

Bible News Prophecy

African Conference 2017 in Nairobi Kenya



Where are the 12 Tribes of Israel?

While many people understand where the tribe of Judah is located, most do not realize where the other 12 tribe

Twenty-Eight Tips for More Effective Prayers

Would you like to learn how to make your prayers more effective?

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About the Front Cover: This photograph is from the *Continuing* Church of God in Nairobi, Kenya.

Bible News Prophecy magazine is published by the *Continuing* Church of God, 1036 W. Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, CA, 93433. <http://www.ccog.org>

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of charge by the *Continuing* Church of God. It is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the membership of the Church and others who have elected to support the work of the Church. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax-deductible in the U.S. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support this worldwide Work of God are gladly welcomed as co-workers in this major effort to

preach and publish the gospel to all nations. Contributions should be sent to: *Continuing* Church of God, 1036 W. Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, CA, 93433.

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**FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF:
BOB THIEL**



**African Conference
2017**

In February 2017, the *Continuing* Church of God hosted a conference for some of our African leaders in Nairobi, Kenya.

Because of budget limitations, we could not have all of the leaders attend. But we were able to have at least one representative from Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, plus many leaders from Kenya.

We wanted the African leaders from different areas to get to meet each other, as well as myself, and Aleksandar Veljic who came from Serbia. Prior to the conference, Aleksandar Veljic spent about a week with Kenyan overseeing Pastor Evans Ochieng visiting congregations all over Kenya. He was able to see the poverty, hope, and spiritual growth in many regions.

We conducted lectures on a variety of topics, such as why the true Church of God is all about love, truth, the gospel of the kingdom of God, history, prophecy, and reaching people in various languages. There were numerous ordinations with the "laying on of hands" (1 Timothy 1:6).

I also provided doctrinal training and went over how the *Continuing* Church of God differed from various Sabbath-keeping groups such as the Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Church of God (Seventh Day), and various groups whose

leaders were once part of the old Worldwide Church of God. We also explained some differences with other Protestants, the Eastern Orthodox, and the Catholics of Rome and answered various questions.

We also went over our plans to better reach Africa. We discussed translating materials into more native languages, making it easier for people to find our congregations, visiting various nations, and our new CCOGAfrica.org website.

Back in 2014, we also held a conference in Nairobi. At that time, we had leaders from Kenya and one from Tanzania who attended. We had about 260 people with the *Continuing* Church of God in those two nations then.

Since that time, our membership in Africa has expanded to about 2000. While God calls (John 6:44; 1 Thessalonians 2:12), this has physically been done by people reading my writings, and then by Pastor Evans Ochieng visiting many areas and telling the message of what we in the *Continuing* Church of God are doing and believe, with support from others.

Consistent with what the Apostle Paul wrote, I have been planting, Pastor Ochieng has been watering, and God has been giving us the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Due to his evangelical efforts, Pastor Evans Ochieng was ordained as an evangelist under my direction during that conference. This is the only such ordination in our particular church.

We expect to see more growth in Africa.

Where Are the Twelve Tribes of Israel?



Mosaic of the 12 Tribes of Israel. From Givat Mordechai Etz Yosef synagogue facade, Ha Rav Gold street, in Jerusalem. Top row, right to left: Asher, Dan, Judah, Reuben; Middle: Joseph, Naphtali, Issachar, Simeon; Bottom: Benjamin, Gad, Zebulun, Levi.

By Bob Thiel

The Bible records that Jacob, also called Israel, made prophecies to the 2 'half-tribes' of Ephraim and Manasseh in Genesis 48, who were the sons of his son Joseph. The Bible also shows that he foretold what would happen to each of the twelve tribes who were descended from his twelve sons.

While many people in the world accept the identity of one tribe (Judah), very few seem to understand where the identities of the other tribes or why such information could be important.

Here is some of what the Bible records in Genesis 49 were prophecies FOR THE LAST DAYS and Jacob's descendants:

1 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

2 "Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father.

3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. 4 Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it--He went up to my couch.

5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. 6 Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.

8 "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh

comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. 11 Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.

13 "Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; He shall become a haven for ships, And his border shall adjoin Sidon.

14 "Issachar is a strong donkey, Lying down between two burdens; 15 He saw that rest was good, And that the land was pleasant; He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, And became a band of slaves.

16 "Dan shall judge his people As one of the tribes of Israel. 17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward. 18 I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!

19 "Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him, But he shall triumph at last.

20 "Bread from Asher shall be rich, And he shall yield royal dainties.

21 "Naphtali is a deer let loose; He uses beautiful words.

22 "Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall. 23 The archers have bitterly grieved him, Shot at him and hated him. 24 But his bow remained in strength, And the arms

of his hands were made strong By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), 25 By the God of your father who will help you, And by the Almighty who will bless you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb. 26 The blessings of your father Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he shall devour the prey, And at night he shall divide the spoil."

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing (Genesis 49:1-28).

Consider also the following as recorded by the prophet Isaiah:

8 "But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. 9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions,

And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: 10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My

righteous right hand.' (Isaiah 41:8-10)

6 Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,

That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' (Isaiah 49:6)

Notice that each of the tribes had their own "blessing" and some of the descendants would be at the ends of the earth. Hence, biblically speaking, they should be looked for individually. Are not England, Canada, and Australia, to cite three examples, the among the ends of the earth from Palestine? And if you consider lands still, like the Falklands, and formerly, like the Far East and India, which were once controlled by Britain, some of the tribes were scattered to the ends of the earth and future scattering will take place.

Yair Davidy wrote that a rabbi named Manasseh ben Israel in the 17th century observed that the French term for England, Angleterre, literally meant "End of the Earth" (Davidy, p. 414).

As far as the prophecies in Genesis and elsewhere go, it has been stated:

The nations identified...as being of the Israelite-seed of Abraham were those who mainly conducted European colonist policies from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. (Davidy. The Tribes, p. 15).

Although I do not agree with all the conclusions in the book cited below, it has been written:

In Sercia (east Scythia) the RHABBANAEI of Reuben bordered the Garianaei of Gad...Ribuiari...is another form for Reuben...Ribuari may have been similar to the Franks own name for themselves (Davidy. The Tribes, pp. 161-162).

The "CHATAE SCYTHAE"...The Chinese records say that that portion of the Naphtalites who had been north of them moved westward prior to 450 c.e. They also say that they had previously been north of the Altai mountains and were part of the Massagete, blue-eyed and fair-haired (Davidy. The Tribes, pp. 199-200).

Finland has been identified....as...especially Issachar (Davidy. The Tribes, p. 217).

BENJAMIN also seems to have been represented by the NORMANS (Davidy. The Tribes, p. 232).

Britain was dominated by the Tribe of Joseph and especially the section of Ephraim...From Britain came many of the settlers of South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada (Davidy. The Tribes, pp. 377,390).

...characteristics of Menasseh are found in the U.S.A. (Davidy. The Tribes, p. 403).

...The Irish of today... have characteristics applicable to DAN and

Simeon...The forefather of the Danes in Danish tradition was called DAN (Davidy. The Tribes, pp. 432,438).

THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE JEWS...Most Jews come from the tribe of Judah followed by the tribes of Benjamin and Simeon together with Levi...Judah is the determining factor (Davidy. The Tribes, p. 433).

The French descend mainly from Reuben (Davidy. The Tribes, p. 440).

