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BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

Prophecies for 2 Tribes, Part I
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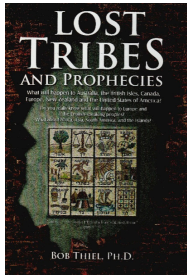
From the Editor: No More Excuses!

Remember to obey God and attend the Feast of Tabernacles each year if possible.

Could You Be Caught Off Guard?

Study the Bible Course Lesson 24: God Won't Ultimately Accept You "Just as You Are" To be a child of God you must change.

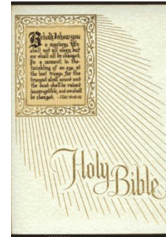
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No More Excuses!

Many people have expressed to me excuses over the years as to why they will not fully follow God and be properly baptized. Others, who may or may not have been baptized, have given reasons why they do not attend the Feast of Tabernacles. And even more, without expressing anything to me, have various excuses as to why they do not do what the God of the Bible wants them to do.

Some do not value what God says enough, whereas others let the cares of this world or how they let their family and/or upbringing affect them so much, that they give in to those pressures. Those are excuses.

Related to family pressures, Jesus taught:

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matthew 10:34-39)

Jesus also taught:

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while.

For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Matthew 13:19-23)

Note that you are not only not to give up, but to actually be productive to become part of the Kingdom of God.

Some will not get baptized.

But some will put a lot of effort into getting baptized, thinking that was the most important thing. And while baptism is important, the Bible teaches:

8 The end of a thing is better than its beginning; (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

Jesus said:

12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. (Matthew 24:12-13)

Do not let your love grow cold, because of the behaviour of others.

People will let the problems of others give them excuses. But as Jesus indicated, as the Apostles Paul and James wrote:

13 ... for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; (Romans 2:13)

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers

only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22)

It is not how you start the race, but it is how you run it, and that you finish it, that counts the most.

Specifically regarding excuses, notice what Jesus taught:

16 "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' 22 And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'" (Luke 14:16-24)

The Kingdom will be filled with doers, not excuse makers.

Notice something from the Old and New Testaments about excuses:

6 Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? (Ecclesiastes 5:6)

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. (John 15:22)

Some people will not tithe. They make excuses. They say that they are too poor, etc. According to the Bible, they can get themselves cursed, because of the lack of faith in the word of God on such matters

(cf. Malachi 3:8-12).

I have been poor. Quite poor. I tithed anyway and am no longer poor. Are you a doer when it comes to tithes and offerings?

What about attending the Feast of Tabernacles. Ever since I was 19 years of age, I attended the Feast of Tabernacle without missing a single year. Could I have made excuses to not attend?

Certainly. My grades in college/university sometimes suffered. Once I faced the possibility of being jailed when I was in the military. Sometimes going to the Feast of Tabernacles hurt my career. But I have attended every year for over four decades.

My wife Joyce once lost a job because she went to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. My wife also came with me to the Feast a week after the birth of our oldest child (though she was not able to attend all services, she did attend some). She attended the Feast of Tabernacles in 2022 after having a concussion where the medical people advised against travel. She also attended in 2023 after she fell and severely injured her left hand and broke part of it (she is left-handed).



(Pixabay Photo)

She and I could have made many excuses. But instead of that, we have both attended the Feast of Tabernacles together for 43 years in a row (as well as attending before we knew each other).

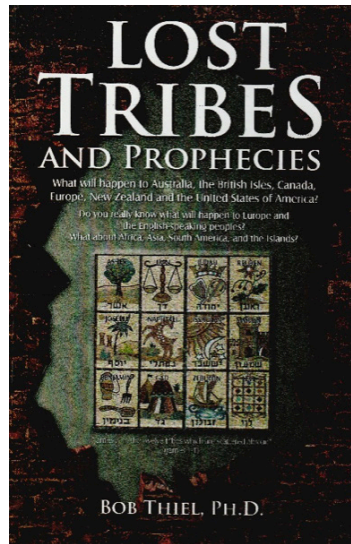
The Feast of Tabernacles is a commanded assembly that runs from sunset October 16th through sunset October 24 in 2024.

Do not sin by not attending if you can.

Do not make excuses.

Prophecies for 2 Tribes, Part I

By: Bob Thiel



This is the first part of a two-part series covering prophecies

In previous issues, we covered 11 of the 13 tribes. Here we will deal mainly with the two that came from Joseph.

God said to Abraham that his seed would be called after Isaac.

First, let's see the following from the Bible:

If you believe the Bible, you must realize that somehow some had to be named after Isaac. Well,

15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." (Genesis 17:15-16)

Since Sarah Abraham's wife was promised to be the mother of "nations" this shows that there are nations descended from Sarah's only son Isaac—hence the descendants of Abraham, Isaac's sons, not Ishmael (whose mother was Sarah's handmaiden Hagar) is what God is referring to here. And since nations is plural here, it is not just a reference to the nation once and now known as Israel.

Isaac's Sons

Notice further:

21 Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. (Genesis 21:12)

there is a group known as Isaac's sons, the Saxons as this 19th century report points to:

The Scythian tribes ... continued to flock into Europe ... The Saxons were ... a Scythian tribe; and of the various Scythian nations which have been recorded, the Sakai or Sacae, are the people from whom the descent of the Saxons can be inferred ... Sakal-Suna, or the sons of Sakal, abbreviated into Saksun is the same sound as Saxon, seems a reasonable etymology of the word Saxon. (Turner S. *The History of the Anglo-Saxons from the Earliest Period to the Norman Conquest*, Vol. 1. Cary and Hart, 1841, pp. 81,82)

While some have put-down the very idea that any of the words above were derived from Isaac's sons, not only does that seemingly go against scripture (Genesis 21:12), it also overlooks various historical assertions and reports.

Before going further, it may be of interest to note a connection between ancient Israel and the Scythians.

The Greco-Roman Catholic accepted Greek language book of 2 Maccabees was apparently written in the 2nd century BCE. It contains a reference to a large city near the Jordan river called Scythopolis (2 Maccabees 12:29). Additionally, there is a reference in the Greco-Roman Catholic accepted Book of Judith. Judith was probably written c. 100 BCE, but the focus is on the 7th to 4th centuries BCE (Judith 3:10) by the Greeks and Beth Shean in Hebrew. This was a city of Manasseh (1 Chronicles 7:29). Perhaps the Greeks called it Scythopolis as it was a place where 'Scythians' had come from and/or perhaps went through when they were taken captive in the 8th century BCE by the Assyrians.

The ancient historian Herodotus points to the defeat of the Assyrians the next century by the Median King Cyaxares and that the Scythians raised up a "great army" and even went to Palestine (Herodotus. *The Histories*, Book 1, 103-105. A. D. Godley, Ed. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1920, pp. 133-137). Some perhaps stayed and interbred with the Samaritans.

The Catholic Encyclopedia suggests that they were the ones who renamed Beth Shean as Scythopolis (Vailhé S. "Scythopolis." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 13. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), and perhaps that is how it happened. *The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906* was unsure where the name came from (Jacobs J, Price IM. "Scythians." *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Funk and Wagnalls, 1906). But whatever the reason, the name Scythopolis was connected to what had been a major city in Manasseh of ancient Israel.

Here is something from the 6th century A.D. British monk Gildas, commenting on the Saxon invasions happening in his day wrote:

After this, sometimes our countrymen, sometimes our enemy, won the field, to the end that our Lord might in this land try after his accustomed manner these his Israelites, whether they loved him or not. (Giles, p. 22)

Notice that Gildas felt that the British Saxons were Israelites. I would also add that the 7th/8th century British monk known as the 'venerable Bede' recorded that the Picts came from Scythia, tried to settle in Ireland, but instead went to what we now call Scotland (Bede. *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 10-11).

In the 10th century a Scottish work, *The Pictish Chronicle*, taught:

The Picts and the Scots are given a common Scythian origin which splices them into the children of Israel stories with their hints of the Promised Land; ... Picts, Scots, and Britons shared a common ancestry; they were on one race. (Cowan, pp. 123-124)

The 11th/12th century Jewish sage Rashi indicated the "ten tribes" had gone into the area now known as France (Davidiy Y. *Commentary on the book of Obadiah*. <http://britam.org/obadiah.html> accessed 11/17/22), which many from Ephraim and Manasseh seemingly would have done before going to the British Isles.

The Declaration of Arbroath of April 6, 1320 states

that the Scots came there from a journey originating “from Greater Scythia ... it came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to its home in the west where it still lives today” (The Declaration of Arbroath: 700th Anniversary Display 1320–2020. National Records of Scotland, 2020). Hence, this is an ancient claim to what could be called British-Israelism.

In the late 16th century an Irish work, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), points to Scythians settling in Ireland (Shuger D. Irishmen, Aristocrats, and Other White Barbarians. Renaissance Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 2, Summer, 1997, pp. 494-525).

In 1650 John Speed and in 1807 Raphael Holinshed published papers claiming that the British Isles were settled by Scythians in the “earliest times” (Johnson JW. The Scythian: His Rise and Fall. Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 20, No. 2, Apr. 1959, p. 256).

And while many moderns claim the early sources were only legends or myths, there are numerous ancient historical connections of some Scythians coming to the British Isles.

It should be noted, however, that 21st century scholars concur that those called Sacae were Scythian (Unterländer M. et al. Ancestry and demography and descendants of Iron Age nomads of the Eurasian Steppe. Nature Communications, March 3, 2017, p. 2). But most do not make the British connection.

Name of Israel

The Bible shows that Isaac had two sons. And that Isaac ended up giving the following blessing to his son Jacob:

26 Then his father Isaac said to him, ... 28 ... may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!” (Genesis

27:26,28-29)

Not long thereafter, Jacob fell in love with Rachel (Genesis 29:18). Their first son she named Joseph, meaning He (God) will add (Genesis 30:24).

