



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The official newspaper of The Church of God International

Vol. 29, No. 1

"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13)

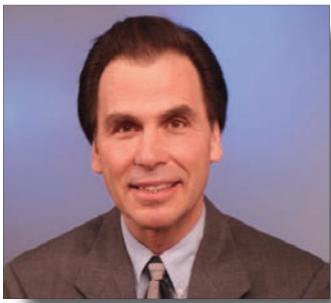
Spring 2008

NORTH AMERICA: LISTEN!

Was the Faith of Our Fathers Originally Christian?

Unfortunately, the history of the United States of America is being rewritten. Over the last forty to fifty years, a very calculated and strategic effort has been made to undermine and malign its political and historical leaders, their efforts, methods, contributions, and sacrifice. The present "spin" is designed to question the original intents of many issues, but none more so than that of this continent's "Christian heritage." This question demands an answer—was the United States of America originally framed in Judeo-Christian values or not?

by Bill Watson



Bill Watson

Sadly, a growing number of people with a more "liberal mind set" have determined that the *American dream*, developed out of the sacrifice of the many becoming one (E PLURIBUS UNUM), is *not something* to be proud of anymore. To the chagrin of some, there are large movements and well financed organizations within American culture today committed to convincing the American people and the rest of the world that the citizens of the United States *SHOULD BE*

ASHAMED of their country. They want you to believe America is an imperialist empire builder, sticking its nose into international affairs that don't concern it, bullying and threatening lesser nations with sanctions or invasion if they don't concede to its required democratic demands. The growing attitude of anti-Americanism within American/Canadian/Australian culture, in combination with many other nations of the world, attests to this fact!

To suggest the possibility that God or "Divine Providence" had something to do with the emergence of this world-renowned *balance of power* over the last

400 years is considered by some as simply foolish. Instead, it's construed as some kind of racial innuendo, allegedly giving the notion the United States thinks itself a superior nation, more valuable to God than any other on earth. Perhaps therein lies some of the reason so many are determined to "*erase God*" out of American culture. However, it is regrettably understandable in this hypersensitive, "politically correct" environment we find ourselves surrounded by.

Admittedly however, to suggest Divine Providence had anything to do with the British Commonwealth's and the United States of America's ascent to greatness would be preposterous and unthinkable to these modern day revisionists—especially in light of the nation's *so-called dismal history* of corruption, concupiscence, war, personal immorality, and legalized slavery (issues which many of these *historical tricksters* use to justify their criticism, claiming our forefathers were culpable). Many of the faultfinders present the challenge that God could never have condoned, honored, and allowed the imposed brutality on so many less fortunate when developing this enormously thundering industrial, geopolitical, and military power the United States has become. Unfortunately, this just goes to illustrate the ignorance of so many concerning how God is working His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ and *His direct intervention* through fulfilled

LISTEN, continued on page 3

Who Changed the Sabbath to Sunday?

There can be no doubt that Christ, His disciples, and the first-century Christians kept Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath. Yet today, most of the Christian professing world keeps Sunday, the first day of the week, calling it the Sabbath. Who made this change, and how did it occur?

by Lloyd W. Cary



Lloyd W. Cary

No serious student of the Scriptures can deny that God instituted the Sabbath at creation and designated the seventh day to be kept holy. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2-3). It was later codified as the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11).

The Word of God makes it expressly clear that Sabbath observance is a special *sign* or "mark" between God and His people. There is also no uncertainty that Christ, His disciples, and the first century Christians kept the seventh-day Sabbath as commanded—the day we now call "Saturday" (Mark 2:28; Luke 4:16).

Is There Any Biblical Support for Sunday Observance?

There is absolutely *no* New Testament text stating that God, Jesus, or the apostles changed the Sabbath to Sunday—not a text, not a word, not even a hint or suggestion. *If* there were, those chapters and verses would be loudly heralded by Sabbath opposers. Had Paul or any other apostle taught a change from Sabbath to Sunday, an absolute firestorm of protest would have arisen from conservative Jewish Christians. The Pharisees and scribes would have insisted that Paul or any other person even suggesting such a thing be stoned to death for the sin of Sabbath breaking. This would have been a much larger issue than the controversy over circumcision!

The self-righteous Pharisees had already falsely accused Christ of breaking the Sabbath because He violated the added man-made rules and traditions *they* placed upon the Sabbath

SABBATH, continued on page 6

What's inside...

Learning To Trust Our Creator

by Ferrell Vincent
Page 2

Know Your Minister—Bill Russ

Page 8

Church News

Page 9

Elisha: Amazing Parallels!

by Jean Jantzen
Page 10

True History—Chapter 8

by Ben Chapman
Page 11

A Hard Saying

by Mike Nolen
Page 13

Defective Christianity

Page 14

Holy Bible, the Word of the Ages

by Nancy Miles
Page 15

And much more...

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Learning to Trust Our Creator

The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior; thou savest me from violence. (2 Samuel 22:3)

by Ferrell Vincent



Ferrell Vincent

When we entered this journey of a Christian way of life, it wasn't easy to take new avenues and begin making decisions concerning things we weren't familiar with. We believed in a living God, at least most of us did. And we soon learned that portions of our life had to be changed. Additionally, the more we learned, the more we realized that more had to be changed! So change began to snowball, and without help from an unseen source, it would be impossible to compete with the world around us, which was a ready-made vacuum that had pressurized all who opposed it. So we had to go to the One who created it all and laid a plan that would relieve the pressure for all who would accept and follow His instructions. And when we go to Him and we see the way He works things out for us, it deepens our belief and trust in Him. And we learn it's much easier to let Him work through the individual than to try to out-guess God. It's amazing how much easier it is when you follow the manual for life that He carefully designed for our benefit.

When we turn to our Creator and accept Jesus Christ, His first-born son, He expects that as His children through baptism and laying on of hands, we accept the rules of the manual He preserved for us. The apostle Paul instructed the evangelist Timothy of what those rules consist of and how they are to help the individual. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

It's hard for a new convert or an individual who has never had any interest in changing to understand the need for a certain way of life to dominate; after all, there are so many different paths to follow. It's part of human nature to feel secure with the majority. When we began to read the instructions in the manual, we soon found that it's God who chooses the path for us to follow, and we are to let Him show the way. His way is not our way, and our way is not His way. If we follow our way, we find ourselves entangled in a wilderness of discouragement that will cause us to desire to turn back if we aren't careful. Look what our Father instructed Moses about the path to travel. "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt" (Exodus 13:17).

God has given His people a way to go that is very different from any other pathway to follow. He has given us a set of laws that will point out what sin is and show us what to repent of, and what to get out of our lives. And when we follow those precepts, we come to Christ, begin developing His mind through prayer and study and feeding on spiritual food, causing the whole body to grow and develop in obedience to the mind which governs the body. Look what the Psalmist recorded in Psalms 119:97-108: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word. Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments."

It's obvious that David knew the importance of the contents within the manual that our God designed for those who desire to receive and apply it to their lives. And with the acceptance and exercising to the best of our ability the contents of that manual, we receive a guarantee of the greatest reward that could be bestowed upon anyone within this universe. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:11-19).

My question is, how could anyone refuse such a great promise, from such a great God, with such a great plan? And all that is required of us is to *trust* Him.

Let us *use* that manual to cause us to know more about the great God, and learn to have greater trust in Him. □

Tribute to the Hoary Head

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head [gray headed], and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:32)

Our senior citizens, sometimes disrespectfully referred to as "old timers" and "geezer," are easy to spot. At sporting events, during the playing of the *Star Spangled Banner*, elders remove their caps, stand at attention, and sing out without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them.

Our senior citizens remember the Depression, World War II, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Normandy, and Hitler. They remember the Atomic Age, the Korean War 1950-55, the Cold War, the Jet Age, the moon landing, and the 50-plus peacekeeping missions from 1945 to 2005, not to mention Vietnam.

If you bump into a senior citizen on the sidewalk, he will probably apologize. If you pass him on the street, he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. They tend to trust strangers and are courtly to women. Senior citizens hold the door for the next person and always when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection. They are often embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children, and they don't like any filth on TV, in movies, or in e-mails. Our elderly citizens have moral courage. They seldom brag unless it's about their grandchildren.

Our country needs its senior citizens for their decent values, their hope for tomorrow, and their trust in God. Let's hear it for the over-the-hill gang! □

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LISTEN, continued from page 1

prophecies of nations and peoples on this earth.

So many willfully ignore the plain realities of world history and the current arrangement of international *FACT*. Like it or not, the reality is, if it weren't for the immense combined efforts of Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, and other allies during the 20th century to resist and subdue the immeasurable and colossal world conquering efforts of Germany and Japan, the geopolitical arrangement of today's world would be *extremely different*. Also, many fail to recognize the *prophetic significance* of the current alliance between the British, North America, and the Jewish state of Israel. Clearly, many of the quibblers would simply say it's just the way "things and stuff" washed out. It's the luck of the draw, "politics as usual."

Quite the contrary, *it's not just blind fate!* Nor is it some kind of reward from God because of the godly attributes, righteousness, or goodness of the American dream, its political forefathers, or the society that has come from this amalgamation of ethnicities and cultures. (Admittedly, the British and American political/military policies, including our leadership over the past decades and centuries, *have not* always been with the purest of intentions when compared to God's moral standards.)

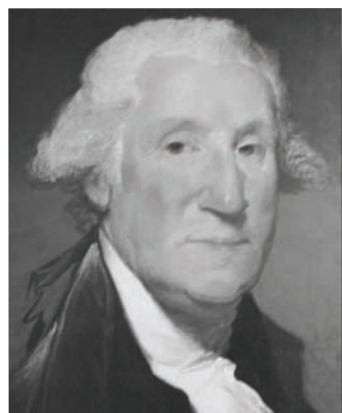
However, that being said, it doesn't erase the fact that presently we have a growing number of nations, cultures, and people who have selectively forgotten the *blood, sweat, and tears* over the last 400 to 600 years that the British and North Americans have sacrificed in global conflicts and struggles, endeavoring to derail the efforts of tyrants and dictators around the world. This was *not mischance, coincidental, or happenstance* according to your Bible. Clearly, it was by design, guided and steered through a variety of geopolitical circumstances that resulted in *fulfilling some ancient promises* made to a single patriarch, Abraham, and his family, who were considered faithful by God. This resulted in the emergence of the *greatest* commonwealth (company) of nations and the *greatest* nation the world has ever seen—the British Commonwealth and the United States of America (Genesis 48:16–22).

FACTS TO CONSIDER

There are some interesting facts, events, and comments of *American history*, specifically, explaining just how obvious it was that this greatest nation was indeed framed from the model of *Biblically* based Judeo-Christian ethics and law, with Jesus Christ being central to this endeavor.

