

# Servants' NEWS

Vol. 3, No. 6

A newsletter for servants of the Almighty Eternal Creator, wherever they may be

August 1997

## The Feast of LOUDNESS

### Hear the Trumpet!

The average American probably wakes up most mornings to the ringing or buzzing sounds of an alarm clock, or perhaps to pleasant music on the clock radio. But for some of those in the armed forces, the shift from dreaming to reality can be a lot more jarring. The wake-up Reveille call of the military camp is blown on a trumpet. It may be easy to reach over and hit the “snooze” button on your alarm, but the bugler’s call has **no** such button! When the call comes, there is no question that you can roll over for a few more winks. It’s time to **WAKE UP!**

Trumpets used in this way are not for the purpose of entertainment. They are for **business**. And it was also this way in the times of ancient Israel:

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses: <sup>2</sup>“Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for **calling the community**



**together** and for **having the camps set out**. <sup>3</sup>When both are sounded, the whole community is to assemble before you at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. <sup>4</sup>If only one is sounded, the leaders—the heads of the clans of Israel—

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## Feast Of Tabernacles

The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles and the “eighth day” associated with it are the last of the holy days mentioned in Leviticus 23 (see verses 33-44). Other holy days in this chapter clearly represent specific future events—Passover foreshadowed the death of our Savior (1Cor 5:7); Pentecost foreshadowed the coming of the holy spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

What does the Feast of Tabernacles picture? One common teaching is that it depicts the Kingdom of God in the millennial rule, that the Feast portrays in micro-

## What Does It Symbolize?

cosm God’s kingdom on earth for 1000 years. Zechariah 14 shows that participation in the Feast of Tabernacles will be mandatory when Christ returns to establish God’s kingdom here on Earth. Ezekiel 37:27 states “my tabernacle will be with them,” showing that God will tabernacle (dwell) with men.

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# Does God Want Us to Pray for the Same Things Again and Again?

and Again? and Again? and Again? and Again? and again? and again?

**M**any people feel that they should ask God continually for the things they need, want or desire. God tells us in His Word that we should not get tired of asking Him for the things that we want from Him. But is that what God really meant? And where do we get the idea that is what He wants?

The idea comes from a parable in Luke 18. The parable of the unjust judge. Let's read the parable and then start to see what we are to learn:

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8.)

That is the parable. On the surface it seems that this lady got what she wanted by nagging the unjust judge and therefore we should not lose heart and pray continuously for the same thing until we receive from God what we have asked for. I have even heard it said that the word "speedily" really means that He will answer it speedily when He chooses, it will be swiftly handled. Is this at all what Jesus was trying to tell these people?

Let us examine the parable closely to see what Jesus was actually saying.

In verse 1 we see that Jesus wants men to always pray and not lose heart. What is it that Jesus is asking us to pray? There is nothing specific mentioned here that He is asking us to pray, but rather that we do pray, and keep in contact with God through prayer, not forgetting to pray or getting too busy to pray. He is saying that if we don't continue in prayer, we will lose heart. What does "lose heart" mean? It means that one would not have the faith or trust in God that one needs. Today, we would say that one would become faint of heart. Those who do not pray become fearful and worry about things that could, will or might happen, because they have lost fellowship with God. This is what Jesus is wanting us to avoid. He wants us to continue in prayer and keep the relationship and trust in God, not ourselves.

Notice the one thing that Jesus did not say. He **did not** say, "men always should ask the same thing over and over of God." In fact, Matthew 6:7-8 says:

But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

So, it is not a matter of asking the same thing over and over again so that God will hear you. First, He said do not pray in vain repetitions, asking the

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*Servants' News* is a ministry to help others understand the Creator's will, obey Him, and teach others. We believe that the Bible contains the foundation of knowledge about our Creator and that He is actively working through people today. Our focus is to help the Sabbath-keeping brethren who believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah, but we realize that the Eternal works with many groups and individuals.

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# The Principle of Love

Let's suppose you knew that you had less than 24 hours to live. What would you say to your family and friends?

This was the situation of Jesus on that last Passover evening and, as recorded in the Gospel of John Chapters 13 through 17, Christ tried to share an attitude of **love** with His disciples.

"Little children, I am with you a little while longer ... A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:33-35).

This commandment was really new and had not been given ever before. The love principal which was given in the first covenant, in Leviticus 19:18—as a type of this one—was from a different perspective; "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself..." Now the standard of love for those who follow Christ was to be **love**, "...even as I have loved you." This magnified standard was brand new in the world and to all of God's children who wish to be Christ's disciples.

Each one of us should study and meditate upon how Christ lived and died for us, for **no one** has ever loved us as He did and continues to do!

During those last 20 hours or so, Christ tried to share the future, based on love, with those disciples, as a pattern for all His followers in the years to come.

As He began to build on this love principle, He tried to comfort them, "Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in Me" (Jn 14:1). He made a very brief statement about going away and returning to them, then He said, "And you know the way where I am going." Now Thomas was not afraid to speak what was on

his mind and when this statement did not make sense to him, he said, "Lord, we do not even know where you are going, how can we know the way?" One purpose for the statement by Christ must have been to begin to shift the disciples thinking/mindset from the physical to the Spiritual. (We also have this need, even today.) Thomas' mindset was on the physical location of the destination, but Christ taught us all the Spiritual principle of "Nothing But Christ!" when He replied, "I am the way, and (I am) the truth, and (I am) the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (v 6).

Thomas and the other disciples—like most believers today—had a relationship with Jesus Christ, but did not grasp the magnitude of knowing Him personally as the only means or method of transportation into the Father's presence.

Please take a little time to read and meditate on verses 7-11 as Christ tried to explain to them, and us, the magnified fellowship we are to grow into (I Cor 1:9) as followers of Christ. He began this particular teaching with, "If you had (truly) known Me..."

Next He told them of the greater works His followers will do because, "...I go to the Father." (Can you see the Love principle here?) He followed this with an absolute, clear promise that whatever the disciples ask "In His Name," He will do it in order to glorify the Father. That was His very purpose in living, and should be ours as well.

"**In My Name**" is that spiritual sphere where Christ abides, and as we fellowship with Him in that realm, we have unlimited authority. It's similar to the legal term "Power of attorney" which means His disciples have the legal authority to act on behalf of Christ. This means that

all His power to **love** and to live Life belongs to us because He said it is so. In His Name is unlimited power and we have the authority to use it.

It's really not a matter of faith, as such, but a matter of understanding our position **in Christ** and then taking our place alongside Him, being and thereby doing the Father's will on earth today.

Wow! Some statement, huh! Some may be thinking, "How is it possible for little ole' me to do our Father's will, accomplishing the same—and even greater—works as did the Messiah?" I refer you to Matthew 19:26 and Luke 18:27 for the Scriptural answer.

Then in John 14:16-18, Christ once again demonstrates the principle of love and tells them (us) what action He will be taking on their behalf, "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever...I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you."

Next in instructing us in the love principle, Christ focused the disciples attention on obedience, making the direct connection between love and applied action: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word...He who does not love Me does not keep My words."

The apostle Paul shared this connection between love and right action in I Corinthians 13. In this letter he listed fifteen individual examples of the love which Christ's disciples should understand and apply. As we meditate on these examples, we see that this type of love is something we **do**, rather than an emotional feeling. Indeed, some even focus on a lack of a particular emotion; love is not jealous; love is not provoked, etc.

This type of love "Never Fails" or never falls into sin and disfavor with God. This is why, as we keep

His words, both the Father and Christ will love us—they will take the action of coming to us and making their “abode” with us. This is accomplished through the “Helper” the Holy Spirit, who “...the Father will send in My Name.” And it is the Helper who will teach us all things. (Jn 14:26; I Jn 2:27)

Another action example of Christ’s love for us is the **peace** He has given to us. His Peace is not what we normally think of as peace—the absence of conflict—but Christian peace comes by the presence of God. He makes His abode with us and this is the love He shares with us.

Before they left the room where the Passover service was observed, He gave the disciples one more brief example (v 37) of love being an action word;

“...but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I **do**.” Because there was continuous communication (prayer) between them, and the fact that our Messiah never spoke or did anything outside of the Father, they were at one with each other in Christ’s walk on earth. This is how He demonstrated His love for the Father, and is a pattern for all of the children of God.

Scripture does not indicate the physical location where Christ spoke the words recorded in Chapters 15, 16 and 17, but the theme of love was continued.

The beautiful and deeply Spiritual analogy of the vine, the vine dresser, and the branches is summarized, without an analogy, in verses 8-11; “By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Fathers commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.”

In the church today, it seems that the process of discipleship is not well understood and taught by only a few, especially when it comes to the specific standards Jesus set out for us in Matthew 10:38-39, Luke 9:23-24, and Luke 14:26-27,33. But here in the remaining part of John 15:12-27 Christ gave an overview of the disciples relationship with each other: “Love one another just as I have loved you,” and their relationship with the world: “If the world hates you, [lack of love] you know that it hated Me before it hated you,” and ended by telling them that they will be witnesses of the living Christ, through the Helper. We would do well to meditate on these words.

The first sentence in Chapter 16 focuses on the reason why Christ is giving them all this information during the last few hours of His life, “These things I have spoken to you that you may be kept from stumbling.” As His disciples apply these principles of love, we will be kept from stumbling, even if we should be removed from the organized religious movement we have become accustomed to. If we walk in the light which He reveals to us, then we will have fellowship with Him and those that belong to Him, in the light. (I Jn 1:5-7).

By now the fact that Jesus was indeed going to leave them was sinking in, and they were understandably sad. It was here He gave them a Spiritual truth that few, even today, seem to grasp. He said, “...it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the Helper shall not come to you....” Therefore, this Helper, which is called along side to help, is more or greater than the power given to, for example, the 70 disciples when they were sent out two by two. It is a magnification of that power because this “Helper,” the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ, our Lord (II Cor 3:17), and this Helper embodies all that Jesus experienced and overcame as a man on earth.

As we meditate on this, and consider the fact that He will “abide”

with His disciples, who are His temple (I Cor 3:16, 6:19), and further, “When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth...He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you” (Jn 16:13-15). Then the awesome privilege we have to be the recipients of this wonderful act of love should begin to have its Spiritual effect in us. We shall begin to yield ourselves, we shall take up our cross and walk with Him, we shall abide in Him, at His level, for His use. This is pure discipleship, and sadly is not seen much in the church today.

Then in verse 23 He tells His disciples of some of the effects of the cross, “...Truly, truly, I say to you, if (when) you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you **in My name**.” Once again, He is trying to teach His disciples of the awesome power to love, which is embodied in that all encompassing Spiritual realm, “In My Name!”

And, in verse 33, Christ gives a very brief summary of what He has given to His disciples in those last few hour of his life; “These things I have spoken to you, that **in Me** you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.”

“In His Name,” we too have overcome the world. Believe it!

Chapter 17 is the true “Lord’s Prayer,” and worthy of much study and meditation, and is therefore beyond the scope of this paper. However, the theme of the love of Christ for His Father, and their love for mankind, is embedded in every statement Christ makes to His Father.

I will close this paper with the Scriptural definition of eternal life, as recorded in verse 3; “And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” If any of us desire eternal life, then we need to get to know, personally, the Son of God.

—Jerry Laws

**"LOUDNESS" from page 1**

are to assemble before you. <sup>5</sup>When a trumpet blast is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out. <sup>6</sup>At the sounding of a second blast, the camps on the south are to set out. The blast will be the signal for setting out. <sup>7</sup>**To gather the assembly**, blow the trumpets, but not with the same signal. <sup>8</sup>"The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come. <sup>9</sup>**When you go into battle** in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, **sound a blast on the trumpets**. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies. <sup>10</sup>**Also at your times of rejoicing**—your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals—you are to **sound the trumpets** over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and **they will be a memorial** for you before your God. I am the LORD your God" (Num 10:1-10, NIV)

In addition to the silver trumpets spoken of in this passage, many of the passages in the Scriptures that speak of trumpets are referring to actual "ram's horn" trumpets, called "shofars." These played a role in such events as the march around Jericho.

Among the seven annual Holy Days observed by the Jews and many Sabbatarian Christians, is one the Jews refer to as "Rosh Hoshana" (the "head of the year") and most observing Christians refer to as the "Feast of Trumpets." In reality, the Bible does not use either one of those names.

Speak to the children of Israel, saying: "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, **a memorial of blowing of trumpets**, a holy convocation" (Lev 23:24)

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a **day of blowing the trumpets** (Num 29:1).

These are the only two scriptures that specifically mention the "Feast of Trumpets," but **no Hebrew word for "trumpet" is in them**. The expression "blowing the trumpets" is translated from the single Hebrew word *t'ruwah*—which means a "loud sound." Of the 36 times that *t'ruwah*

appears in the Hebrew scriptures, it is translated "shout" 11 times, "shouting" 8 times, "alarm" 6 times, and "sound" 3 times (King James Bible). A loud trumpet blast would certainly fit within the meaning of the Hebrew—and we can be sure that trumpets were blown on that day because it was both a new moon and a time for assembly. But the focus of the Feast is not on a specific musical instrument—it is on a loud alarm—a warning to wake up!

Are we saying that all believers must stop calling it the "Feast of Trumpets" and begin calling it the "Feast of Loudness"? No. That would probably make communication with other believers more difficult and possibly create more division. But when we study the Bible and meditate on the meaning of this day, we need to think about other "loud sounds," as well as trumpets.

Except for the offering prescribed in Numbers 29:2-6 and the required blowing of silver trumpets on **each** new month, there is little the Bible says about what is to be done on that day. We cannot prove which Jewish traditions associated with the day have a divine source, but they are at least worth examining: The shofar (ram's horn trumpet) had a prominent role in this and most other ceremonies involving the use of trumpets. This may be because of a desire to incorporate its unique wailing, almost mournful quality, as opposed to the more crisp sound of a metal trumpet. Several specific types of blast are blown on this feast. They believe it is a last warning as a call to repentance—in preparation for heavenly decisions which will be "sealed" on the Day of Atonement.

Besides finding no specific Biblical definition for the kind of "loud sound" to be made on this Feast, there are also no **specific** Biblical passages indicating the purpose of the day in typology, either historically or prophetically. Passover is clearly tied to the historical event of the Exodus and to the crucifixion of the Messiah. The Jews tie Pentecost in to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, and Christians tie it to the coming of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of the Messiah. But the Feast of Trumpets is not described as commemorating any event in particular. And although we can speculate as to its

prophetic significance, there is no passage which clearly states what it **must** foreshadow.

In the past, many groups which observe the annual Holy Days have tended to package them all up in a neat box with a single, narrow description of their purpose, symbolism and prophetic significance. This description has then been taught by rote to the membership of such groups. Since these packaged systems seemed so complete and self-contained, most members have never thought to either question the system as being accurate, or question whether it might be incomplete. And yet many of these systems have been the result of limited research and reasoning of just one or a few men, without even necessarily a claim to Divine revelation.

The Jews in Jesus time were waiting for the Messiah. They had all of what we call the Old Testament at their disposal. They could read for themselves the types and symbolism. The devout ones kept the Sabbath and all the Holy Days. They were waiting for the Messiah. And yet most of them missed the coming of the true Messiah! They had it "all figured out" how it was "supposed" to happen based on their own research and reasoning. But they were wrong.

**WHAT IF** all the prepackaged reasonings some have presented over the years **ARE** incomplete? Not necessarily false, not necessarily misleading—just incomplete. We would venture to guess that a fair number of the people reading this did not know that "Feast of Loudness" or "Feast of Loud Sounds" would be a more accurate translation of the Biblical name for this day. This should cause us to want to look in new places in the Bible for parallels and possible explanations of this day.

As we **keep** the Holy Days year after year, we can expect to learn **new** things from the experience. We can have understanding in a way that those who have only read about these days do not have. The value of keeping the days and focussing on their meaning year after year should be to go deeper into the understanding of the things of the Eternal, not just rehearse the same few lessons over and over. Many concepts in the Scriptures have multiple layers of meaning, and can be understood on

various levels depending on the spiritual and mental maturity of the reader. For instance, regular meditation on the "model" "Lord's prayer" can yield deeper and deeper understanding as the years go by. Praying "give us this day our daily bread" can mean simple provision of physical food, and the passage makes sense at that level to most young believers. To the more mature, it can be a prayer to receive the spiritual "manna from Heaven" daily. To the veteran believer, it can be a prayer to spiritually feed all of the Eternal's people for this age.