When Jacob was older, God renamed him Israel (Genesis 32:28). When he was even older, he passed on his name and gave blessings to Joseph’s two sons:

11 And Israel said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!” ...

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said:

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, 16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

17 Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father’s hand to remove it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.”

19 But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.”

20 So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!’ “

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “... 22 Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.” (Genesis 48:11,15-22).

In Genesis 48, Jacob is clearly indicating that biblically one or both sons of Joseph could be referred to by the name Israel (though Ephraim looks to be referred to more as Israel than Manasseh through scripture) and seemingly also Jacob.

Ephraim is Firstborn

God had Jacob intentionally give the “right hand” blessing to Ephraim (Genesis 48:13-14) and God later declared:

9 For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is my firstborn. (Jeremiah 31:9)

Hence, God clearly decided that one who was not actually born first in any family would be designated as the firstborn, indicating Ephraim was to receive firstborn blessings. Ephraim was born last, after the 12 sons of Jacob and after his brother Manasseh—this brings to mind the passage from Jesus about the last being first and the first last (e.g. Matthew 19:30).

Moses wrote of the following blessings to the descendants of Joseph:

13 And of Joseph he said:
“Blessed of the Lord is his land, With the precious things of heaven, with the dew, And the deep lying beneath, 14 With the precious fruits of the sun, With the precious produce of the months, 15 With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, 16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come ‘on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.’ 17 His glory is like a firstborn bull, And his horns like the horns of the wild ox; Together with them He shall push the peoples To the ends of the earth; They are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And they are the thousands of Manasseh.” (Deuteronomy 33:13-17)

So, Ephraim and Manasseh were promised many blessings. Those of us who believe the Bible understand that some peoples had to receive those blessings.

Consistent with Deuteronomy 33:17, Britain had colonies (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Falkland Islands) and other large outposts (Rhodesia, India, Hong Kong, and South Africa) to “the ends of the earth,” while the USA has had military bases all

over the world. And, together, the Anglo-American nations have militarily pushed people around the world.

Church of England minister Frederick Glover, who identifies England with the tribe of Ephraim, wrote:

Sons of Sakae ... Anglo-Saxons ... There are ... very striking ... marks by which the descent of England from Israel may be seen ... the Seven-Day weekly division of time ... and ... their use of the Three Yearly Feasts of the Hebrews, the Passover, ... the Feast of Weeks, ... and the Feast of Tabernacles, by the Anglo-Saxons ... (Glover FRA. England: The Remnant of Judah and the Israel of Ephraim, 2nd ed., Rivingtons, 1881, pp. 131-132)

So, there were anciently religious connections between Israel and the early Anglo-Saxons.

Birthright Did Not Remain with Reuben

Notice something else related to Israel’s descendants:

1 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; 2 yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph’s (1 Chronicles 5:1-2).

As the firstborn, the birthright was originally Reuben’s. Consider that when it comes to wealth and territory, France (Reuben) sold off much territorial wealth in the form what has been called the Louisiana Purchase to the then rising U.S.A. in 1803. Plus, France also lost its prominence to the British (Ephraim) in the Napoleonic wars.

This time looks to have marked a transfer of physical birthright blessings to the descendants of Joseph.

The Bible records the promise from Israel that Ephraim would become a group of nations and that

Manasseh would become an important nation on its own (Genesis 48:19).

The Jewish sage Isaac Arbarbanel wrote that Manasseh would expand (Isaac Arbarbanel Commentary on Obadiah 19. Sefaria.org accessed 11/17/22), and the U.S.A. certainly did after its separation from the British Isles.

In the 19th century at least one Jewish scholar, Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser (known as the Malbim), interpreted certain passages of scripture to mean that Ephraim would rise up first and that Manasseh would rise up later (Davidiy, pp. 384, 445-447).

After the rise of the British Empire in the 19th century, more people started to wonder if the British were the people of the covenant promises to Ephraim (Genesis 48:14-20) and the descendants of Isaac (Genesis 17:19). A few Christians, Jews, and others began to write in the English language about this, as well as the rising up of the U.S. as a major power, in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries (Knox RT. Josephs Land: Ephraim, Or Great Britain, Manasseh Or United States, 1886. Nickels R. History of the Seventh Day Church of God. Giving & Sharing, 1994, pp. 76,142; McNair R. America and Britain in Prophecy. Global Church of God, 1996, pp. 29-32; Davidiy, pp. 361-450).

It should also be pointed out that a significant amount of Anglican ministers in the late 19th century believed in some form of British Israelism.

British: Covenant People

Interestingly, the Hebrew term often translated as “covenant” in Isaiah 46:11 and elsewhere in the Old Testament is beriyth (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance word #1285) and the word for “man” is iysh (found in Isaiah 46:8, Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance word #377). Together those words are pronounced similar to the term “British.” Although some linguists have other views, it cannot be disproven as a possibility.

That said, covenant blessings were prophesied in the Bible (cf. Leviticus 26:9; Deuteronomy 8:18; Isaiah 42:6, 49:8).

Now notice something published the early 20th century:

Lieut. Totten of Yale says, “The word Britain is an astonishing confirmation here. It occurs in nearly the same form, and with reference to Israel (Saxon), twice in the Bible - Britham, a covenant. First in Isaiah 42:6: ‘I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee to Britham, for a light of the Gentiles.’ Second, in 49:8: ‘I will preserve thee and give thee to Britham, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. Both of these passages are parts of addresses made to certain peoples represented as dwelling in the Isles’ (Isaiah 42:10-12; 49:8), and as being the descendants of Israel. Who are they, but Britains, who in ancient Welsh (almost vernacular Hebrew) call themselves ‘Bryth y Brithan’ or Biths of Briton, i.e., The covenanters of the Land of the Covenant.’ “ (Spencer, p. 78)

While some major academics endorsed aspects of British-Israelism until about a century ago, this view fell out of academic favor, but was never actually disproven.

In the Bible, the descendants of Joseph’s sons were promised prosperity and blessings (Genesis 49:22-26), which the U.S.A. and its Anglo-Saxon-Celtic descended allies have enjoyed.

Yet, Jesus warned that “to whom much is given” from such “much will be required” (Luke 12:48). And the Bible also warns of curses for those who forsake God’s laws (Deuteronomy 28:15-57) and violate His covenant (Leviticus 26:15,25). Both blessings and cursings are in the prophecies.

Not a Salvation Issue

Some have wrongly asserted that race and ethnicity are massive salvation issues. We disagree. We in the Continuing Church of God believe that salvation

is available now (Colossians 3:10-12) and in the future (Revelation 7:9-10) to people of all races and ethnic groups as God calls (John 6:44). We also teach against racial prejudice (see also the free book, online at ccog.org, *Statement of Beliefs of the Continuing Church of God*).

We in the Continuing Church of God are NOT part of the so-called “Christian Identity movement.” We do teach a truly biblical form of what is known as British-Israelism that understands that physical blessings (along with curses for disobedience; cf. Deuteronomy 28:15,22-24;31:29b) were promised to those that are now the primary Anglo-American nations in the world.

The Apostles were quite clear that salvation is available to Gentile peoples (Acts 11:1-18) —and since I am ethnically predominantly Gentile, I am one who benefits from the biblical teachings here.

Furthermore, those of the “Christian Identity movement” tend to advocate the destruction of other peoples and call for the conquering rise of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. We faithful in the Continuing Church of God do not—plus we are pacifists.

Although it has been claimed that “**BRITISH-ISRAELISM** ... has produced a highly favored perspective of English-speaking Christians in Bible prophecy”(Brackney, p. 61), we in the Continuing Church of God teach that because the British-Israelite peoples have been despising the God of the Bible (cf. Amos 2:4), they are prophesied to lose their blessings and to be destroyed fairly soon unless there is massive national repentance (cf. Hosea 11:3a, 5b-7). We do not teach superiority of any race nor ethnic group.

A Nation and Multitude of Nations

Israel promised that Manasseh would become a great nation and Ephraim a multitude of nations.

Here is something from a Jewish source (Yair Davidiy), followed by that source citing a different source:

Joseph: Menasseh U.S.A. The United States of America (Davidy Y. The Tribes. Russell-Davis Publishers, Israel. 1993, p. 403)

From the West of England and from Wales, Scotland, and Ireland the United States of America received approximately 87% of its British immigrants in its formative period. In other words, early American society was formed largely by groups from the Tribe of Manasseh. (Davidiy, p. 426. #Kephart, apparently a reference to Calvin Kephart, “Races of Mankind, Their Origin and Migration,” N.Y. 1960, pp.437-438)

We in the *Continuing* Church of God believe that the United States received the blessings to Manasseh and did become a great nation. The Encyclopaedia Britannica once reported:

The United States is the world’s greatest economic power, measured in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). ... The United States is relatively young by world standards, being less than 250 years old; it achieved its current size only in the mid-20th century. ... Probably no other country has a wider range of racial, ethnic, and cultural types than does the United States. ... Annually, the U.S. spends more on its military than the next seven highest-ranking countries in military spending combined. (Harris, JT, et al. United States. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Updated December 22, 2019)

As far as Ephraim goes, we believe that the promises went to the United Kingdom and its British descended allies. As far as being greater in some ways to the U.S.A., notice the following:

In 1913, 412 million people lived under the control of the British Empire, 23 percent of the world’s population at that time. It remains the largest empire in human history and at the peak of its power in 1920, it covered an astonishing 13.71 million square miles - that’s close to a quarter of the world’s land area. (McCarthy N. The Biggest Empires In Human History. Statista, December 19, 2019)

The British Commonwealth was truly a multitude of nations. The sun did not set on the old British empire. Even today, we see a company of nations

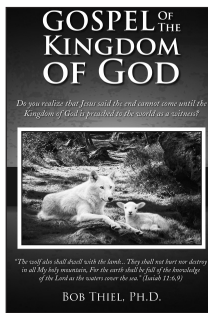
from Ephraim including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that Black Hebrew Israelite groups improperly claim that Puerto Rico is Ephraim and Cuba is Manasseh (Jones P. My Visit To A Black Hebrew Israelite Meeting In Harlem. Religion Unplugged, February 8, 2019). Scripturally, we know Ephraim was to become a “multitude of nations”

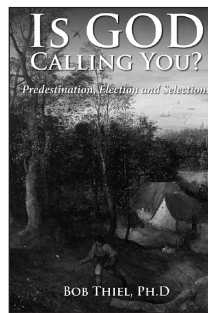
(Genesis 48:19b), and that has not been the case for Puerto Rico. Nor is it generally considered to be “greater” (Genesis 48:19c) than Cuba, which it would have to be if Cuba was Manasseh as the Black Hebrew Israelites assert. The British Empire and the United States best fit those prophecies (and others) for Ephraim and Manasseh respectively.