We in the *Continuing* Church of God believe that the descendants of Israel travelled to many places. While the following list may need some adjustment, it basically reflects where many of us have been taught those descendants went (even though some of each are scattered throughout many lands):

Reuben - France (dignified but troubled, Genesis 49:3-4.)

Judah - The nation now called Israel as well as the Jews not in that land but who were from the area near Jerusalem (Ezra 4:12).

Simeon - Scattered throughout the tribes (Genesis 49:5).

Levi - Scattered throughout the tribes (Genesis 49:5).

Issachar - Finland (sits between Europe and Russia, Genesis 49:14).

Zebulun - Netherlands (haven by the sea, Genesis 49:13) and a few in South Africa.

Gad - Switzerland (will apparently have to temporarily accept European domination, Genesis 49:19).

Dan - Denmark, Ireland (on the outskirts--Genesis 49:17; the tribe that named places "Dan", Judges 18:12,29) (those in Northern Ireland mainly are descended from the Ephraim).

Asher - Belgium, Luxembourg (wealthy, Genesis 49:20).

Naphtali - Sweden (attractively described, Genesis 49:21).

Benjamin - Norway, Iceland (former vikings, cf. Genesis 49:27)

Ephraim - Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and probably some in South Africa and Zimbabwe (company of nations, Genesis 48:19).

Manasseh - United States of America (blessed nation, Genesis 48:19).

These are the countries that contain the physical cities of Israel that Jesus apparently was referring to in Matthew 10:22-23.

Countries like Sweden, Belgium Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, France, Denmark, Ireland, and Iceland seem to fit some of the positive statements in Genesis 49--but they will ultimately face tests and trials from the coming European Beast power (cf. Ezekiel 5:4; 39:23,28).

Perhaps it should be pointed out that several of the "Israelite nations" are ethnically mixed (per Davidy Y. The Tribes, 4th edition. Russell-David Publishers, 2011

and other sources) and it may take them some time for the actual Israelites to separate out.

They probably are also where the 144,000 from Revelation 7 will be chosen from (except Dan, which is missing from the list in Revelation 7:4-8; interestingly, many in the Catholic Church tend to believe that the final antichrist will be from the tribe of Dan).

Back in the old Worldwide Church of God, some speculated that Denmark would leave the European Union (EU) and not be part of the European Beast power. I am not particularly sure on that one way or the other now, but do consider that it is a possibility (the viper and serpent comments in Genesis 49:17 suggest that Dan is different than others who might unify). Yet, the fact that the tribe of Dan is the only tribe not listed amongst the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4-8 makes me lean the other way at this instant--yet the fact that Denmark has not yet adopted the Euro (though its currency is directly linked to it) suggests a certain independence on the outskirts of the EU—but that arrangement may not last.

On the other hand, we of the Philadelphia remnant and the old WCG correctly realized that the UK would not be an equal part of the European Union and was likely to pull out:

Bible prophecy clearly shows that Britain will not be one of the ... NATIONS comprising the final United States of Europe (McNair R. A Strong United Europe. Tomorrow's World, February 1970, p. 17).

It should be understood that ultimately, Britain will NOT thrive as part of the EU but will be taken over

by the final European Beast power—yet its former Prime Minister is promoting something that will not help the peoples of the UK. (Thiel B. Tony Blair Calls for a Strong, Elected, EU President. Church of God News, June 9, 2007.)

Perhaps it should be mentioned that the general position within the Churches of God is that Britain will not remain in the EU and will pull out at some point. (Thiel B. Tony Blair a Catholic EU Leader? Church of God News, June 26, 2007.)

Back in the early 1990s, when I was vice president of an irrigation equipment manufacturer, I told our British sales representative, who was visiting the factory in California, that one day the UK would separate from Europe. He flat out told me that could not possibly happen. And he gave reasons, but they were not biblical ones—I told him he was in error. The vote by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union on June 23, 2016 (called the Brexit), shows that he, who was not part of the Church of God, was in error.

Israel's Formation in 1948

It also should be pointed out that many simply believe that the nation of Jews called Israel is ALL OF ISRAEL, along with Jews scattered around the world. As shown by other scriptures (e.g. Genesis 48:11,15-16,19-20; cf. 1 Chronicles 5:1-2), the name Israel was to be placed on the descendants of Joseph. Yet, it was prophesied that most would call the Jews 'Israel':

1 Hear this, O house of Jacob, Who are called by the name of Israel, And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah (Isaiah 48:1)

This has happened today, so most overlook the scriptures that teach that there are other tribes of Israel in other places (e.g. James 1:1).

While some have pointed to the formation of the small nation of Israel as the fulfilment of many end time prophecies, this has frequently been overstated.

Although this formation has prophetic relevance, it was not the 'fig tree' that many Protestant prophetic watchers have claimed as the start of the final generation (Mark 13:28-30). If we grant that a generation could last for up to 70 years (cf. Psalm 90:10), Jesus would need to return by 2018 for 1948 to be the starting point for "this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30).

Furthermore, the formation of Israel is NOT the final prophesied regathering that certain Protestants have claimed. Here is some of what Herbert Armstrong wrote about this in 1948:

Not Prophesied Regathering

In God's own due time the Jews are to be released from their persecutions, their harrowing trials, and be reestablished within Palestine IN PEACE! But this is not that prophesied regathering of Israel! This is merely a blundering human effort to do for themselves, before the time, what they will have to wait for God to do for them. And this present movement, setting up a nation of Jews and calling it "ISRAEL," can only lead to more bloodshed and more troubles!

In the first place, the new nation that has declared itself in Palestine is not Israel at all—it is only a part of JUDAH! When the great prophesied exodus occurs, it will be Israel and Judah together. And they will not do it in their own defiant, embittered power and strength; they will be taken back, by Christ after His coming, from a condition of slavery and from the land of their enemies (see Ezek. 39:25-27). At that time they will take captive their captors and rule over those who had been ruling over them (Isa. 14:1-3—see especially Moffatt translation; Jer. 30:16; 31:11). It will be a greater exodus than the typical one under Moses—this one will be under CHRIST at His return! (Jer. 23:7-8.) They will go back to Palestine weeping, confessing their sins, loathing themselves for having ignored and transgressed against God, seeking the MESSIAH whom they have rejected (Jer. 50:4-5; Ezek. 20:34-43). They will then be converted, changed from sinners into Spirit-filled people living by God's laws (Jer. 50:19-20; Ezek. 36:24-28). The Jews in Palestine, and this new nation, fulfill NONE of those prophecies! But what a strange dilemma!

The Jews Are Not Israel!

Most people today do not seem to know that the Jews are not Israel, but only a part of Judah. The first place in the Bible where the word "Jews" occurs, the Jews are at war against ISRAEL (II Kings 16:6). Four whole books of the Bible are devoted to

showing the historic difference between the two nations Israel and Judah. There were twelve tribes of Israel, originally. But after Solomon died, the nation ISRAEL rejected her king, Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and made Jeroboam, of the tribe of Ephraim, king. Then the one tribe of Judah split off from the nation Israel and formed a NEW NATION of their own (just as they are trying to do again today), in order to retain Rehoboam as king. This new nation was called the kingdom of JUDAH. The tribe of Benjamin and a large portion of Levi then joined Judah, leaving the TEN TRIBES in the nation ISRAEL. (Armstrong HW. Plain Truth, June 1948)

And he was correct. The nation of Israel does not represent all the tribes of Israel. Notice the following prophecy:

18 "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers. (Jeremiah 3:18)

7 For thus says the Lord: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O Lord, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!' 8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with child, together; A great throng shall return there. 9 They shall come with weeping, And with supplications

I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn. 10 "Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.' (Jeremiah 31:7-10)

That has NOT been fulfilled. The 'land of the north' has to do with *end time* Babylonian Europe (cf. Zechariah 2:6-7).