Almost 400 years ago, the group of people arriving on the Mayflower from England was essentially a *Christian* church congregation, pastored by a man named John Robinson. However, choosing to remain behind with the majority of this independent congregation (which separated from the Christian Church of England), deferred the departing of the first group to North America under the leadership of Elder Brewster. They sighted land in the Cape Cod area, off the east coast near the present city of Boston, in the month of November, 1620. Only half of the approximately 102 original passengers would survive the first winter.

Interestingly, it's a fact that this small group of *Christian Separatists, pilgrims* as they considered themselves, were fleeing religious persecution from the Church of England. The "compact" that all of them signed before disembarking included the following terminology: "*In the Name of God, Amen... Having undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the **Christian Faith...** in the preference of God and one another, Covenant and Combine our selves together...*" These references clearly indicate that God was an important, intrinsic, and central idea to their thinking, as was specifically, the *Christian faith*. As these English colonies began to grow and develop, they perceived the hand of God guiding their fledgling "nation settlement" in a direction that even they admitted was un-chartered.

**George Washington**

Approximately 140 years later, George Washington himself, writing to his brother John Washington, wrote about his sense of Providence due to the protection he received during the French and Indian War. Washington wrote, "*But by the **all-powerful dispensations of Providence**, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me!*"

Traveling with his boyhood friend, Dr. Craik,

the two of them riding near the Ohio River fifteen years later came upon an Indian chief who admitted he [the Indian chief] tried killing him [George Washington] with 17 easy shots. The chief said, "Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man [pointing to Washington], and **guides his destinies**

—he will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the *founder of a mighty empire*. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the *particular favorite of Heaven*, and who can never die in battle." The chief continued, "Washington was never born to be killed by a bullet! I had seventeen fair fires at him with my rifle, and after all could not bring him to the ground!" This *historical fact* was taught throughout the schools of America until 1934. Today, lamentably, it's *no longer* POLITICALLY CORRECT!

Pastor **Henry Muhlenberg**, of the Lutheran Church near Valley Forge, said this concerning General George Washington: "I heard a fine example today, namely, that His Excellency General Washington rode around among his army yesterday and admonished each and everyone to fear God, to put away the wickedness that has set in and become so general, and to *practice the Christian virtues*. From all appearances, this gentleman does not belong to the so-called world of society, for he respects God's Word, believes in the *atonement through Christ*, and bears himself in humility and gentleness. Therefore, the Lord God has also singularly, yea, marvelously, **preserved him from harm** in the midst of countless perils, ambushes, fatigues, etc. and has hitherto graciously held him in His hand as a *chosen vessel*."

**The Siege of Yorktown.** Washington and French commander Comte de Rochambeau in the field, planning the final allied campaign.

And perhaps no other quote so succinctly presents this notion of divine providence and destiny, than the memo Washington himself wrote to Brigadier-General Thomas Nelson in Virginia, when he said, "*The **hand of Providence** has been so conspicuous in all this (the course of the war) that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more wicked that has not gratitude to acknowledge his obligations; but it will be time enough for me to turn Preacher when my present appointment ceases.*" In other words, Washington believed it to be *very obvious* that God's hand was on him and the genesis of the nation by virtue of the way events played out to the benefit of the colonies.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL PROOF

There are many other facts and statements from other leaders of the time that undeniably prove the United States of America was indeed established as a *Judeo-Christian culture*, based on both Old and New Testaments, with the precepts of Jesus Christ central to the laws of its society. Notice what **John Jay**, co-author of the Federalist papers, said: "*Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors... This country and this people seem to have been made for each other.*" **Patrick Henry** said, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by *Christians*: not on religions, but on the *gospel of Jesus Christ*."

George Washington, speaking to a Hebrew congregation in Savannah, Georgia, said, "May the same wonder-working deity, who long since delivering the Hebrews from their Egyptian Oppressors planted them in the promised land—whose *Providential Agency* has lately been conspicuous in establishing these United States as an independent nation—still continue to water them with the dews of Heaven and to make the inhabitants for every denomination participate in the temporal and spiritual blessings of that people whose God is Jehovah." **Thomas Jefferson**, in his Second Inaugural Address, said, "I shall need too, the favor of that Being whose hands we are, *who led our forefathers*, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life, who has covered our infancy with *His Providence* and our riper years with His wisdom and power..." **Thomas Jefferson**, writing to Dr Benjamin Rush about *Jesus Christ* said, "His system of morals... if filled up in the style and spirit of the rich fragments He left us would be the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man... Of all the systems of morality, ancient and modern, which have come under my observation, *none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus*." **LISTEN, continued on page 4**

**The Signing of the Declaration of Independence**

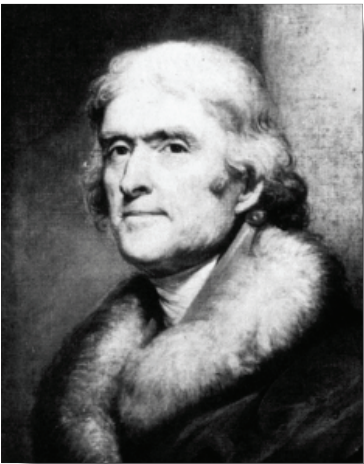
LISTEN, continued from page 3**Mt. Rushmore, South Dakota**

existence of God. The presiding *judge remarked*, that he had not before been aware that there was a man living who *did not believe* in the existence of God... and that he knew of no case in a *Christian country*, where a witness had been permitted to testify without such belief.” How times have changed! **Gustave de Beaumont**, another French historian, said in that same year, “Religion in America is not only a moral institution, but *also a political institution*... In the United States, the law is *never* atheistic.” Admittedly, these visiting French historians recognized what they believed to be obvious; the nation was built within a Christian framing.

Today, it’s also a known historical fact that the Articles of Confederation of the United Colonies of New England and the original Colonial Charters included language to the effect that said, “...to advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel in purity with peace...” Many of these documents are “salted and peppered” with language clearly affirming the *Christian mind set* these early settlers and national leaders had in the beginning of the United States.

To the chagrin of many, there are states today who *presently retain* in their state constitutions the qualifications necessary for any intended political delegate planning to represent that particular state’s constituency. Unfortunately, those qualifications are not enforced. The reason becomes obvious, because these qualifications are no longer viewed legitimate due to the current anti-Christian bias encroaching within our society. Notice what some of these requirements demand.

The state of **Delaware requires** in Article 22: “Every person, who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust... shall... make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: I, “John Doe,” do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.”

**Thomas Jefferson**

Pennsylvania’s constitution required the delegate to make a similar declaration: “I do believe in one God, the creator and governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.”

We could include Massachusetts, North Carolina, Maryland, and many others, but it would only go to prove a lamentable fact: the United States of America *is abandoning* the precepts of the God of Israel, His Son Jesus Christ, and the writings of both Old and New Testaments. These documents no longer retain the central

influence or sense of importance they once had when the nation was young and small in its own sight.

A DISTURBING WARNING TO A NATION WHO ABANDONS GOD

In Deuteronomy 32:15–52, Moses makes a prophetic warning to the nation Jeshurun (Israel). This young, poor, and homeless nation, Israel, was about to go into the Promised Land. They had just finished their exhausting forty years of trial in the wilderness. And yet, Moses knew they would “wax fat” and “grow thick,” becoming ultimately a great nation. He also knew they would forget their God, provoking Him to jealousy WITH STRANGE GODS! Regrettably, *ALL* of North America (Canada included) is repeating this history.

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He does not change. NORTH AMERICA has been given more blessings than most nations on earth, and sadly has *ignored* the source of those blessings. Presently, *throughout the continent*, a secular hedonistic humanism is growing in popularity. As this occurs, the role of God becomes marginalized, if not eliminated, in the lives of the people and shamefully, its leaders. **Samuel Adams** said, “A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely *overthrow* the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy. While the people are virtuous they *cannot* be subdued; but when once they *lose their*

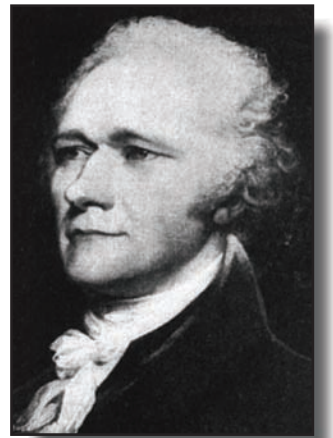
Alexis De Tocqueville, a French historian, while traveling in New York in August of 1831, made this observation concerning a local court case in Chester County, illustrating the importance of a belief in God among the common U.S. citizenry of that time. He wrote, “The court of common pleas of Chester County... *rejected a witness* who

declared his disbelief in the

virtue then will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader.” The current trends illustrate a reckless abandonment of God AND *Christian virtue* in our present day social order, obviously the counter-distinction Samuel Adams warned this young nation about.

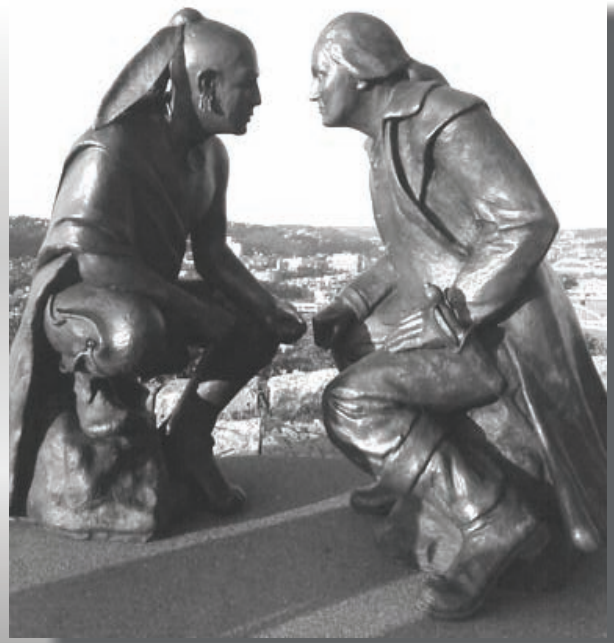
Ancient Israel of old finally degenerated into such a wretched social and moral condition that even God could not tolerate it any longer. He finally mentioned, through the prophet **Amos** some years previous to the first invasion by the Assyrian army, “Thus saith the Lord; As a shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria [*the northern ten tribes of Israel would be destroyed, not Judah*] in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch [*those who were living in the lap of luxury at the time*]. ...That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him I will also visit the altars of Bethel [*ancient pagan worship sites within the nation of Israel*]; and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground [*they will be destroyed*]. And I will smite the winter house with the summer house [*vacation and luxury homes*]; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses [*mansions*] shall have an end, saith the Lord” (Amos 3:12–15).

Some years later, **Hosea** continues the warning by saying, “For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place [*they will become vulnerable and destroyed because God will pull His protection away*]. Ephraim [*a prophetic name primarily referencing the British Commonwealth and the United States of America*] is joined to idols: let him alone. Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love [*her rulers love shameful things*], Give ye. The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices” [*they shall be blown away like leaves in the wind because of their sins*] (Hosea 4:16–19).