More on aspects of this is planned for the next edition of this magazine.

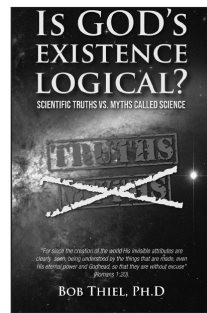
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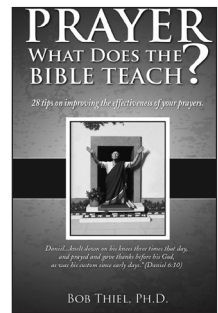
The Gospel of the Kingdom of God



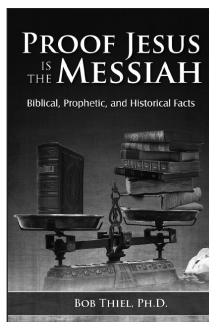
Is God Calling You?



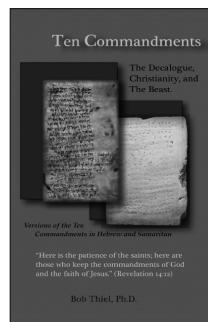
Is God's Existence Logical?



Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?



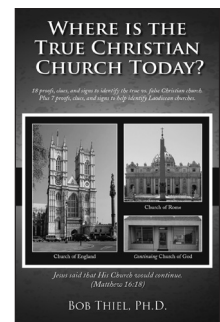
Proof Jesus is the Messiah



The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast



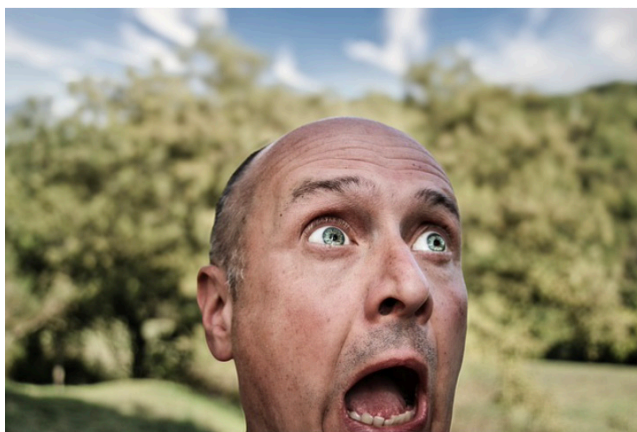
Should You Keep God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?



Where Is the True Christian Church Today?

Will YOU Be CAUGHT OFF GUARD?

By Eugene M Walter



(Pixabay picha ya mtu ambaye ameshuka na ana uoga)

Editor comments: On October 7, 2023, Israelis were shocked by Hamas attacking them. Over 1,000 were killed, many were raped, and hundreds were taken hostage. Those affected did not expect what occurred. They were caught off guard. Had they known what would happen and had taken the proper steps, those things would not have happened to them.

While you may think that you cannot be caught off guard, the plain truth is that most end time Christians will be (cf. Revelation 3:1-6, 14-18). They will not know when the Great Tribulation is starting until it is too late for most to successfully flee.

Now, consider the following which was written by Eugene M Walter of the old Radio Church of God in March 1963 (and hence is in the public domain and can be used in this magazine). Though the initial headlines he cites are quite dated, the idea that many will be caught off guard remains even more true today.

UNEXPECTEDLY Great Britain is out of the Common Market! Without warning the entire Northern Hemisphere finds itself in the cold, icy grip of the worst winter in the last one hundred years! **OVERNIGHT** 87 per cent of the American citrus crop is wiped out by a fierce, merciless cold wave!

These major headlines have all screamed across your newspaper within recent weeks and months. With them have been literally hundreds of less-significant reports of **SUDDEN** and **UNEXPECTED** loss of life and property through fires, drownings, highway accidents, heart attacks, accidents on the job!

Those in the world react to these things like the proverbial ostrich who sticks its silly head in the sand — they quickly bury themselves in their own little routine, fearful to face reality. They turn to thrills and pleasures to shut out of their minds any thought that sudden disaster could strike them. “To be sure,” they reason, “there are problems — but, after all, any real danger is in the far-off, distant future — there’s nothing we need to **REALLY** worry about today. It will all turn out all right. There will always be a brighter day tomorrow. And if there isn’t ... well, we’ll worry about that tomorrow!”

This is the natural reaction of the human mind — the way the world looks at it. And because this **IS** the attitude of today’s world, never has a society been more vulnerable to **SUDDEN DESTRUCTION** than we are. And never has man had more numerous ways to bring this destruction about! Few realize how precariously balanced our society is — what a thin, frayed, artificial **THREAD** is holding it together.

For example, in today’s world, electric and telephone lines, water and gas lines, highways and transportation lines are our **LIFELINES**! They must all be in top operating condition, or our manmade society cannot function “normally.” Yet all of these lifelines can very quickly and easily be severed in any number of ways — by man or by the forces of nature.

And consider the delicate balance of our gold supply. France and Germany simultaneously demanding their gold from our dwindling supply could **SUDDENLY WRECK** our entire economy! Or consider the paralyzing, chaotic effects of a general, nation-wide strike called in an outburst of uncontrolled passion by a greedy, selfish labor union leader! Or let your mind envision the holocaust of accidental nuclear war — to say nothing of

calculated, deliberate nuclear attack.

These are not vague, unlikely-to-happen possibilities affecting only a few people! These are just a few of many very REAL possibilities! Possibilities of SUDDEN DESTRUCTION with far-reaching consequences — affecting WHOLE NATIONS and huge sections of nations! Truly, never in all human history has a society been more susceptible — more RIPE — for SUDDEN and UNEXPECTED DESTRUCTION than ours today! And that destruction will SURELY come! God Almighty SAYS SO!

God Punishes SUDDENLY

God is infinitely patient with mankind, but once man has filled the cup of sin and lawlessness to the brim, God intervenes SWIFTLY and SURELY in meting out justice and punishment. God inspired Solomon to write: “Therefore shall his [the wicked’s] calamity come suddenly; SUDDENLY shall he be broken without remedy” (Proverbs 6:15). “For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth SUDDENLY upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:12).

The flood at the time of Noah and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are two outstanding examples of this living principle. Jesus Christ Himself used these examples as types of the destruction that will come in our day. He said: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and DESTROYED them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the SAME DAY that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17:26-30).

Destruction came QUICKLY when God intervened in those days — and it will come quickly again when He intervenes in our day. Just as God warned ancient Israel that if they sinned their punishment would be SUDDEN AND SURE (Deuteronomy 7:4), so God warns modern Israel that if we continue to sin, we, too, will be destroyed SWIFTLY AND SUDDENLY.

“Take heed to yourselves,” God says to modern Israel, “that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them. And then the Lord’s wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye PERISH QUICKLY from off the good land which the Lord giveth you” (Deuteronomy 11:16-17). Today modern Israel has broken this command and now this punishment — this CURSE — is beginning to be carried out. “The Lord shall send upon thee CURSING, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, UNTIL THOU be destroyed, and until thou PERISH QUICKLY; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me” (Deuteronomy 28:20).

This IS PROMISED by God Almighty to come on modern Israel today wherever Israel may be. And on Israel’s captor — modern Babylon — punishment at the hand of God will also come quickly and surely (Jeremiah 51:8; Isaiah 47:11). Yes, the WHOLE WORLD — Israelite and Gentile nations alike — are going to be taken by complete surprise — totally caught off guard — by the catastrophic events which will soon come crashing down on it.

Destruction ALWAYS falls SUDDENLY AND UNEXPECTEDLY on an unsuspecting and God-rejecting world.

How About YOU?

But what about YOU? Will YOU be “caught off guard”? What is YOUR reaction to world news and the events you see taking place about you daily? Does it seem unlikely or highly improbable that anything sudden and drastic could happen to YOU? Is sudden death of a heart attack or in an automobile accident something you’ve always thought of as happening to the other fellow? The fellow in the “world”? Do you think none of these things could happen to YOU, because you’re a “member” in God’s Church?

God says, “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). God has not made ANY of His children immune from sudden death! Any one of us — and that includes YOU — could be called to give an account of our lives at any moment!