Because certain ones do not understand that the nation called Israel is not all Israel, they have misunderstood the timing of prophecies such as Ezekiel 38.

Other Comments on the Tribes

Some object to the entire concept of the tribes being heavily European and point out that the differing peoples/tribes/nations often look different than the Jews. But notice the following:

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. (Hebrews 7:11-14)

Since it is evident that Jesus looked like a Jew (from Judah) and not a Levite (which is where the priests came from) the New Testament is clearly stating that those of Judah could be distinguished from the tribe of Levite. Hence, it is obvious that people of different tribes of Israel could, even now, look different from each other.

Because of intermarriage and other factors, some of the countries that the differing tribes tended to dominate are subject to debate--however, overall the peoples of northwestern Europe seemed to have descended from the tribes of Israel as well as the nations that came from those peoples.

Here are some comments from the late Dr. Hoeh on the identity of some of the tribes (I left out Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah as they have more coverage elsewhere):

4. Levi, the priestly tribe, was to be scattered in Israel (Gen. 49:5-7). God never gave them land to inherit as the other tribes. Therefore, we should not expect them to be given territory today. Nothing is said in Deut. 33 about inheriting land. Among the Jews today we find many bearing the names: Levi, Levy, Levine. Others bear the name "Cohen" and its variations. The Hebrew word "Kohen" means priest and is so translated 725 times in the King James version. Here then, we have the great bulk of Levi scattered among Judah because they left their

priestly functions in Israel almost totally (I Kings 12:31).

5. Simeon received no blessing from Moses. In fact, he does not even mention the tribe! Jacob said God would scatter them throughout Israel. How? Take a map of Palestine for the time of the division of the land. Notice that Simeon did have an inheritance SOUTH of Judah. When Judah separated from Israel, Judah occupied that territory, yet Simeon went with Israel! The only explanation is that Simeon migrated into Israel generally, but no new territory was assigned to Simeon. This tribe became scattered. It is possible that the small scattered tribes in Western Europe, variously called the Senones or Semaones or Sennones, represented the fragments of the tribe of Simeon.

6. Reuben, unstable as water and having the excellency of greatness, we have recognized as France. Southern France, settled by the descendants of Javan (the Greeks), is gentile ... is unstable, yet sets the styles for the world, has the form of real excellency, and has the same sex weakness as Reuben, is France... And is it not significant that the very country at war with England around 1800 should be France (Reuben), who would lose the birthright in the Napoleonic war? (Napoleon was Italian.)

7. Dan was originally divided into two parts, one about Joppa, a seaport, and the other in the north of Palestine. Dan refused to fight along

side the other tribes against the Gentiles (Judges 5:17). Dan would judge, or stand up to rule, his own people as one of the separate tribes of Israel indicating he would gain self-government in the following manner: "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the part, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider falleth, backward." Ireland has done just that to England. In fact, the symbol of the illegal Irish Republican Army was the coiled snake!

Dan would also be like a young lion leaping forth, an apt description of Denmark, which acquired the Virgin Islands, Greenland, Iceland and other islands in her heyday. Especially unique is the fact that of all the tribes Northern Dan still preserves their father's name the Danes!

8. Benjamin constitutes Norway and Iceland. The Icelandic people in reality a colony of Norwegians. Benjamin was given to David because Jerusalem, David's capital, was in the tribe of Benjamin, not Judah. God said He would give David light in Jerusalem (I Kings 11:36). This verse could not refer to Judah which did not have to be given to the Jewish House of David. Benjamin was told to flee the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 6:1) which many of them did.

Benjamin is compared to "a wolf that raveth; in the morning he devoureth the prey, and at even he divideth the spoil" (Gen. 49:27). This is certainly an apt description of the Vikings who pillaged Northern Europe, and even Mediterranean

regions. Almost all Viking raids came from Norway. It is also significant that Benjamin, the smallest tribe, still is the smallest today. There are fewer Norwegians (plus 148 thousand from Iceland) than any other Israelite nation. (Moses' blessing in Deut. 33 has particular reference to this fact that Jerusalem was in the tribe of Benjamin.)

9. Issachar is compared to a "large-boned ass," Jacob continues: "For he saw a resting-place that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he BOWED HIS SHOULDER TO BEAR, and became a SERVANT UNDER "ASSWORK." (Gen. 49:14-15.) An ass is not the most intelligent of animals, but it is a willing worker. Such is Finland. Finland is the ONLY nation that has voluntarily taken the full responsibility of her debts. She is today paying off a huge indemnity to Russia. Her land is pleasant and good, not extraordinarily rich. According to Deuteronomy 33:19 she derives wealth from fishing and from hidden treasures of the sand gigantic peat bogs and the finest sand for glass-making. Issachar is not a colonizing people they dwell pastorally "in tents," said Moses.

10. Nephtali represents Sweden "satisfied with favor, full with the blessings of the Lord." She is compared to a prancing hind or deer and "giveth goodly words" (Gen. 49:21). From Sweden, with a well-balanced economy, come the Nobel prizes in token to great world accomplishments. Sweden, during two world wars and the recent

trouble in Palestine, sent her emissaries to speak words of conciliation and peace. The promise by Moses to possess "the sea and the south" is applicable both to ancient Nephtali and modern Sweden: notice the position of the Sea of Galilee and Baltic relative to the position of this tribe.

11. Zebulun settled in Holland (The Netherlands). Zebulun dwell at the "shore of the sea, and he shall be a shore for ships, and his flank shall be upon Zidon" a Gentile country. Moses said: "rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out." She takes also treasures from the sea and the sand, Zebulun, then, is a colonizing people. She is not a pillaging people as Benjamin.

12. Gad, which means "the troop" certainly designates Switzerland the only Israelite nation in which every man is mobilized for defense. Against Gad would come the foreign troops, said Jacob, but he will "trod upon their heel." Moses declared that Gad does NOT "leap," a characteristic of the colonizing or pillaging tribes. Gad "teareth the arm, yea, the crown of the head" of the Holy Roman Empire, in whose territory "he chose a first part for himself, and there a portion of a ruler was reserved." To Gad come "the heads of the people" as they do today to Geneva. No other nation on earth so perfectly fits this description of a nation of troops.

13. Asher "his bread shall be fat and he shall yield royal dainties" (Gen. 49:20). This peculiar expression could have reference alone to

Belgium and the kindred state Luxembourg. From Belgium have come the finest Flemish paintings, the royal tapestries which graced the halls of kings, fine cut diamonds, porcelain and Belgian lace. Belgium and Luxembourg are blessed above many another son of Jacob "Blessed be Asher above sons; let him be the favoured of his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil" prosperity. Iron and brass shall by thy bars; and as thy days, so shall they riches increase. Because of uranium, Belgium's prosperity will continue to grow. (The above rendering of Deut. 33:25 is the correct it is highly obscure.)