For years, some have observed the Days of Unleavened Bread as a symbolism of "putting sin out of their life," and spent those days examining all the nooks and crannies of themselves, trying to pinpoint and "put out" bad habits and the like. And this is valid and profitable. But in recent years, many have come to see an even deeper symbolism in the fact that we don't **put out** leaven during the Days of Unleavened Bread—that is to be done **before** the days begin! The actual command for the Days is to **take in** Unleavened bread! We are to take in the nature of our Messiah—that "bread that came down from heaven." And this points to such passages as "let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus." This change in emphasis doesn't negate the earlier lessons, it just deepens and broadens them.

Thus it may be with the Feast of Trumpets. The usual prophetic explanation of this Feast is to say that it signifies the "Last Trump" of Revelation, the return of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. That is a reasonable and possible valid conclusion—but by no means exhaustive of the possible significance of the day. Note that the trumpets of Numbers 10 were blown

for a variety of reasons, not just war. They were to call an assembly together. They were to blow over offerings, that the Lord might "remember" his people. They were to be sounds of rejoicing at festivals. Now that we know the day is about loud sounds other than trumpets, we have even more possibilities to consider!

Passover and Pentecost each had both memorial and prophetic significance. That is, each had a former and a latter fulfillment. **IF** the Feast of Trumpets does point to the return of Christ as its latter fulfillment, where is the former fulfillment? Some have speculated that Christ was born on the Feast of Trumpets—but we cannot prove that and therefore cannot celebrate it. But **what if** there is a fulfillment yet to come? What if some of the other events should play a part in such a fulfillment? One possibility might be an extremely powerful "wake-up call" of some kind to His people—a loud and obvious miraculous event. Another possibility is a "wake-up" call to the world: a miracle televised by all the major news networks or maybe a divine voice speaking everywhere on Earth at the same time. An unusual earthquake, storm or volcano could also "fill the bill." Yet another possibility would be the arrival of the flying scroll that reveals thieves and liars (Zech 5). Could one of these events occur 15 years (a day for a year) before the millennium begins?

We do not claim to have any divine revelation regarding the above suggestions. We do believe that the meaning of this Feast deserves much more study and **prayer for divine revelation**. There are many other possibilities. Maybe you will be given understanding of some of them. Even so, none of this negates the possibility that the Messiah

will, indeed, return on some future Feast of Trumpets. But seeking greater understanding on this subject will certainly give the Eternal opportunity to do greater work in our lives.

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples and told them to wait in Jerusalem until Pentecost. But it does not appear that they **really** understood what was going to happen on that day! Jesus had made vague references to receiving "power from on high," but were they really expecting to "speak in other languages" that day? Once it happened, they recognized the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. But there is no indication that either they, or the rest of the Jews, expected this particular manifestation. Now that we have the "Spirit of Truth," it is possible that the Eternal may show us what will happen beforehand.

Let us not become so dogmatic about exactly how prophecy must play itself out, according to our own particular interpretation of the symbology of the Holy Days, that we miss out on some of what the Eternal plans to do.

Instead of approaching each Holy Day season, such as the fall Feasts coming up, with all our old "cue cards," it might be better to approach them with excitement and prayer that the Eternal might open our eyes to discover more and more of Him and His plan in them.

We hope that everyone finds a place to assemble with other brethren during the holy days this year. We know of many smaller congregations that are getting together for larger meetings on the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. We would like to encourage this practice.

May the Eternal bless all of His people during this fall holy day season!  
—Norman S. Edwards & Pam Dewey

**"Prayer" from page 2**

same thing over and over again, and secondly, **He will hear you the first time because He already knows what you need and He is waiting for your prayer to ask Him to provide it**, not trying to get it yourself.

Now, back to verse 2 of the Luke 18 parable. Jesus says there was a judge who cared basically about himself only. He did not know or fear God and he did not have respect for men. He respected

himself and those who it benefitted him to respect or give wishes to. Jesus later calls him an unjust judge. There was no justice with this man, he was stuck on himself alone. In verse 3 we are introduced to a widow in the same city who had a problem that she needed this judge to settle for her. So she came to him and said, "Avenge me of my adversary." So in the simplest of terms she asked the unjust judge to deliver her.

We are told in verse 4 that he would

not for a while. We are not told how long whether it was a few hours, a day, a week, or a year, but the period of time is unimportant. After this period of time something came over him or he thought within himself, "Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." This is where many people add a thought that Jesus never said. Because the unjust judge said, "lest by her con-

tinual coming she weary me," they assume that the widow lady had been coming to the judge every day to ask the same thing. But, that is actually glaringly absent from the story Jesus told. Jesus only mentions her coming once and asking, He never mentions she came to the judge again.

Rather, verse 4 says: "he said within himself." This widow was troubling him **within**, not by continually coming back to him and asking, but he could not get her out of his mind. She was troubling him in a far greater way than trying to get an audience with him each day which he would have controlled. If he did not want to see her he would not have had to see her, he was the judge. Obviously, he was not concerned about what other men thought because he did not regard man either. This widow was troubling him on the inside, a part he could not control, so he decided to give her what she wanted so that she would not trouble his mind any longer.

Jesus never mentioned she ever came back, but she was continually in the mind of the unjust judge and he eventually relented to avenge her adversary to relieve his conscience so that he would not be weary from her. Another key word to see that this is what Jesus was talking about is the word "lest." If the widow had been coming often to trouble him, he would not have said "lest by her continual coming," but "because her continual coming is wearying me." You and I know people like this today, that if they are going to do something honorable, then they give another reason or a excuse why they are doing what is right. They just can not say they are doing it because it is the right thing to do—if they did this once, it would mean that they would be responsible for "doing right" in many other areas of their life.

So the unjust judge is going to avenge her. Jesus says, "Hear what the unjust judge said." What did the unjust judge actually say? What he said in effect was "even though I do not care about this woman or anyone else for that matter, because she is bothering me, I will do what she asks because it does not affect me and I do not want to be bothered with her any longer". His positive answer was for all the wrong reasons, his selfish reasons, not because it was the right thing to do.

## More Biblical Prayers: Only a Few are Long or Repeated

There are hundreds of examples of prayer in the Bible. Studying them can be extremely valuable—though we do not have room to list all of them here. You can find most Bible prayers by looking up "pray" and "prayer" in a concordance. This is one of the few cases where an NKJV or an NIV concordance will be more useful than the common Strong's or Young's KJV concordance. The KJV uses the word "pray" in numerous cases where the other translations say "ask". If you use a KJV concordance to look up "pray", you will have to wade through a couple hundred extra verses that are merely conversations with another person, not with the Eternal. (Also, you will need to include the word "beseech" if use use a KJV concordance.)

What do we find by looking at the prayers in the Bible? We find two main kinds of prayers. One kind is **group prayer** which is often repeated. Many of the Psalms are longer prayers, and they were certainly sung many times. However, most of the content is praise—few of the Psalms ask the Eternal for anything specific. The requests are usually timeless things: His love, His truth, His forgiveness, His deliverance, etc. That is why we can sing or recite these same Psalms today and nearly every word is relevant. Acts 4:24-30 records a prayer spoken by all of the early disciples—it basically asks for power to preach the Gospel.

The other kind of prayer is **individual prayer**. Most are short, well-thought-out, heart-felt requests to God. There is very little fancy language—the prayers are more like a serious child asking his father for something important. In most cases, the prayers were answered. The answer seems to be greatly determined by the character of the person asking, what they were asking for and why they were asking for it. Prayer frequency seems of little importance compared to the right-

eousness of the person. "When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood" (Isa 1:15).

Probably the longest individual prayers recorded in the Bible are Solomon's prayer dedicating the physical Temple (1Kngs 8; 2Chr 6) and Christ's prayer for the Church—the spiritual temple (John 17).

Some prayers were repeated. Elijah prayed 3 times to ask for someone to be raised from the dead. Just before he died, Jesus prayed the same prayer two, maybe three times (Mark 14:32-41). The Bible records both of these prayers as only a sentence or two in length.

Many Bible teachers talk about Elijah praying seven times for rain, but the scripture does not say that at all (1Kng 18:41-44). It merely says that Elijah sent his servant seven times. Elijah told the king there would be rain **before** he prayed (v 41).

There certainly are cases where the answers to prayers are delayed. Daniel fasted for 21 days. Did the Eternal answer him because of the length of that fast?

Then he [the angel] said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for **from the first day** that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia **withstood me twenty-one days**; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

Just because we do not immediately see the answer, does not mean that the Eternal has not heard or answered. We, today, can receive answers just like the people in the Bible. We simply must know the Bible well enough to know the Eternal's will, and we must ask wholeheartedly in faith!

—Norman S. Edwards

In verse 7, is God comparing Himself to the unjust judge or contrasting Himself? I think that we all know that God is not like the unjust judge, so Jesus is contrasting the two, not comparing. Therefore, we should look for the things that are different in the parable, not the same.

There may be some that still say, "I think that the widow kept coming to him and wore him down till he gave in." This might be so, but we can at this point get the same understanding of the parable. If the widow kept coming, is this what God wants us to do also? Does he want us to come to Him daily in our prayers—sometimes multiple times a day—and ask for the same thing over and over again until He answers our request as we want Him to? I do not think that you would want someone continually coming to you asking the same thing over and over again if you were in control of a situation.

For example, suppose you were the boss who had to decide upon the right time to plant. You will let the other workers know the proper time to put the seed in the earth. Everyday three times a day, your workers come to you and say, "give us the seed to plant." You tell them, it is not the right time, when the time is right I will give it to you. But the next day they are back again asking three times a day, "give us the seed to plant." How many days do you think you could take it before you told them. "What is your problem, quit asking me the same thing over and over again, I will give it to you at the right time as I told you. Quit asking." But the next day they are there again asking as before.

Does this behavior impress you with their willingness to not give up their requests? Or rather would it make you more and more annoyed with them and feel less like you want to give them the seed even when the time comes to plant? Indeed, parents of small children are often frustrated when their children ask for the same things over and over, even though they have told them they will not be able to have it until later. Such children sometimes must be taught to stop being a "pest" by being deprived of the very thing for which they excessively asked.

Granted, we are not God, but this behavior that many humans promote of continually asking God because suppos-

edly this parable says to, does not make sense and the final verse then does not seem to even fit, yet it has most of the meaning of the whole parable.

We see, by this illustration, that **God is not espousing that we nag Him** so that He gives us what we ask for, but rather about something totally different.

We pick it up again in verse 7. "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?" Remember, God is being contrasted to the unjust judge, not compared. The elect that cry out day and night—again, it is absent that they were crying out the same thing day and night—pray to God continually about their needs at all times. Unlike the unjust judge with whom you take your chances, God is always ready to avenge His people who pray and ask Him, even though He bears long with us. What is He bearing with us?

Some might say, "It is our sins. He bears long with our sins and is still merciful to us and delivers us." And I would have to agree with them. Some could say, "He has to bear waiting for us to ask for His help so often. We spend too much time trying to do it ourselves." And, again, I would have to agree. But, I think what He has to bear with is discovered at the end of the next verse. What He has to bear long with is our lack of faith. We ask Him to avenge us, but we really do not believe that He will do it, or maybe even hear our request. Therefore most of us ask over and over again. We even back up this asking over and over again with a parable that can so clearly show us just the opposite.

God is saying He is nothing like the unjust judge. He hears our request the first time and will "avenge us speedily" (v. 8). But, too often, God has to bear long with us, because we do not really believe that He hears and is going to answer our request. Sometimes we doubt or lack faith to believe that God will do what He has promised. Therefore, He bears with us while still avenging us. What He is saying is that if you do have faith and believe God will do it, then you will be avenged speedily.

**The key to this verse is the last statement Jesus makes. "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"** This is the issue of the parable—our faith. Do we have faith? Do we believe that God

hears us the first time and that we do not have to nag Him to get Him to do what we want? There is no certain number of prayers that God waits for before He will answer it. We do not have to ask just the right way before God hears our prayers. We do not have to ask every way we can think of to get God to hear. What God is saying is that He does hear us, the first time, He just bears long with us waiting for us to trust Him, to believe that He will do what He has promised to do.

This parable is a glorious statement by Jesus of how God cares and loves us. It is **not** a parable teaching us that God requires numerous prayers before he will hear. God promises rather to hear what we ask the first time and, if you have the faith to believe, He will do what He has promised. He will avenge you speedily. However, Jesus' insight into us caused him to add, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" Will you believe God? We all need to have the faith that God wants from us, but we are all lacking. We need to build that faith. But how?

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom 10:17).

We build faith by studying and learning the word of God and then we know positively what God has promised and believe that He will do it because we know what He says He will do. Brethren, God promises to answer our prayers of faith:

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:13-14).

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:23-24).

God wants to answer our request speedily, but He also wants us to ask according to His will, and then believe that He will do it. Is it belief to ask something over and over again? When God does not answer as we expect, we need to ask Him to show us **His will**, not to ask for **our will** over and over again. Let us all grow in faith, that it can be said of us when Jesus comes, "There was faith found in you".

—Ron Wilson

# Baptism

**FROM: Old Testament Period**  
**TO: The End of Times**

Why baptism? What is its history? We Sabbatharians are quite familiar with much of its meaning and its ritual. But could there be some other aspects to it which we have overlooked? Why does God utilise the metaphor of immersion or complete surrounding or wrapping? Has the earth experienced such immersion in its long history? And if so, is there a connection to human baptism?

Some years ago I undertook a study to re-prove to myself that indeed salvation is a process in three stages and that our greatest salvation lies ahead which will be fulfilled in the resurrection. During this quest the three stage process was also found in areas such as glorification, redemption, putting on Christ/the new man/the new creation, renewal/re-creation and Kingdom of God membership.

Soon my mind turned to Christian baptism. But before we enter that arena, let us take a quick peek at the baptism theme which appears in the Bible. The baptism theme appears in connection with man, as well as with the earth upon which he dwells. God immerses or surrounds man in water to produce a new creature, washing him clean to enable a new life to emerge.

Similarly, as we shall see, God immerses or surrounds the earth in baptismal waters or fire from time-to-time, to cleanse it and to make it ready for a new age within His plan.

## **Baptism of the Earth?**

Repeatedly, the earth has been engulfed in geo-enormous upheavals which consign gripping movies such as *Volcano* and *Dante's Peak* to mere blips. Scientists reckon immense devastation and catastrophe upon the earth to occur at regular, cyclical periods.

In Genesis 1:1-2 we are told:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was [became] without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Several matters may be teased out of this scripture which we generally seldom hear about. Firstly, philological studies of "moved" is taken to mean "to

brood" like a bird or dove fluttering over his offspring. Others feel that there may be an inference here to hover or coast in the air like an eagle (compare Deut 32:11). Here we find God showing great care for the re-forming of the earth prior to the creation of humankind. What happened prior to Adam's creation?

If we are to accept dating methodologies indicating that the earth is about 4.6 billion years old, God was indeed active in creative expression long prior to the creation of man. It would seem that God may have been busy with various physical creative expressions over a long time. Here are some of the biochronological eras or epochs into which the earth's history may be divided:

Archeozoic Proterozoic (the precambrian era - 4.6 billion to 600 millions years ago).

Paleozoic (including the cambrian, orovician, silurian, devonian, carboniferous and permian eras—600-230 million years ago).

Mesozoic (including the triassic, jurassic and cretaceous eras—230-67 million years ago).

Cenozoic (tertiary and quaternary eras—67 million years ago to recent times).

The quaternary era consists of the Pleistocene and Holocene periods. The Pleistocene period was a time when the earth experienced an horrific Ice Age; followed by tremendous flooding during the Holocene period with the latter commencing about 10,000 BC and ending about 4,000 BC (please note that there was enormous flooding, but the entire globe was not subdued with water). Scientists have shown that deserts arose after 4,000 BC. The land

bridges between Australia and both Papua New Guinea and Tasmania; and between Siberia and Alaska disappeared at that time, never to be recovered. One source actually states that "sea-levels rose continuously until around 6,000 years ago" (*Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, vol 1, 1994, p 473. See also *Archaeology of the Dreamtime* by Josephine Flood, 1983, page 123) which is about 4,000 BC, about the time of the creation of man.