**Alexander Hamilton**

Today, much in the same way these ancient ten tribes of Israel did, North America and Great Britain, blessed at one time with more than most, aspiring to become the greatest commonwealth of nations and greatest nation the world had ever seen, have squandered their blessings and become oblivious to losing their position of influence as the geopolitical superpowers they once were. *Secular* and *Biblical* history proves God blessed these cultures for the good of mankind. Over the years, regardless of what the gainsayers and revisionists claim, human rights have been greatly enhanced and protected, generally speaking, by the influence of their hegemony. Unfortunately, these days are coming to a close, because God is not amused by a social system in conflict with the original Judeo/Christian precepts that should underscore its cultural identity.

Our nation is adrift, moving further away from the original values and standards ensconced in the Old and New Testaments, which defined our *Christian heritage*. Jesus Christ and the one He introduced as the Father, is sending out a *sharp clear appeal* to all who will hear: *REPENT* and *COMMIT* your life to the Christian “way” by accepting Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior. The day is upon us; it’s time we recognize our nation and our personal lives *have NEED* of a relationship with God and Jesus Christ. Our nation is *departing* from the God of Israel and Jesus Christ, who are fundamental to our nation’s blessings and protection. We are warned to “Take heed, ...lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in *DEPARTING* from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12). It is not a good thing to be in that position. Therefore, “**Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts ...**” (Hebrews 3:15). □

**George Washington discussing events with Indian leader**

Did you know...

The following is now unconstitutional in the United States:

- 1) To recite a verbal prayer in school.
- 2) To discuss the topic of religion in school.
- 3) To pray out loud at lunch in school.
- 4) To display war memorials in the shape of a cross.
- 5) To arrive early at school to hear another student recite a prayer.
- 6) For the Board of Education to use the word of God.
- 7) For a kindergarten class to ask whose birthday is represented by Christmas.
- 8) For the Ten Commandments to hang on a wall in any classroom.
- 9) To introduce any legal bill if the legislator who did so had a religious activity in mind when he authored it.
- 10) For a kindergartener in class to recite "God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food."
- 11) For any school graduation ceremony to contain an opening or closing prayer.

What On Earth... Is God Doing?

Have you ever stopped to wonder what, exactly, God is doing? How do we—you and I—fit into His plan? What is the reason for our national existence, and what is our destiny? Have you ever wondered why the United States and the British Commonwealth of nations have been blessed over and above all nations of the earth?

And have you ever wondered why we have adopted the Hebrew Bible and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to build our culture around? Why, of all the religions on earth, would our cultures pattern our governments, social laws, and our primary faith after the God of Israel and a Jewish Messiah named Jesus Christ?

The answers to these vital questions should be the very beginning point in our children's education; yet the truth has been suppressed, not taught!

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Our blessings are not the result of "dumb luck" or the "superior intellect" of our founding fathers—rather, they are the direct result of fulfilled Bible prophecy! The intricate manner in which God worked out these specific prophecies in fine detail is a saga stranger than fiction.

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Voices From The Past

Sole Loyalty



Theodore Roosevelt

Following are Theodore Roosevelt's words regarding the assimilation of immigrants into American culture:

"In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American, and nothing but an American.... There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag.... we have room for but one language here, and that is the English language... and we have room for but one sole loyalty, and that is a loyalty to the American people."

—Theodore Roosevelt, 1907

Sources:

- 1. The New York Times. "A Roosevelt Idea Made in Germany." 2 Feb. 1916 (p. 5).
- 2. The Washington Post. "T.R. Assails Wilson." June 1, 1916 (p. 1).
- 3. Boston Daily Globe. "'Moral Treason' to Attack Allies." 5 July 1917 (p. 10).
- 4. The Washington Post. "Use Only English, Roosevelt Urges." 28 May 1918 (p. 2).
- 5. The Chicago Daily Tribune. "Abolish Hyphen Roosevelt's Last Words to Public." January 7, 1919 (p. 4).

A copy of this letter, obtained from the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, can be viewed online at: www.snopes.com/politics/quotes/troosevelt.asp

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10 Reasons to Memorize Scripture:

- 1. Hiding God's Word within your heart keeps you from sin (Psalm 119:11).
- 2. Memorizing Scripture creates and sustains delight in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2-3; 119:97).
- 3. It fulfills your very purpose for living (Matthew 4:4).
- 4. It fends off the flaming arrows of the evil one (Ephesians. 6:16).
- 5. It feeds, sustains, and grows faith (Proverbs 22:18-19; Romans 10:17).
- 6. It enables you to pray more effectively (John 15:7).
- 7. It allows the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:15-16).
- 8. It brings joy, emboldens us, and lifts the spirits (Jeremiah 15:16; Isaiah 51:7).
- 9. It promotes ongoing meditation (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2).
- 10. Jesus Christ set the example (Mathew 4:4, 7, 10).

SABBATH, continued from page 1

(Mark 2:24). The total absence of any such controversy over a change in the day of worship is one of the best evidences showing the apostles and other New Testament Christians did *not* change the day. On the contrary, we have a record of many Sabbaths that Paul and his traveling companions kept long after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You may read of them in your own Bible in Acts 13:14, 27, 42–44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; and 18:4.

Acts 13:42–44 is especially significant in that Paul and Barnabas, when speaking at a Jewish synagogue, were invited to speak again the *next* Sabbath. This would have been Paul's golden opportunity to tell the people to meet with him the next *day* rather than waiting a whole week for the Sabbath. But, "on the next *Sabbath* almost the whole city [Christians and Gentiles alike] gathered to hear the word of the Lord."

Yet today, most of the Christian professing world keeps Sunday, the first day of the week, calling *it* the Sabbath. The question arises then, *who* changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and *how* did it occur? The answer may amaze you!

Biblical Testimony

The New Testament plainly shows we are to continue keeping the commandments (Matthew 5:17–18; 19:17; 28:20)—all ten of them. Where, then, do men get the "authority" to *change* the fourth commandment by substituting Sunday for the original Sabbath Christ and the apostles kept?

The Bible prophesied many centuries earlier that the time would come when men would think to *change times and laws* (Daniel 7:25). Many Bible prophecies are "dual" in nature—that is, they have a type and antitype, an earlier and a later fulfillment. Though speaking specifically of the soon-coming antichrist, we can see the forerunner type documented in history.

The Watering Down of the Sabbath in the First 300 Years

The Christians during the apostolic era, from about 35 to 100 A.D., kept Sabbath on the designated seventh day of the week. For the first 300 years of Christian history, when the Roman Emperors regarded themselves as gods, Christianity became an "illegal religion," and God's people were scattered abroad (Acts 8:1). Judaism, however, was regarded at that time as "legal," as long as they obeyed Roman laws. Thus, during the apostolic era, Christians found it convenient to let the Roman authorities think of them as Jews, which gained them legitimacy with the Roman government. However, when the Jews rebelled against Rome, the Romans put down their rebellion by destroying Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and again in 135 A.D. Obviously, the Roman government's suppression of the Jews made it increasingly uncomfortable for Christians to be thought of as Jewish. At that time, Sunday was the rest day of the Roman Empire, whose religion was *Mithraism*, a form of sun worship. Since Sabbath observance is visible to others, some Christians in the early second century sought to distance themselves from Judaism by observing a different day, thus "blending in" to the society around them.

During the Empire-wide Christian persecutions under Nero, Maximin, Diocletian, and Galerius, Sabbath-keeping Christians were hunted down, tortured, and for sport, often used for entertainment in the Colosseum.

Constantine Made Sunday a Civil Rest Day

When Emperor Constantine I—a pagan sun-worshiper—came to power in 313 A.D., he legalized Christianity and made the first Sunday-keeping law. His infamous Sunday enforcement law of March 7, 321 A.D. reads as follows: "On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed." (*Codex Justinianus* 3.12.3, trans. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 5th ed. (New York, 1902), 3:380, note 1.)

The Sunday law was officially confirmed by the Roman Papacy. The Council of Laodicea in 364 A.D. decreed, "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ." (Strand, *op. cit.*, citing Charles J. Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church*, 2 (Edinburgh, 1876) 316.)

Cardinal Gibbons, in *Faith of Our Fathers*, 92nd ed., p. 89, freely admits, "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we [the Catholic Church] never sanctify."

Again, "The Catholic Church,...by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." (*The Catholic Mirror*, official publication of James Cardinal Gibbons, September 23, 1893.)

"Protestants do not realize that by observing Sunday, they accept the authority of the spokesperson of the Church, the Pope." (Our Sunday Visitor, February 5, 1950.)

"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change [Saturday Sabbath to Sunday] was her act... And the act is a MARK of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things." (H.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons.)

"Sunday is our MARK of authority... the church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact." (*Catholic Record of London*, Ontario, September 1, 1923.)

What a shocking admission!

A Prophecy Come to Pass!

At this point, we need to note an amazing prophecy. Daniel 7:25 foretold, "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws." Quoting Daniel 7:25, Adam Clarke's Commentary says:

• "He shall speak great words against the Most High} Literally, *Sermones quasi Deus loquetur*; 'He shall speak as if he were God.' So Jerome quotes from *Symmachus*. To none can this apply so well or so fully as to the popes of Rome. They have assumed *infallibility*, which belongs only to God. They profess to forgive sins, which belongs only to God. They profess to open and shut heaven, which belongs only to God. They profess to be higher than all the kings of the earth, which belongs only to God. And they go *beyond* God in pretending to loose whole nations from their oath of allegiance to their kings, when such kings do not please them! And they go *against* God when they give indulgences for sin. This is the worst of all blasphemies!

• *And shall wear out the saints}* By wars, crusades, massacres, inquisitions, and persecutions of all kinds. What in this way have they not done against all those who have protested against their *innovations*, and refused to submit to their *idolatrous worship*? Witness the exterminating crusades published against the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*. Witness *John Huss*, and *Jerome of Prague*. Witness the *Smithfield fires* in England! Witness *God* and man against this bloody, persecuting, ruthless, and impure Church!

• *And think to change times and laws}* Appointing fasts and feasts; canonizing persons whom he chooses to call saints; granting pardons and indulgences for sins; instituting new modes of worship utterly unknown to the Christian Church; new articles of faith; new rules of practice; and reversing, with pleasure, the laws both of God and man.—Dodd." (Emphasis his. *Clarke's Commentary*, Volume IV, p. 594.)

Who Changed the Sabbath to Sunday?

Your Bible says, "But in vain [uselessness] they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7).

Further, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to *this word* [the Bible], it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

"Prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the Catholic Church alone. The Catholic church says, by my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the Holy Catholic Church." (Thomas Enright, CSSR, President, Redemptorist College [Roman Catholic], Kansas City, MO, February 18, 1884.)

"The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. The Pope has authority and has often exercised it, to dispense with the command of Christ." (*Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop.*)

It is a matter of Biblical and secular history that God never changed His holy Sabbath or transferred its solemnity to Sunday. *Who*, then, changed the Sabbath to Sunday?