But beyond the possibility of personal disaster striking you in the normal routine of your life, what about the CERTAIN disaster which is coming in a few years when the prophecies of your Bible are fulfilled? Will YOU have God's protection then? Do you "think you stand?" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

It's very easy to "forget" about these unpleasant things which are coming — to throw them out of your mind. But that won't keep them from happening! It's easy to trust in a chronological date — a date which gives a false sense of security because it's a number of years in the future. But the date may be WRONG — and the "future" may suddenly be here — sooner than you expected! It's easy to "kid yourself" that there is "plenty of time" — that you can settle down to the serious business of OVERCOMING YOURSELF "just a little later." But "plenty of time" will suddenly be "NO TIME" — and "just a little later" will never arrive!

Change NOW!

These thoughts and attitudes are all very NATURAL. But they are also gravely DANGEROUS! If YOU have any such thought or attitude, TAKE HEED! The Bible soberly warns of just such an attitude. It is a warning directed NOT to the world, but to GOD'S OWN PEOPLE!

Christ Himself gave the most serious of these warnings: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you [members in God's Church] UNAWARES. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. WATCH ye [Christ's own disciples] therefore, and PRAY ALWAYS, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that SHALL COME TO PASS, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:34-36). Mark also records this warning given by Christ: "WATCH YE therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find YOU SLEEPING. And what I say unto you I say unto ALL, WATCH!!!" (Mark 13:35-37).

Christ KNEW the tendencies of human nature and He warned against becoming entangled in the cares of this life — against going to sleep spiritually. But He also showed how to counteract this tendency and to

overcome it. His solution was simple, yet sure. He said to be alert and awake, to be on guard, to WATCH, TO PRAY ALWAYS.

The Apostle Paul gave this same identical warning to God's people. He said: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves [God's own people] know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they [the world] shall say: Peace and safety; then SUDDEN DESTRUCTION cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But YE, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake YOU as a thief. YE are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us NOT SLEEP, as do others; but let us WATCH and BE SOBER" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6).

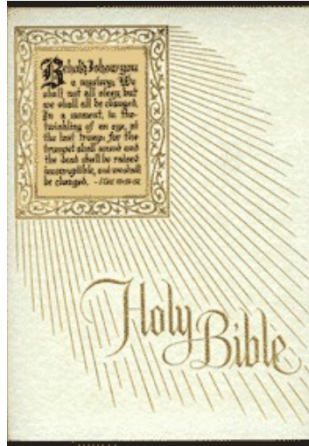
Those living in the darkness of Satan's world WILL be overtaken by the Day of the Lord. But there will be NO EXCUSE if WE are caught off guard. To us God says: "... knowing the time, that now it is high time to AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Romans 13:11-12). In other words, WAKE UP! BE spiritually PREPARED for what lies ahead for YOU!

World events are snowballing — prophecy is rapidly being fulfilled. Today the world — unknowingly — stands on the brink of SUDDEN DESTRUCTION. Very soon now Jesus Christ will return QUICKLY (Revelation 3:11; 22:7, 20) — "as a thief" (Revelation 16:15) — bringing His reward with Him (Revelation 22:12). Only those who are spiritually awake and alert — WATCHING AND PRAYING — will be prepared to meet Him.

Will YOU be ready?

Sadly, according to what Jesus prophesied in the 3rd chapter of the Book of Revelation, most will not be ready. They think they are fine and have, what moderns call, the "normalcy bias." Yet, things will change and only the faithful Philadelphian Christians will sufficiently heed the warnings and be protected from the "hour of trial" according to Jesus (Revelation 3:7-10)—Editor.

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE



Lesson 24b

Lesson 24: God Won't Ultimately Accept You “Just as You Are”

Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief

Published 2024 by the *Continuing Church of God*

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

Does God want you to be just as you are or does God expect YOU TO CHANGE?

Do you think you are fine as you are?

Time for a Change!

Peter shouted to those of his day: “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ...” (Acts 3:19).

To repent means to CHANGE! To change your ATTITUDE toward God and His perfect Laws, which were designed to BRING US peace, health, happiness and EVERYTHING we so earnestly desire! To change your attitude toward your fellowman – even toward your own self.

God “winked at” the ignorance of blundering man in

past ages. “But now commands all men everywhere to repent!” (Acts 17:30)

But HUMANS HAVE REFUSED TO OBEY that command, except in rare, scattered instances.

As a result of human selfishness, human resentment toward God’s Laws, human jealousy, animosity, hatred, bigotry and intolerance toward their fellows, humans have filled the world and the nostrils of God with the stench of a decaying, rotting society! Humans have remained UNmindful of God’s command to repent – and so is suffering the automatic penalty!

But why should you suffer the anguish, sickness, wretchedness and the threat of nuclear holocaust that hovers over this reckless, heedless world? There is no reason for anyone to remain UNrepentant – especially now that we have SEEN, with our own eyes, from our

own Bibles, the amazing, perhaps shocking, truths of God Almighty!

Now is the time to obey the command of our Creator – the One who gives us every breath of air we breathe – and REPENT!

David's Example of Repentance

One very outstanding example of repentance is that of a man who lived hundreds of years before Christ. This man did obey God and did repent. That man was DAVID!

“David!” you exclaim, “Why – what about his affair with Bathsheba?”

Yes, David did commit some terrible sins. And so have we. But he DID SOMETHING about them. He REPENTED! That's why David will be in God's Kingdom and will even rule all Israel when Christ establishes His Millennial government on earth (Ezekiel 37:24-25; Jeremiah 30:9). That's what repentance can lead to – even though one has committed some very grievous sins!

Some people's natures give them more trouble than others. David was one who had more trouble than most. He had pressing drives. He was a man of action. He “gave himself a bad time.” On the surface it would seem impossible for someone like him to ever please God enough to be born into His Kingdom – let alone give him rule over others.

Just look at what David did! He lusted after Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who was one of his generals. David lusted to the point that he committed adultery with her and caused her to have a child by him. Then David, in an attempt to disclaim himself as father of this illegitimate child, caused Bathsheba's husband to become drunk, hoping to make him logically think that it was he, himself, who was its father.

Failing in this, David then took drastic action to conceal what he had done. He had Bathsheba's husband placed in the very front of hottest battle to make certain he would be killed. And Uriah was killed. Thus, David became a MURDERER in God's sight (2 Samuel 12:9). David had sinned very greatly!

BUT did David CONFESS his sins? He certainly did – “So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” (2 Samuel 12:13). David's repentant attitude endeared him to God.

Again, David sinned greatly when he did not trust God for protection, but rather trusted in the strength of numbers of MEN. He had his fighting men numbered (2 Samuel 24:2, 9, 10). Did David REPENT and confess this sin? Again, he certainly did! For “David's heart smote him [or THROBBED from the realization he had sinned against God] after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly [David confessed his sin] in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away [or FORGIVE] the iniquity of thy servant for I have done very foolishly.” (2 Samuel 24:10, KJV) David's repentance was from the very depths of his being! That is one reason he was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

David was one of the very few people of Old Covenant times to whom God gave the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:11), for the Holy Spirit was not yet available to all mankind (John 7:38-39). David obeyed God and overcame by the power of the Holy Spirit, even though at times he did stumble and fall! So, David is soon, at Christ's coming, to be resurrected and born into God's Kingdom.

Since REPENTANCE can lead to that for David, who had his weaknesses, just think where it can lead you!

Don't Take This Lightly!

Do you consider this as just “another lesson” of this course? Do you ASSUME this lesson is an emotional appeal to “give your heart to the Lord”? If so, that kind of careless thinking could prove DISASTROUS!

It's time to WAKE UP! It's time we realize that the only way to lasting peace, success and joy here and now, is to REPENT and RECEIVE GOD'S SPIRIT!

Through these lessons on repentance God is making one thing very plain – that we desperately need the Spirit of God to help CHANGE our human nature and make it conformable to His! We need God's spiritual power to help us conquer and rule over the human vanity, the greed, lust, resentment, hostility and suspicion in every one of us. And God shows that the

ONLY WAY we can receive His Spirit is to repent and be baptized! (Acts 2:38.)

But to be truly repentant in God's sight, we must first thoroughly understand the very DEPTHS of true repentance. This lesson makes it absolutely plain.

God Won't Accept You "Just as You Are"

The Apostle Paul wrote that before people come to God, they are "slaves of sin" (Romans 6:17). But Christians are not to remain that way!

The favorite invitation or "altar-call hymn" sung in revival or evangelistic services has been "JUST AS I AM." But can you really come to God "just as you are"? Will God receive anyone who is VILE and SINFUL AND UNREPENTANT?

God reveals we cannot sit down at His immaculate, holy table with wrinkled, soiled clothes and dirty hands, which symbolically represent the human sinner's condition. One must first be WASHED CLEAN of all sin before he can enter God's presence.

Notice this in your Bible.

1. How can we become CLEANSED of sin – made acceptable to God? Is it through our repentance and acceptance of Christ's sacrifice and His shed blood which covers – BLOTS OUT – our sins and reconciles us to God? (Revelation 7:13-14 and Romans 5:8-10.)

2. Is white, clean clothing symbolic of the righteousness God requires of those who would enter His Kingdom? (Revelation 19:8-9, KJV and Matthew 22:11-13.) What is "righteousness"? (Psalm 119:172.) Isn't this plainly talking about KEEPING God's commandments?

COMMENT: Because WE CAN'T save ourselves and can't keep God's Law perfectly, OF OURSELVES, the FALSE TEACHING is going out that Jesus did it all for us – that WE DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING except believe He did it all for us and "accept" Him as our Savior! Many today have been deceived into believing

that God imputes Jesus' righteousness to us, counting us as righteous because of His righteousness – WHILE WE CONTINUE SINNING!

THAT IS NOT TRUE. THAT IS JUST ANOTHER DECEPTIVE LIE OF SATAN THE DEVIL!