One example may be found at Susa. Its lowest levels show traces of human occupation about 4,000 BC, which fits nicely into the Biblical dating model of the creation of man, c. 4,000 BC (*The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, art. "Crafts, Craftsmen", page 139).

The Australian Aboriginal peoples describe the creation of man thusly: "In the beginning the world lay quiet, in utter darkness. There was no vegetation, no living or moving thing on the bare bones of the mountains. The world was not dead. It was asleep." They then describe how light manifest itself upon the earth. Man was created "in the bodily and mental form of the Baiame ... the Father-God, the Great Spirit" (*Aboriginal Stories* by A.W. Reed, pages 11, 8-9). By the way, Aboriginal legends also speak of giants and a great Flood! Sound familiar?

Is there inference in Genesis 1:1-2 of the end of the Holocene period with God intervening to reverse the great flooding all over the earth in readiness for conditions for human existence? This may indeed be the case; and if it is, it may give credence to the theory that God cleanses the planet prior to creative activity. He is the God of fiat

creation, not a God guiding evolutionary development. As such, He may determine to create at various times, according to His great will and wisdom. He created man after readying the earth for him at the end of the Holocene period. But this was not the last time God 'baptised' and cleansed the earth.

### **Noah's Flood**

Historians, in general, are gradually settling on dating of ancient history by reducing events downwards slightly. This has been occurring for some time and now seems to be reaching toward finalisation with the assistance of great works such as *A Test of Time* by David Rohl. For instance it may be that the great flooding recorded in Mesopotamian history and which historians dated at about 2,650 BC, could be determined at about 2,324 BC, coinciding with Noah's worldwide Flood. Great Middle Eastern emperors, heroes and villains, may now be seen to be descendants of Noah. For instance, Assur may have been Sargon of Akkad. Some decades ago he was dated at 3,200 BC, but gradually this was reduced with the rest of the dating of the Middle Eastern records to 2,500 BC and further since. He was indeed a great and powerful man of the post-Flood world. I may write more about him in a future article.

There is much evidence for the pre-Flood dating of the old Egyptian Kingdom. For instance, scientists now admit that the erosion of the face of the Sphinx is a direct result of great flooding and not wind erosion; and we know that the dating of the Sphinx reveals a pre-Flood origin.

But let us turn to Noah himself. His name means comfort, consolation, rest or regeneration (Gen 5:29). As in Christ's day, the world was wicked (Gen 6:5-9). Like Christ, he was spiritually just and walked with God (Gen 6:9); both he and Christ were preachers of righteousness (IIPet 2:5) and had great faith (Heb 11:7); this faith was demonstrated by obedience to God (Gen 6:22), which included sabbath observance (Gen 7:4,10; 8:4,10,12).

In considering Noah's ark, and without going into detailed typology in this article, the pitch (probably resin) which covered the ark pictures atone-

ment (Heb "kaphar" = atonement), the period prior to the flood is typical of the events leading up to the tribulation; the flood itself the height of the tribulation and Day of the Lord (cf. Luke 17:26-27; Rev 12:15-17). On 1 Tishri Noah looked out on the new world. We know that Christ will probably return on 1 Tishri too, to commence His millennial reign. Noah, at that time, commenced his 7th century at which time he saw and received the 'promised land'. Similarly, Christ will commence the seventh millenium of God's Plan at His return. We also know that God made a covenant with Noah – possibly a type of the New Covenant which Christ will finalise at His return (Is 54:8-10; Gen 9:9).

Christ preached to the demon spirits, in Noah's day. It would appear that He may have given them warning about their ultimate punishment which will be fulfilled at the end time. Noah's Flood was a type of the Day of the Lord at which time their punishments will be meted out (IPet 3:19-20). Interestingly, in the following verse the Flood is likened to baptism.

But while God has promised that the earth will not be submerged by water (Gen 9:15), He has also predicted that it will be consumed by fire.

### **Earth's Coming Baptism of Fire!**

In the future, the Devil, Beast, False Prophet and the unrighteous, will be cast into the terrible lake of fire (Rev 20:10). It would appear that the lake of fire will then spread and engulf the entire earth and even the entire universe will be cleansed and recreated—made ready for new creations—for a dynamic God Family. Peter writes of this most incredible event in history:

"... the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (IIPet 3:10).

We are told in Micah that "the mountains shall be molten under Him ... as wax before the fire" (Mic 1:4) as the earth is cleansed. Compare also Luke 3:5.

Our own Sun is a most fascinating body: it is an average sized star as far as we know; it's heat is generated by the nuclear fusion of its hydrogen into helium. One day, our glorious Sun will run

out of finite hydrogen energy in billions of years time. Of course, God may intervene and speed that process up in due course. In any event, it will begin to burn helium instead of hydrogen, becoming a "Red Giant" and become at least 100 times its current size, engulfing much of the inner solar system.

Eventually the sun will exhaust its supply of Helium fuel and shrink in size, lose its heat gradually and begin to die, becoming a mere White Dwarf star (cf. Rev 21:23; 22:5).

From the above examples, it appears that God has plunged (or baptised) the earth into the most catastrophic immersions in water, and yet will baptise it in fire. While this is of course speculative, nevertheless, it seems to fit a model that He performs such feats from time-to-time. The earth was prepared for man via gigantic flooding; followed by the Noachian Flood and the fiery inferno yet to come.

Finally, Peter seems to tie these three together in 2 Peter 3:5-7,12:

"... by the word of God the heavens were of old [creation of the earth], and the earth standing out of the water and in the water [Holocene period?]:

"Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished [Noachian worldwide Flood];

"But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition for ungodly men ... wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness [the final re-creation of the Universe]".

In time order, the evil are engulfed by fire (Rev 20:10-15; Mal 4:3), followed by the inauguration of the New Heavens and New Earth (Rev 21:1) from which the evil are absent (v8). Sequentially, it would appear that God may bring forward by billions of years the folding up of the physical universe after the lake of fire has spread and engulfed (i.e., baptised) the entire earth. From there it will engulf the uni-

verse, preparing the way for a new creation with dimensions, sights, colours, sounds, and experiences that we cannot even possibly imagine at this stage. But Rev 21 & 22 gives us some insights and clues.

Speculation aside, we can ascertain from the above the following consistency: **God practices methods of cleansing via immersion or baptism prior to His involvement with a new creation.**

But before the entire universe is re-created, God wants us all to be re-created and the first step along that rocky road is simple water baptism. Let us now explore the baptism of the people of God found in both Old and New Testaments.

### **Old Testament Baptism**

“Water is the element naturally used for cleansing the body and its symbolical use entered into almost every cult, and into none more completely than the Jewish, whose ceremonial washings were proverbial” (“Baptism”, *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol 1, page 418).

The Dead Sea Scrolls also depict the baptism ritual as something practised by much of Jewry at that time. To this day Jews practice baptism for both male and female converts who immerse themselves in a ritual bath (*Jewish Literacy* by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, 1991, page 625).

Long before the Jews practised baptism, pre-Christian baptism is found in the Old Testament. For instance, the passing of Israel through the Red Sea on the final Day of Unleavened Bread, was likened to a baptism by Paul (ICor 10:1-2). And further baptismal and resurrection typology may be found in the crossing of the Jordan River which was a type of entering the Kingdom of God followed by pulling down the strongholds of the enemy (Joshua 3:15-17; IICor 10:4).

In the Wilderness, at the Tabernacle, the Levites were cleansed via sprinkling of water to purify them in preparation for service to God and man (Num 8:6-7,11,21). Similarly Christians must be cleansed and sanctified by sprinkling (Heb 10:22; ICor 11:28; IICor 7:1; Titus 2:14).

Further, the Levites had to be bathed or washed clean in water in Ex

29:4 “one of the ceremonial washings referred to in Heb. 6.2, and rendered ‘baptisms’” (Bullinger, *Companion Bible*, page 113). Similarly, Christians have been baptised and must be “baptised” by the washing of the spirit each and every day until they die (ICor 6:11; IICor 7:1; Eph 5:25-26). And by connecting Titus 3:5 with IICor 4: 16 and Eph 4:22-24 we can see that we must be washed clean each day by the water and the blood.

Other washing rituals may be found in Lev 14:9 and Num 19:18 which are evidently types of Christian cleansing and purification at baptism. Not just the baptism with water upon repentance, but daily washings of the Spirit of God.

### **Is Baptism a Process?**

As we shall shortly see, if we search the entire New Testament we shall ascertain quite clearly that salvation and related or overlapping concepts follow the same patterns: we are saved from past sins; we are being saved on a daily basis by Jesus Christ our High Priest, by washing us clean by His precious blood, by washing of our conscience by the spiritual water (the Holy Spirit) and by the Word (eating daily of the Bible and its teachings and lessons); and we will be finally saved by inheriting immortality in the resurrection. Salvation is nothing without immortality. Past salvation pictured by the Passover is very incomplete without our current salvation of adhering to God’s Ways and Laws and receipt of the Holy Spirit to enable us to develop Godly characteristics such as the fruits of the spirit and the beatitudes (pictured by the Days of Unleavened Bread). We are placed within His Church to enable us to have the best means to grow spiritually (Pentecost). Then, at the resurrection, pictured by the Feast of Trumpets, we are finally saved. But even then salvation continues with the removal of Satan (Atonement), the Millennial reign of the Messiah (Tabernacles) and the billions of mankind given an opportunity of salvation (Last Great Day).

A salvation which concentrates primarily upon the death of Christ misses out on the rest of the story. It is a very limited or even stunted salvation resting upon the historical Christ, and little if anything, upon the eschatological

Christ. Let us be certain that our salvation does not begin and end with the Passover sacrifice of Christ. Christ is a lot bigger than merely the four Gospels. He is the whole Word of God and everything he stands for or will do is to be found stated throughout the entire Bible.

It is clear that these overlapping concepts, which are utilised by Almighty God to inculcate in us an understanding of what He is doing in us, are used in the sense of one process in three stages. I ask the reader to bear with me and to examine the many quoted scriptures to prove this point. We find this consistency wherever the New Testament speaks of our calling into glory, salvation/grace/blood of Christ, conversion/reconciliation/sanctification/justification, redemption, putting on Christ/the new man/new creation, resurrection/renewal/re-creation/glorification and Kingdom of God membership.

My basic argument is simply this: if these aforementioned aspects of salvation are to be found in scripture to fulfil a process in three stages, then why not the washing of baptism by the spirit, water and blood which is fundamental to salvation? It would seem inconsistent if indeed this were not the case.

Could it be true that baptism is a process commencing at our physical immersion (pictured by the baptism of the Red Sea crossing), undergoing growth via trials and pangs whilst being fed spiritual food (pictured by the Wilderness wanderings) and reaching its fullness at the resurrection (pictured by the baptism of the crossing of the Jordan) whence we enter the Kingdom (pictured by the Holy Land) in similitude to the other aspects of salvation?

At this point, before we take a peek at the scripture itself, we should understand that the first stage in all of these aspects of salvation, is a very minuscule part of the whole process. Thus, our past salvation, as important, wonderful and beautiful as it is, should be seen within the overall process: the beginning is so small, it is merely a ‘taste’ or ‘foretaste’ of the ultimate reality (see Heb 6:4). Our past salvation is a mere ‘molecule’ compared to the glory which shall be. A parallel may as well be a comparison of a worm with a butterfly (Rom 12:2); or ant with a

human; or, better still, compare an unborn babe with the limited 'knowledge' and senses it has, with a born child (see 1Cor 15:37, 42-43).

**Washing of Baptism by the Spirit, Water & Blood**

Given the aforementioned Biblical principle, is it at all possible that even baptism could be a process paralleling the three stages of salvation, conversion, redemption and so forth? Be prepared for a surprise. Following is a list of scriptures which appear to give credence to the theory that spiritual baptism is a process in three stages:

**STAGE 1:**

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood,**

1John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, **and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

1Pet 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with **the precious blood of Christ,** as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1Pet 3:21 The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Heb 9:14 How much more shall the **blood of Christ,** who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and **be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,** and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Rom 6:3-4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death:** that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life ["Paul generally speaks of baptism, not as a new birth, but as a 'burial with Christ' in the baptismal waters followed by a rising again therefrom" (JH Bernard, *The International Critical Commentary, The Gospel According to St. John,* pages clxiii-iv)].

Col 2:12 **Buried with him in baptism,** wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

1Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit are **we all baptized into one body,** whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

**STAGE 2:**

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**

Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.**

2Cor 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet **the inward man is renewed day by day.**

1Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not **the communion of the blood of Christ?** The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

1Cor 6:11 And such were some of you: **but ye are washed,** but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with **the washing of water by the word.**

John 15:3 Now **ye are clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you.

**STAGE 3:**

Matt 3:11-12 I indeed baptize you

with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: **he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but **he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and **be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?** [here Christ was speaking of His future sufferings, death and resurrection. Cp Ps 11:6; 42:7; 69:1-3; 124:4-5; Is 51:17].

Luke 12:49-51 I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a **baptism to be baptized with** [His future sufferings, death and resurrection]; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

From the above we may deduce the following:

Firstly, we have been both physically baptised and spiritually washed clean of all sin and purity by the precious, blood of the Son of God (the bath of regeneration) in order to make us pure, righteous, upright and thus God-like. Secondly, God continues to wash us clean by the blood of Christ upon repentance of sins on a daily basis. And, as Christians, we are spiritual priests after the order of Melchizedek, inheriting the functions of the physical Levitical priesthood in a spiritual service to God, we must be bathed on a daily basis, in the waters of the holy spirit in contact with God via His Word. In effect, we are spiritually washed as the priests were physically washed as a type of baptism as we have seen.

Thirdly, we see that Christ's death and resurrection and the final resurrection are likened to a baptism. If so, then why not the first resurrection for Christians? Perhaps we will experience another 'washing' of the spirit - actually putting on Christ and becoming composed of the spirit - at this time. How like a baby at the 'breaking of water' at the time of birth and then its washing by the nurse or mid-wife.

Does this not fit the overall scheme of God's plan of salvation?

Theodore of Mopsuestia (c 350-428AD) wrote in terms of baptistry as a womb which, he believed, was for preparing Christians for birth; incredibly, he even describes the baptismal water as the water of second birth, which was itself typed by the fluid surrounding the fetus in the mother's womb (*Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, pages 53-54).

There seems to be some credibility to this: the embryo 'floats' in amniotic fluid within the sac. An outer membrane, the chorion, encloses the amniotic sac. This is known as the womb or uterus. The amniotic sac is also known as the water bag. When it breaks upon birth, the fluid and blood washes over

the baby almost like some kind of baptism. Further, the baby is then washed by the midwife or nurse. Could this be a type of baptism of the resurrection at which time our 'midwives', the angels, deliver us to Christ? See Matt 24:31; 1Thess 4:17.

In a future paper on the Christian spiritual Exodus, the 'baptism' of the Red Sea will be revealed to be equivalent to Christian water baptism and the 'baptism' of the River Jordan will be shown to represent the resurrection of spiritual Israelites.

Peter Toon in *Born Again. A Biblical and Theological Study of Regeneration* (Baker BookHouse, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987) likens baptism to a mere seed of new life (page 87). He further states that

... the verb used in Mark 12:10 to describe Jesus' arising from the

water is *anabaino*, the very verb used in John 3:13; 6:62; 20:17; and Ephesians 4:8-10 to refer to the ascension of Jesus. Thus there is probably an allusion to the ascension of Jesus in his coming up out of the river. And, of course, following this ascent there was the descent (*katabaino*) of the Spirit upon him (page 22).

Of course, because baptism pictures the repentant being washed clean, dying to sin and rising with Christ, partaking of His sufferings, plus his/her future resurrection. A future baptism of a bodily death and resurrection awaits all Christians at the return of Christ.