The undeniable and historical truth is, Rome, in concert with the Roman Catholic Church, changed Sabbath to Sunday!

The facts are before you. Let no one deceive you. The Bible and the traditions of men *are not the same!* What will *you* believe? Whom will *you* follow? The God of your Bible—or the traditions of men? The choice, dear reader, is yours. □

Amazing Admissions, Confessions, and Testimonies About the Sabbath and Sunday!

What men say...

Emphasis mine throughout.
The editor

"Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the Sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained is the edict of Constantine, 321 A.D." (*Chamber's Encyclopedia*, article *Sabbath*)

"The power of the Caesars lived again in the universal dominion of the popes." (H.G. Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*)

"During the first crusade, Pope Urban II decreed at the council of Clermont (AD 1095) that the Sabbath be set aside in honour of the Virgin Mary." (*History of the Sabbath*, p. 672)

"The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ Himself, hidden under a veil of flesh." (*The Catholic National*, July 1895)

"...the church is above the Bible, and the transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact." (*Catholic Record of London, Ontario*, Sept. 1, 1923)

"Sunday...is the law of the Catholic Church alone..." (*American Sentinel* [Catholic], June, 1893)

"The Sunday...is purely a creation of the Catholic Church." (*American Catholic Quarterly Review*, January, 1883)

"Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change (Saturday Sabbath to Sunday) was hers. The Pope has power to change times, to abrogate laws, and to dispense with all things, even the precepts of Christ. The Pope has authority and has often exercised it, to dispense with the command of Christ." (*Decretal, de Tranlatic Episcop. Cap.*)

"It is always somewhat laughable, to see the Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in their Bible." (Peter R. Kraemer, *Catholic Church Extension Society*)

"Protestants...accept Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made the change... But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that... in observing the Sunday, they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the Pope." (*Our Sunday Visitor*, February 15, 1950)

"Is it not strange that Sunday is almost universally observed when the Sacred writings do not endorse it? Satan, the great counterfeiter, worked through the 'mystery of iniquity' to introduce a counterfeit Sabbath to take the place of the true Sabbath of God. Sunday stands side by side with Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy (or Maundy) Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Whitsunday, Corpus Christi, Assumption Day, all Soul's Day, Christmas Day, and a host of other ecclesiastical feast days too numerous to mention. This array of Roman Catholic feasts and fast days are all man made. None of them bears the divine credentials of the Author of the Inspired Word." (M. E. Walsh)

"The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word 'remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on the tables of stone at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?" (Dwight L. Moody, *Weighed and Wanting*, Fleming H. Revell Co.: New York, pp. 47, 48)

"I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church." (T. Enright, C.S.S.R., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1884)

"The Sabbath is a part of the Decalogue—the Ten Commandments. This alone forever settles the question as to the perpetuity of the institution... Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole moral law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand....The teaching of Christ confirms the perpetuity of the Sabbath." (T. C. Blake, D.D. Presbyterian, *Theology Condensed*, p. 474–475)

"They [Roman Catholics] refer to the Sabbath Day, as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath Day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!" (*Augsburg Confession of Faith* art. 28; written by Melanchthon, approved by Martin Luther, 1530; as published in *The Book of Concord of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Henry Jacobs, ed. (1911), p. 63)

"Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history But what a pity it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!" (Baptist Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of *The Baptist Manual*, a paper read before a New York ministers' conference, Nov. 13, 1893, reported in *New York Examiner*, Nov. 16, 1893)

"The observance of the first day instead of the seventh day rests in the testimony of the Catholic church and the church alone." (Hobart, Episcopalian, *Church News*, July 2, 1894)

"It is true there is no positive command for infant baptism... Nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week. Many believe that Christ changed the Sabbath. But from His own words, we see that He came for no such purpose. Those who believe that Jesus changed the Sabbath base it only on supposition." (Amos Binney, Methodist, *Theological Compendium*, p. 180–181)

"...the seventh day is the only Sabbath day commanded, and God never repealed that command. If you would keep the Sabbath, keep it; but Sunday is not the Sabbath... is the Seventh day not the first day that the command refers to." (G. Alridge, *Church of Christ* editor, *The Bible Standard*, April, 1916)

"But, say some, 'it was changed from the seventh to the first day.' Where? when? and by whom? No man can tell. No, it never was changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again: for the reason assigned must be changed before the observance, or respect to the reason, can be changed! It is all old wives' fables to talk of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. If it be changed, it was that august personage changed it who changes times and laws *ex officio*—I think his name is Doctor Antichrist." (Alexander Campbell—*The Christian Baptist*, Feb. 2, 1824)

What the Bible says...

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exodus 20:8–11)

On the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because he rested in it from all his work which he had created and made. (Genesis 2:2–3)

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. (Mark 2:27–28)

He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He entered, as was his custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. (Luke 4:16)

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures. (Acts 17:2)

He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. (Acts 18:4, WEB)

There remains therefore a Sabbath [Sabatismos] rest for the people of God.

Church News

Know Your Minister, Bill Russ



Bill Russ

My name is William A. Russ—I answer to the name Bill. I was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, to William C. Russ and Finnis O. Russ McGill. I was the third of seven siblings, the

oldest son of two brothers; yes, I had five sisters. We lived in Indianapolis less than one year, moving on to Detroit, Michigan. We stayed in Detroit about nine years.

My father was Catholic, but I do not know much about the religion of my father's parents, or even if they had any. My grandfather died before I was born, my grandmother a year or two after I was born. My father and mother talked about my grandmother, but hardly a word about my grandfather, due to fear of the Ku Klux Klan. I have seen pictures of my grandmother, but not one of my grandfather. My mother was a Methodist, my father's second choice.

I owe thanks to President Dwight D. Eisenhower; it was under his watch in the mid fifties that the auto market went south, and my father was laid off. We moved south to the state of Tennessee, where my mother was born. I took to Tennessee like a duck to water. I at one time was so wrapped up in the volunteer state that if I was cut I would have bled orange.

Coming to the South after living in the North all of my life was a great change for me. I was not used to having a school for whites, and another for blacks, a drinking fountain for whites, and one for blacks. We lived in somewhat of a mixed neighborhood; we all played together, watched TV at each other's house, but when we went to school or church, we went our separate ways. These early years had a profound effect on my life. We all believed we were worshipping the same God, but we could not worship Him together.

My father being Catholic in a small southern town was, to say the least, quite unusual. There was only one Catholic church in Dickson, and it was not a mixed assembly, but a segregated congregation. My father had no problem with the Methodists—my mother was one—but it was my grandmother (my mother's mother), a devout Methodist, who became the reason we all attended a Methodist church.

How I came from this environment to God's church begs for an answer. It is a given that all things are possible with God. We also know God does not force anyone to follow His paths. There is something in us willing to follow God's will and to seek truth. My father instilled in me and all of his children to have faith in our understanding. We could question him, teachers, doctors, or police, with the correct attitude. But at no time could we question the man of God. The minister was always right; the priest, as they are called in the Catholic church, was beyond reproach.

Growing up, I was not the most gifted one around in sports; I could not outrun, or out-throw, but I was hard to beat catching; baseball,

football, basketball—throw anything at me and I caught it, but my so-called claim to fame was that I would not quit.

At the age of fourteen I was given the liberty of attending the church of my choice. I started attending New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. In six month's time, I was teaching my age group in Sunday school. To this day, I do not know why I was given the honor to teach without being a member of the church; I had not been baptized. My memory served me well; I could read the Bible verses for the Sunday school lesson, but I could not glean the same meaning out of them that I had been taught in Sunday school, or church. My father's instructions about not questioning the priest or ministers has become problematic; I did not see the ministers as all knowing. I carried a 94 point grade average in high school, with math, science, and history my best subjects; English and literature were my worst. I started to college, but did not stay in college very long. I loved to read, just not what was on the agenda. I had a love for science fiction, history, and westerns. My father and I would read the Bible; basically we only read the Minor Prophets, with Jonah being our favorite. We never tried to understand what it was all about, what God was saying through His prophets. My father would not try to explain Scripture, and the ministers would not give you an answer you could understand, if they gave you an answer at all. I came to see the ministers as not being all knowing, even about the Word of God. I still had a hard time overcoming my father's teaching about not questioning them.

I did not have this problem with my Uncle Sam [my second cousin on my mother's side—the whole town called him Uncle Sam]. We lived in the same neighborhood. He was the reason I started attending New Hope Baptist Church. He held the office of deacon, and was one of the only barbers in Dickson that cut both whites' and blacks' hair back in the 1950s. I was witness to ministers of both races picking Uncle Sam's head, asking questions they had about the Bible. It was under Uncle Sam that I first came to know I did not have to believe everything said in the pulpit, that the ministers could, and did, make mistakes. It was my Uncle Sam who started my search to prove the first day of the week.

After a year or more searching the Christian Bible (New Testament), I now believed we were wrong about the day to worship. Not knowing any Sabbatarians, I stayed in the Baptist church, putting the Sabbath issue on the back burner.

At 18, I bought my first car, and was baptized into New Hope Baptist Church, not the body of Christ. I started teaching the adult class, but did I know or understand the Holy Scriptures? No, I did not, but I knew more than my students. I was now studying my Bible with help from my Uncle Sam.

How did I come to the knowledge of the Sabbath? As I stated earlier, I asked my Uncle Sam about the Sabbath. Could it be proven out of the Bible? His answer was that it could, and I was bound and determined to prove this by doing a study on the Sabbath or Sunday observance.

About a year later, I was convinced that Sunday was not the day to worship, but the seventh

day of the week. One Sunday morning while I was dressing for Sunday school, I was watching TV and ran across a speaker saying things I read in the Bible and had come to the same conclusions.

After months of watching the program, I didn't remember the name of the speaker or the name of the program, but I did find out it was sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventists.

Looking for this program one Sunday, to my surprise it was not on; thinking they were now on a different channel, I begin to channel surf, and found Garner Ted Armstrong. I was taken by what he was saying, more so than the SDAs. I listened to Garner Ted Armstrong every Sunday unless I was at work. I started to order material from Tyler, and sent money to Garner Ted, but I did not know there was a church behind him.

I knew the Sabbath was the last day of the seven-day week. Not knowing anyone who kept the Sabbath, I started attending church with the Seventh Day Adventists; in two weeks I knew this was not the place for me—about all we had in common was the day to come together to worship the God of Creation.

Not long after attending with the SDAs, I found Churches of God in Nashville, with the CGI being one of them. The first Sabbath I worshipped with CGI, there would be no turning back. Now the Bible came alive for me, and what I read and could understand was preached with more insight.

After I was baptized into the Church of God, I attended my first Passover; I had read the booklet *God's Seasonal Plan* and other articles from CGI and other Churches of God. I did not understand the meaning of the New Testament Passover or the other annual Sabbaths until I started keeping them.