SUMMARY: Here we have a recapitulation of Jacob's prophecy for the latter days, and of Moses' blessings (some of which apply to the millennium). IN ALL THE WORLD THERE IS NO GROUP OF NATIONS SO PERFECTLY CORRESPONDING TO THE PROPHECIES. And within this extraordinary group of nations each nation has its own characteristics. (LOCATION OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL by Herman L Hoeh (ca. 1950s) <http://www.giveshare.org/israel/locationtribes.html>)

Related to Gad, let me add the following scripture:

20 And of Gad he said: "Blessed is he who enlarges Gad; He dwells as a lion, And tears the arm and the crown of his head. 21 He provided the first part for himself, Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there. He came with the heads of the people; He administered the justice

of the Lord, And His judgments with Israel." (Deuteronomy 33:20-21)

Switzerland, Geneva particularly, has had a history of being an "international lawgiver."

Note: Even though the migrations of some of the ancestors of Switzerland and Germany are similar, while some have erroneously taught that Germany is Gad, Germany has no history of being a recognized lawgiver—but instead primarily descended from Assyria.

Here is more information on most of the other tribes, straight from the Bible:

6 "Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few."

7 And this he said of Judah:

"Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, And bring him to his people; Let his hands be sufficient for him, And may You be a help against his enemies."

8 And of Levi he said:

"Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, Whom You tested at Massah, And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah, 9 Who says of his father and mother, 'I have not seen them'; Nor did he acknowledge his brothers, Or know his own children; For they have observed Your word And kept Your covenant. 10 They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar. 11 Bless his substance, Lord, And accept the work of his hands; Strike the loins of those who rise against him, And of those

who hate him, that they rise not again."

12 Of Benjamin he said:

"The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him, Who shelters him all the day long; And he shall dwell between His shoulders." (Deuteronomy 33:6-12)

18 And of Zebulun he said:

"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, And Issachar in your tents! 19 They shall call the peoples to the mountain; There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas And of treasures hidden in the sand." (Deuteronomy 33:18)

22 And of Dan he said:

"Dan is a lion's whelp; He shall leap from Bashan."

23 And of Naphtali he said:

"O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, And full of the blessing of the Lord, Possess the west and the south."

24 And of Asher he said:

"Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil. 25 Your sandals shall be iron and bronze; As your days, so shall your strength be. (Deuteronomy 33:22-26)

It may be of interest to note that the word translated as 'west' regarding Naphtali is

also defined as roaring sea, which is how Herman Hoeh explained it. Sweden is basically on the west border of the Baltic Sea.

Although certain "theologians" have dismissed the idea that Israel is still separate from Judah, the Bible is clear that into the last days (cf. Revelation 18:2-5) that there remains a separation between the two:

5 For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, By his God, the Lord of hosts, Though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." 6 Flee from the midst of Babylon, And every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, For this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He shall recompense her. (Jeremiah 51:5-6)

So, despite critics, those who actually believe the Bible realize that God considers that Israel (the so-called ten lost tribes) and Judah (Judah, Levi, and perhaps part of Benjamin) still exist separately.

Before going further, perhaps it should be mentioned that there are several prophecies involving the nation that is now called Israel (which is mainly descended from Judah) that should be quoted:

20 But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. (Luke 21:20)

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those

who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:15-16)

22 Behold, the noise of the report has come, And a great commotion out of the north country, To make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals. (Jeremiah 10:22)

6 Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem

You have sold to the Greeks, That you may remove them far from their borders. (Joel 3:6)

Disaster is prophesied for the current nation known as Israel (cf. Isaiah 22:7-10). And its surviving residents apparently will become slaves, apparently in lands controlled by northern peoples, like the Greeks (note: the old Greek Empire included much of the old Roman Empire, hence lands other than Greece may end up with those from modern Israel).

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that Jesus is clear that the twelve tribes will exist in the far future:

24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the

table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

28 "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:24-30)

Notice also:

14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl.

And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. (Revelation 21:14-21)

Thus, God has a plan for the twelve tribes according to the New Testament. The twelve apostles will be ruling over the twelve tribes.

Many of the Old Testament Prophecies Concerning the Descendants of Jacob Have Not Been Fulfilled

And while most commentators understand the passages from Jacob in Genesis 48 & 49 to be prophetic, many seem to conclude that they have been fulfilled long ago. Notice what the renowned Protestant theologian John F. Walvoord wrote:

In general, the prophecies that Jacob bestowed on his children have been fulfilled in their subsequent history (Walvoord, John F. The Prophecy Handbook. Victor Books, Wheaton (IL), 1990, p. 33).

That statement above is outrageously inaccurate. Many Protestants simply do not understand where the USA is mentioned in prophecy (more on the USA is expected in future articles, but for now consider Daniel 11:39 is a prophecy that the strongest military power will be eliminated in the time of the end and Habakkuk 2:6-8 foretells the elimination of a highly indebted people). Not only have many prophecies NOT been fulfilled historically, a lot of these prophecies were for the last days.

It was during the time of the New Testament that the last days began (Hebrews 1:2), and no commentator (outside of those who accept that there are still tribes of Israel that are not affiliated with the nation now called

Israel) has been able to show how the prophecies of Genesis 49:1-27 were fulfilled in “the latter days.” Nor have I seen any of them explain who “the multitude of nations” that were to descend from Ephraim are.

On the other hand, the late John Ogwyn noted:

There is no record of Ephraim and Manasseh ever becoming a great nation and company of nations prior to Israel’s captivity. They never became a blessing to all the nations of the world before they went into Assyrian captivity in the eighth century before Christ. Clearly, the fulfillment of the promises that God made to Abraham and reconfirmed to his descendants did not occur before ten-tribed Israel disappeared from the pages of your Bible and then from the pages of secular history (Ogwyn J. 2006).

While “disappeared” is how many view them, the fact is that they did fulfil the prophecies and have more still to fulfil.

Furthermore, a major prophetic chapter in the Bible after those in Genesis is in Leviticus 26. In a sense it could be called the first major “blessings and cursings” chapter in the Bible. Without going into all the details, notice one verse:

33 I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste (Leviticus 26:33).

And while God did allow the Assyrians to scatter the children of Israel in the Old Testament, they did not then destroy their

cities. Instead, the cities remained and the Assyrians put other peoples in them (2 Kings 17:24).

And why is that relevant?

Because it shows that the “cities” becoming “waste” prophecy is still waiting to be fulfilled. Hence, this is another Old Testament prophecy that is still to happen—and is likely to impact the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim and Manasseh are called “a great people” in the Bible (Joshua 17:17).

Interestingly, the Bible in other places distinguishes between the descendants of Judah and those of Joseph. Notice one such place:

As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions' (Ezekiel 37:16).

Similarly notice:

3 Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, Who cause the seat of violence to come near...6 Who drink wine from bowls, And anoint yourselves with the best ointments, But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. 7 Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives, And those who recline at banquets shall be removed. 8 The Lord God has sworn by Himself, The Lord God of hosts says: "I abhor the pride of Jacob, And hate his palaces;

Therefore I will deliver up the city
And all that is in it." (Amos 6:3, 6-8)

The descendants of Joseph, also known as Jacob, will be punished (Jeremiah 30:7) for sin including pride. Notice that they do not think it can happen to them, but it will:

8 "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,"

Says the Lord.