Finally, whilst parts of this article may be considered speculative, I hope that it has been sufficiently interesting and beneficial to readers.

—Craig White

**“Feast” from page 1**

Once the Feast of Tabernacles and the Kingdom of God are “tied together,” there is much the Bible says about life in the Kingdom after it becomes fully established:

And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—  
“The LORD is one,” And His name one (Zech 14:9).

But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken (Mic 4:4).

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” Says the LORD (Isa 65:25).

Revelation 20:1-6 shows that Christ will reign for 1000 years, painting a picture of God's rule of peace, tranquility, prosperity and happiness for 1000 years. This is certainly a useful understanding of scripture, but is that all that there is about the Feast of Tabernacles?

Some teachers further explain that brethren should spend a lot of money at the Feast of Tabernacles, living the lifestyle that everyone will have in the prosperous Millennium. This thinking is often derived from this scripture:

Then you shall exchange it

[tithe] for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the **place which the LORD your God chooses**. And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you **shall eat** there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household (Deut 14:25-26).

Applying this scripture specifically to the Feast of Tabernacles and/or Millennium is a bit of a stretch. This chapter mentions bringing in the tithe and the harvesting of fall crops, but it does not mention the Feast of Tabernacles or any Feasts at all. The expression “place which the Lord your God chooses” does not specifically refer to the Feasts. It refers to a place for worship in general (Deut 12:5; 18:6), eating firstborn animals (which may occur at various times throughout the year) (Deut 15:19-20), a place for judgment (Deut 17:8), a place to give firstfruits (not tithes) (Deut 26:2). The expression does refer to a place to keep the Feast of Tabernacles twice (Deut 16:16; 31:11), but also other Feasts.

Certainly, the Feast of Tabernacles was a time when Ancient Israel rejoiced with their harvest, consuming the tithe and various offerings of which the offeror was commanded to eat. However, we do not find any

scripture indicating that the Feast of Tabernacles should be a time of luxury any more than other Feasts or Sabbaths in Jerusalem. **There is no scripture that instructs us to “imitate or symbolize the wealth of the Millennium” during the Feast of Tabernacles** or at any other time.

**What Else Can We Learn From the Feast of Tabernacles?**

Leviticus 23:43 gives an oft-ignored reason why we should keep the Feast of Tabernacles:

That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles was to remind Israel of how God dealt with them as he brought them out of the land of Egypt. If we are going to understand the meaning of the Feast, then we need to study how and why God made Israel to dwell in tents.

A tent offers a bare minimum of security as opposed to a permanent dwelling. A tent dwelling is much more vulnerable to the elements of the weather and wild beasts, etc. But it is easier to change and move. The Israelites had to learn to trust in God for security. They had to be flexible—willing to change. They were drawn away from material security to prompt

an awareness that their true security really came from God. But why 40 years? Apparently, immediate entrance into the promised land was not possible because of the lack of faith (Num. 13, 14). The people refused to believe that God would bring them safely into the promised land. Therefore, God kept them in the wilderness 40 long years until a whole generation of Israelites died in the wilderness.

As we understand it, a generation of experiences in a tightly controlled environment were required to develop the faith and habits needed to enter into the promised

land. It was during these 40 years that God was "hands-on" governing and judging the people of Israel. Judgment was immediate and

There is no scripture that instructs us to imitate or symbolize the wealth of the Millennium during the Feast of Tabernacles

personal. God's presence was always visible to the people in a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day. The Word of God was available directly from Moses. He also established 70 elders as leaders and judges over the people (Deut 11:16-17). These men prophesied by the power of the spirit (Deut 11:25). It was a time to instill the habit of Sabbath keeping (Ex. 16). It was a time in which physical care and provision was at a minimum. Their shoes did not wear out, their clothes did not grow old.

Now these are the things they could remember by looking back as they kept the Feast, but what does this have to do with us? Why should we look back at these things? Much of the New Testament teaching is pictured in terms of a "wilderness." John the Baptist was a literal "voice crying in the wilderness" (Matt 3:1; Mark 1:3). Jesus began his work in the wilderness and fed the multitudes in the wilderness (Matt 4:1; 15:32-38). The Israelites are actually referred to as the "church (Greek *ekklesia*) in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). Also, Revelation 12:6 speaks of a woman (usually symbolizing a church) that escapes to a wilderness to get away from the Dragon. The Apostle Peter

refers to believers as "sojourners" and "pilgrims," here for only "a time," yet called to be a "special people" (1Pet 1:17; 2:9,11). Their physical bodies are referred to as "tabernacles" (2Cor 5:1-4; 2Pet 1:13-15). Many other scriptures expand on this theme.

**Does the Feast of Tabernacles Picture a Future Event, Also?**

We see how the Feast of Tabernacles pictures "the church" being nourished in the wilderness in a general way. Is there a scriptural basis to use the Feast as a type of something in the future? Hebrews 7-10 makes it

clear that many things in the old covenant portrayed types of yet future events under the new covenant.

Colossians 2:16-17 states that the feast days (along with Sabbaths and new moons) are a "shadow of things to come." If feast days are to foreshadow events in the future and are based on events of the past, then it becomes clear that the Feast of Tabernacles is based on Israel's experience in the wilderness and probably foreshadows something relating to those past events. In order to understand the future fulfillment, let us look at the past events:

**#1 All of Israel Dwelt in Tents—Temporary Dwellings**

Participants in the final fulfillment will dwell in some kind of temporary dwellings. God himself spoke to Moses from a temporary temple. Now in prophetic fulfillment where can we find these conditions extant? We already mentioned the emphasis on the "pilgrim" and "sojourner" nature of the people that God is using now. Even the world that we know is temporary:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of

persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness (2Pet 3:10-11).

This reminds us that we and our world are all of a fleshly nature, which equates to a temporary existence—in effect, a temporary dwelling.

**#2 God's Direct Government**

These Scriptures also portray an obvious hands-on presence of God with His direct guidance and organization. Ancient Israel was organized into 12 tribes. We find that the same 12 tribes will be judged by the twelve apostles:

So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt 19:28).

Jesus said in John 5:22 that the Father had committed all judgment to the Son and thus Jesus must remain supreme in judgment on his throne, subordinate to him, the twelve apostles under him, and also many others. Seventy elders were appointed in Numbers 11:16, and similarly Jesus sent out seventy more in Luke 10:1. Many additional judges and officers were chosen (Deut 1:13-17; 16:18-20). Similarly, Paul said:

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (1Cor 6:2.)

This reminds us that we must learn to judge righteous judgment. It likens God's Kingdom—His government in action—to the 40 years in the wilderness, when judgment and punishment were immediate and quick. Other scriptures mention immediate and quick judgment in a future setting:

And though the Lord gives you The bread of adversity and the water of affliction, Yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left (Isa 30:20-21).

"For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD,

"So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh" (Isa 66:22-24).

**#3 A Time of Learning**

The forty year experience was a time of training. In Exodus 16, the habit of Sabbath keeping was irrefutably instilled in people. The first recorded Sabbath-breaker died for his deed (Num 15:32-36). People learned both to fear to disobey God and to trust in his loving care to feed them in spite of the wilderness, semi-desert conditions round about them.

**Judgment and Learning  
Go Hand in Hand**

Now if judgment and learning God's righteous way of life were an integral part of "tabernacling" in the wilderness, would not one expect Jesus to emphasize these things in his teaching while attending the Feast of Tabernacles? As a matter of fact, he did just that! In John 7:14 he begins to teach that one must be willing to follow God's will to agree with the doctrine of God. Then he reprimands them for not keeping the law and for plotting to kill him. In verses 19-23 He reminds them of keeping priorities straight in Sabbath observance. In verse 24, **He admonishes them to judge with righteous judgment.** Surely, Jesus was demonstrating by his actions the future fulfillment of those days.

These two principles, learning righteousness, and righteous judgment, appear to go hand in hand. Peter points out that for those being called in this age, judgment is an integral part in the process of maturing. "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God..." (1 Pet 4:17). Later, Peter says:

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after you have suf-**

**fered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you** (1Pet 5:10).

Other scriptures show this judgment/righteousness relationship and show that the saints will become the judge:

...For when Your judgments are in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa 26:9).

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? (1Cor 6:2-3).

Bearing these things in mind, we can look for prophecies which are a fulfillment of the judgment and learning experienced by ancient Israel. We find just such a prophecy in Rev 20:4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." This appears to follow right on the heels of Christ returning to this earth to put down all misrule and establish God's Kingdom on earth. This is also borne out in Daniel's prophecy:

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Dan 7:21-22, KJV).

We find out more about who and how many will judge and be judged:

I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated... A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened (Dan 7:9-10).

Who are these 1,000,000 assistants who will judge with Jesus Christ and the Apostles? Who are the 100,000,000 that will be judged? To

determine who are the "assistant judges," let us look at the qualifications of the leaders that the Eternal chose:

The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take

**We can rejoice in the scriptures that tell us everyone will be judged and justly rewarded or punished for what they have done.**

of the Spirit that is on you and **put the Spirit on them.** They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to

carry it alone (Num 11:16-17, NIV).

Moses selected people who were already considered leaders by the people. Other scriptures give the standards for righteousness demanded of leaders. But it is important to note that God approved them by placing his holy spirit on them. The same type of person was desired when people were needed to serve the New Testament congregations, but here they already had the holy spirit:

Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business (Acts 6:3).

So it was the outstanding selected ones who were placed in positions of judgment. So shall it also be in the final fulfillment. Revelation 20:4 shows that those who successfully resisted the beast "...lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Rev. 3:21 puts it this way:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

**Who Will Be Judged?**

Since the saints are to rule the world, who then are those 100,000,000 who are to be judged? Once again we can look back at ancient Israel to help understand what will happen in the future. All who were Israelite born were required to

attend the Feast and to dwell in booths (Lev. 23:42). In Deuteronomy 31:9-13 there is a further defining of who must attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Every seven years all men, women, children and sojourners who were within the gates of Israel were to have the law read to them:

...that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God... (Deut 31:12-13).

And so all Israel, all within Israel and generations **who have not heard** must participate and be taught God's way. The final fulfillment of this Feast must include people who have not heard God's way, but need to learn it.

### Who is Judged and When?

For years, most Church of God groups taught that there would be three resurrections, only the second of which would involve judgment:

**1) The first resurrection** is for those who died "in Christ" and will rise with him during the Millennium (Rev 20:1-5). They have already been judged in their previous life and will no longer be judged, but "meet the Lord in the air when he returns" (1Thes 4:16). During the millennial rule, those humans who survived the tribulation will be taught God's way and judged on their obedience by those of this first resurrection.

**2) The second resurrection or "great white throne judgment"** is for all who ever lived not having understood what the Eternal expects of them (Rev 20:11-14). "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Rev 20:12). This is an obvious picture of people learning to live by the laws and principles of God and were judged according to their performance in the light of those laws and principles. Isaiah 65 appears to say that everyone will have 100 years to learn righteousness and put it into practice in their lives.

**3) The third resurrection** is for the wicked who knew of God's way but rejected it. They will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:15). That is their judgment and there is no need for further judgment or chance to repent. This final resurrection is immediately followed by the new heavens and the new earth, when the physical earth is recreated (Rev 21:1-3).

### Is There Any More to Learn?

The above is one possible understanding, but if we conclude that it explains everything, we may miss important truth in the scriptures.

Since many people have lived and died, never having heard about God, His Son, His truth or His Word, one or more resurrections are necessary for them to have a chance to learn. **It is important to realize that the Bible does not assign numbers to resurrections.** The expression "first resurrection" appears only in Revelation 20:5,6 and the Greek word for first is *protos*, which conveys more the idea of "chief" or "primary," **not** "number 1 in a series." The expressions "second resurrection" and "third resurrection" **are not in the Bible!** Furthermore, the chronologically first resurrection to immortal life was Jesus' resurrection; those who rise at his return will be chronologically the second resurrection. The Bible does appear to describe two—possibly three—**different kinds of resurrections.** These would be resurrections to **life, to judgment, and possibly, to contempt or destruction.** Keep these in mind as you read the following resurrection scriptures.

Jesus definitely spoke of two specific kinds of resurrections:

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a **resurrection of life**, those who committed the evil deeds to a **resurrection of judgment** (John 5:28-29, NAB).

The King James and most other versions say "damnation" or "condemnation" here instead of "judgment". The Greek word here is *krisis*, which is translated "judgment" in 41 out of 48 places that it appears. It does

**not** mean an "already judged condemnation." There are two kinds of resurrections here: those who judge with Christ on one hand and those who will be judged on the other. This interaction of both appears in Jude 14-15:

"...Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute **judgment on all**, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Verse 1 of Daniel 12 explains how God stops humanly-devised evil government. Verse 2 discusses two results of resurrections:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to **everlasting life**, Some to shame and **everlasting contempt**. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever (Dan 12:2-3).

The resurrection "to everlasting life" here clearly matches the resurrection "to life" in the above scriptures. The resurrection "to everlasting contempt" does not specifically exclude a "resurrection to judgment." People could be raised to judgment—the final result of which would be either "everlasting life" or "contempt." After all, verse 3 continues the Feast of Tabernacles theme of teaching and conversion.

The following are an interesting pair of scriptures, both words of Jesus and both recorded by John. The identical (even in Greek) term "last day" is used in both. Yet, the first scripture refers to the resurrection of a converted person, and the latter refers to the judgment of one who has rejected Jesus.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will **raise him up at the last day**" (John 6:44)

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will **judge him in the last day**" (John 12:48).

Paul appears to confirm that at least one single resurrection will involve both the just and the unjust.

The word “resurrection,” below, is clearly singular in the Greek:

I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be **a resurrection** of the dead, **both of the just and the unjust** (Acts 24:15).

We find another indication of apparently a single resurrection of both good and bad people together:

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of **the dead, that they should be judged**, And that You should **reward Your servants** the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should **destroy those who destroy** the earth (Rev 11:18).

All the above are to happen simultaneously, if we are to accept this scripture honestly, just the way it is written. Our Messiah’s statement concerning two kinds of resurrections bear no hint that one will occur 1000 years after the other.

Another parable, that is often ignored in studies of resurrections is in Luke 12. Peter asks who Jesus is speaking to, and he clearly shows it is converted people in verses 43-44:

Blessed is that servant **whom his master will find so doing when he comes**. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.

These and following verses show that Jesus is speaking about how He will deal with His followers when He returns. What will happen?

And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, **shall be beaten with many stripes**. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, **shall be beaten with few**. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more (Luke 12:47-48).

A stripe is symbolic of a punishment given to correct someone—so that they will not make the mistake again. God never commanded a person condemned to death to be beaten first—he takes no pleasure in their suffering. Nor does it make sense to give a “few stripes” to an immortal

being or to a human who will be immediately turned into an immortal being. These verses strongly imply that there can be an end-time correction process for people who knew God, but have more to learn before they are changed. (These people are not rising to meet Christ in the air). If this understanding of these verses is correct, it solves the problem of what happens to a person who has been baptized, then becomes involved in some kind of obvious sin, then unexpectedly dies. Does the Eternal have only the choices of 1) raising him immortal or 2) putting him in the lake of fire? Apparently, He has a plan to give correction first.

Even though some people appear to be changed to immortality “in the twinkling of an eye” (1Cor 15:52), other scriptures indicate there is a judgment for every converted person:

For we [brethren] must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2Cor 5:10—Rom 14:10 is similar).

Because He has appointed a day on which He will **judge the world** in righteousness by the Man [Christ] whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all, by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

### **What Does it All Mean**

We can see from the above scriptures that the timing of various resurrections and judgments is not clearly stated in the Bible. There are many more scriptures that refer to “the day of judgement” (though most probably could be translated “**a** day of judgment”—the Greek does not imply that there is only one such day). Other related scriptures can be found by looking up “His coming” and “His Appearing.”

We do not need to be fearful if we do not understand exactly when each person will rise from the dead, when and how they will be judged. We can pray for understanding—that the Eternal will show us how all of the diverse scriptures fit together. We are closer to the truth in this state of mind, than we are when we think we under-

stand it all when we really do not.