No, Jesus didn't live a good life for us – in our stead! We are NOT excused from keeping God's Commandments, living a righteous life, overcoming, growing in spiritual character, and enduring in spite of all opposition, persecution, trial and test unto the end.

You and I must actually DO these things in order to be saved!

9 ... He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, (Hebrews 5:9)

But how?

By the POWER of the Holy Spirit God promises to place within us to help us obey Him! We, of ourselves, can't save ourselves – God must do it. But we are NOT EXCUSED FROM KEEPING HIS LAW and its various principles revealed throughout the Bible!

God knows our every weakness. He is responsible for putting human nature in every one of us. And so, God sent His Son into the world to proclaim the way we can OVERCOME the downward pulls of the flesh. He taught that we must yield to GOD'S GOVERNMENT over our lives – that we must REPENT and turn from our filth of the flesh and pride of mind and heart so we can receive the power to CHANGE OUR HUMAN NATURE!

Repent of Human Nature!

GOD set in motion an ability within the human mind which allows it to be HOSTILE and DISOBEDIENT to God. We tend to call it HUMAN NATURE! But few people realize what it is. Human nature has a spiritual side and a physical side.

On its spiritual side, it is VANITY. Vanity loves to exalt the SELF. It is SELF-CENTERED. It is selfish and greedy. It is this way NATURALLY.

On its physical side, there are the five senses, and the

PULL of these senses to want to be satisfied. Exercise of the senses can produce sensations of pleasure. Some of these sensual pleasures are healthy, uplifting and beneficial. But many are injurious, harmful and bad. Yet the bad ones cry out for gratification as much as – probably far more than – the beneficial. Thus, human nature exerts an automatic, impulsive PULL toward selfishness, greed, vanity, jealousy, envy, hatred, and toward the lusts (wrong desires) of the flesh.

Human nature makes it come NATURAL to resent and resist authority over one. A child tends to resist the authority of its parents. We grow up with a natural attitude of hostility toward any authority, all the way up to God's authority.

Human nature does want to BE good. But often it just doesn't want to DO good!

Perhaps a motion picture from last century might illustrate how human nature works. It was an old Charlie Chaplin picture called The Great Dictator. Chaplin acted the part of Adolf Hitler, who was paying a "State Visit" to Benito Mussolini. Mussolini had a private barber shop with two chairs. The two dictators went together to the barber shop for haircuts. Before the barber arrived, Mussolini reached down the side of his chair, grasped the lever and jacked it up a notch, elevating himself an inch or two above Hitler. Immediately Hitler elevated his seat TWO notches, elevating himself one or two inches above Mussolini. Then Mussolini jacked his seat up a couple additional notches – and so on and on, until they both crashed into the ceiling – each trying to elevate himself above the other.

It made human nature appear not only funny, but foolish. And it really is. You see it all around you. And while people condemn it in others, most fail to recognize, let alone repent of THEIR OWN human nature!

As an old cartoonist said, "There oughta be a law." Yes, there ought to be a LAW AGAINST aspects of human nature. And, as a matter of fact, there is. IT IS GOD'S LAW!

1. How did Jesus sum up God's Law? (Matthew 22:36-40.) Can God's Law be summed up in the one word "love"? (John 14:15; 15:9-10; 2 John 6 and

Romans 13:8-10.)

COMMENT: Jesus summed up God's Law in two simple SUMMARY COMMANDS. The first, to love God, summarizes basically the first four of the Ten Commandments which teach us HOW TO LOVE GOD. The second great commandment, to love neighbor, summarizes the last six of the Ten Commandments which teach us HOW TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR!

2. But is the carnal, UNSPIRITUAL mind – motivated by the downward pulls of human nature – UNABLE to obey the Laws of God – unable to really LOVE God and man? (Romans 8:7-8 and Galatians 5:19-21.)

3. Therefore, isn't the expression of human nature CRIMINAL in God's sight? (1 John 3:4.)

COMMENT: Human nature, or the carnal mind, loves first of all itself. Next it loves that which belongs to it or is in some way connected to it – persons, concepts, material possessions. All these are a part of a larger "self" – like a little empire. This "empirical self" even broadens to include the social or occupational group of which the person is a member, ITS state, region or nation, and ultimately the whole human society with the beliefs, customs and ideologies which are a part of it. This is the "self" that human nature loves ahead of God and ahead of any other supposed opposer or "outsider."

Those whom God will ultimately change from mortal humans to the divine likeness of God – those who will be BORN as the very sons of God – are those who repent of that nature. They repent of what they ARE as well as what they have done. Then, through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as well as in His resurrected LIFE and POWER, they are forgiven their guilty past. They are given contact with God and receive His Holy Spirit. Through His Spirit they are begotten as HIS SPIRITUAL CHILDREN and receive His DIVINE NATURE.

When they REPENT OF HUMAN NATURE – they repent of hostility to authority – of resentment against God's Law. They SURRENDER UNCONDITIONALLY to God, and wholeheartedly WANT Him to RULE in their lives. They

then CHANGE (through God's power given as His gift) from rebellion to submission – from self-centeredness to being GOD-centered. They OVERCOME the temptations of the flesh. And they continually GROW in God's character through obedience to God the rest of their lives.

The Essence of Repentance

The dictionary definition of repentance is “to feel self-reproach, compunction or contrition for past conduct, to feel such sorrow for sin or fault as to be disposed to change one's life for the better” (The American College Dictionary).

The Bible definition means all of that AND MUCH MORE! The Smith-Goodspeed translation of Ephesians 4:22 states that we “must lay aside with your former habits your old self which is going to ruin through its deceptive passions.” In other words, we must completely do away with our former way of life which was totally motivated by our carnal minds!

1. Is true repentance deep, moving and heartfelt? (Hosea 7:14-16.)

COMMENT: God condemns those whose “repentance” leads to no change of action. “They did not cry out to Me with their heart [that is, their MINDS – they did not really mean it – in other words, it was all just EMOTION] ... They return [repent], but not to the Most High.” True repentance requires TOTAL mental AND emotional involvement.

1. Is repentance toward God? (Acts 20:21.)

COMMENT: Most people have never understood what this means. Even their so-called repentance is wholly turned toward self! Sin is against God – He is the Lawgiver whose perfect Law we have broken! To repent means to be so humbled – broken up – by the audacity of the colossal crime of rebelling against the living, HOLY GOD – SO abhorrent of our deceitful, vain, selfish selves – that in real contrition we turn to God for mercy, forgiveness and the help we desperately need to overcome human nature.

2. What did Job say, when finally stripped of his self-righteous shell? (Job 42:5, 6.)

COMMENT: “NOW my eye sees You,” said Job. For the first time, after he had been brought down completely, Job got his man-centered mind off of himself and really saw God as the center of the universe! “Therefore I ABHOR myself, and REPENT in dust and ashes”!

Some have thought repentance is merely a matter of being thankful that they are so “good” they have been able to see the truth and are now accepting it. THAT IS NOT REPENTANCE! That is self-righteousness – sin – to be repented of!

Every one of us must ultimately come to see God as Job did. We have to quit trying to approach God thinking, “What can God do for ME?” We ought rather to think, “What does GOD DEMAND of me?”

We all are GOD'S workmanship, not He ours! Try to see yourself through God's eyes and put Him foremost in your mind. If you do, then you will begin to love God as Jesus instructs (Matthew 22:37).

God Leads Us to Repentance

When you first grasp - THIS concept – when YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT repentance really is – you will find it shocking! Then the question will arise in your mind: How is it POSSIBLE for a human being to come to that kind of repentance? How can one even start to change from self-love to God-love?

The startling answer is that even this must come from God!

We can't just drum up the deep feeling of abhorrence for our sins and our wicked human nature. It has to come from God!

1. Does God's goodness and mercy lead one to repentance? (Romans 2:4.) And is He patient and loving in leading one to repentance? Same verse.

2. Is God willing to grant repentance even to those that have been strongly opposed to Him? (2 Timothy 2:25. See also Acts 11:18.)

3. Didn't Jesus plainly say NO ONE could come to Him unless the Father draws him? (John 6:44, 65.)

COMMENT: But what about the “whoever will” (John 3:16) you have heard so much about? Is it possible that one could WANT to come to repentance and to God AND BE UNABLE? The answer is: if you have understood this far, and YOU WANT to come to God, you ARE being called – YOU ARE being drawn by God’s Spirit! BUT IT TAKES ACTION ON YOUR PART NOW to make your calling and election SURE. “For many are called, but few are [finally] chosen.” (Matthew 22:14.)

There are certain definite steps YOU must take to become a true child of God. Let’s review these steps once again.

4. What are Peter’s instructions on becoming a Christian? How did he say we can receive God’s Spirit? (Acts 2:38.) Must we then CONTINUE to obey God to remain a true Christian? (Acts 5:32.)

COMMENT: Repentance is toward God and means we THOROUGHLY ABHOR our past lives of transgressing His spiritual laws – of giving in to our carnal lusts and wicked human nature. It means we turn AWAY from that kind of life and turn TO God’s way – that we henceforth obey the principles and laws laid down in God’s Word.

Then we must BELIEVE in Christ’s sacrifice as payment of the death penalty our past sins have incurred – believing that His shed blood will cover all our past transgressions of God’s Law. We must also believe in His resurrection from the dead and God’s promise of eternal life through Him. (Romans 5:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 50-56.)

Finally, we must be BAPTIZED – completely immersed in water – as an outward symbol of our inward belief. Then, according to God’s promise, He will miraculously place His Holy Spirit in us and thus BEGET US as His SPIRITUAL CHILDREN! (see also Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3-5; Acts 2:38; John 1:12-13.)