I was asked by my pastor, Hal Bryant, to prepare a sermonette and go with him to Jackson, Tennessee. I had accompanied Hal to Jackson before, giving opening or closing prayer, but not speaking. I was utterly surprised to be given the opportunity to speak to God's people. It was a humbling feeling to be asked to speak to God's people—what a privilege to be given the chance to speak in God's church.

Some time later, Hal asked me to consider becoming a minister; at the time, I had not heard of the MAP program, a CGI program to train prospective men for the ministry. Hal was not only my friend and pastor, but he was also my mentor—Hal sponsored me in the MAP program. I lost him to death at a milestone in my life. I always believed a milestone was something one looked forward to, but how wrong one can be. The next milestone in my life was when the leaders of the MAP program assigned Ferrell Vincent to be my pastor and mentor. Being my pastor was easier than being my mentor. Hal and I were friends long before I was in the MAP program, but I didn't know Ferrell very well. Ferrell proved to be every bit the mentor Hal was, and I will always be grateful to Ferrell Vincent for taking the baton as it was passed from Hal to him. It shows the heart of the men in the Church of God; they are willing to make sacrifices for the good of the Work. May the God of creation inspire me to do the same.

The MAP program is worth the ride even if you are not ordained; you have the chance to meet some of the finest, most dedicated men in God's church. □

Church News

52 Visitors Attend First Jamaican CGI Campaign

The Church of God International in Jamaica kicked off its Operation Saturation Evangelism Program for 2008 by pulling in 52 visitors at its campaign last Sabbath, January 26, when we addressed the subject, "Should You Keep the Sabbath?"

A total of 256 persons were in attendance to hear this over 90-minute presentation. All sat with rapt attention, and almost everyone stayed for the question-and-answer session. In the audience were two former Worldwide Church of God ministers, including the man who was the father of the Jamaican work and the original local contact here in the 1960s. I remember our first meeting as if it were yesterday—but that was 35 years ago, when I was a mere teenager! Then there was no local congregation in Jamaica, and many Sabbaths I would go to his home to be with his family alone.

Today, he has abandoned all the truths we once believed, and does not even believe in physical baptism anymore. He said in the question-and-answer session that I had "cleverly" covered all the ground and made it difficult for anyone to respond to how I "set up the arguments," a concession that the presentation was effectively delivered. The other former WCG minister, whom I personally invited and who was one of the most impressive local speakers here, said he was impressed with the lecture and that he now accepts the validity of the Sabbath. He had abandoned the Sabbath and had become involved in a leading charismatic church here. Recently he has been just staying home, disillusioned with the institutional church. A graduate of the local theological seminary here, he is now a lecturer at the Graduate School of Theology.

Several ex-Worldwidiers who are now with CGI were excited to see their two former pastors in the audience. Both say they will return this Sabbath. A number of ex-Worldwidiers are being contacted for the follow-up campaign this Sabbath.

One man said he was never so challenged as a Sunday-keeper. But one graduate of Oral Roberts University took us on strongly in the session, and vowed to come back this Sabbath when I will do the second part of the presentation. On February 9, I will address the issue of the *Trinity*, and then at the end of the month I will address the feast days.

We are determined to do our part in fulfilling the great commission Jesus left His church. □

Submitted by Ian Boyne

An Aussie BYO BBQ

A barbeque was held at the home of Diane and Zoltan Tuskes and attended by all from the church in Ipswich. The get-together started at 12 PM so the folk who participated in Christian Leadership could attend after it had finished.

Christian Leadership is always held on the second Sunday of every month and attended by a small group of ladies and gentlemen. We learn the art of speaking in front of a group, developing our personalities so we can improve on our personal evangelism, commenting on table topics using Christian principles, plus being evaluated by our peers. We often follow up with a lunch nearby, but this time we met with all our brethren and enjoyed a hearty lunch. We often have BYO's, and if you are wondering what a "BYO" means, well the answer is "Bring Your Own Food and Drinks." This is good for everyone, as they get to eat what they want.

Diane and Zoltan have created a lovely casual area beside their house where we can sit around, talk, and enjoy each other's company. Zoltan and Danjard had a swim after lunch, and we watched and enjoyed the calming effects of the waterfall running into the pool, which Zoltan had created.

Diane and Zoltan have done a wonderful job with their home and garden, including a small rainforest in their back yard with a path leading to a quiet area for reading and relaxing.

We have suffered with drought for years now, and this summer we have had continual rain; so it was good to see it finally stop so we could all have a wonderful day. □

Submitted by Sonja Schofield



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Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if you, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800-1000 words in ether .doc, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson.org or lw Cary@henry-net.com.
- DEADLINE for the next issue is May 15, 2008.
- We look forward to seeing you *in print!*

The Editor

Elisha: Amazing Parallels!

by Jean Jantzen



Jean Jantzen

When I studied the life of Elisha, I wondered what particular meaning his life held for me, a modern day called-out Christian. His life seemed so low key, so ordinary, so tedious in comparison to his larger-than-life predecessor, Elijah. However, I discovered some amazing parallels between

Elisha's life and the life of one called by God today, and it was comforting, exciting and encouraging. I could relate to the fact that he was an ordinary, industrious person who suddenly was recruited by God into active service. He did not hesitate to leave his home, his former way of life. He slaughtered and cooked up his twelve oxen and invited his family and friends to a farewell dinner. In doing so, he was literally turning his back on the old life. What an example for us today! He must have come from a well-to-do family if he employed that many oxen—but in this case, I was curious about the number twelve! The number twelve is significant as it implies structural beginning or foundation of organization and governmental perfection. There were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles chosen to serve as the foundation of Christ's Church. (Matthew 10:1-7; Luke 22:29-30). *God taps us on the shoulder, and that's what happened to Elisha. Anyone recruited by God has to look at it as a very special calling, as did Elisha.*

In the New Testament, Christ says, "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself daily and take up his cross and follow me." Two thousand years later, many have professed religion, but few have followed Christ and done as He commanded. Few seem willing to forsake their own way. The majority are a stiff-necked, stubborn lot who would rather suffer the consequences in unhappy, unfulfilled lives. But Elisha followed God.

It seems strange that Elijah four times tried to leave Elisha behind, but each time Elisha refused to leave Elijah (2 Kings 2). After our initial calling, God allows Satan to test us to see if we will go the extra mile, to see if we are serious about our calling. Very often when a test comes, many find their faith fading; difficulties are too great, problems too many, and they wonder if they have stepped out on the right pathway; *but a few are like Elisha. No matter how hard the road ahead, there are no doubts, no turning back!*

It is interesting to note that Ruth, as she took her journey toward God (like Elisha), was told to go back. "Turn away, my daughters, go your way ...Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her own people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law" (Ruth 1:12, 15). Ruth's response is the same as Elisha's. "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16-17). She had made up her mind. Wasn't that our feelings when we started our journey with God?

Four places mentioned on Elisha's journey, Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan, were in conjunction with his refusing to leave Elijah. Elijah and Elisha were in Gilgal, and Elijah said to Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel." Elisha replied, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." And they went to the next place, and the same things were said. I believe these four places represent certain milestones in a person's calling. What does Gilgal represent in the journey? There came a moment in the history of the nation of Israel when they arrived at Gilgal (Joshua 5) after forty years of living in the wilderness (world). This new

generation of men had not been circumcised, and God commanded this be done at Gilgal. This signified they belonged to God through a covenant made with Abraham. Gilgal pictures the cutting off of the flesh, which represents our past sinful life. (Philippians 3:3). So what Elijah was really saying to Elisha was, "Is Gilgal a stumbling block for you?" Elisha, recognizing his own sinful nature, was prepared to enter into the covenant with God and move on to the next step, whatever it might be. *Gilgal is a very important beginning for the newly-called-out ones. It is an acknowledgement of what we are, and like Elisha, a few make the same choice—to follow God.*

Then they came to Bethel. Earlier, Jacob had a wonderful vision of the angels on the ladder that reached heaven, and he awoke and said, "...How dreadful [awesome] is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:17). He called the place Bethel. Bethel represents the presence and the holiness of God and the awesome promises given to those of Abraham's seed. "And Elijah said Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And [Elisha] said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho" (2 Kings 2:4). *We, like Elisha, accept the covenant and understand the promises and recognize the steps that lead to holiness. We count the cost and move forward.*

*No matter
how hard the road
ahead, there are
no doubts, no
turning back!*

What does Jericho represent? When the children of Israel went over Jordan and into the land, standing to thwart their progress was the city of Jericho (Joshua 6). It was no use bypassing it. Jericho, a walled city, stood right across the path, and it had to be overcome. The ark was carried around it, the priests blew the trumpets, and then the walls fell down; and so Jericho was overcome. Jericho represented the world in opposition to the people of God, and how well we know it. Being holy in an evil world is not an easy thing. Many things of the world are tempting. So Elijah said to Elisha, "Now you tarry here at Jericho" at the place where the world's power and domination is seen. But Elisha replied that he would overcome and move on; in other words, he rejected what the world had to offer. And so they came to Jordan. *We know we cannot overcome the world by our strength—God has to give us the victory if we are to follow Him.*

Still, Elijah had to ask one more time, "Will you tarry at the Jordan, Elisha?" "No" he said, "I am going to learn the lessons that are to be found at Jordan." But what are the lessons? The children of Israel came to the Jordan and were told to wait; and when the ark began to move, they were to follow the ark, but to keep a respectful distance of two thousand cubits (see Joshua 3:4). When the ark moved through the Jordan, as the priests' feet touched the water, the water flowed back. "The priests...stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan and all the Israelites passed over...until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (Joshua 3:17). So Elisha passed over Jordan, which represented his baptism. Note God's words spoken to Joshua when he passed over Jordan. "This day will I begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Joshua 3:7, 4:14). That same message would hold true for Elisha,

who was taking over for Elijah. This experience showed Elisha was set apart for holy use. Elisha was prepared to do whatever God asked of him. *We can identify that we too are set apart for holy use, and also must be prepared to do what God asks of us.*

Elisha did very well on his journey towards baptism. Four times he was told to go back, but every time he said "No, I am going to go on." That is resolution. That is determination. He might easily have said "Well, the man of God has told me to tarry here. I will do what he says." "Ah, no", he said, "I have been called, I have been chosen. I am going to go on and fulfil what the Lord desires of me." *After counting the cost, we take that final plunge and commitment of baptism signifying the death of the old man and the beginning of the new.*

Elijah and Elisha were prophets during a time of great apostasy by God's people, Israel. Elijah got the people's attention by a miraculous display of God's power. *We too are called during a time of widespread religious confusion.*

Then Elisha needed to be recognized as a true prophet; consequently, the incident with the bears. Imagine being accosted by a very large group of angry, hostile young college students. They were attacking God's prophet because they did not believe he was who he said he was. They didn't believe the story of Elijah. God understands mob violence. God fought Elisha's battle. There were probably a hundred and fifty angry young men, and many ran for their lives when the bears attacked them, with forty-two being killed (2 Kings 2:23-24). This incident would be talked of far and wide, so that in the future, Israel would acknowledge, recognize, and respect Elisha as a man of the true God.