**We can rejoice in the overwhelming number of scriptures that tell us everyone will be judged and justly rewarded or punished for what they have done. We can use the Feast of Tabernacles as a time to realize that our bodies are temporary dwellings, here now to learn from God, and to be ready for a time of judgment in the future.** We should keep an open mind to scriptures that we thought we completely understood and realize that there may be other possible explanations.

### **One “Other Possible Explanation”**

As one example, let us examine the commonly accepted explanation of Revelation 20: that no unconverted are resurrected during the 1000-year millennium—they are all raised afterward in the “second resurrection”. That may well be true, but we are then faced with many Scriptures (some of which we have already listed) that appear to contradict that premise. 2 Timothy. 4:1 mentions “the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead **at** His appearing and His kingdom.” Jude 14-15 infers that Christ is coming to judge all the ungodly, an obvious reference to those who lived in the days of the writing of the book.

Obviously, there will be many “ungodly” people who survive the tribulation and live on into the millennium. They will need teaching and judgment. But the huge majority of people that need teaching and judging are dead. It does not seem to make sense that there would be a 1000-year separation between those who are judges and the majority that need to be judged.

Let us consider an alternate understanding of Revelation 20:4-5. It says, “they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” This does not exclude the possibility of a resurrection or multiple resurrections during the 1000 years. The “resurrection to judgment” mentioned by Jesus in John 5:29 is something less than the “resurrection to life,” so the people in the latter will not really “live” on the same level or sense of those in the former. We have already shown how the “first

resurrection,” in Revelation 20 is not chronologically or numerically first. The Greek *primos* can also be translated “chief”. A “chief resurrection” would define more the quality of the resurrection rather than its sequence. This is born out in verse 6 which indicates they are resurrected with spirit bodies and therefore are not subject to the “second death,” which is also a **qualitative** rather than a sequential term. (We know this from the fact that there were some who were raised from the dead that also died again—Lazarus died twice but will not necessarily suffer the Revelation 20 “second death”). So it seems that the “first” or “chief resurrection” is referring to the resurrection to everlasting life Jesus mentioned in John 5.

If there are resurrections to judgment during the Millennium, how then do we explain Revelation 20:5?

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Most expounders of this verse have had to claim that the first sentence should be in parenthesis (though there are none in the Greek) because the second sentence describes the “first resurrection” in verse 4. It is possible that the key to understanding this verse is the Greek word *anazao* here translated “live again”. This word apparently means more than just “live again” but implies a “re-creation,” “rebirth,” or a “renewal better than before.” Thayer’s Greek Lexicon gives these definitions:

1) live again, recover life; 1a) to be restored to a correct life; 1a1) **of one who returns to a better moral state**; 1b) to revive, regain strength and vigour

The Greek *anazao* is used four other places in the New Testament, and each seems to have this meaning in all of them. In Luke 15:24,32 it describes the new and superior state of the repentant “prodigal son.” It is used in Romans 7:9 to show how sin is more powerfully disclosed by the Law of God. Finally, it is used in Romans 14:9:

For to this end Christ died and rose and **lived again** [*anazao*], that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

In this verse there is already a word for “rose”, but apparently Paul did not consider that enough. He used also *anazao* to indicate that Christ went on to a superior state of life.

When we couple the understanding of this word with that of the “primary” or “chief resurrection,” Revelation 20:4-5 takes on this meaning:

And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not receive superior life until the thousand years were finished. This is the chief resurrection.

With this translation, there is plenty of room for one or more resurrections to human life and judgment during the Millennium, just **not to Eternal life**. These people could live and learn, and die again. Isaiah 65 indicates that people will have 100 years to learn, but will still die afterward. This fits with the end of Revelation 20 which seems like a final dispensing of everyone with little time to change: the people written in the “book of life” live, and everyone else is cast into the lake of fire. Admittedly, this translation of Revelation 20:5 is different than nearly all other Bible translations, but it makes a lot more sense with other scriptures that seem to imply judgment near the beginning of the return of Christ.

One more question that some of our readers may be asking: If all of the dead are resurrected and judged during the Millennium, symbolized by the Feast of Tabernacles, what becomes of the traditionally taught “hundred year judgment period” symbolized by the “eighth day” of the Feast? Answer: The period is not really needed—but then, it is very difficult to document from scripture anyway. What, then, would the “eighth day” of the Feast symbolize? Possibly the “New Heavens and the New Earth” of Revelation 21-22. But that is another subject for another time. We included this example not to declare it as “new truth,” but to point out that there are other possible understandings of the Bible and that we should not dogmatically declare our beliefs simply because a “credible teacher” taught them or because we know a lot of people who believe them.

## Conclusion

Let us review what we have discussed. The Feast of Tabernacles is to be a reminder of Israel’s experience in the wilderness and at the same time be a shadow of things to come. It is, in effect, a pivot point between the two, bringing forth the reflection of the past, and transforming it into a prophecy of the future. Its characteristics are direct guidance by God, re-education, building of faith, judgment, and removing of evil and evil doers. Also, there was miraculous feeding of bread from heaven, water gushing from the rock, and shoes and clothing that did not wear out. These ought to be prophetic of future events in fulfillment.

Also, we see that many prophecies of resurrections, the Millennium, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth are not as straightforward as we might have thought. If there is anyone who can harmonize all of the prophecies on all of these subjects, we would like to hear from them.

Even without understanding all of the prophecies, we can see that the Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows God’s Kingdom on Earth. Whether or not it foreshadows **only** the Millennium appears to hinge on whether judgment and re-education are to take place only during that period, afterward, or a combination of both. It seems many Sabbath-keepers envision a life of bliss and glory for both the Feast and the Millennium and somehow seem to miss the responsibilities that are going to be required in the Kingdom. If we feel that we “understand the prophetic time line,” we may tend to cut short or ignore things that could teach us lessons God wants us to understand for now and for the future.

By studying these, and considering what was to be done during the Feast, and who was to participate in it, we should be able to ascertain whether and how the Feast pictures God’s Kingdom. We should be able to study the Bible and gain fresh understanding for ourselves and our future.

We believe there is a challenge here for us to strive to learn about and teach all that God intends, as embodied in the Feast celebration.

—Archie Faul & Norman S. Edwards

# Local Congregations



## Wooten Speaks: Idaho, W. Virginia

Ray Wooten will be the featured speaker at the following events. Everyone is welcome.

A special Sabbath weekend is planned for **Post Falls, Idaho**, Sept. 13-14, 1997. A service, potluck meal, and Bible study will be held on the 13th (Sabbath), and a picnic on the 14th. For more details contact Gary or Betty Cook (208-664-4480), or Bob or Linda Gentry (509-624-8378).

A special Sabbath is planned in **Poca, West Virginia**, for September 27, 1997. For more information, call George Hampton at 304-586-3070 or e-mail at Cogpoca@aol.com.

## New Hymnal Still Forthcoming

*Songs for the Family of God*, a hymnal intended for use by multiple Sabbath-keeping congregations is nearly ready to go to press. It contains 77 songs, a collection of some of the best of "older Christian standards," Dwight Armstrong, Mark Graham, Ross Jutsum, other contemporary authors, and some international melodies. A detailed story and full list of titles appeared on page 23 of the March/April *Servants' News*.

As of now, the layout and proof-reading of the hymnal are essentially complete. All producer Mark Graham is waiting for are license arrangements to be finalized with the Worldwide Church of God. Graham has been negotiating with Ralph Helge and Hermon Hoeh of the WCG for several months. According to Herman Hoeh (in an August 5 telephone conversation), the WCG will be making arrangements with a third party royalty-broker (such as ASCAP, BMI, CCLI, etc.) to handle royalties for Dwight Armstrong's music. Royalty payments are collected by these organizations based on the number of copies published, and they are forwarded to the copyright holder.

Several months may be required for the WCG to get all of this set up, but once they have finished, anyone desiring to publish Dwight Armstrong's works will be able to obtain permission and pay the royalties.

As of now, Graham has no way to be sure what the royalty payments will be or when he will obtain permission to use the Dwight Armstrong songs. As soon as this is resolved, he will be ready to print the hymnal.

Graham provided *Servants' News* with a preliminary copy of the hymnal and it seems very well done. We believe it will be the best choice for a local congregation desiring to retain a traditional "Church of God" yet also draw on the best of other sources. Graham is committed to providing this hymnal to anyone who wants it, so additional copies will always be available to you. Larger church organizations often refuse to sell their hymnal to brethren outside of their organization. Congregations desiring more lively worship and praise music can simply use *Songs for the Family of God* in addition to a modern praise and worship hymnal.

For more information, contact:

—Mark Graham  
PO Box 770261

Lakewood, OH 44107-0019

Tel: 216-529-1380 (Eastern Time)

E-mail: magraham@baldwinw.edu

## Instrumental Accompaniment on CD

State of the Heart Music Ministry has announced the October 8th release of a collection of 8 CDs, each containing instrumental accompaniments for 15 or more outstanding worship music selections. Four of the volumes will contain the great traditional Christian hymns including *Amazing Grace*; *Blessed Assurance*; *He Lives*; *How Great Thou Art*; *I Love to Tell the Story*; *In the Garden*; *Jesus Saves*; *Nearer, My God, to Thee*; *Rock of Ages*; *To God Be the Glory*; *Victory in*

*Jesus*; *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* and *Worthy of Worship*.

The other four CDs will include the most popular contemporary praise and worship "spiritual songs" or choruses like *As the Deer*; *I Love You, Lord*; *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*; *Majesty and Shine, Jesus, Shine*. It will also contain music composed by Ross Jutsum of State of the Heart Music Ministry, including *Jesus, You're My Best Friend*.

**The collection will be called *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.**

A booklet containing the words to all songs is included with the set. Each song on the CD consists of an instrumental melody, piano accompaniment, and other instruments as appropriate. This format is ideally suited for accompaniment at worship groups or for individuals to privately listen and sing along. The melody is loud enough to help people learn, but will not "drown out" a group of people singing along with the CDs. More specific suggestions for how to use the CD's and booklets are included in the set.

Future plans call for additional formats to be sold in the future, including: overhead projection transparencies, discs for slide files, a MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) version on disc, and eventually, a printed hymnal with complete music.

For pricing and availability contact:

State of the Heart Music Ministry  
P.O. Box 888

Gladewater, TX 75647 U.S.A.

E-mail: rfjutsum@aol.com

Tel: 903-845-3450, 9AM to 6PM CDT

## Parenting Resources for the Church and the Home

From birth through your child's teen years, Growing Families International, Inc., is here to help parents raise morally responsible and biblically responsive children. They offer a full line of Bible-based parenting

courses for the church and community. Tapes, books, and other resources are available to help families apply biblical principles for living.

We know of Sabbatarian congregations who have held their own parenting classes using these videos and individual workbooks. Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, founders of Growing Families International, Inc., have authored these courses: Growing Kids God's Way, Preparation for Parenting, Preparation for the Toddler Years, Reaching the Heart of Your Teen, Reflections of Moral Innocence, and Preparation for Adolescence.

For more information, contact: Growing Families International, Inc., 9259 Eton Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311; 800-396-4434, 818-772-6264, fax: 818-885-7011, e-mail: info@gfi.org.

We are presently participating in one of their programs, and have found it quite valuable.

—Norman and Marleen Edwards

## **Christian Renewal Ministries**

We are an outreach ministry that grew out of the Seattle Church of God (Independent). We have ties and bridges to a number of different ministries. We offer all of our literature freely to any other ministries who wish to use it without obligation. We also encourage any other independent ministries and home fellowships who are of like-mind to associate with us and we will add the location of their services or a contact name & number to our website.

We also urge independent ministries to network together. We have done this quite successfully by looking more toward what we have in common and less toward how we are different. See the Feast of Tabernacles page on our website to see this spirit in action. Our website name is:

<http://www.frugal.com/~crmi/>

—Gregory Richardson, correspondent for: Christian Renewal Ministries International  
P.O. Box 111, Auburn, WA 98071-0111  
1-800-333-5208; FAX 1-253-351-2973  
E-Mail: crmi@frugal.com

## **Web Sites Worth Visiting**

For those with access to the Internet, you might be interested in some of these Worldwide Web sites:

<http://www.biblestudy.org> - Alan Ruth's resource site—lots of study material and other items especially useful to local congregations

<http://www.teleport.com/~stanczak/> - "Likeminds Home Page"—a site connected with the Likeminds Internet Forum. It includes sample posts from the forum, links to other Sabbatarian sites, and a variety of articles by several different authors related to the interests on the forum. "Likeminds are non-partisan commandment keepers who believe in a shared-ministry (1Pet.2:9) without church governance hierarchies (2Cor.1:24)."

<http://www.youall.com/oasis/> - "The OASIS" Website of "Eagle Ministries," hosted by George and Pam Dewey. Articles and links of interest to Sabbatarians.

<http://www.youall.com/waco/> - A temporary website to provide up-to-date news and information on the situation regarding the break-up in the Waco UCG congregation.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/1928/assorted.html> - a site listing hundreds of other "Church of God" groups, with links to their web sites.

## **Sabbatarian Singles Forum**

The Sabbatarian Singles Fellowship Forum was created for unmarried people within the Churches of God. The forum is to provide a springboard for those of us, with similar backgrounds in the Faith, to be able to correspond with others of our unique belief system! It is not a forum for discussing differences, but rather for celebrating our similarities!

We are starting with the forum so participants can read and respond within their own time frame. Later, we would like to begin a chat room with interested parties from this core group of people. You may subscribe at:

[SSFF@aol.com](mailto:SSFF@aol.com)

For more information, contact:

—Marla Prouty, Everett, WA  
[MAR944@aol.com](mailto:MAR944@aol.com)

## **Wisdom From the Internet**

Working with the poor? Remember Dart's first law of helping the poor: "Don't be one of them." You can't help other people unless you are strong, so

don't weaken yourself or your family in the process of helping others.

**This does not mean you don't sacrifice.** It means don't weaken yourself. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't go out of our way to be a good Samaritan.

But, don't weaken yourself. The good Samaritan paid the man's one time expenses, he didn't "take him in to raise," and he didn't bankrupt himself in the process. If he himself had been poor, he could have done little to help.

Money and health, including mental health are power. It is wrong to be selfish, but it is not wrong to be strong. I have often given this same advice to someone who was being destroyed mentally and physically by caring for another. Take care of yourself first so you will be able to take care of others.

It is the same advice airlines give their passengers relative to oxygen masks. Put yours on first, then put them on your children. You will be no good to your children if you have passed out. Many people have a concept of unselfishness that is vain.

—Ron Dart, [Cem@Gower.net](mailto:Cem@Gower.net).

Tel: 903-509-2999 Fax:903-509-1139

## **UCG Congregations Ponder Choices**

Over the past several months, at least nine local congregation circuits of the United Church of God, An International Association have split up or are in the process of doing so. In each case, the factors differ, though questions on the issue of governance are always present. Everyone agrees that the present UCG-AIA leaders derived their responsibilities and authority from the vote of the UCG-AIA elders at their Cincinnati conference. The main issue in debate is: Has the process of granting authority and responsibility now ended. Are these new leaders now responsible only to God for what they do and are ministers and members bound to follow all of their decisions? Or, are the leaders still at least partly responsible to the people's understanding of what God wants for their congregation? Do the people that gave them their authority still have the right to say "this or that is a bad decision, we want you to change what you are doing there"?

This same problem also occurs in miniature in some local congrega-

**Continued on page 29**

The Seed,  
The Sower,  
The Gospel...

## ...AND Home Fellowships!

The church of God is experiencing an explosive growth in home fellowship groups. This trend will no doubt continue and enlarge over the next several years. Members of these new house churches, many of which came from larger church organizations, wonder what their roles and responsibilities are in spreading the gospel. Brethren grapple with this question against a backdrop of leaders in larger churches deriding this new movement of God's people. Their chief criticism lies in the belief that small fellowships do not do "the work." Some ministers feel that a home fellowship's role is at best irrelevant and at worst a hindrance to those "truly" active in God's great commission delivered to His people (Matt. 28:16-20).

In an overlooked statement by Jesus and the words of the apostle Paul we discover the responsibilities local fellowships bear. Jesus, talking to His disciples after a discussion with the women at the well in Samaria, said, "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (John 4:35, NKJV). Jesus goes on to declare "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true 'One sows and another reaps'. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors" (v. 36-38).