9 "For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. 10 All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.' (Amos 9:8-10)

Are not the nations of the USA and its Anglo-Saxon allies sinful? The Bible points out that the descendants of Jacob and Joseph are God's people (Psalm 77:15). And since God will sift them out, He knows who they are!

Also notice the following prophecy:

25 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name — 26 after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their own land and no one made them afraid. 27 When I have brought them back from

the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, 28 then they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. 29 And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' says the Lord God." (Ezekiel 39:25-29)

This was NOT fulfilled by the Jews going back to the land in the Middle East and establishing the nation of Israel in 1948. Why? Because most Jews were secular then and now. All do NOT know the living God-- which the prophecy shows that they would have, if it had yet been fulfilled.

What about those that are not descended from Judah, Ephraim, or Manasseh? The remaining tribes of Israel? Well, while the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7) does not start with their immediate punishment (Ezekiel 5:1-3 seems mainly to point to Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh), they too will receive punishment (notice the **bolded** end of verse 4):

1 "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass it over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the hair. 2 You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around it with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them. 3 You shall also

take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your garment. 4 Then take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. **From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel.** (Ezekiel 5:1-4)

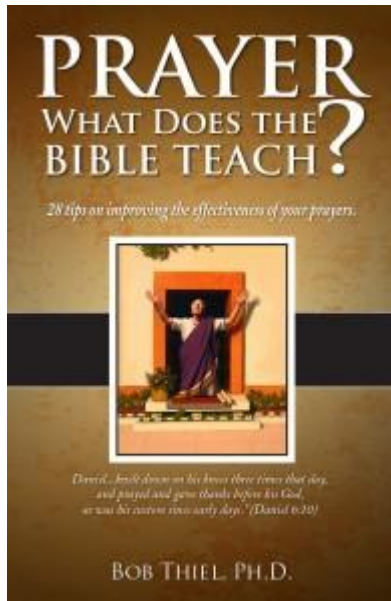
of trouble will fall upon the descendants of Israel—but they will not all be destroyed as some will survive it (Jeremiah 30:7)

The bolded portion seems to show that the rest of the house of Israel will have tribulation after the modern nations that include Israel and the Anglo-descended countries will essentially be gone. This would include such countries as France, Finland, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden, and Norway. The 'small number' in verse 3 appears to be about 10 percent as that is the amount that Isaiah 6:13 indicates will be left. As Ezekiel 5:4 seems to show, after the USA is eliminated, fire will spread to "all the house of Israel."

(Some have questioned if Israelitish-descended nations could be part of the final Beast power. History shows us that France, Switzerland, and at least parts of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Britain were part of old Roman Empire. At least parts of France, as well as essentially all of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Belgium were part of the so-called 'Holy Roman Empire.' Consider also that three members of the House of Luxembourg reigned as 'Holy Roman Emperors.' The fact that at least part of the Israelitish peoples were part of the beasts in Daniel 2:40-43 and 7:2-8, should show all that it, for a time, can be part of the final Beast power.)

Of course, after Jesus comes and His Kingdom is established, all of that type of punishment will end. But until then, a time

Twenty-Eight Tips for More Effective Prayers: Part 7



Continuing Church of God booklet on prayer

By Bob Thiel

This is the seventh part of a seven-part series on prayer.

It has been said that, “The Church of God goes forward on its knees.” This has basically been used as an admonition to tell Christians that they need to pray. But how?

In the previous articles, prayer was defined, and twenty-one tips were discussed. In this article, three additional tips, starting with what we will call tip number twenty-six are covered, as well as a summary of all 28 tips.

Tip Number 26: Deal With ‘Secret Sins’

Sometimes you have sins that are in the way, including secret ones. God will not hear you if you accept iniquity:

¹⁸ If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. (Psalms 66:18)

¹ Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Some do a good job of hiding their sins from others. Some even hide sins from themselves. But God knows:

⁵ O God, You know my foolishness; And my sins are not hidden from You. (Psalms 69:5)

⁷ For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. (Psalms 90:7-8)

God will allow you to face tests and trials to purge you from sins:

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

We are to strive to be perfect in God's sight, not our own. Jesus taught:

⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

We cannot hide sins from God and should strive not to hide sins from ourselves.

Notice what the Old and New Testaments teach:

³⁹ Why should a living man complain, A man for the punishment of his sins? ⁴⁰ Let us search out and examine our ways,

And turn back to the Lord; ⁴¹ Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven. (Lamentations 3:39-41)

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

But humans do not tend to believe this. We seem to prefer to think our problems are physical and require a physical solution, when many are spiritual and require a spiritual solution.

That does not mean to neglect the physical, but understand also the spiritual:

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. ⁸ It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. (Proverbs 3:7-8)

² Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; (Isaiah 55:2-3)

¹² Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for

food, and their leaves for medicine. (Ezekiel 47:12)

⁷ But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. ⁹ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. ¹¹ These things command and teach. (1 Timothy 4:7-11)

Examine yourself and change. Remember the Bible teaches:

¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)

All of us need more faith and patience. Jesus even asked if He would really find faith when He returns:

⁸ Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

Jesus prophesied that there would be problems with faith in the end times. We all need more faith, we all need to change.

Tip Number 27: Change Can Make the Impossible, Possible

What if what you are going through seems impossible?

According to the Bible it is not:

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to

be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Remember during tests and trials to resist Satan, and God will make a way for you to bear it. Turn potentially destructive events into character building ones.

Items like weight loss and cessation of smoking are difficult, but not impossible. Items like an adult growing 1 1/2 feet (Matthew 6:27) or one who is born blind being able to see without medical intervention (John 9:30-33) are basically impossible. Sometimes we face the impossible, because God believes we can handle it and it will help us build character. Sometimes, perhaps it is also to motivate us more to be closer to God.

Some trials and tests need to be taken one day at a time. Don't sell yourself short. For almost everything you can hold out for another day. Do not worry and tell yourself you cannot continue. Recall that Jesus taught:

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:31-34)

A lot of trials should only be looked at one day at a time as Jesus implied above.

We also need to be careful about comparing ourselves to others:

¹² For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12)

Why do some trials for Christians seem more difficult than for those outside?

¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now

"If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where

will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:17-19)

So, Christians may find that they encounter issues that others do not. Despite problems, we must try to do good, even when suffering.

As far as prayer goes, what if what you want is 'impossible'?

Well, as far as God is concerned, nothing is impossible:

²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

²³ Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." (Mark 9:23)

³⁶ And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." (Mark 14:36)

You might say, that is fine for God, but I'm imperfect and thus the impossible will not happen for me. Well, do you really believe the Bible? The Bible teaches:

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

You might be telling yourself, "Well that was true for the Apostle Paul. Paul was a great man of faith, but I am a nobody. I have sinned a lot."

Well, remember that the Apostle Paul earlier had "persecuted the Church of God beyond measure" (Galatians 1:13). You probably did not do anything worse than that. Even if you did, you still can repent.

But the real point is that yes, through Christ, His followers can do all things.

This includes healing:

² Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: ³ Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, ⁴ Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, ⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The Lord executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷ He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. ⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. ⁹ He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. ¹⁰ He has not dealt

with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalms 103:2-12)

But you may say, you or someone you are praying about has not been healed.

While God does heal all diseases, He does so when He feels it will truly help the one.

Sometimes it is not clear why you do not get the answer you are expecting or even pleading for. Is this *necessarily* because you lack faith?