More on baptism can be found in our free booklet, online at ccog.org, titled About Baptism.

1. What kind of a person was Moses? (Numbers 12:3.) Was God going to destroy Israel, because of their disobedience, and start another great nation through Moses? (Exodus 32:9, 10.)

COMMENT: Meekness does not mean weakness. Moses was meek, but he was not WEAK. Moses was STRONG, physically and spiritually.

2. Did Moses succumb to vanity – as most of us would have done – when God said “I will make of you a great nation”? (Exodus 32:10.) What was his reaction? (Exodus 32:11-13.)

COMMENT: Moses was more concerned for the good of others than for self. Above all, he was concerned for God’s Holy Name. His life was God-centered. (Numbers 14:11-20 – be sure to read these verses.)

3. Did Moses try to elevate himself above others – as Hitler and Mussolini did? (Numbers 11:27-29; 16:3-5.)

COMMENT: Meekness is the opposite of arrogance. (Titus 3:1-2.) This is the attitude of a repentant mind. Moses through meekness was made strong spiritually and was thereby enabled TO LIVE the Ten Commandments.

4. But had Moses always been that meek and humble? Or had he formerly taken on himself to go beyond his authority? (Exodus 2:11-14.)

COMMENT: Moses was trained in all the learning of Egypt and all the prerogatives of Pharaoh’s court. He was the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter. (Exodus 2:10.) As a young man, he made a great name for himself as a politician and military leader in Egypt. He was “mighty in WORDS and DEEDS.” (Acts 7:22.) But God then began to deal with Moses’ arrogance.

5. Did Moses at first think he could deliver Israel by his own human power? (Acts 7:23-25.) Then did God strike him down and humble him for FORTY LONG YEARS until his whole attitude was changed? (Verses 26-30.)

COMMENT: Moses, in the height of his carnal pride and glory, was STRUCK DOWN. It was God who forced his flight into the wilderness to bring about Moses’ conversion.

Moses, in this exile, is a type of each one of us. Not the least of his tasks was UNLEARNING the results of 40 years of false Egyptian training – a task for which he was given an equal number of years. Likewise, we also must come out of this world and UNLEARN its ways!

When Moses became meek and humble, God showed him that he COULD, after all, succeed in delivering Israel. But he would have to do it in and by GOD'S power – not his own! This God demonstrated by turning his staff into a serpent, and by turning Moses' hand leprous and instantaneously healing it again.

Yes, Moses was originally very carnal-minded and arrogant – with the same human nature all of us have. Then God began to strike him down. We, like Job and Moses, must be struck down and our carnal nature will be shattered. If He has not brought YOU down – CONQUERED YOU – brought you to total surrender in true repentance, then you have not really repented and been truly converted – no matter how “good” a person you think you “naturally” are!

1. Was Jesus Christ meek (although He did not have to repent of sin, because He never sinned)? (See Matthew 11:29, KJV; 21:5, KJV and 2 Corinthians 10:1.)

COMMENT: Jesus Christ had the STRONGEST character of any one who ever lived. He was also physically strong and healthy. But He always had the attitude of TOTAL submission to God His Father because He was filled with God's Spirit.

1. Does Christ say we all must also become childlike – teachable? (Matthew 18:3-4.)

COMMENT: This does not mean like a rebellious teenager – but like a VERY SMALL child.

2. What will become of the meek? (Matthew 5:3, 5; Psalm 22:26, KJV and Zephaniah 2:3.)

3. Did David strive to be humble before God? (Psalm 131:1-2.) Did he repent TOWARD GOD? (Psalm 51:1-4, 17 - Be sure to READ this entire chapter.)

COMMENT: David, Moses and all the prophets of God in Old Testament times prayed to the One who became Christ. People THEN did not personally pray to the Father, though they knew of Him.

Not the Common Ideal

You won't become a David or a Moses all at once. But the important thing is to know what real repentance

is, and how you can truly repent. Don't make the mistake of overlooking repentance as a necessary step to salvation. Don't assume – with THIS WORLD'S religions – that you can QUALIFY YOURSELF TO GOD by some man-devised method which is FALSELY called “repentance.”

It is amazing to see the misunderstanding of so many people, especially about repenting and becoming a Christian.

Here is what one person, who apparently saw how certain Protestant churches functioned, said:

“I'll tell you why my husband and I have not been converted. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, we have to go forward in a meeting before a lot of people, kneel at the altar, and have a FEELING of deep emotion, pray before a lot of people, and shed a lot of tears. And I just don't know how to WORK UP that feeling, and I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to shed tears or pray aloud before others.”

That is NOT REPENTANCE!

Where did JESUS give such instructions? Where did HE set such an example? Where did HE have His disciples “get converted” by such a formula? Where do you find it in your Bible? Where is the teaching for it? Where did the apostle Paul practice it or have others do it? YOU FIND NO SUCH EXAMPLES OR TEACHING ANYWHERE IN YOUR BIBLE!

Repentance is not only a matter of FEELING! It is NOT a matter of stirring up one's EMOTIONS. It is a matter of HEART. It is a heart-felt realization that you have thought, spoken, and lived contrary to God's Laws and that you should QUIT DOING so!

Tragically most of us are victims of pagan teachings, doctrines, rituals, and customs, which have wormed their way into a so-called “Christianity” and have been given Christian-sounding names! Let's contend for the FAITH ONCE DELIVERED – as faithfully recorded in the Bible – not as practiced by the churches of MEN!

A Parting of the Ways

Repentance is a matter of turning FROM your old way of life which may have seemed right to you – of turning

TO a new and TRUE way of life in Jesus Christ, living by every word of God in and by God's Holy Spirit. When you UNDERSTAND the real meaning and purpose of repentance, you will see that it is something that takes place deep in your heart and is not a matter of the surroundings, or the presence of other people.

When you come to this PARTING OF THE WAYS of your old life – when you come to the place of this COMPLETE CHANGE – this total unconditional surrender to God – this complete consecration, GIVING OF SELF to Him, accepting Christ as your personal Saviour – turning FROM your sins, and TURNING TO God's way of life as you find it in the Bible, you will want to PRAY, you will want to throw yourself completely on God's mercy, and ask Him through Jesus to forgive all your past sins and transgressions against Him.

Herbert W. Armstrong's Experience of Repentance

There are many ways by which God can bring man to repentance. Here are the thoughts and emotions Herbert W. Armstrong experienced in coming to repentance – as revealed in excerpts taken from his Autobiography.

“After the flash depression of 1920 had plunged all my major advertising clients into receiverships, sweeping away the publisher's representative business in Chicago, I hung grimly on for two years. It was futile.

“What I totally failed, then, to realize was that God was beginning to deal with me, to strike me down, to take away the 'idols' of business ambitions, and set me in His work for a very special mission. Jonah tried to escape on a ship from a mission of God. Isaiah protested he was unworthy. Jeremiah argued he was too young. Paul had to be knocked down. But it required several knock-downs to deflate me and wean me from a love of this world. “It was bewildering – utterly frustrating! It seemed as if some mysterious, invisible hand was just disintegrating every business I ever started!

“That was exactly what WAS happening! The hand of God was taking away every activity on which my heart had been set – the business success before which shrine I had worshipped. This zeal to become important in the business world had become an IDOL. God was destroying the idol. He was knocking me down – again and again! He was

puncturing the ego, and deflating the vanity.

“I had been beaten down. God had brought that about – though I didn't realize it then.

This made surrender less difficult. Repeated business reverses, failure after failure had destroyed my self-confidence. I was broken in spirit. The SELF in me didn't want to die. It wanted to try to get up from ignominious defeat and try again to tread the broad and popular WAY of vanity and of this world. But now I knew THAT way was wrong! I knew its ultimate penalty was [eternal] death. But I [my old carnal self] didn't want to die NOW!

“It was truly a battle for life [my CARNAL life] – a life and death struggle. In the end, I [my CARNAL self] lost that battle as I had been losing all worldly battles in recent years.

“I told God I was only a burned-out hunk of junk. In final desperation I threw myself on His mercy. If He could use my life, I would give it to HIM -- not in physical suicide, but as a LIVING sacrifice, to be used as HE willed. It was worth nothing to me any longer.

“Jesus Christ had bought and paid for my life by His death. It really BELONGED to Him, and I told Him He could have it!

“From then on, this defeated no-good life of mine was GOD'S. I didn't see how it could be worth anything to Him. But it was His to use as His instrument, if He thought He could use it.

“It was humiliating to have to admit my wife had been right and that I had been wrong, in the most serious argument that ever came between us.

“It was shocking, disillusioning, to learn, after intensive study of the Bible for the first time, that what I had been taught from a child in Sunday School, was in so many basic points, the very opposite from what the Bible plainly states!

“I had argued. I commanded her to stop this ridiculous nonsense. I had said she was CRAZY!

“Finally I entered into an intensive study of the Bible for the first time in my life. I was determined to PROVE she was wrong, for her new belief and practice was contrary to the orthodox teaching of the large denominational churches that call themselves Christian. My study started early mornings, lasted often until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m.

“But to my utter disappointment and astonishment, I found that the popular church teachings and practices were NOT based on the Bible. They had originated, as research in history had revealed, in paganism.

“The opening of my eyes to the TRUTH brought me to the crossroads of my life. To accept it meant to throw in my lot with a class of humble and unpretentious people I had always looked upon as inferior. It meant being cut off from the high and the mighty and the wealthy of this world, to which I had aspired. It meant the final crushing of VANITY. It meant a total CHANGE OF LIFE! It meant real REPENTANCE, for now I saw that I had been breaking God’s Law. I had been rebelling against God. It meant turning around and going the WAY OF GOD – the WAY of His BIBLE – living according to every word in the Bible, instead of according to the ways of society or the desires of the flesh and of vanity.