Let's back up to his baptism: "And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me" (2 Kings 2:9). *This is an amazing request! Maybe we should follow his example.*

We've all walked the same road as Elisha, through Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho to stand before Jordan (baptism). When Elisha stood before Jordan, these words would have been for him. When you or I stand before Jordan, these words are for us. "This day will I begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Joshua 3:7, 4:14). *Just like Elisha, those in the body of Christ have had the mantle (God's Spirit) bestowed upon them, and those same words spoken—how awesome is that!*

Until this in-depth study, I did not really appreciate Elisha's example of unwavering loyalty, love, and wholehearted servitude toward God, Elijah, and the people he served. *As the New Testament body of Christ, we would do well to follow his lead.*

In the not-too-distant future, people of the world will recognize us as true servants of God, and He will magnify us in their sight. With the power of Jesus Christ, we will perform miracles quietly and humbly, not like the thundering miracles of the bold and dramatic Elijah, but like Elisha who steadfastly and unceremoniously assisted the common people and did more on an individual basis with compassion—a widow, a laborer, a Shunnamite woman. He increased a widow's supply of oil, which saved her children from being sold into slavery (2 Kings 4:1-7). He cleansed a pot of food into which a poisonous herb had been mistakenly added (4:38-41). He fed 100 hungry men by multiplying a small amount of barley loaves and corn (4:42-44). He cured a Gentile of his leprosy (5:14). He recovered a lost ax head that a man had borrowed, thus saving him from financial ruin (6:1-7). *What amazing parallels! What an amazing future job description for you and me! It must truly inspire and encourage us that God loves us so much.* □

True History According to Holy Scripture

Chapter 8

JOSEPH—A TRULY REMARKABLE PATRIARCH From Slave to Second-in-Command Under Pharaoh

by Benjamin R. Chapman



Ben Chapman

To fully understand how Joseph saved his entire family, we must turn our attention for a moment to the government of one of the great nations in the world of Joseph's day—Egypt. You may remember back in Chapter 2 of this *History* how that nation began under the rebellious ruler Cush and his mother/wife Semaramis. Cush, son of Ham and grandson of Noah, was the founder

of the Dynasties of Egypt and its first Pharaoh. His son Nimrod was the Second Pharaoh, who co-reigned with his father during the two years of construction of the Tower of Babel. When all languages were confused, and the people spread around the world from Babel, Cush unexplainably died (some speculate that Nimrod murdered his own father!) and left Nimrod in total control of one of the great growth centers in the world. The other was the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys, the land of Shinar.

A Most Important Pharaoh, Zoser I

2285 A.M. Zoser I (Djoser), first Pharaoh of Dynasty III of Memphis, comes to power. He reigned for 19 years (1737-1718 B.C.E.) according to one date list; 29 years (1737-1708) according to another list, as the second Pharaoh of Dynasty III of Memphis. This was the powerful Pharaoh of Joseph's time.

One doesn't learn how to interpret dreams—it is a gift from God. One can prepare himself for such a task IF he is very obedient to God and to His laws and the need arises. Such is the case of Joseph, who was trying hard to please God in all his actions. Joseph probably wondered why his brothers sold him into slavery, why he was thrown into prison, and what in the world was happening to him! He was soon to find out. He was 28 now, having been in slavery for about five years.

2287 A.M. The Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and baker offended the Pharaoh. They were imprisoned with Joseph. Our story gets very exciting now! See Genesis 40:1-4.

"And it came to pass after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph *was* bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward."

Into the same prison where Joseph was the trustee! Coincidence or through God's great plan?

The two officials of Pharaoh had mysterious dreams one night, which greatly saddened them. They did not understand their dreams; they needed an interpreter! Joseph was at the right place at the right time! And he knew who the "keeper" of dreams was!

"And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they *were* sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye *so* sadly to day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, *Do* not interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me; And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her blossoms shot forth; and the

Editor's note: This is the eighth installment of a series by Benjamin R. Chapman on the history of the world according to Biblical data. Mr. Chapman has completed several chapters, and plans to eventually publish the entire series in a single volume. Until the volume is completed and made available, we will run segments of the work serially in *The International News*.

clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: And Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and, behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head: And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee" (Genesis 40:5-19).

And sure enough, in exactly three days their dreams came true just as Joseph had foretold! The butler was restored to his job and the baker was hung! But the butler promptly forgot all about Joseph and his agreement to inform Pharaoh of Joseph's plight.

2288 A.M. Isaac died at 180 years, Genesis 35:28-29. Apparently, Moses wrapped up Isaac's life. Ivan Panin has Joseph 29 too, when his grandfather died. Being in prison, Joseph was unable to attend his grandfather's burial.

2289 A.M. Two years later, the Pharaoh himself had a dream. This is what God was preparing Joseph for! And what a very strange dream it was! We can read about it in Genesis 41:1-8.

"And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the *other* kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, *it was* a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh."

Indeed, what a strange pair of dreams! No wonder he was troubled! And none of his wise men nor magicians could interpret them!

Then the cupbearer remembered Joseph! He told Pharaoh that there was a special man in prison who had interpreted his dream exactly—no hedging or fudging,

precisely correct in every detail. It didn't take Pharaoh long to summon Joseph from prison!

Seven Very Good Years Followed by Seven Very Bad Years

"And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath showed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do. The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: the dream *is* one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them *are* seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This *is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it *shall be* very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (Genesis 41:25-32).

What was Pharaoh to do? Joseph had the answer. Did he know that he was the one to be elevated to the high-ranking Second-In-Command under Pharaoh? I doubt it. Joseph was a thirty-year-old, very humble servant of God. But perhaps he suspected!

"Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine" (Genesis 41:33-36).

Joseph was 30 years old when he was proclaimed by Pharaoh as Second-in-Command over Egypt. (Genesis 41:46). He was given Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, to wife. Joseph's Egyptian name in ancient records was *Imhotep* or *Imouthes*.

2289-2303 Seven good years were followed by seven years of famine. Joseph began gathering 20 percent of crops in the good years. This was only the beginning of his great accomplishments. During the seven years of famine, he was greatly concerned about his family back in Canaan. What was going to happen to them?

2290-2296? Joseph was father of two boys: Mannaseh and Ephraim (Genesis 41:50-53).

Excavations were carried out at the Step Pyramid at Sakkara, and at the base of a statue of Pharaoh Djoser (Zoser I) were inscribed the names of Djoser and of:

"Imhotep, Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt, Chief under the King, Administrator of the Great Palace, Hereditary Lord, High Priest of Heliopolis, Imhotep the Builder, the Sculptor, the Maker of Stone Vases ..."

The name Imhotep, in ancient Egyptian, is translated to mean "the voice (or mouth) of Im"; however, there is no record of a god in Egypt called "Im." But we all know the God "I AM." In the Bible, Joseph is given the Egyptian name of Zaphenath-paneah, which has been translated by some to mean "the God lives; the God speaks."

2296 A.M. The famine began. Ancient Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy grain. They did not recognize Joseph, but he recognized them. He returned their money. The older brothers were stricken with guilt! *What's going on?* they pondered.

"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them. **HISTORY, continued on page 12**

HISTORY, continued from page 11

And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not. And Joseph said unto them, That *is* it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye *are* spies: Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any* truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye *are* spies. And he put them all together into ward three days. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; *for* I fear God: If ye *be* true *men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so" (Genesis 42:1–20).

Worse—they did not know Joseph understood their every word! He was using an interpreter, speaking to them in a rough tone in Egyptian. Finally, in exchange for keeping Simeon in prison until they returned with young Benjamin, he filled their sacks and let them return home. They dejectedly went home with great wonderment, especially after they discovered all their money in their sacks! I'm sure it was difficult for them to explain to their father Jacob all that had happened. But at least they had enough food stores for another year of the famine.

2297 A.M. Jacob sent them back for more grain, but this time with Benjamin. We read of this second trip in Genesis 43:1–15:

"And the famine *was* sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: But if thou wilt not send *him*, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye *so* ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, *Is* your father yet alive? have ye *another* brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time. And their father Israel said unto them, If it *must be* so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an oversight: Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of *my children*, I am bereaved. And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph."

This time he received them graciously, invited them for a banquet, but they still didn't recognize him! But Joseph knew them! He arranged them in order of their ages and gave a special gift of food and drink to his younger brother. They were astonished! How could he know their ages?

"And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive? And they

answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him" (Genesis 43:26–43).

Joseph sneaked money back into their grain sacks, allowed them to leave, but then re-captured them! Finally, he broke down and told them he was their brother Joseph. Read this tear-moving account in your Bibles in Genesis 45:1–5:

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."

2298 A.M. Jacob (Israel) and his family returned to Goshen to live (Genesis 46:1–7). They were presented to Pharaoh (Genesis 47:7–9). Jacob was 130 years old. He lived to be 147.

Chronological Tie-in Between Bible and Egyptian History

The critically important connection between Bible chronology and Egyptian history is in this life of Joseph! There are other connections, but this one is accurately dated.

At the beginning of year 18 of Zoser I (1720 B.C.E., 2303 A.M.), the climax (last year) of a seven-year famine occurred. No other seven-year famine is ever reported during the entire history of the Pharaohs. An account of the calamity is to be found on the rocks of the island of Sehel, at the First Cataract. A modern translation of it may be found in *Biblical Archaeology*, by G. Ernest Wright, page 56. The account reads:

"Year 18 ...I was in distress on the Great Throne, and those who are in the palace were in Heart's affliction from a very great evil, since the Nile had not come in my time for a space of seven years. Grain was scant, fruits were dried up, and everything which they eat was short ...The infant was wailing; the youth was waiting; the heart of the old man was in sorrow ...The courtiers were in need. The temples were shut up ...Everything was found empty." (Translation by J. A. Wilson in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, edited by J. B. Pritchard, page 31.) See pages 64–65 of *Compendium of World History*.

2298 A.M. Jacob was 130. Joseph was 39 (30 + 7 + 2). He had been Pharaoh's Second-in-Command for nine years (the seven years of the great harvest plus two years into the seven years of the famine—see Genesis 45:6).

During the seven years of famine, Joseph sold grain to the people for money, later accepting animals for payment, and finally accepting land for payment, until the Pharaoh owned all of the neighboring nations. Joseph was called "Trafficker" or "Money-getter" in one reference.

Israel's Name Passed to the Two Sons of Joseph

This remarkable story of how the blessings God had given to Jacob (now called Israel) were passed unto the

two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. Read it in Genesis 48:

"And it came to pass after these things, that *one* told Joseph, Behold, thy father *is* sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And *one* told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same *is* Bethlehem.

And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who *are* these? And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God hath given me in this *place*. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, *so that* he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh *was* the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this *is* the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know *it*, my son, I know *it*: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

2315 A.M. Jacob died at 147 years; he was embalmed under Joseph's instructions (Genesis 50:1–3). Imhotep is the earliest physician whose historical records survive. He became the "god of healing" at a great sanctuary in Memphis where people came from everywhere to seek cures.