No.

Notice what happened with the Apostle Paul who wrote:

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Why did God not heal the Apostle Paul?

Because it may have affected Paul in the wrong way. The above passage indicates that Paul and/or the people around him could not properly handle matters if Paul did not have the particular infirmity. Or perhaps because Paul did have the character to endure and be an example, God decided it was best.

Paul probably felt that HE could do God's work better if only God would heal him of whatever this was. Because of statements in Galatians 4:15 and 6:11, some feel that this affliction may have had something to do with his vision. If so, consider that since Paul wrote more books of the New Testament than anyone else, that God did not need to have Paul healed of this, irrespective of what Paul may have thought.

Nor did Paul's likely prayers heal everyone he was involved with. Paul refers to Timothy's recurring stomach problems in 1 Timothy 5:23, and also says, "Trophimus have I left in Miletum sick" (2 Timothy 4:20).

Building character is more important to God, and God's will, than physical healing. That does NOT mean that the 'impossible' will not be done. Yet, the experience of the Apostle Paul helps demonstrate that God's ultimate will for you exceeds what you may prefer physically.

You might think that you are unworthy for God to hear your prayer, but all sin:

²³...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)

If you believe and confess your sins, God will hear you. But you may have more character to develop in areas than you might think.

Tip Number 28: Close with Amen

Jesus ended the prayer He gave in Matthew 6 with the term 'Amen.' Amen stems from the verb aman meaning "to support, confirm, or rear up" (Harkavy, *Students' Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*). Amen itself means "truly" (ibid.). Christ often used this word in the New Testament, where (in the King James Version) it is translated "verily." Basically the word signifies that you believe and agree with what was stated before.

Believe what you pray. Have the right attitude. Amen.

Summary

Here is a listing of the 28 tips:

1. **Pray to God the Father**
2. **Worship God in Truth**
3. **Believe God**
4. **Obey God: Do More than the Demons**
5. **Worship God in Spirit**
6. **Resist Satan**
7. **Don't Fight God**
8. **Pray for Others**
9. **Pray for Your Needs**
10. **Remember God's Will and Have Your Priorities in Order**
11. **Praying Positions from the Bible**
12. **Pray Every Day**
13. **Forgiveness**
14. **Recognize God's Spirit**
15. **Pray for What the Bible Says to Pray For**
16. **Ask for Spiritual Gifts**
17. **Don't Pray for Show**
18. **Obey the New Testament About Head Coverings**
19. **Ask Often, Do Not Use Vain Repetitions, But Be Fervent**
20. **If You Are Suffering or Sick, Pray About It**

21. **Pray for Church Leaders**
22. **Pray for Secular Leaders**
23. **Put Jesus in Your Prayers**
24. **The Difficult: Remember Fasting**
25. **Pray With Thanksgiving**
26. **Deal With 'Secret Sins'**
27. **Change Can Make the Impossible, Possible**
28. **Close with Amen**

Some may be thinking:

"Wait a minute! I want God to do things MY WAY. That is why I pray. And you keep quoting verses that I should confess my sins, pray for others, pray for the work, pray for God's will to be done, give thanks, and even fast. Those are not the kind of tips I was hoping for."

Well, you either believe the God of the Bible or you do not. You can pray for your wants and needs, but you need to understand that prayer is intended to be more than a 'please give me this, please give me that' process.

Study, review, and strive to understand all the tips in this booklet. Read the Bible. Pray regularly to the Father.

If you do believe and will follow what the Bible says, God will answer your prayers. The twenty-eight tips in this booklet should give you at least a start to realize how God wants you to view prayer.

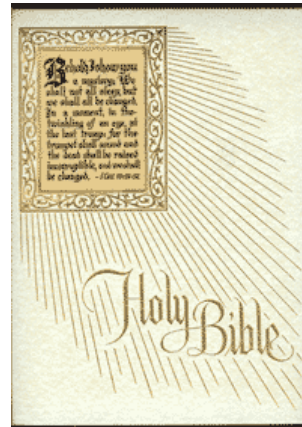
¹⁷ Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

Pray.

More information on prayer can be found in our booklet *Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?*

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

Lesson 12a: Proof of Biblical History-Introduction



Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief

Published 2017 by the *Continuing Church of God*

This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Although much of the original writing has been retained, it has been updated for the 21st century and contains 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 King James Version (KJV), sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version, is also often used. Additionally, Catholic-approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.

Note: This particular lesson was so long in the original, it was needful to break it into

multiple pieces as it was longer than two regular-sized editions of this magazine. The next part, 12b, is planned for the next edition of this magazine.

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY PROVE THE BIBLE TRUE

IS THERE proof OUTSIDE the Bible that the events described in Scripture really happened – that its great characters actually lived?

Where is the PROOF that Joseph was in Egypt? – that Abraham and his ancestors really existed? – that David was actually king of Israel? – and, above all, that Christ and the apostles were known by their Jewish and Gentile contemporaries?

And where is the PROOF that the inspired Word of God has been accurately preserved for us today – especially since there are so many different modern translations?

Yes, WHERE IS THE PROOF?

It's time we studied the proof of HISTORY and ARCHAEOLOGY to further prove the Bible is FACT, and not fable.

Ministers Deny Divine Origin

It will probably SHOCK YOU to know what many religious leaders personally think and publicly say about the Bible! Here is what Harry Emerson Fosdick, a noted American minister, wrote in his book, "The Modern Use of the Bible":

"We know now that every idea in the Bible started from primitive and childlike origins ..." and that it is an

"impossible attempt to harmonize the Bible with itself, to make it speak with unanimous voice, to resolve its conflicts and contradictions ..." (pages 11, 24).

Why did Dr. Fosdick write this? Was he convinced that there was no proof of the inspiration of the Bible? OR WAS HE OVERLOOKING THE PROOF – AND NEGLECTING THE TRUTH?

Of the earlier writings in the Bible, he further says: "But we do not need to apologize for their crudities Their lack is a lack of maturity"

Today it is shocking to realize that the religious leaders believe the Bible is primitive, childlike, crude, immature – a book of fables and myths instead of the inspired TRUTH of GOD!

Bible Scholars Skeptical Too

Dr. James Moffatt, who produced a famous English rendering of the Bible, says in his introduction to the Bible that many of its books are "notes by disciples, worked up into literary papers which have been repeatedly edited, sometimes by pious collectors."

To this learned man the earlier portions of the Bible stemmed from "the natural desire to gather up the primitive traditions of the people."

Yes, here is one of the foremost biblical scholars declaring that the Bible has a natural origin in human TRADITIONS! – implying that it is NOT backed by FACT! What made him believe such an idea? Was he without proof of the inspiration of Scripture?

Surely, if there were proof for the inspiration of the Bible, these learned men would not have overlooked it – would they? ... OR DID THEY FACE THE EVIDENCE AND REJECT IT?

Now read what Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed, who also translated the Bible, says about the Scriptures in his book, "How to Read the Bible." He says you should remember this about the first twelve books: "It is man's first attempt to organize his knowledge of his past into what we would call an outline of history." He disregards even the POSSIBILITY that God could have INSPIRED the men who wrote the Bible!

When we read Genesis, Dr. Goodspeed would remind us that:

"Genesis is a great encyclopedia of HEBREW thought, and its solutions of the great problems that confront the human mind. Its great achievement was that it unified it all as the work of one supreme being" (p. 39).