Notice that the disciples were sent to harvest that which they did not sow or plant! It was the righteous men and

women that toiled before them, and the words and deeds inspired by God and written in the Old Testament that sowed the seed of truth (1Peter 1:10-12, Acts 15:21). The disciples were not the first to enter into the harvest field of the world. They did not personally know the workers that came before them. God's work is one where laborers expend their efforts at various times in the field.

The apostle Paul offers us insight into how God distributes jobs in His work. Paul, in correcting the Corinthian church not to have contentions, said "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." (1Cor. 3:5-6). He goes on to state "So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." (v. 7-8).

Paul was stressing that all workers in God's work are critical to the successful implementation of God's plan of salvation. ALL are to cooperate to reach a common goal whether they plant seeds of truth or later water by encouraging spiritual growth in others. Each person who puts his hand to the plow in God's work is rewarded according to the effort they exert.

A significant contributing factor to the confusion and criticism about responsibilities in the gospel derives from an obsession with numbers. The number of members or ministers we have, the moneys we collect and the volume of requests we receive through media outreach are some of the figures used to verify who "really" is active and producing in God's work. We must be cautious however not to put greater

faith in numbers than in God's plan. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, taught God's way for 120 years and gained not one convert. Many of the righteous prophets of old did not live to fully see the fruit of their labors (1Peter 1:10-12). Regardless of numbers, we must never overlook our Christian calling and commission. The manifestation of the ultimate fruit of our efforts may not come until the future.

Home fellowships can play a dynamic, rewarding role in the commission to spread the gospel Jesus gave His church. It may be our skills and talents lead us to be sowers of God's truth in the soil of the mind of another whom He has prepared to accept His word. We may be waterers, encouraging others on their road to accepting Jesus as their Savior before their baptism or giving spiritual nourishment to those already converted. We may also labor as harvesters who gather the fruit of the sower and waterer into God's church. God however reserves for Himself the ultimate gathering of the harvest of souls at His resurrections (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43; Rev. 20).

Whether sowers, waterers or harvesters, all Christians are fellow laborers and contributors to God's great work. Our Father has promised us a reward for using our talents in whatever job He has given us. Since we are in the "last days" before Christ's return, it may be that the sowing and watering of some home fellowships do not bear fruit until the Great Tribulation. At that time, an innumerable multitude will accept Jesus as their Savior, repent and turn to God (Rev. 7:9-17). May God help us awaken to our high calling in Jesus, to take our royal priesthood seriously (1Peter 2:9-10) and boldly enter into the fields of the lives of His greatest creation, mankind.

—Alan Ruth



# Letters & Responses

We print a representative sampling of our mail—both positive and negative. We do not include names unless we are fairly sure that the writer would not object. To avoid any difficulty, writers should specify how much of their name and address they would like us to print. We include our response to each letter in this type-style. We have selected a title for each letter for easy reference. If writers supply their own title, we will be happy to use it.

## Praise for "Praise"

**LETTER:** August 10, 1997

Hi Norm! Just wanted to tell you I enjoyed your article on "Praise." I thought you took a unique approach with your comparisons to sporting events and political rallies. In a similar vein, it's interesting to me that many people who would be comfortable with the public display of affection between parents and children are disgusted and sickened by contemporary services where worshippers openly express their love for their Father and Older Brother by clapping or raising their hands in praise.

Since I was once one of those disgusted, I've given some thought as to why I felt that way. There may be as many reasons for the disgust as there are disgusted people. But in my case, I believe legalism kept me too focused on the contractual relationship I had with God and distracted me from the more intimate relationship God intended.

I hope anyone disturbed by your article will read the scriptural references again and pray for understanding. God wants them so much closer than they realize!

—California

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for the encouragement. We have never heard of anyone who claimed to have made a scriptural study of praise and worship and concluded that only old, staid music should be used to worship the Eternal.

—NSE

## The Holy Spirit Remains Unscathed

**LETTER:** August 15, 1997

Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter and all the literature you were kind enough to send. I regret that I don't have access to E-mail or photo copying facilities or I would offer my services. Hope it soon gets established for you to get the European mail speeded up; it is much appreciated.

I attend UCG (AIA) and for all the many criticisms and problems that come our way, there is one thing that's obvious to those who take note, and that is the intervention and direction of the Holy Spirit in both personal and group activities and teaching and provision.

Thank God, His Spirit is beyond the scope of man's meddling—unlike the written and spoken word, which has been so distorted in many areas. Thank you for all your hard work.

Sincerely,

—A.S., England

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for your letter. One family is taking care of our United Kingdom subscription list, and another is taking care of the rest of Europe. See page 2 for the addresses.

We agree that the Eternal does his work with people in organizations, with people out of organizations, and with people who have not yet made up their mind. The history of religion never gives us a single group with "the truth" and a lot of other groups with error. We find numerous groups with a mixture of truth and error (yes, some big ones with nearly all error!).

—NSE

## Forgot CBCG Feast Sites?, TCG?

**LETTER:** August 10, 1997

I was looking at your Festival information in the July issue of your publication on your web site and noticed that Christian Biblical Church of God's sites are not listed.

Is this an oversight, or is there something I should know about that outfit?

Also, do you have any information about "The Churches of God" located in Texas?

—Sincerely, D. J. Fudge

**RESPONSE:** In most cases, we simply print information about Feast sites from whatever reliable source we find—contacting each hosting organization would take a long time. Some might need a committee or board meeting before they could "approve" of our printing their Feast information. In the case of the Christian Biblical Church of God, we did not have any reliable source, so we called their leader, Fred Coulter and he specifically asked us not to list their Feast sites, so we honored his request.

The Churches of God is a split-off from the Church of God, International. It currently has a rather loose structure—some work is done in Hawkins, Texas and some in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It is now called **The Church of God Outreach Ministries**. For more information, call their toll-free number: 800-611-8080.

—NSE

## Attending Feast Again After 3 Years

**LETTER:**

August 5, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards

I appreciate very much the information contained in the materials you sent me which I've had opportunity to read over most. I enjoyed reading the How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans? study paper and took particular notice regarding the purpose of spiritual gifts.

I think God has been working on me for a time and toward a certain design. I have always been somewhat of an iconoclast and have frequently questioned the purpose of doctrine and logic of those in church authority. This kind of thinking has led myself to leave a main line Christian Organization, join a Sabbath Keeping Group and eventually be disfellowshipped for not blindly obeying the leaders. Now, through experience, I have greater discernment of that which is false in addition to understanding that which is corrupt. Though these experiences were difficult for my family and myself, I acknowledge the method behind the madness and believe that God has called me out for a real reason.

In light of what is happening with the greater congregation of believers, I've got to believe that there is something to more to do with the body. I can grasp the information available and do the best I can on my own. However, there is certainly something lacking and I've found that to being independent though safe lacks the synergy and benefit of a congregation. Especially when looking for some assistance to recognize, develop and capitalize on my spiritual gifts, I would honor the advice given to me by sincere elders. In light of the Parable of the Talents, I'm ultimately responsible for the fruit I would or would not bare. This weighs heavy on my heart as I see the world growing darker.

We haven't attended a Feast of Tabernacles outside my immediate family for three years now. Primarily due to reasons I have sited above. However, I desire to attend the feast and to gather with those who are interested in living in accordance with the true government of God.

We live in south central Indiana and I have noted the Ohio feast site at Burr Oak State Park. I would like to attend, but I guess I don't really know what to expect.

Sincerely,

—DC, Indiana

**RESPONSE:** We are glad that the paper on government was a help to you. Also, we are happy that you are able to attend the Feast this year. The biggest differences you will probably notice are: you will be able to ask questions of the speakers, you will be able to read scriptures in services, there will be more singing, there will be less people telling you what to do or think, and not everyone there will have the same opinion about every doctrine. We look forward to seeing you.

—NSE

### Unhappy With United Church of God

**LETTER:** August July 31, 1997  
Dear Norm;

Just a little donation to help you do the work that the *Servants' News* requires. Sure do enjoy reading them and the other articles we received. Keep up the good work. Hope you and your family are well. God bless you and help you.

Several of us here who attend United are very upset with the present administration and in Victoria in the south end of the Island, about 35 brethren left United for the same reasons. And as we gather, there are other areas having the same problems here in Canada.

Let's pray that His Kingdom won't be much longer and our true Shepherd will soon return.

With Brotherly Love,

—Canada

**RESPONSE:** We say "amen" to your prayer for the return of the true Shepherd, but we remind you that He is also working now! We believe that brethren now are directly seeking the Eternal, Christ and His Word more than they ever have in the past 30 years or longer. Even though difficulties arise when friends are separated, those who truly seek the Eternal will continue to have love for each other in this life, and in the Millennium to come.

—NSE

### Is Non-tithing Breaking the Eighth Commandment?

**LETTER:** July 23, 1997  
Dear Sir:

We would like to request your booklet on "How To Give to the Eternal!"

In the newest booklet from the Global Church, "The 10 Commandments", in it, it refers to not paying your tithes—as breaking of the 8th Commandment. We really feel we need to study the subject on tithing again.

I believe that this is the first time I have seen it connected to the 8th Commandment.

Sincerely,

—California

**RESPONSE:** We will gladly send you the booklet which should answer this question in detail. But for a quick answer, consider this: Paul told the Ephesians "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Yet he clearly says that he provided for his own needs by working (Acts 20:34-35; 18:3, 1Thes 2:9, 2Thes 3:8-9). If Paul was not teaching them to tithe to him to preach the Gospel, was he teaching them to steal? We do not think so.

Malachi 3:8 talks about people robbing God in tithes and offerings. Verses 10-11 show that the tithes were on food given to the Levites and Priests. But both Old and New Testament show that everyone is responsible for giving offerings.

There is no doubt that the Eternal blesses people for giving in a right spirit. But there is much doubt about church organizations that demand a certain amount of money from their members--there is no New Testament example of this, nor is there any proof that Levitical tithes transferred to the "ministry."

—NSE

### Comments on Men vs. Women

**LETTER:** August 3, 1997  
Dear Sir or Madam,

I received my July 1997 issue of *Servants' News* on Friday (August 1). That evening, I flipped through the issue and the article "Men vs. Women?" caught my eye. I must admit that if I hadn't seen Eric Trowbridge's letter in print in your publication (which I trust), I would never have believed that someone could be so 'messed up' in his or her view of women. It saddens me because I suspect that Eric must have experienced one or more bad relationships with women to cause him to feel that women are so inferior as a group.

When I was in public school, I had a natural ability in Mathematics. I do not consider myself an exception—I feel there are a lot of women that excel in Mathematics or other sciences. It is possible that a higher percentage of men in general excel in math/science compared to women, but there are a lot of women that have excellent

math skills. But one must wonder if part of this higher percentage in men with good math skills might not be environmental and not an innate ability that more men have than women. The reason I say this is because while in public school, I was **discouraged** on several occasions from developing my math abilities. A high school counselor tried to encourage me to take a sewing class instead of Trigonometry. I took the Trig class (and my mother taught me how to sew at home).

In spite of being discouraged to pursue the areas of Mathematics/Science, I have a Bachelors Degree and a Masters Degree—both with a major in Mathematics and a minor in Computer Science. When I was taking my Mathematics classes for both degrees, the **majority** of my classmates were female. When I was working on my Masters Degree, I had a teaching fellowship, as did 5 of my other classmates. These fellowships were awarded to the 'better' students. We were paid to teach two undergraduate classes in Mathematics while working on our Masters Degree. All 6 of the fellowship students were female. There were 2 male students that took graduate classes towards a Masters Degree at the same time I was working on mine, but they did not have a fellowship. In the Computer Science classes that I took (both undergraduate and graduate level), the majority of the pupils were female as well.

After obtaining my Masters Degree, I taught at the college level for 13 years. **Very rarely** did the number of male students in any of my classes exceed the female students. Typically, there was almost an even number of males to females. Looking back on those 13 years of teaching, I can remember several outstanding male students, but I can also remember several outstanding female students.

I retired from teaching to stay at home and raise our 4 children. I enjoyed my time teaching, as I now enjoy my time at home with my children. When I was pursuing my degrees and teaching, this was with my husband's approval. When we decided to have children, we decided it best for me to retire and stay at home with the children. I do not consider myself an exception to the female race—I think many of us women try very hard to do things pleasing to our husbands.

I found many of the statements that Eric made in his letter offensive to women in general. Eric states that "women's 'gullible nature' is the reason they are not to teach," and Adam's sin was letting his wife teach him." Sounds to me like Adam was the

gullible one! Eric states that "girls suffer more from low self esteem than boys" which I don't doubt is true, but what is the source of that? The woman has been considered (until recent times) more like property than as a person. What about the men in the Old Testament having more than one wife? What do you suppose the 'older' wife felt like when the husband took another wife, much younger and prettier? I am sure she felt like an object that is old and rejected and put on the back shelf.

And what about Eric's statement that 'anorexia' is almost a feminine problem. While he is incorrect that is almost exclusively a female problem (I have known several men that were anorexic), we must address why this is a major problem with girls/women? Our society thinks a man with a little extra weight around the middle can still be attractive. But let a woman put on a few extra pounds and she is obese and a glutton. My husband notices overweight women, but doesn't seem to notice men that are proportionally as overweight. Why is that? Because allowances are made by our society with respect to how a man looks as he ages, but no allowances are made with regards to a woman's appearance.

I could continue in this way, quoting Eric's letter and responding, but I would waste too much of my time typing (and too much of your time having to read this lengthy epistle!). Thanks for an interesting newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Helen Casey, Texas

**RESPONSE:** We largely agree with your letter. Our reading of various research indicates that there are considerably more men in math and science schools and jobs. Your experience with more women may be unique to the school where you taught, or possibly because women students tend to choose women teachers.

Human Engineering Laboratories concluded that many math and science aptitudes are carried on the "X" chromosome, but are recessive genes. Since men only have one "X" chromosome, about 50% of the men have the aptitude. But since women have two "X" chromosomes, they must have the math/science genes in both of them in order to have the aptitudes. This explains why about 25% of women have these aptitudes. The Eternal could have designed women so that they would never have these abilities, but **He did not!** If He gave these abilities to 25% of women, He certainly expects them to use them where possible.

Thank you for your example of how a woman can both become educated, work in a meaningful job, and raise a family. Other

women raise a family early in life, and go on to a career later. Some put their entire life into their family. Others put their entire life into a career. Our Creator likes variety. He probably could have made the Earth's ecosystem work with a few dozen general-purpose insects. Instead, he made about 1,000,000 different kinds. If he took that much interest in diverse kinds of bugs, does he not have even more interest in diverse kinds of people?

—NSE

### Comments on Conder's Writings

**LETTER:** August 19, 1997

Mr. Edwards,

Thank you for your quick response to my request for literature and a holy day calendar.

Regarding Eric Snow's refutation of Conder's heresy, please send me a copy as soon as possible. I have begun a study of Conder's book myself. It was given to me by two friends (also former WCG) who said that for awhile they believed Conder's premise, but not being able to disprove it, they refuted it on faith alone!

To me, this is blind faith and not substantive. I have only begun my review, but it has been obvious from the start that Conder never fully understood the basic teachings of the COG or the Bible. He misstates facts and teachings often.

This appears to be another sad commentary on many who were "brought up in the church." They accepted without proving for themselves what was true. Conder appears to have neither the training nor background required for proving or disproving anything. He jumps to conclusions based on inaccurate information and poor reasoning. His statement that Jesus was born in Nazareth shows his ignorance of scripture or careless editing. In either case, I submit that if "we" can't disprove his claims, the "we" as a body are the most tragic of people. We must use all our resources, all "gifts" in a joint effort on all fronts from now on. The days of allowing oneself to lie back and get spoon-fed are over!

The fact that three people I know from WCG (former members) have believed Conder should be a wake-up call. We are not as strong as we think we are!

So once again, thanks for your timely response, and please send me Mr. Snow's treatise. If I find additional refutation arguments during my study, I will surely let you know. We need all the ammo we can get!