1710 B.C.E. Jacob's death according to HLH.

1684–1668 B.C.E. Joseph ruled as the fifth Pharaoh of Dynasty III in Memphis under the names of Souphis, Suphis, or Sasphis. He is also listed in Dynasty IV of Memphis as its third Pharaoh as Suphis. His total public service was 66 years (1734 to 1668).

2369 A.M. Joseph died at 110 to end a remarkable career.

Let's now turn our attention to the amazing buildings Joseph built to store the seven years of a huge crop increase.

HISTORY, continued on next page

HISTORY, continued from page 12

See <http://www.anchorstone.com/wyatt/number7d.html> for complete details. Also see at that same address ...number7b.html. Anchor Stones Newsletter Seven, April 1994, has much fascinating information. Also see *The Scepter of Egypt*, Vol. 1, p. 60.

The Step Pyramid at Sakkara (Saqqara)

It was Imhotep who is credited with having designed the first pyramid, and began building with hewn stone instead of all mud brick. It was during the time of Djoser (Zoser I) that Egypt became a truly great nation; it had gathered the wealth of all the surrounding nations by selling them grain during the famine.

During the seven years of plenty, the people, under Joseph's wise guidance, began to organize a great administrative center which would handle the selling of the grain to all the surrounding nations. A large complex was built containing the future burial site of the pharaoh, but also included a walled-in center containing huge grain bins.

From the above web page, entitled "Joseph in Egypt," we can read some excerpts about what archaeologists have discovered about this "pyramid."

Surrounding the Step Pyramid, the first ever built, and its complex, is a very beautiful and elaborate wall. At the main entrance on the east wall at the southern end, one enters a long hall of forty columns, twenty on each side. Each column is connected to the main wall by a perpendicular wall, forming small "rooms" between each column. As you exit the colonnade and walk straight ahead, you come to a series of very large pits which extend deep into the earth.

These are extremely large in size, much larger than any burial chambers; they are all centrally accessible by a connecting tunnel, extend to well above ground level, and one has a staircase extending down to the bottom. For this reason, we know that they were not built as tombs; if they were, they would have been constructed underground, and they certainly would not have been so incredibly large.

These massive structures extend to well above ground level, which indicates that they were not hidden, as were tombs. Because the ancient Egyptians buried their dead with so much valuable material and provisions for their "afterlife," plundering of tombs was always their biggest fear. Therefore, we know that these massive pits had another purpose. Also, in all the other ancient cities, whenever large bins such as these were uncovered, they were recognized as storage bins; but in Egypt, the scholars tend to term everything they find a "tomb."

Every city had stored grain from its region, but at the complex at Sakkara, we have these massive pits which would have stored an incredible amount of grain, more than a single city would have needed.

At the entrance to this complex, as we described earlier, there are forty small cubicles, each just the right size to hold a single person, who could administer the receipt of payment from people coming to purchase grain. There could have been several "cashiers" of each language group to handle the purchases of those who spoke the various languages. Of course, the Egyptologists think all these little cubicles were for statues; however, no pedestals were found in the remains, which is a very important point, because the statues were always erected on pedestals. Statues may vanish, but pedestals remain.

The design of the pits is impressive. There are eleven of them, with only one containing a very elaborate stairway all the way to the bottom. All the pits are connected to each other by a subterranean tunnel; the pits were filled and the tops were sealed with wooden timbers and stone. All of the grain could be accessed from one entrance, and there is one entrance into the pits from outside the wall enclosure of the complex. Last of all, grain was found in the floor of these pits, which has been explained by Egyptologists as having been food buried with deceased who were buried there; however, no evidence of burials was ever found in these pits.

The complex at Sakkara is unique; nothing like it has ever been found. It was described by William Hayes as being a "veritable city in itself, planned and executed as a single unit and built of fine white limestone from the nearby Mukat-tam Hills." (*The Scepter of Egypt*, Vol. 1, p. 60.)

Now it is time to turn our attention to the great leader and man of God, Moses—and the Exodus!

To be continued....

A Hard Saying

by Mike Nolen



Mike Nolen

Our Savior made many statements during His earthly ministry which were, and still are, very troubling to many. One such passage is recorded in John 6 as He taught His disciples in the synagogue at Capernaum: "...He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever..." (John 6:56-58).

Notice the people's response to the above words: "...This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60).

What does the phrase "hard saying" imply? A hard saying may refer to an expression difficult to understand or language that is simply hard to accept. The Greek word translated "hard" in this passage is *sklyros*, defined by Strong's as *dry*, i.e., *hard* or *tough* (figuratively *harsh*, *severe*).

What these disciples in effect are saying is, *We do not accept what you are saying, Jesus. We are not going to tolerate this kind of teaching. Your demands are too harsh.* Surprising reaction from folk who followed Jesus throughout His ministry in Galilee? They had heard great teachings and witnessed wonderful miracles. They saw water converted to wine, the feeding of the multitude, and the remote healing of the nobleman's son. Nobody had ever performed such works as these; however, when Jesus offered a requirement for which they were not prepared, Scripture reveals they murmured, which prompted Jesus to ask, "Does this offend [trouble] you?" Well, apparently they *were* offended, for we read in John 6:66, "...From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him..."

These people were attracted to the person of Christ who impressed them with His miracles and teachings; however, when Christ no longer presented Himself as the miracle worker, but as the bread of God from heaven, they were troubled. When He announced that *except the Father draw them* they would not come to Him—when He insisted *in order to be My disciple you're going to have to make Me a part of your life—in a spiritual sense, eat My flesh and drink My blood*, they were gone. They found His words unacceptable, offensive, and intolerable. They were, after all, Jews, the privileged people of God. Were not the prophets sent to their nation? Did they not have official interpreters of His word? Wasn't the law given to them? Jesus, they thought, could not possibly be accepted when He challenged *their* understanding of the way to God. They could not imagine that Jesus was, in fact, the one way to salvation. Therefore, they did not accept what He was saying.

What He said in the discourse of John 6 was a common premise proclaimed throughout His ministry. Following Jesus becomes a life of self denial. He must come before all else in your life; you take up the cross, you bear His shame. If you are not willing to give up everything for Him, you are wasting your time. He is either first or not at all. Moreover, He says, *if you are going to be My disciple, the world is going to hate you.*

Strong words? Hard words? Hard to understand?—or hard to accept?

Are such words troubling to *you*? How many are offended by what God's people believe and practice? When one understands the full requirements of following Christ and begins to count the cost of being a disciple of Jesus, then, sadly for many, the interest fades and they fall away.

We may agree that some of His words present a challenge and may not be so easy to comprehend at first glance, but this is not the real difficulty. After reasonable study, His words are not so complex as to be misunderstood. The hardness was not in Jesus' words; the hardness was in the hearts of many who heard Him. They had their own ideas about serving God, and they were not to be converted.

How many turned back on that day in the synagogue at Capernaum and returned to what they had left originally to follow Christ? We cannot know for sure—Scripture records simply the word "many." It may have been all of them but the twelve. He then turned to the twelve and asked, "Will you also go away?" Peter responded with words that should reside in the heart of every Christian. He said, "...Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:67-69). Those who truly follow Christ first believe, and then are sure; they know in their hearts that Jesus is the Christ, and His way is ultimately the only way.

The Days of Unleavened Bread symbolize the spiritual consumption of Jesus Christ, which must occur in our lives if sin is to be conquered. Jesus said His words are life, and we must absorb them into our very being and allow them to transform our lives. We should be assimilating Christ's teachings—making them a part of us as physical food becomes a part of us. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," Jesus said. Just as manna, the bread from heaven in the Israelite's wilderness, had to be consumed each day, so must Christ.

The words of Christ—the truth of God—may repel many, but not His disciples. God's true followers are not offended by His words, and live to please Him. He offers the same question to us as He did the twelve, "Will you also go away?" Peter's response had to delight the heart of Christ that day. Would our answer be as gratifying?

We as God's people must ask ourselves, especially at this season of self-examination, *Am I ingesting the Bread that has been so abundantly sent from heaven for me? Am I accepting it, storing it, devouring it—living by it as though my life depends upon it?* (which it does!)

Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if you, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800-1000 words in ether .doc, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson.org or lw Cary@henry-net.com.

• The DEADLINE for the next issue is May 15th. 2008.

• We look forward to seeing you *in print!*

The Editor

Defective Christianity

In spite of your good works, best intentions, and noblest ideals, could you still be practicing a “defective” Christianity?

by Lloyd W. Cary



Lloyd W. Cary

The seven churches addressed in Revelation chapters two and three were actual churches in the apostle John’s time. They are also types of conditions throughout all generations. What Christ had to say to these churches was relevant to His churches down through time.

The first of these, the Ephesian church, was *on fire* when it came to activity! They had it all!

Although the city around them was steeped in idolatry and immorality, the church at Ephesus was thriving! They were doing all the right stuff!

And yet, they suffered from a malady—“defective Christianity”! The church Paul founded some 40 years previously in Ephesus had somehow lost its way, even though it appeared to be very scriptural and spiritual.

The inscription to the church at Ephesus reads, “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; ‘These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks’” (Revelation 2:1).

Christ’s Evaluation—the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Christ then went on to enumerate the church’s strong points.

“I know thy works [they had good works!], and thy labor [they labored!], and thy patience [they were patient!], and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them [proved all things!] which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate” (Revelation 2:2–3,6).

Notice, here was a solid, Bible-believing church! An outstanding church! Christ commends them for the following things:

- They labored for Him.
- They remained faithful despite the persecution they endured.
- They refused to compromise with the world.
- They proved all things.
- They did not entertain false teachers.
- They detested the Nicolaitane “clergy class” that was creeping into Christianity.

Most churches today do not come *close* to this standard of Christianity!

In addition, Christ was honoring them with His very presence! But it is possible to be a remarkable church and still not come up to the Lord’s standard. Read on.

Christ then continued with an indictment: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Revelation 2:4).

This is the *one thing* that made this otherwise perfect church defective: they had left their “first love.” This could not be tolerated by the Lord, any more than we could tolerate our mates loving someone else more than they love us! If the situation were not resolved, this defect would spread like a cancer and destroy them. Yes, their heads, their tongues, were on fire for God, but their hearts had grown cold. “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Isaiah

29:13). Empty ritualism—even if it is enthusiastic—does not bring closeness to God. Jesus used this verse to describe the Judaism of His day (Matthew 15:7–9; Mark 7:6,7).

The problem with the Ephesian church, as recorded in the book of Revelation, was that they failed to put Jesus *first*—ahead of everything and everybody else—and therefore did not truly love Him with their whole hearts.

The Ephesian congregation had many good things going for them in that they upheld scriptural truth, holiness, and doctrinal purity; but underneath it all, they were a dying church. The form of Christianity they were practicing was defective. There was something wrong with it!