“It was a matter of which WAY I would travel for the remainder of my life. I had certainly reached the CROSSROADS! In final desperation, I threw myself on His mercy. If He could use my life I would give it to Him.

“This utter surrender to God – this REPENTANCE – this GIVING UP of the world, of friends and associates, and everything – was the most bitter pill I ever swallowed. Yet it was the ONLY medicine in all of my life that ever brought a healing!

“For I actually began to realize that I was finding JOY beyond words to describe in this total defeat. I had actually found JOY in the study of the Bible – in the discovery of new truth heretofore hidden from my consciousness. And in surrendering to GOD in complete repentance, I found unspeakable joy in accepting JESUS CHRIST as my personal Saviour and my present High Priest.

“Somehow I began to realize a NEW fellowship and friendship had come into my life. I began to be conscious of a contact and fellowship with Christ, and with God the Father.

“When I read and studied the Bible, God was talking to ME and how I loved to listen! I began to pray, and I KNEW that in prayer I was talking with God. I was not yet very well acquainted with God. But one gets to be better acquainted with another by constant contact and continuous conversation.”

And this is the experience Mr. Armstrong went through, and the final great joy he has found, as a result of repentance.

Proof of True Repentance

After you have surrendered to God and been baptized,

how can you be SURE YOU have truly repented? What are the “fruits” of true repentance? What will tell you with absolute CERTAINTY whether you are in a continuous ATTITUDE of repentance? Let’s understand.

1. Will you continue to be deeply involved in things pertaining to this material, evil world? (Colossians 3:1-2.)

2. Will you STILL be yielding yourself to God’s will and GROWING in His character, months and years after baptism? (2 Peter 3:18.)

COMMENT: If you have truly repented and been baptized, you will have been given God’s Holy Spirit. Your mind is now surrendered – yielded to God. You have given up always wanting your own way. You have been CONQUERED in your rebellion against God. And you are WILLING TO OBEY God no matter what the cost.

Jesus surrendered totally to the rule of God and let the Holy Spirit direct and empower His life completely. Even when facing what He knew would be an agonizing death, Jesus prayed: “not My will, but YOURS, be done.” (Luke 22:42.) Your attitude will be more like His CONTINUALLY until the time you are transformed at the resurrection. For now, a new constancy, a new steadfastness, a new certainty, has been added to your character – if you have really been converted and received God’s Spirit. No longer are you completely at the mercy of every emotion and every circumstance – timid, irresolute, unstable, unsteady, wishy-washy. Instead, you are gradually developing the very CHARACTER OF GOD!

3. If you have truly repented and received God’s Spirit, will you find that you are now ABLE to keep God’s Commandments, discovering they are actually a JOY to keep? (1 John 5:3 and John 15:10-11.) Will keeping God’s Commandments become EASIER as you continue to grow spiritually? (Matthew 11:29-30.)

COMMENT: Gradually you will sense the lifting power of the Holy Spirit within you as you strive to serve and obey God. You will be pleasantly surprised at your ability to withstand and HOLD DOWN the downward pulls which mastered you in the past. You will pattern your life more and more after the way Christ lived. (1 Peter 2:21-23.) Your whole point of view towards

everything and everybody will be CHANGING as you continue to yield to God.

4. Do Christians still sin occasionally after their initial repentance and after burial in baptism? (Ecclesiastes 7:20 and 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1.)

COMMENT: Repentance is not complete with baptism. It is not ended in going down once into a watery grave. Baptism is merely a SYMBOL of your initial repentance of all past sins up to that point in your life.

Repentance must be on a DAILY BASIS! For in actual living, you will be coming to God in repentance for sins you STILL COMMIT DAILY, asking God to cover and cancel them out with Christ's shed blood. New knowledge, together with daily repentance, will produce a CHANGE in your character and in your whole attitude towards everything!

5. If you have truly repented before baptism and are repenting of your daily sins, will you also be striving to live by every word of the Bible, although your carnal nature tends to REBEL against it? (Matthew 4:4; John 3:19-21.)

COMMENT: The "light" that has come into the world is God's inspired Word. But the carnal mind is "enmity against God" (Romans 8:7) and does not, BY NATURE, want to live by His Word. And it is only when driven to it by bitter experiences that one will repent and accept its teachings. So, if you have truly repented, you will be continuing to follow the Bible, although your human nature – which still remains as long as you're human – will tend to DRAW YOU AWAY from obedience to God.

6. But after you have continued steadfast in this new way of life several years, drinking in of God's Spirit every day, what CHANGES will you and others find has occurred within you? What spiritual "fruits" will be MANIFESTED THROUGH YOU more and more as you continue in God's ways? (Galatians 5:22-23. Also READ 1 Corinthians 13.)

COMMENT: You will be filled with SPIRITUAL LOVE for God and all fellowmen – even your enemies. You will have sympathy, patience, and kindness for others and their faults and mistakes. You will be gentle and kind, seeking only to HELP and to SERVE.

7. Will you have much new SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE which you know by past experience that you, of yourself – with your own effort – could NOT have acquired? (John 16:13.)

8. Will you be "growing up" in these new truths which lead to becoming a son in God's Family, while those in the world around you plod on in a life that leads to nowhere? (Matthew 11:25; 1 Peter 2:2 and Matthew 4:4.)

COMMENT: If you have truly yielded to God, you will have become like a SPIRITUAL "babe" that needs to be nourished on God's Word so it can grow up SPIRITUALLY.

You will also be like plastic clay, ready and willing to be molded and fashioned into God's character. You will be willing to CHANGE your ways as new truth is revealed.

9. Will you be growing in Jesus Christ's character? (Ephesians 4:15.)

10. Will you have a respect for God and His Word that you never had before? (Isaiah 66:2.)

11. Will you be receiving ANSWERS to your prayers? (1 John 3:22.)

12. Will you be willing to give of your time and effort in serving others? (Matthew 20:25-27.)

13. If you have truly repented and been converted by God's Spirit, will your POCKETBOOK be "converted" too? (Matthew 6:19-21.)

14. And what will have become of your ATTITUDE toward this "Present Evil World" and its glitter, though you love the people in it? (2 Corinthians 6:17 and 1 John 2:15-17.)

COMMENT: One who is a true Christian will NOT BE FOLLOWING the customs and practices of this world's societies. Instead, he will be searching the Bible to learn GOD'S REVEALED WILL, and doing it! You will have questioned all the ways of the "crowd" and clearly

discerned where the world's ministers are wrong.

However, the apostle John does not mean that we are to absolve all contact with the "outside world." We can still LOVE others and yet not fellowship with them. We were born into this world. We cannot remove ourselves physically out of the world (1 Corinthians 5:9-10), but we need NOT BE OF IT – involved in its pursuits which are contrary to God's Word.

These, then, are the "fruits" of a truly repentant and converted mind. How do you measure up?

Begin to Live ABUNDANTLY

If you have never before come to true repentance as God defines it – if you are now sick and tired of the empty, fruitless, materialistic life you have been living – IF in your heart you DO want to turn FROM it to a FULL and JOYFUL life filled with God's Holy Spirit, then why delay? Why delay another minute?

Wherever you are now, go where you can be alone with God – into the privacy of your own room if you are at home – YES, RIGHT NOW! Get down on your knees and make your full surrender to God – give yourself to Him without any reservations. Ask God to forgive your sins, no matter how sinful you may have been. He will forgive them all – your sins will become "WHITE as snow"! (Isaiah 1:18.) Accept Christ as your living Saviour. But don't look for a certain "feeling." It is not a matter of feeling, but of REPENTANCE and of BELIEVING. God laid down the terms. Conform to them NOW!

Don't say, "I don't know how," but do it now! ACT and DO IT – YOU know you OUGHT to, so EXERCISE YOUR WILL and DO IT! Just go to a room ALONE, close the door, and with no one else around, except you and God alone – GIVE YOURSELF TO HIM, ask Him to FORGIVE all your past sins – CONFESS them to HIM (not to any human being) – and then just say – yes, say it: "I here and now accept JESUS CHRIST as my personal Saviour." Everything may be HARD, until YOU SAY THAT. But the minute you say those words to your heavenly Father, the unseen power that caused you to hesitate, and put it off, and has made it so difficult – the power of the devil's demon-world – will let loose. You will then be free – you'll know you now belong to GOD – the

contact will be established! You can TALK to Him, and He will HEAR! YOU can POUR OUT YOUR HEART TO Him, and He will LISTEN – and comfort, and come close and give YOU WHAT YOU NEED.

Then you must be BAPTIZED – not into any religious denomination or organization, but into Jesus Christ. You should be baptized as SOON AS POSSIBLE after you repent and give yourself to God.

(If you have truly repented and want to be baptized God's way, then email Dr. Bob Thiel. He will then ensure that one of God's ministers in the field will get in touch with you. This service, like all the literature from God's Work, is absolutely FREE!)

Once you are baptized, God PROMISES to put His Spirit within you – to give you, and radiate from you a LOVE YOU never had, a new FAITH, PATIENCE, UNDERSTANDING. Through His Spirit you will be given POWER for SELF-MASTERY. Power to UNDERSTAND the Bible.

Then KEEP UP THE CONTACT now established! You do this by DAILY Bible study and prayer. God talks to you through His Word. You talk to Him in prayer. It is a two-way conversation. Through it you BECOME ACQUAINTED – get to KNOW God. And where once He seemed far away and unreal, He will now seem close, and REAL! But be sure to KEEP IT UP EVERY DAY! YOU will experience an inner joy you didn't dream could exist – you will find He IS truly REAL – and an ACTUAL help in every time of need!