Sincerely,

—RM, Illinois

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for your insight on the Conder situation. We believe that it is possible to refute his idea, that the New Testament and Jesus are phonies, by either or both methods. When brethren prayed in the name of Jesus or Yeshua many times and received direct answers, it is impossible to convince them that no one heard. This is especially true for people who were delivered from death, received miraculous healing, had lost property miraculously returned, or witnessed other great miracles. Also, we believe that a person with an honest mind looking at history will find the New Testament one of the most historically-provable documents.

Please encourage anyone you know who is interested to write for a copy of Eric Snow's paper.

—NSE

### Questions on Keeping the Sabbath

**LETTER:** August 2, 1997

Dear NSE,

I am reading your news from local congregations section in SN, July 1997. I disagree partly with your comment on the Sabbath-keepers rights—ie Sabbath-keepers should not expect others to work less desirable hours so they can keep the Sabbath.

Keeping the Sabbath does not involve insuring the rights of others not to keep it. Of course, we respect their rights, but we are not made unable to keep the Sabbath except when their right not to is reinforced. That is not a requirement in keeping God's laws.

I am a nurse and the problem has occurred in my situation many times. It is a perceived problem for the managers who decide that my being a Sabbath-keeper is unfair to those who like to party on Saturday night.

Should I then occasionally break the Sabbath for this profit-seeking medical facility—so their party-goers have a right to do their thing? I am not saying that they do not have that right, but I am saying that I will not be there drawing a paycheck **so they can hire** those who want equal rights.

If all of us wanted to keep the Sabbath—whose responsibility is it to insure patient rights and care when we keep the Sabbath? (the facility)

Granted the patients must have care. If they (the patient) were in trouble, I would do that care for free—but not to profit the company. There is much paperwork and equipment care that goes into patient care. When that patient enters the hospital—the first priority is not immediate care except in

the emergency room and even there they are looking for financial coverage and insurance at outstanding costs. (ie, I have seen lists where a patient paid \$5 for an aspirin). The nurse must insure while she's drawing pay and on the clock, that not only is the patient being cared for, but that the necessary charges are billed for whatever she does and uses in order to treat the patient.

Some ministers have said this is my part in being "a good neighbor." But do I shove aside the first four commandments to keep the last six?

In other cases, if some company decides to do business on the Sabbath, are we supposed to respect their "rights" to break it and break it ourselves—so someone will be insured of equal rights?

Sincerely in love,

—Myra McQueen, Texas

**RESPONSE:** We are sorry that our comment at the end of page 13 (July 1997 *SN*) was not very clear. We do not mean that Sabbath-keepers should agree to work on the Sabbath so that others can have the day off. What we meant is that Sabbath-keepers **should not expect the government or employers to require others to work less desirable hours** in order for Sabbath-keepers to be able to keep the Sabbath. The most we can expect from human governments is that they let people practice their own religion as long as it does not interfere with others. If we accept government enforcement of special provisions for Sabbath-keepers, we may later find government enforcement of special provisions for keepers of other days—or government enforcement of provisions against Sabbath-keepers.

In the Millennium, we will have a righteous government that will make provision for everyone to keep the Sabbath. (It works fine for the Eternal to enforce religion in a government, but when men do it, you never know what religion they will end up enforcing!) Yet, there will always be some people who do need to "work" on the Sabbath, such as priests (Matt 12:5) and security forces (2 Kings 11:5). Most places where entire communities keep the Sabbath, this and other necessary work is done on an unpaid, rotating basis by a combination of professionals and volunteers. For example, if 100 men were needed to guard the temple, day and night, 400 men might be required to do the job. That would allow three shifts, time for a day off, vacations, emergencies, etc. On the Sabbath, 100 full-time men might split the three shifts with the help of 200 volunteers. That way, the full-time men would have to work only one out of every four Sabbaths.

How do we maintain essential functions on the Sabbath in our society? This becomes increasingly complicated when your goal is to give emergency care to needy people on the Sabbath, but the goal of a corporation is to make a profit on every day including the Sabbath. When God gave the command to put Sabbath breakers to death (Ex 31:14-15; 35:2), He gave it to free men who would farm their own land, and be in charge of their own lives. Much later, we find brethren who are slaves—Paul tells them to obtain freedom if possible, but not to be concerned about it (1Cor 7:21-22). Certainly, some slaves of unconverted masters had to work on the Sabbath. Paul did not require them to be killed or let their wives and children go unfed (1Tim 5:8) in order not to work on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, the Eternal certainly expected slaves to keep the entire Sabbath as much as possible—even if that meant working extra hard during the rest of the week.

Today, the Eternal expects us to do everything we reasonably can to keep the Sabbath. If we work for ourselves, we are without excuse. If we work for someone else who regularly requires us to work on the Sabbath, we need to change jobs if possible. Does the Eternal require a person to quit the first time he or she is scheduled to work on the Sabbath, or can that person find a new job first? The scripture does not give details on these decisions, but no one will fool the Eternal! "For whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

On the other hand, most believers will go to hospitals on the Sabbath in genuine emergencies. If the Eternal allows believers to use such services, how can it be a sin for them to help provide them? Supposing a power-line falls on a major highway on the Sabbath in a small town, and only two men there know how to safely disconnect it. Should the Sabbath-keeper refuse to help and risk death or injury to people driving or walking over it? Our Savior showed that it was acceptable to do some work in genuine emergency situations (Luke 14:5). Notice that he did not say that if an ox falls into a pit on the Sabbath that the owner should pray that God will miraculously take it out! Nor did he say that the man should let the ox die knowing that God would bless him for strictly keeping the Sabbath. We believe that the Eternal accepts people who do **occasional, genuine emergency** work on the Sabbath if it is done to satisfy genuine human need, not to simply keep a good job. The Bible gives no answers to questions such as: What constitutes an emer-

gency? How many hours per month can be worked? Is it all right to miss Sabbath services? Can I accept the money? These are issues that the Bible does not explain in detail—people should pray and ask for the Eternal's will in the matter. Not everyone will make the same decision.

"Be holy, for I am holy" And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear (1Pet 1:16-17).

—NSE

## What Do We Call The Father?

**LETTER:**

May 23, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards,

Thank you for the series of articles on the "sacred names" in the March-April issue of *Servants' News*. For some time now, I have been puzzled by the popularity of the sacred names movement among former members of the Worldwide Church of God.

In your article, you asked the question, "What is the Father's name?" Well, isn't His name "God the Father?" God is referred to as "Father" 250 times in the New Testament; 120 times in the gospel of John alone.

"Father" is a name that one can call God in any language, whether it is Hebrew, Greek, English, or Swahili. The expression "*Abba*, Father" occurs three times in the New Testament; one of them spoken by our Savior Himself. (See Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, and Galatians 4:6). In these passages, God is called "Father" in two languages simultaneously. *Abba* is Aramaic for "father" or "papa" [and *pater* is Greek for father].

In Norman Arthur's article, he did a word study on the name of YHVH. I have done a similar study on the name of the "Father." The following scriptures are taken from the New King James Version:

Our **Father** in heaven, hallowed be your **name** (Matt 6:9 and Luke 11:2).

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the **name of the Father** and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19).

I have come in My **Father's name**, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive (John 5:43).

Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My **Father's name**, they bear witness of Me (John 10:25).

Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father save Me from this

hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour. **Father glorify your name.**' Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again (John 12:27,28).

I have manifested Your [the Father's] **name** to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word (John 17:6).

Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy **Father**, keep through Your **name** those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your **name**. These whom You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (John 17:11,12).

O righteous **Father!** The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your **name**, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:25, 26).

For this reason I bow my knees to the **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is **named** (Eph 3:14,15).

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His **Father's name** written on their foreheads (Rev 14:1).

God the Father is called "the Father of glory," (Eph 1:17) "the Father of spirits", (Heb 12:9) "the Father of lights," (Jms 1:17) and "the Father of mercy and the God of all comfort." (2Cor 1:3).

God has many names, and to take any one of them in vain would be a violation of the third commandment. The proponents of the sacred names movement believe that we should call God by His Hebrew name. I certainly respect their decision to do that. But God knows that the majority of the world's population does not speak Hebrew, and He has revealed many names of Himself that each of us can call Him in our own language.

Sincerely in Christ,

—Ed Randall, New Mexico

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for your good analysis. The very fact that the New Testament uses both names in several places indicates that both were used at that time. If only one name was used by people (whether it be Aramaic or Greek), why would any of the writers write it in two languages? But the issue is complex enough that we, like

you, accept whatever names others use.

—NSE

## Name Wrong, You Worship Satan?

**LETTER:**

August 14, 1997

Hello Norman Edwards,

A few months ago, we wrote to you cancelling our subscription to your magazine. Seems like you simply ignored our letter and have kept on sending your magazine to us.

Please do take note that we are not in the least interested in what *Servants' News* has to say. We are no longer members of any Church of God—because worshipping God is WORSHIPPING SATAN (once you know who GOD, or THE LORD IS!). As strange as this may sound to you, you should check up on what we pointed to you the last time we wrote. HA BAAL is in the Hebrew language translated as THE LORD. All who worship THE LORD simply do what the ancient Israelites did and what hence caused them to go into captivity (i.e. BAAL WORSHIP). They turned away from worshipping the true *eloah*, who is none other than YAHWEH.

We are Yahwehists and do not need anything from the Churches of God. We believe in attaining salvation from Yahweh through his beloved Son, Yahushua the Messiah.

Please DO NOT IGNORE THIS MAIL and CANCEL OUR SUBSCRIPTION.

I will point you to the right direction if you truly want to obtain our creator's TRUTH. Go to the web site "WWW.Yahweh.Org" and download whatever you find there. You may or may not find them useful.

All the *Servants' News* you send us end in the same pile as any magazines that come to us from the CGs (who still refuse to cancel our subscriptions). We BURN THEM —as this is what will happen to the deity of this world (whom you serve—knowingly or unknowingly!).

—Elias R. A. Polo, Kenya

**RESPONSE:** Thank you very much for letting us know that you do not want to receive *Servants' News* any more. We have no record of receiving your previous request to cancel. Our mail service isn't perfect—but then neither are we.

We appreciate your desire to serve Yahweh and Yahushua as you understand from the scriptures. May he bless you for your service.

We have been spending some time studying the scriptures that talk about final judgement. We found it interesting that some people were serving Yahushua and

did not even know it (Matt 25:31-40). On the other hand, there were some doing mighty works in His Name, but they are evil doers (Matt 7:22-23). We have not yet found a scripture where people are judged for how well they pronounce His Name, but we are still looking!

—NSE

## Former WCG Elder Turns Atheist

**LETTER:**

January 11, 1997

Dear Mr. Edwards,

The December issue of the *Servants' News* arrived today along with a card to be signed and returned indicating my wishes whether to continue the free subscription or not. I have enclosed it indicating I am declining your offer. (I noted earlier on the mailing label that I was sent the publication at the request of a third party).

**RESPONSE:** We put the note on your mailing label so that you would know another requested it. We will take you off of our mailing list right away.

**LETTER:** In 1992, I exited from Herbert Armstrong's **cult** after some 30 years of involvement. I was a member for 25 years and a **Local Church Elder for the last 16**.

After exiting, I spent considerable time in critical thought and logical analysis with the help of the kind of people rarely met in cults like the WCG—bright people. I entered the field of free thought. It was most difficult to maneuver around in this new world as one must be free of two things which go to aid the cult's control system—the force of traditions and the tyranny of one's own passions (Bertrand Russell). The WCG always frowned on anyone using rational analysis of their system of madness. PRAY-PAY-and OBEY were the watchwords.

**RESPONSE:** We sympathize with the difficulty you experienced. There were many in the WCG who took the biblical truth they had and added their own traditions and ideas to enrich themselves. They will have to answer for it some day.

Also, many WCG ministers read the Bible and saw what the Eternal expected, then tried to force their members to do it, without any particular discernment as to whether the members had the holy spirit and were doing things according to their own convictions. While they claimed to teach salvation by grace and good works through the power of the Holy Spirit and knowledge of the Bible, most WCG ministers rarely ever made any effort to understand how their members **thought and why they did what they did**. As long as they paid their tithes and obeyed the ministers, they were considered "good members." In most congregations, no

one would ever know or care if a member of 30-years could not explain one doctrine from the Bible. But if a person came dressed in work clothes for services (in spite of James 2:2-4), or asked a question about the writings of an "outsider" (like Bertrand Russell), then **they were in trouble!**

The result of this method of teaching has been evident during the last ten years of the WCG breakup. Former-members have gone in nearly every possible direction. Many have desperately tried to recreate the same system in new organizations, repeating the same errors. Nevertheless, in spite of all of the mistakes made, some of us in the WCG did establish a relationship with the Eternal and accomplished much by the power of the Holy Spirit working in **them**. They did learn truth there and know why they know it. Many others, such as yourself, simply went through the same motions but never did establish a living relationship with the Eternal.

**LETTER:** I have suffered much depression over the last 4 ½ years as I reflected on my wretched, wasted life in the cult. I threw away my youth, a possible normal life, and tens of thousands of dollars in forced pursuit of Armstrong's soap bubble which eventually burst, revealing its true nature.

**RESPONSE:** I understand how you feel that way. Without a real relationship with God, keeping the Sabbath, paying tithes, deleavening your house and many other activities that the WCG tried to enforce are nearly meaningless. Those things never earned anyone salvation and without a spiritual understanding, they become a boring routine.

I realize now that much of the money I sent in was probably wasted and that I wasted much time following the dictates of men when I could have followed the Eternal. But just as Jesus learned obedience by suffering, so did I. I have learned the evils of putting organizations and human leaders before the Eternal and His word. I have helped many to come to this understanding and am convinced that I will never be a part of a human hierarchy again.

**LETTER:** Each time, the Servants' News arrived in my mailbox, my depression would increase as I reflected on so many decent people (albeit blinded) wasting so much time and money on such massively erroneous assumptions. I must now push ahead in my recovery from religious reminders of my formerly misdirected life. Hence my leaving your mailing list.

I am now an atheist in the sense **I do not believe in a god or gods**. Through much struggle I am gaining back a measure of self-respect and peace. I had these things in

some measure years ago, prior to being ensnared by "The World Tomorrow" broadcast as presented by the master liar/playboy/whore-master, [name withheld]. I will curse forever that sad day back in 1962.

**RESPONSE:** I do not think you have fully thought out life with no God. I will not answer you from the Bible which you do not believe, but from hard, cold logic. You say you will "curse forever that sad day?" Without God, you will do nothing "forever"—you will die, rot in a grave, and be forgotten in less than 100 years. Furthermore, how are you any more important than any other plant, fish or insect that happens to be alive right now? Without God, there are no moral standards that you or anyone else need follow. What is wrong with a man committing adultery—with your wife or daughter? Many governments will not prosecute this act if it is between consenting adults. What is wrong with someone lying on TV if they can get rich from it? That is easier than working! Furthermore, what is wrong with violating human laws—even committing murder—if you are sure you can escape prosecution by the state? What is wrong with one nation annihilating another nation to gain their wealth? There are plenty of Satanists, mobsters, and politicians who operate with exactly these philosophies. I can tell them with the authority of God that they are sinning and will have to account for it—I could ask God for deliverance if they threaten me or my family. You have only your own authority to say they are wrong, and for protection you must either look to yourself (take up martial arts, weapons, etc.) or become a servant to some more powerful human or organization.

Today, you are fortunate. You live in a country that officially places a high value on human life (because its founders were Bible-believers). But tomorrow, that might not be so. Do you believe that educated, thinking men have progressed beyond the barbarism I describe? A great many highly educated artists, philosophers, statesmen, scientists, and others served Adolf Hitler willingly—a regime that attempted to obliterate whole nations and that routinely killed off **its own people** when they became too old or sick to be productive. We could find many similar examples throughout history. Without God, you have no basis for saying any of this is wrong.

**LETTER:** I hope you will publish this letter and if you do, please spare me the usual appended "response" with the standard biblical phrases and "isn't it a shame" platitudes. I've said the same things in the past when some of my friends wised up years ago.

In the assumption you will publish this

letter, I am tempted to list some of the writings which set me free, but I'll leave those recommendations for any contacts from your readers who might have the courage and healthy curiosity to ask larger questions of life which do not appear in your journal.