Do you catch what this means? The Bible is the work of MAN only – MAN'S attempt to organize historical knowledge, the Hebrew MAN'S solution to the world's moral problems – MASQUERADING as though it were from a supreme being!

This is exactly the view of most educated people! The Bible is, according to this misguided philosophy, the inspiring record of MAN'S search for a concept of God – not the INSPIRED record of GOD'S revelation to man of essential knowledge man needs to know, but would not otherwise be able to obtain!

Concerning God's law, Dr. Goodspeed says that it "perpetuates the old legal practices

taken over from the Canaanites after the conquest ..." and represents "... various stages of primitive legislation...." In other words, Dr. Goodspeed believes mortal, carnal human beings formulated the Ten Commandments and all of God's statutes and judgments!

As for the remainder of the Bible, he believes "The Book of Joshua is the LEGENDARY story of the conquest of Canaan" and that the Book of Ruth "belongs to Israel's FICTION, rather than to its history, and should be among its TALES and STORIES" (p. 51).

Sincere, but Ignorant?

SHOCKING UTTERANCES SUCH AS THESE ARE THE PRODUCT OF HUMAN REASON! To the natural mind the Bible is merely a book of tales and stories, and fabulous solutions to the question of human origin and destiny.

But what PROOF do these men have for propounding the concept that the Bible was fraudulently written by Hebrews who only "claimed" divine authority for their merely human utterances?

Have these men been able to DISPROVE the Bible? – to disprove the existence of its great characters – to disprove the occurrence of its outstanding historic events?

NO! FOR HAD THEY BEEN ABLE TO DISPROVE THE BIBLE, THEY WOULD HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR "PROOF" LONG AGO!

The RELIGIOUS LEADERS of this world are responsible for souring the average man-on-the-street against the Bible. What else can the average person believe when religious leaders, who are SUPPOSED to know the

Bible, declare the Bible a pious fraud! The religious leaders are the Bible's WORST ENEMIES!

Of course the Bible is read from the pulpits. It is continually being translated anew, but ITS TEACHINGS HAVE BEEN REJECTED! ITS solutions to the world's ills have been repudiated WITHOUT BEING TESTED!

People are being persuaded to TAKE FOR GRANTED WHAT THE CHURCHES SAY ABOUT THE BIBLE. THEY HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES HUNDREDS OF CONFLICTING IDEAS, just as Dr. Fosdick wrote, and that the BIBLE IS the cause for the hundreds of disputing sects and denominations. But they have NOT BEEN WILLING TO EXAMINE THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES to learn what it actually does say! If they did, they would be mightily surprised!

The reason people have willingly believed fables about the Bible is that they sincerely do NOT WANT TO DO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS! They WANT to believe fables! "THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE, BUT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN DESIRES, *BECAUSE* THEY HAVE ITCHING EARS, THEY WILL HEAP UP FOR THEMSELVES TEACHERS; AND THEY WILL TURN *THEIR* EARS AWAY FROM THE TRUTH, AND BE TURNED ASIDE TO FABLES." (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Note well that people AS A WHOLE will just naturally not ENDURE the truth!

People sincerely WANT to serve their OWN lusts. They want to be in ignorance of God's law and way of life! They do not want the astounding proof that the Bible is true, that it is inspired – that it can be proved right!

As Jeremiah the prophet was inspired to write: "An appalling and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy in the service of FALSEHOOD, and the priests bear rule at their beck and call; and My people love to have it so" (Jeremiah 5:30-31, Moffatt).

No wonder so many are deceived today. Most religious leaders just won't preach the truth! So let us now understand what the Bible REALLY IS.

WHAT the Bible Really IS

The Bible is the written revelation of the Creator God for mankind. IT CONTAINS THE ABSOLUTELY VITAL KNOWLEDGE THAT EVERYONE NEEDS DESPERATELY TO UNDERSTAND – but which would be inaccessible by any NATURAL means.

In the Bible, God speaks with authority to us through its writers. THE BIBLE, THEN, POSSESSES SUPREME AUTHORITY OVER OUR LIVES SINCE IT COMES FROM OUR OWN SUPREME CREATOR. The Bible repeats hundreds of times: "Thus says the LORD, In Scripture, God speaks in the first person – "I" – and challenges us to test Him to PROVE whether He speaks the truth. (Isaiah 44:6-9.)

Without the Bible we can NEVER UNDERSTAND THE LESSONS OF THE PAST, THE MEANING OF THE PRESENT, AND THE GOAL OF THE FUTURE.

Scripture, when rightly understood, GIVES A RATIONAL MEANING for man's existence and the causes of our world's ills. It explains exactly why this world experiences wars, sicknesses and suffering.

There are hundreds of religious, political and economic "cures" in the world, but none of them reaches the cause of earth's problems. Only GOD'S MIND IS great enough to know the TRUE answers. No book BUT HIS BIBLE can explain the laws that eternally regulate human life and human affairs – LAWS which, when violated, bring the penalties of sickness, war and death.

Only the Bible is able to point the way out of impending chaos!

Yet humans reject its solutions as out of date in this digital information age. Its truth they do not want to know. That's WHY "THE LORD HAS A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS" (Jeremiah 25:31). EVER SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN LIFE, GOD HAS HAD A CONTROVERSY WITH HUMANITY. HUMAN BEINGS BY NATURE REFUSE TO FOLLOW HIS WAY OF LIFE. Humans think their ways are better. Humans assume that they know more than God.

Yes, "There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of DEATH" (Proverbs 14:12). Humanity avoids acknowledging God as Supreme Ruler. People hide their eyes from plain evidence, and label Scripture falsely as myth and tradition.

Where Is the Proof?

Everyone today demands proof! People have a chip on their shoulders, so to speak. They want someone to prove whether the Bible REALLY is true. Christ said this challenging attitude would reach its climax in these last days of human civilization – just before man with his scientific ingenuity could blast all human life out of existence (Luke 18:8; Matthew 24:22).

Of course it is right that we should prove it! And there is proof – proof of the most amazing kind – proof that would astound the public if the theologians were to publicly confess it! But the world is wilfully ignorant of it.

Believe it or not, the world ALREADY KNOWS OF THE PROOF but, having been deceived, is unwilling to accept it. It has SEEN the proof, FELT it, DUG it up, READ it and even PUBLISHED it! But humanity, deceived by superstition and vain religious traditions, has REJECTED the proof because it does not want to believe and SURRENDER ITS WILL to the Bible.

This lesson of the Study the Bible Course is the fourth in a series demonstrating the proof of God's existence and the inspiration of His revelation. We have already studied the proof of creation, with the astounding confirmation of a pre-Adamic catastrophe and the tangible evidence of the flood in Noah's day. This is visible proof for those who have eyes to see. But the world as a whole has closed its eyes to truth and wilfully "abide in darkness" (John 12:46). We have also covered the proof of prophecy – the supreme evidence that only a living, active God could have written the Bible and brought about the present fulfillment of its prophecies.

Only the wilfully ignorant would reject the evidence of creation and prophecy. But, sadly, the world is filled with them! It has rejected both.

The mass of evidence is overwhelming. It is so great the Bible Study Course cannot begin to contain it all. But this mass of evidence has created a paradox. Just as the world publishes and sells the Bible, but does not

believe it, so it also discovers, publishes and sells the evidences of biblical inspiration WITHOUT BELIEVING THEM!