You won't be perfect all at once. You will still have yourself to WRESTLE with. Trials, tests, afflictions, persecutions will come – but now you will find an ever-present HELP and deliverance – a constant source of inspiration, and courage, and power – an inner peace and faith – and you will begin to live a full and ABUNDANT LIFE for the first time, with the assurance of ETERNAL LIFE.

Don't become discouraged and give up, though, when you make a SLIP. You'll be starting out as a Spiritual BABE in Christ. Babies stumble and fall down many times before they learn to walk. Don't let that discourage you – get up and try all the harder and, as you continue the CHRISTIAN LIFE, the Bible and God's way will become a new, and the SUPREME INTEREST of your life!

When you look at your troublesome, naturally evil self, so human and full of faults and weaknesses, so beset by temptations of pride in the flesh, with all its limitations and shortcomings, knowing that to be finally saved you must GROW in grace and in God's knowledge – must develop in righteous holy character – must overcome this SELF and temptations and weaknesses – and must endure through trial and test and opposition and all discouragement unto the end – well, when you look at it that way, it may seem utterly impossible ever to be saved.

Of course!

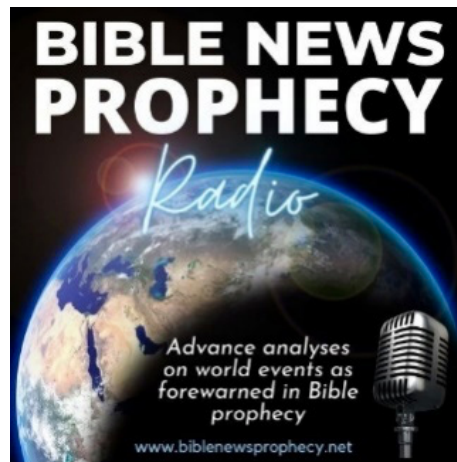
Of yourself, it is impossible to be saved. But with GOD it is certain – IF we yield to Him and TRUST Him. We shall be saved, NOT by our own power to overcome and develop perfect character, but through FAITH in GOD'S POWER! GOD WON'T LET YOU FAIL if you endure to the end in the conditions which He has set for salvation!

God does not want you as you are—as you would end up miserable throughout eternity if He allowed that and you did not change.

God wants what's best for you so that your eternity will be better than you can imagine.

More on God's plan can be found in our free booklet, available online at ccog.org, titled The MYSTERY of GOD'S PLAN: Why Did God Create Anything? Why Did God Make You?

Continuing Church of God Radio Log



In addition to being online around the world in the English language at www.biblenewsprophecy.net, as well as in other languages at www.bnpi.net, there are numerous radio stations the Bible News Prophecy radio program is on.

Europe, Middle East, & North Africa: Via European Gospel Radio

AM/MW 1323 kHz + streaming. This broadcast is also on shortwave at the 7295 kHz location from October through late March; from late March to late October, it is 7290 kHz.

Far East and North America

Radio Miami International, WRMI, SW 5850 kHz. 0130 UTC Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Kenya

Radio Milambo 103.8 FM, Migori – Fridays at 6:00 pm

Ghana

OTEC 102.9 FM, Kumasi – Sundays at 7:00 am

Sunsum 98.7 FM, Kumasi – Tuesdays at 6:00 am

Philippines

Dxms 107.3 FM All Star FM, Surigao City – Sundays at 7:00 am

USA

KKIM AM 1000 Albuquerque – Saturday 9:15 am

KGMS AM 940 Tucson – Saturday 1:15 am

KCNW AM 1380 & FM 96.1 Kansas City – Saturday 2:30 pm

KERI AM 1410 Bakersfield – Saturday 11:45 am

WWNL AM 1080 & FM 103.9 Pittsburgh – Saturday 11:30 am

WSKY AM 1230 Asheville – Saturday 7:45 pm

WELP AM 1360 & FM 104.3 Greenville – Saturday 7:00 pm

WNVY AM 1070 & FM 104.5 Pensacola – Saturday 7:15 pm

Multimedia

By Bob Thiel

In addition to radio, personal visits, the video platforms shown on the back cover of this magazine, and printed literature, the Continuing Church of God uses many forms of media and methods to reach people around the world as we work to fulfill the commissions from Jesus in Matthew 24:14 and 28:19-20.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:22, ESV)

In the case of the Continuing Church of God we use multiple methods to reach all that we can.

For example, we have internet advertising campaigns to also reach people around the world.



According to Google, over a half-billion impressions on computers around the world have been occurred through CCOG's 'church history' and 'universal offer of salvation' campaigns, since we started this with them in May of 2013 (though we do not know how many are unique computers as opposed to those being reached multiple times). We are regularly reaching millions around the world with this method.



We also have a special campaign on Microsoft which focuses on the Sabbath which has had over 300,000 computer impressions. We regularly are reaching thousands around the world with this method.

Online News and Doctrine

We utilize other methods to reach people with news and doctrine online.



Flipboard – flipboard.com/@ProphecyNews/

Flipboard is a digital magazine, which contains primarily news items. We joined and created Flipboard magazines in 2014. Our Flipboard Page consists of COGwriter news articles, includes literature, sermons, sermonettes, categorized in 23 separate magazines. Updates are daily. It was first available on the desktop, and then a mobile app.



Pinterest - pinterest.nz/biblenewsradio/

Pinterest is a discovery visual engine, inspires ideas and more. Pins (posters) are created about Bible News Prophecy, news, or sermon items are added to the Pinterest page. In its initial years, a lot of the content added was from COGwriter news articles, with over 130,000 impressions, now due to censorship issues, only certain subjects are added.



MeWe - mewe.com/p/biblenewsprophecyradio

MeWe is a social media site, similar to facebook, but without the censorship, ads, or news feed manipulation. We joined in 2022. Content shared on MeWe is from Bible News Prophecy Radio and COGwriter, including any new literature.

tumblr

Tumblr - tumblr.com/blog/biblenewsprophecy

Tumblr is a social media site and free blog site to share your content with others who may be interested. COGwriter articles and BNP radio items are shared here.



Facebook has news and prophetic information.

USA - facebook.com/ContinuingCoG/

Africa - facebook.com/CCOGAfrica/

Canada - facebook.com/ccogcanada/

Europe - facebook.com/CCOGEurope/

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Church of God News

"...contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Bible - News - Prophecy

biblenewsprophecy.com

COGwriter - cogwriter.com/news/

COGwriter.com has over 12,000 articles, books, and news posts. There are three posts (sometimes more) per day.

Let me also add that we have our English language booklet, The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, available in over 1,200 languages at ccog.org. This also supports what is called the Ezekiel watchman warning of Ezekiel 3-7, it also assists in reaching the fulness (or full number) of Gentiles that will be reached before Jesus returns (cf. Romans 11:25-26).

A lot of materials are put out on many platforms as we support the commissions Jesus gave in Matthew 24:14 and 28:19-20, as well as to strive to "become all things to all people, that by all means" we might assist in saving some.

Questions and Answers



By Bob Thiel

Q: Why Did God Make Males and Females?

A: In this crazy world, many are confused about gender. Few have considered WHY God made humans male and female.

So, why did God make humans male and female?

Well, an obvious reason would have to do with reproduction as God told the first man and woman:

28 Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth...
(Genesis 1:28)

Of course, as cells can reproduce without having a male and female, God did not have to make humans male and female for reproduction, though for many reasons related to reproduction, there are clear benefits.

That said, the Bible gives a fairly specific related reason He made humans male and female:

14 ... Between you and the wife of your youth ... she is your companion And your wife by covenant. 15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring... (Malachi 2:14bd-15)

God made males and females so that they could be one and ultimately produce godly offspring (for deification). But it was for more than that.

Jesus, Himself, taught:

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

The Apostle Paul wrote related to this that, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32).

In addition, the two properly becoming one also helps us better understand the relationship between the Father and the Son (John 17:20-23).

The marriage relationship helps picture the relationship between the Father and the Son (both of whom the Bible identifies as God, e.g. Colossians 2:2, which is a mystery to most) as well the relationship between Jesus and the church. Plus, it also points to what will happen to converted humans after the resurrection (which the Bible also calls a mystery, e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

The Apostle Paul discussed love and gave some other spiritual lessons related to the marital state:

4 ... admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children. (Titus 2:4)

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:22-27)

Another reason to make males and females was to make it possible, though with physical distinctions in this life, for couples to be glorified together with Jesus (Romans 8:16-17). Working together (Genesis 1:28; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12) and even suffering together in this life was also part of the plan (Romans 8:16-17) for male-

female couples.

Also, since eternity lasts forever, having the variety of experiences as male or female will contribute to the diversity of experiences, we the truly converted will have during our eternal life.

Let's also see some lessons from history:

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. 32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (Hebrews 11:30-40)

Both men and women had faith and were heirs to the promises — equally. And both men and women are to be made perfect. And this will be better for us.

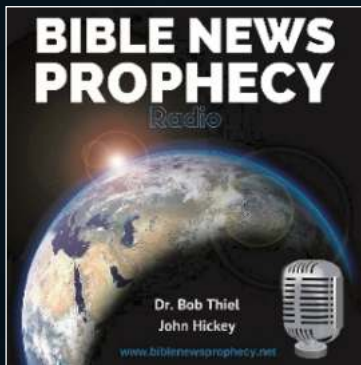
For what purpose?

To give love in a unique way throughout all eternity.

As the Apostle Paul wrote to Christians (and not just married couples):

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all ... (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

Whether male or female, humans are intended to give love. Increasing love to all will make eternity better. Making humans male and female assists in supporting that plan.



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



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