The time is coming
when there will be
no more time for
preparation.

Yes, they upheld Biblical doctrines, withstood error, and knew Christ as the Lord of the church; but there was no heart devotion! They practiced holiness on the outside, while their hearts were far from Christ. God inspired Isaiah to write, “O that there were such an *heart* in them, that they would fear me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever” (Deuteronomy 5:29)! They religiously did all the right things, but without proper fear unto obedience and heartfelt zeal for God. “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine *heart*, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

In verse one of Revelation chapter two, we find the Lord moving in this church despite the fact it was backsliding. “Backsliding” means lapsing back into sin and wrongdoing.

Proverbs 14:14 reminds us, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his *own ways*”—preferring his *own* desires and wants ahead of God’s. Even though the Ephesian church was at that time not fully devoted, nevertheless Christ still held them in His hand and carried them. The Lord does not “give up” on any church for occasional or unintentional sin—He gives them time to repent. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah! Only *ten* righteous—ten repentant sinners—would have saved the cities (Genesis 18:22)!

Christ’s Instruction

Christ then went on to instruct the Ephesian congregation. He told them what they must do to save themselves. “*Remember* therefore from whence thou art fallen, *and repent*, and *do* the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:5).

Next, Christ gave them the *incentive* to obey: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).

Yes, Christ promised them a great blessing if they would respond favorably to His warning. They would enjoy the eternal fruit of everlasting life in His presence! What a promise!

This strongly infers they would *not* share in this reward if they continued practicing defective Chris-

tianity! In fact, Jesus warned that their light would be snuffed out if they did not repent!

The Church’s Three “R’s”

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches the church its three “R’s”: Remember, Repent, and Rejoice.

• *Remember*: They were to think back to the wonderful experiences they had in the Lord. They had been zealous, devoted, and holy in the past. Could they not see how far they had fallen—backslidden—from God?

• *Repent*: It is impossible to “hide behind the commendable” if our hearts are not right with the Lord. Repentance for the Ephesian congregation was not because of commandment breaking in this instance—they were zealous in that regard—but for the greatest sin the church could commit: that is, failing to truly honor the Lord by putting Him first! In this context, “repent” directly relates to a return to their “first love.”

• *Rejoice*: Once they remembered from whence they had fallen, and repented, they could rest assured and rejoice in the fact that they had eternal life promised to them!

However, at the time of John’s writing, they were in danger of becoming a Christ-less church if they continued to ignore their greatest need. When Christ leaves a church because of their refusal to repent, “religion”—“religiosity”—always fills the void. People are filled with their own ways (Psalm 81:12; Jeremiah 7:24).

The Ephesian congregation had a choice to make. The remedy prescribed by Christ could not be administered gradually; instead, there had to be a decisive response to His instructions immediately. It is as though He were saying, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15).

In order to be overcomers, the Ephesian church did not need more faith, or a greater depth of holiness, or more knowledge of the Word of God! They already *had* these things! No, all that was required was that they should rekindle their first love! They were to “Love the LORD [their] God with all [their] heart, and with all [their] soul, and with all [their] might” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Revivals, holiness movements, and living room churches have failed at this very point. Somewhere along the way, they ceased to put Christ first! The Ephesians failed to put God first—before their friends, family, jobs, and before life itself!

An Example of “Missing the Mark”

A *text* without a *context* is just a *pretext*! Hebrews 10:25 cautions the followers of Christ, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” *Why* do so many stop reading at this point? To their own hurt, many ignore the very next verse, which continues, “For if we *sin* willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” A definition of “sin” is “missing the mark, goal, or ideal.” It is *God’s will* that we assemble together. Not assembling ourselves together is linked to *sin*! Hebrews 4:9 reminds us, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” The Greek word for “rest” in this verse is *sabbatismos*, meaning “a keeping of the Sabbath.” How can we possibly exhort, encourage, and uplift one another—how can “iron sharpen iron” (Proverbs 27:17)—if we selfishly stay home from Sabbath services and watch someone else’s videotapes? “By *this* shall all men

know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love [*agape*] one to another” (John 13:35; 1 John 5:2).

The right doctrine and holy living of the Ephesian congregation cannot be faulted, but these things mean nothing if Jesus is not Lord and Master. “Except the LORD build the house, they labor *in vain* that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

It is possible for our *head* to be on fire for God, while at the same time our *heart* is stone cold toward Him and the brethren. And as our love for God declines, so His reproof proportionately increases.

The answer may not be *more* holiness, a *greater* stand against error, or an *increase* of faith. Perhaps all that is needed is a return to our *first love*—the former *zeal*—to bring revival.

It is self-deceptively foolish to hide behind charismatic antics or principles of “Christian living” if we do not love, comfort, and edify the brethren and serve Jesus Christ *from the heart*. With all our talk of holiness and sanctification—with all our good works and best intentions—we can be as far from the Lord as the religionist and the hypocrite if we continue in defective Christianity.

This brings us back to the basic three: ¹⁾ *Remember* our first love and do the first works; ²⁾ *Repent* of our sins and attitudes; and then we may ³⁾ *Rejoice* in our calling.

“For if after they have escaped the pollution’s of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2 Peter 2:20–22).

James 1:27 says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Yet, if done through defective Christianity—having a wrong motive, drawing attention to one’s own righteousness—this will avail nothing. Even the Pharisees were “righteous” in their own way. There are many good people—many charities—doing many good deeds. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments [all *ten* of them]” (1 John. 5:3). Anything put between man and God becomes an idol.

Even the apostle Peter evaded full commitment when Jesus asked, “Simon, lovest [*agapao*] thou Me?” And Peter replied, “Lord, Thou knowest I love [*phileo*] thee” three times, denoting completeness (John 21:15–17). The Greek word Jesus used, *agapao*, was a word meaning *Godly* love. Peter replied with the Greek word “*phileo*,” meaning a brotherly or camaraderie love.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13 that, although he spoke with the tongues of men and angels, had the gift of prophecy, understood all mysteries, and bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, it would have profited him nothing if he had not charity [*agape*].

A certain lawyer came to Christ, testing Him, and asked, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:36–40).

Putting It All Together

Brethren, our time is short and is getting shorter. The time is coming when there will *be* no more time for preparation! We need to ask ourselves, prayerfully and seriously, if *we* put anything or anyone between God and ourselves. We each need to ask ourselves sincerely and from the heart, *Do I put God first in my life? Do I truly love my fellow man? Or could it be that I am practicing a form of “defective Christianity”? And if I am,, what am I going to do about it?* □

The Holy Bible, Word of the Ages

by Miss Nancy



Nancy Miles

The Holy Bible is the most wonderful and unique book ever written, for it is the message of God to His creation. It contains truths and the plan of salvation which we could not know except by divine revelation.

The Bible continues year after year to be the number one bestseller, and has been translated into most every known language and distributed around the world! This has to be God’s doing, as wicked men have tried to destroy the Bible throughout the centuries.

We will also have a fight to hold on to the truth. Today, there are no book burnings as in days of old; yet, the writings of the Bible are called myth and superstition, even as the spade of archeology continues to unearth the true historical facts. What will it take for the world to believe? Probably nothing less than the return of Jesus Christ and establishment of His world-ruling Kingdom!

A sinner can read the Bible, repent, and find forgiveness, while an unrepentant sinner can read and not understand, because it is “here a little and there a little.” An obedient child of God can read the Word and understand because the “here a little and there a little” is brought together in his mind and spirit. This operation is one of the proofs of the divine authorship of the Bible.

To millions throughout the world who have suffered loss, sickness, or the death of a loved one, the reading of the Psalms has brought comfort, hope, and faith to go on with life. The Bible also contains stories that have inspired children and adults alike—the stories of Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah and the Ark; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Joseph; Moses and the Exodus; Daniel and the three Hebrew children; Samuel (who, by the way, was called at age three); David and Goliath; and, of course, Jesus, who from the manger to Calvary was and is the most remarkable man who ever lived. He is also the greatest lover of children and adults the world has ever known. So, let us be thankful for God’s unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, and for His gift of the written Word, the Holy Bible. The Bible is our written witness of Christ, which will lead us to find the truth and the living Christ behind the words. (*Oh, brethren, taste and see that the Lord is good!*) I think we can all agree that the Holy Bible is truly THE MAGNIFICENT WORD OF GOD!

Show and Tell

As I held up the Bible and turned the pages, I said to my Sabbath school pupils, “This book is the Holy Bible, as you all know. I wonder if you have ever considered that when we open the cover of the Bible, it is like opening a door. Then every page we turn from Genesis to Revelation is also like a door that is opened.” Then followed a recitation of “The Sheepfold of God and the Door of the Sheep,” accompanied by the continual turning of the pages of the Bible.

The Sheepfold of God and the Door of the Sheep

Each page of the Holy Bible
Is a door for God’s sheep.
As we turn its many pages, we see

Its commandments we must keep.
The Holy Bible is also called
The sheepfold of God...and
The door is called Jesus;
Oh, walk where His feet have trod!

Jesus was called the Lamb of God
When He lived here as a man.
He set us an example to love
And obey God while we can.

Now today, we are the sheep
And Jesus is our Shepherd evermore.
So, pick up the Bible each day
And enter through Jesus the Door.

We will go in and find green pasture,
Then go out and live the true way.
So, always feed on the Word of God
And grow stronger each day.

Then some day we’ll help teach the others
About the sheepfold and Jesus the Door,
And show them how they can enter in
And live in joy evermore.

They will have blessings for obedience,
Strong faith and true love,
Begettal into God’s family,
And birth from the Father above.

So always remember...
That each page of the Holy Bible
Has a door of its own.
So feed in God’s sheepfold
And someday sit on His throne.

Yes, let us feed in God’s sheepfold
And sit with Jesus on His throne.
And now, always remember...
That each page of the Bible has a door of its own!
And that door is called Jesus!

FOOD FOR Thought...

- Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, even Moses started out as a basket case.
- Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.
- It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one.
- When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.
- People are funny; they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church.
- Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on your front door forever.
- Stop griping about your congregation; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.
- If the church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has.
- God Himself does not propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you?
- Some minds are like concrete: all mixed up and permanently set.
- Peace starts with a smile. Are you a peacemaker?
- I don't know why some people keep changing churches; what difference does it make which one you stay home from?
- A lot of church members who are singing "Standing on the Promises" are just sitting on the premises.
- We were called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.
- Become ye fishers of men. You catch them—He'll clean them.
- Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.
- Don't put a question mark where God put a period.
- Don't wait for six strong men to carry you off to church.
- Forbidden fruits create many jams.
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.
- God loves everyone, but probably prefers "fruits of the spirit" over "religious nuts"!
- God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.
- A Bible known is worth a dozen only owned.
- If God is your Co-pilot—swap seats.
- When you pray, don't give God instructions—just report for duty.
- The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.
- The will of God never takes you to where the grace of God will not protect you.
- We don't change the message; the message changes us.
- Prayers cannot be answered unless they are first prayed.



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