In closing, I do thank you for the past issues of the SN as they helped me further understand the sad human condition.

Sincerely,

—New Hampshire

**RESPONSE:** We do not think your approach "is a shame" at all. You are being honest. Apparently, you have never felt or seen the power of the Eternal working in your life and you are honest enough to admit it. Following WCG rules never put God's spirit in anyone. **You are in a much better condition than ministers who are not sure there is a God, but continue preaching because it is the only job they know.** If you continue to live a moral life—follow most of God's laws even though you do not believe in Him, you will probably be better off than someone who claims to know God, but does not have His spirit. If, on the other hand, you follow your atheistic views to their ultimate conclusion—that you can do whatever you want as long as you "don't get caught," your life will be indeed miserable.

But I would guess that you believe that man is quite capable of writing his own standards of morality, and that you will adopt the philosophy of some brilliant person who wrote one of the books that "set you free." Since you will not hear the Bible, you will have a chance to see the fruit of human systems for yourself. You will certainly come into conflict with people who have values different than yours—and you will learn that the strongest man usually wins—not the one with the "most brilliant" standards.

I think your new-found freedom is a positive thing for you now. At some point, I believe you will learn why you need God. It may occur sooner, or it may not occur until you are older and near death and you ask yourself the questions: "What did my life mean, anyway?" "Am I about to be forgotten forever in an endless stream of pointless history?" If you remained in an organization where you thought you "already had God," there is little chance you would ever truly repent and receive His spirit. But as you navigate the treacherous waters of human philosophies, you will come to see the need for God in your life—not a need for human organizations—but a need to understand and obey the true Creator of the universe.

—NSE ☞

# Festival Sites By Geographic Region

## North West (USA/Canada)

**Anchorage, Alaska**, Global Church of God, 907-262-7059  
**Anchorage, Alaska**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Coeur D'Alene, Idaho**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Edmonton, Alberta**, The Church of God Outreach Ministries, 403-835-5184  
**Edmonton, Alberta**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Jackson Hole, Wyoming**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222  
**Kelowna, British Columbia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Ocean Shores, Washington**, Seattle Church of God, Independent, 800-333-5208  
**Penticton, British Columbia**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Redding, California**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Seaside, Oregon**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Sis-q-Meadows, Oregon**, Omega Praise Fellowship, 541-855-7220  
**Sunriver, Oregon**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 415-726-3005  
**Vernon, British Columbia**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222

## South West (USA/Mexico)

**Acapulco, Mexico**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Albuquerque, New Mexico**, Church of God Ministry (Lon Lacey), 505-822-8709  
**Colorado Springs, Colorado**, Churchlight Publications (J. Hines), 719-473-0026 C#5  
**Colorado Springs, Colorado**, Christian Church of God (Jeff Booth), 806-353-4400  
**Corona, California**, Church of God Talent Ministries (Ted Phillips), 909-280-9046 C#1  
**Flagstaff, Arizona**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222  
**Kahuku, Oahu, Hawaii**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Kings Beach, California**, Church of God International, 903-825-2525  
**Lake Tahoe, California**, Independant fellowship in Sacramento, 916-642-8687. C#3,4,5  
**Lihue, Hawaii**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Palm Springs, California**, Worldwide

Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**San Diego, California**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222  
**San Diego, California**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Snowmass, Colorado**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Vail, Colorado**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110

## North Central (USA/Canada)

**Chatham, Ontario**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 519-351-7978  
**Chicago, Illinois**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Little Chute, Wisconsin**, Church Counsel (J. Purvins), 414-733-5271 C#5  
**Rapid City, South Dakota**, Triumph (Bill Dankenbring), 818-797-0075  
**Winnipeg, Manitoba**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

## South Central (USA/Mexico)

**Branson, Missouri**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800,  
**Branson, Missouri**, Church of God, In Truth (Russell), 909-279-7302 C#1  
**Corpus Christi, Texas**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Hot Springs, Arkansas**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Jefferson City, Missouri**, Church of the Great God, 800-878-8220.  
**Kerrville, Texas**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222  
**Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri**, Cornerstone Publications (Jim Rector), 903-792-1352  
**Lake Texoma, Oklahoma**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 417-833-9208  
**Monterrey, Mexico**, Christian Churches of God (Aus), 512-516-0744 C#1  
**San Antonio, Texas**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 210-333-7229  
**Wagoner, Oklahoma**, Church of God International, 903-825-2525.

## North East (USA/Canada)

**African Lion Safari, Ontario**, Christian Churches of God (Aus), 519-740-0866 C#1  
**Burr Oak State Park, Ohio**, *Servants' News*, 517-543-5544  
**Fernwood, Pennsylvania**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

**Granby, Quebec**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110, French only.  
**Halifax, Nova Scotia**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Land Between the Lakes, Kentucky**, Church of God International, 903-825-2525  
**Lexington, Kentucky**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Louisville, Kentucky**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Lake of the Bays, Ontario**, Church of God International, 903-825-2525  
**Mont-Orford, Quebec**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800  
**Niagara Falls, Ontario**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222  
**Paducah, Kentucky**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222  
**Rockville, Maryland**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Saratoga Springs, New York**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**St. John's, Newfoundland**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Toronto, Ontario**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110  
**Virginia Beach, Virginia**, United Biblical Churches of God

## Feast Calendars

As usual, the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept with a variety of calendar systems. The entries in the adjacent listing are marked with the calendar system they use if it is other than the Hebrew calendar (C#3). Sites supporting multiple calendar systems have the numbers separated by commas (C#1,2).

NUMBER	FIRST FULL DAY OF FEAST
C#1	September 16, 1997
C#2	October 15, 1997
C#3	October 16, 1997 (Hebrew)
C#4	October 17, 1997
C#5	October 18, 1997

*Servants' News* cannot guarantee anything about the doctrines taught or the character of the people at these Feast sites. We encourage each person to obtain information about the teachers and teachings of a group before attending a site.

(Kimbrough), 352-382-0877 C#3,4,5

**South East (USA & Carribean)**

- Buck's Pocket State Park**, Creation 7th Day Adventist Church, 800-754-8021 C#2
- Caribbean Cruise**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Clearwater, Florida**, Global Church of God, 619-675-2222
- Chattanooga, Tennessee**, Global Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Daytona Beach, Florida**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 904-673-8324
- Daytona Beach, Florida**, The House of God (Manuel Rojas) & Church of God United of Chicago, 904-252-7270
- Destin, Florida**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 904-581-2820
- Gatlinburg, Tennessee**, United Christian Ministries (Ray Wooten), 888-985-9066
- Hilton Head, South Carolina**, End Time Assembly of God, 800-768-0137
- Jekyll Island, Georgia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Joelton, Tennessee**, Church of God Congregation Beth'El (Benton), 615-876-0733 C#1
- Kissimmee, Florida**, Christian Educational Ministries (Ron Dart), 903-509-2999
- Lewisburg, Tennessee**, Church of God Fellowship of Nashville, 615-896-9365
- Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**, Worldwide Church of God, 818-304-6110
- Nashville, Tennessee**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 615-896-9365.
- Ocho Rios, Jamaica**, Church of God International, 903-825-2525.
- Orlando, Florida**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Panama City, Florida**, Church of God International, 903-825-2525

**INTERNATIONAL**

**Africa**

- Akumadan, Ghana**, James Dugger, Box 43, Akumadan, Ashanta, Ghana, (no phone # availble)
- Naro, Moru, Kenya**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- George, South Africa**, Global Church of God, 27-11-664-6036
- Uvongo, South Africa**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Zimbabwe**, Global Church of God, 27-11-664-6036
- Mutare, Zimbabwe**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

**Australia & Pacific**

- Aberdare, NSW, Australia** Church of God Outreach Ministries, 011-6149-912525
- Kambah, ACT, Australia** 2902, Global Church of God, 61-6-231-8166
- Eden, VIC, Australia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Launceston, TAS, Australia** United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Nelson Bay, NSW, Australia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Noosa Bay, QLD, Australia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Perth, WA, Australia**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Ulladulla, NSW, Australia**, Christian Churches of God, 042-674-314 C#1
- Penang, Malaysia**, Global Church of God, 60-3-930-1187
- Taupo, New Zealand**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Bagio City, Philippines**, Global Church of God, 63-2-892-6459
- Manila, Philippines**, Church of God International 903-825-2525
- Naku'alofa, Tonga**, United Church of

**Burr Oak Feast**

Over 100 people are planning to attend the Burr Oak Feast of Tabernacles site. We should have an enjoyable Feast this year. Three or four extra rooms are being held for any late arrivals. Call *Servants' News* at 517-543-5544 if you are interested.

God, 818-294-0800

**Central & South America**

- Maitencillo, Chile**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Esquipulas, Guatemala**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Quetzaltenango, Guatemala**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

**Europe**

- Hengelhof, Belgium**, Global Church of God, 32-71-218-190
- La Colle-sur-Loup, France**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Winterberg, Germany**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Lido di Camaio, Tuscany, Italy**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Wezuperbrug, Drenthe, Netherlands**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Sundvolden, Norway**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- Billingham, Lincs, U.K.**, Church of God Outreach Ministries, 011-441526-860508
- Carberry, Scotland, U.K.**, Church of God International, 47-67562275
- Cheltenham, U.K.**, Global Church of God, 01-332-835498
- Weymouth, Dorset, U.K.**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800
- York, Yorkshire, U.K.**, United Church of God, 818-294-0800

**"Local News" from page 20**

tions—they voted to ask the UCG-AIA to provide them a pastor a couple of years ago, and now, their local pastor is telling them that they have no authority to override any of his decisions for the congregation. **Is the only type of vote the Eternal honors is one that gives someone absolute authority?**

These difficulties have occurred in the following cities:

- Elkhart, Indiana
- Kansas City, Missouri
- Meadville, Pennsylvania
- Miami & West Palm Beach, Florida
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Poca, West Virginia
- San Antonio, Texas
- Toledo, Ohio & Detroit, Michigan

Waco, Texas.

In most of these congregations, approximately **one third** of the members believe their congregation should be solidly under the control of UCG-AIA headquarters, about **another third** believe they should be locally autonomous in most matters, and **the rest** are somewhere in between. Local minister's opinions seem to span all three categories, too. In most of the cases, nearly all of the members are close personal friends and would like to remain that way. Most would like all to stay in the same congregation. We encourage congregations, if possible, to try to agree to stay together for a year (or some other length of time) so they can hear all sides of the issue and pray for a

peaceful solution. If that is not possible and the congregation does break up, they should still try to share social activities and other meetings when possible.

We would like encourage everyone, no matter what their personal view of this situation, to deal with kindness and love to others. Those UCG-AIA members who believe the Bible teaches hierarchy should remember that their headquarters was not created by a divine act of God, but by the vote of men. Those who do **not** believe the Bible teaches hierarchy must remember how many people they know who first learned Bible truth from a hierarchical organization.

We hope to cover these stories in greater detail in an upcoming issue.

—Norman S. Edwards

Our goal is to bring worthwhile information to as many as want it at the lowest practical cost. The loose-leaf format used by *Servants' News* and most of the literature below is inexpensive and makes copying easy (most literature is public domain). You might wish to hold the pages together with a 3-ring binder, staples, brads or a paper clip.

## New, First-Time Items:

### Mature Literature

**Is Christianity a Fraud? A Preliminary Assessment of the Conder Thesis** by Eric V. Snow, 70 pages. Thousands of books have been written over hundreds of years, both "for" and "against" the validity of the New Testament. Brethren reading only those "against" the New Testament often become confused. This paper covers a variety of evidence in favor of the New Testament.

**The Seven Eras of Ancient Israel—Type of the Eras of the True Church** by Craig M.

White, 8 pages. Possible parallels between Old Testament events and Revelation 2 & 3.

### Basic Literature

**What is Christian Religion?** by Norman S. Edwards, 2 page tract. Introduction to the Bible—shows religion is living by the Bible and Holy Spirit, not joining an organization.

**Spreading Sunshine** edited by the Cumming Family, 2 pages. A sample of this free, weekly newsletter of "selected words and stories of encouragement and hope."

### **Late News: Hearing God Conference**

How does God communicate with us today? Answers from Messianic Jewish, Evangelical, Catholic, and Churches of God perspective. Saturday, September 20th, 1997 9:00 A.M. to 4:15 P.M., near Appleton, Wisconsin. For details, contact Gary Lesperance (920-739-1911) or Kenneth Bozeman (920-788-2939).

## Items Featured This Issue (always available):

### Study Resources and Information

**ANCHOR Magazine** edited by Melvin Rhodes. One free 16 page sample issue. Reaching out to recovering homosexuals.

**Barnabas Ministries Mission Statement** by Alan Ruth, 2 pages.

**CEM Correspondence Course** edited by Ronald Dart, 8 pages. First lesson from SN, others free from CEM.

**A Church of God Ministry Order Form** by Lon Lacey & friends. 1 page. Free literature on nature of God & Satan, Biblical law, prophecy, history, church government, etc.

**The Fellowship Commentator** by F. Paul Haney. Sample 8 page issue of free quarterly newsletter.

**Friends of the Family Lending Library Order Form** by Rod McKown, 2 pages. Check out family books and tapes.

**Hebrew Roots** Sample 24-page issue of free newsletter with emphasis on the Hebrew roots of "Christian" belief.

**History Research Projects Order Form** by Craig White. 4 pages. Hard-to-find books on the origins of nations.

**International Bible Learning Center Catalog**, 12-page slim booklet. Sabbatarian college-type Bible courses on video.

**A Living Relationship with Original Language Text Unfolding** by John Purvins. First issue of free Christian living magazine and Hebrew-Greek study course, 38 pages.

**Living Room Church of God (LRCOG) Directory** edited by Robert Bodkin, 16 pages. Find a place to fellowship!

**Sabbath History** edited by Leon Lyell in Australia. One free sample issue of 26-page newsletter about the history of Sabbath keepers & groups. There is nothing else like it.

**Sermon Transcripts for the Deaf Order Form** by Kevin McMillen, 1 page. Free CEM sermon transcripts for the deaf.

**The Sabbath Sentinel** One free sample issue of 16 page glossy magazine—doctrinal & human interest articles. With Bible Sabbath Association order form: Sabbath books & tracts.

**The WAY** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of doctrinal articles relating to the Biblical way of life.

## Highly Recommended Items Listed Every Issue:

### Mature Literature

**Assembling on the Sabbath** by Norman S. Edwards, 16 pages. An exposition of the scriptures regarding our need to fellowship on the Sabbath and how to do it.

**Biblical Calendar Basics** by Norman S. Edwards, 10 pages. Introduction to the issues about the Biblical and Hebrew calendars (beginning of months, years, postponements etc.)

**Did Christ Reorganize the Church?** by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1939, 8 pages. Very different than his later approach: Christ never set up a hierarchical government.

**The Heart of the Matter** by Jim Rector, 31 pages. Our calling is to spiritual growth, not just attendance, socializing, politeness or legalism.

**How Do We Give to the Eternal?** by Richard Tafoya & Norman Edwards, 36 pages. Biblical study of giving and tithing.

**How Does the Eternal Govern Through Humans?** by Norman S. Edwards, 34 pages. How the KJV translators altered Scriptures about government to please King

James and an analysis of what the Bible says about how we should govern in today's congregations.

**The Worldwide Church of God Splits: Their Triumphs and Troubles** by Alan Ruth, 56 pages. Facts and analysis of the last 20 years of "Church of God" history.

### Study Resources and Information

**The Christian Beacon** Sample 24-page issue of free quarterly newsletter of encouraging articles for Sabbatarians.

**Giving and Sharing Order Form** by Richard Nickels. 3 pages. Has many excellent free items, low prices on hard-to-find religious books, and fine literature on floppy disk.

**The Journal: News of the Churches of God** edited by Dixon Cartwright. One free sample issue. Best single source of news about Sabbath-keeping groups. 16 pages.

**Servants' News & Norman Edwards Statement of Receipts and Expenses**, 2 pages. (Always sent to contributors.)

**Servants' News Complete Literature List & Index**, 30 pages.