The world has not only turned the truth upside down, but it has also turned the PROOF upside down – making right SEEM wrong and true proof SEEM disproof.

To help you see and understand this amazing evidence, make sure your Bible is in front of you. Also have several sheets of paper, and a pen or pencil so you can WRITE DOWN THE ANSWERS and your own comments. There are not many questions asked you in this lesson because we are giving you the proof of God's inspiration of the Bible directly from the HISTORICAL RECORDS themselves.

You need to summarize these NEW PROOFS for yourself, in your own words. That is the best way to REMEMBER them!

These proofs confound the atheist. These proofs demonstrate once and for all time that the biblical record is inspired of God and true!

Are you ready to begin?

LESSON 12

History Records the FLOOD

Heretofore, we have presented the evidence of creation and of science. Now we come to the most important test of biblical inspiration.

The Bible contains a record of HISTORICAL EVENTS that cover a period of over 4,000 years of human experiences. LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF STATEMENTS, FOR WHICH HISTORICAL EVIDENCE REMAINS, PERMIT US TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE BIBLE IS THE

TRUTH – or whether it is a record of myths and fables that were inaccurately gathered centuries after their occurrence and "made to appear" as the work of a Supreme Being, as Drs. Moffatt and Goodspeed declare.

Is Bible history true? Let's REALLY PROVE whether we can depend on the Bible for the TRUTH!

1. Does the Bible record that a great flood occurred in Noah's day which destroyed almost all life from the earth? Genesis 7:1, 6, 21, 22.

COMMENT: If the nations stem from one family, as the Bible teaches, we ought to expect all nations to have ancient TRADITIONS about the flood.

In the previous lesson we proved the GEOLOGICAL evidence of a flood in the days of Noah. Critics may dispute the time (because they reject Bible chronology), but they know the RECORD IS there for everyone to see. That they cannot deny! But if Noah and his family escaped the flood's destructive forces, it is not demanding too much if we seek for confirmation among all nations that the flood preceded the founding of present nations.

What is the history of testimony – testimony which men have dug up, translated, printed and circulated for public consumption?

Here are the facts which anyone can know: The AMERICAN INDIANS in both North and South America preserved legends of the Flood in which a few escaped by means of a boat and repopled the earth.

The NATIVES of GREENLAND maintained that all men were once drowned and that a

man and woman became the ancestors of all now living.

The POLYNESIANS from the South Pacific contend that a flood overwhelmed all but eight people.

CHINESE traditions speak of their civilization as having been founded by a man, together with his three sons and daughters, who escaped a devastating flood.

EGYPTIAN and other AFRICAN traditions preserve similar accounts.

The GREEKS pictured their "Noah" as building an Ark to escape the waters, after which he sent out a dove twice before setting foot on earth again.

The ancient BABYLONIANS and ASSYRIANS have preserved for us on clay tablets word-for-word accounts of the same traditions among them – traditions which are exact in many details!

Think for a moment – IF the Flood had not occurred, would all these peoples have preserved these records of the Flood? Certainly all people would not have been deceived into believing the Flood had happened if it had not happened! The old Radio Church of God reported that, "You may find this unanimous testimony of ancient nations in the International Standard Encyclopaedia, article 'Deluge' and in summary form in Halley's Bible Handbook." If you would like a larger list of Flood world stories to look into here is a link: <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/flood-myths.html>.

Thus, for the Flood of Noah we have the actual geological evidence AND the

testimony of many ancient peoples who remembered the catastrophic results. The only reason the testimony is not believed today is that man is unwilling to believe what God says! He would rather believe the evolutionary fairy tale that everything has continued the same since the beginning of time.

Knowing these facts, some skeptics assert that the biblical record came from Babylonian tradition rather than fact. The EVIDENCE IS JUST THE OPPOSITE! The Babylonian record we have was nearly all found in the Library of Ashurbanipal (around 650 B.C.), long AFTER Moses' record of Noah's Flood. The sane explanation is many peoples preserved their OWN accounts. Of these accounts only the biblical record is without contradiction and filled with rational simplicity.

So the Book of books is right after all. The SCRIPTURE STANDS VINDICATED. It is INSPIRED. IT IS TRUE ON EVERY COUNT!

Passover: Is It Only About Christ's Death?

Should Christians keep the Passover?

By Bob Thiel



Unleavened bread and wine

As many are aware, the children of Israel were specifically told to observe the Passover in the Old Testament Book of Exodus.

Families took a lamb, without blemish (Exodus 12:5), for the sacrifice (Exodus 12:3-4). The lamb was sacrificed on the fourteenth at twilight (Exodus 12:6) and some of its blood was placed upon the door of the family's home (Exodus 12:7). Those who took the steps God instructed were 'passed over' from death, whereas the Egyptians who did not do this were not (Exodus 12:28-30).

As many also realize, Jesus kept the Passover annually (Exodus 13:10) from the time of His youth (Luke 2:41-42) and throughout His entire life (Luke 22:15).

Passover was observed on the fourteenth day of the month of the first month (Leviticus 23:5; called Abib in Deuteronomy 16:1 or Nisan in Esther 3:7). It occurs in the Spring season of the year.

Although Jesus changed several practices associated with it (Luke 22:19-22; John 13:1-17), our Savior also told His disciples to keep it (Luke 22:7-13). Also the New Testament is clear, that because of Jesus' sacrifice, killing sheep and putting blood on doorposts (Exodus 12:6-7) is not needed anymore (cf. Hebrews 7:12-13, 26-27; 9:11-28).

The Apostle Paul specifically taught that Christians were to keep Passover in accordance with Jesus' instructions (1 Corinthians 5:7-8; 11:23-26).

The Bible teaches that Jesus "was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20) to be "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Thus, God's plan of salvation through His Holy Days and festivals, including Jesus being the "Passover lamb," was known before humans were placed on the planet. That is why some of the celestial bodies were placed in the heavens to be able to calculate them!

Pretty much all churches recognize that the Bible teaches that Jesus fulfilled something associated with Passover when He was killed.

We find the operation of this great Sacrifice even discussed in the Garden of Eden. After Jesus was prophesied (Genesis 3:15), God killed an animal (probably a lamb or goat), in order to cover the nakedness (a representation of a type of sin in this incidence) of Adam and Eve with its skins (Genesis 3:21). We also see this principle of sacrifice operating when Abel sacrificed a lamb from his flock (Genesis 4:2-4).

The famous Passover in the days of Moses showed the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12:1-38). Moses recorded God's instructions about this as well as the calendar (Genesis 1:14; 2:1; Exodus 12:1) and His feasts (Leviticus 23). The Passover basically became the first of these events annually picturing to God's children His great plan of salvation.

In the Old Testament, the Passover pictured deliverance from the bondage of Egypt and God's intervention. But, prophetically, it was also looking towards the time that Jesus would come and be our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29; cf. 3:16-17).

On Jesus' last Passover as a human being, He continued to keep it at the time of the late evening and told His disciples to keep it (Luke 22:14-19; cf. John 13:2,12-15) and on the 14th of Nisan/Abib (cf. Luke 22:14; 23:52-54).

Jesus, however, changed several of the practices associated with its observance. Jesus made the bread and wine an integral part of Passover (Matthew 26:18, 26-30) and added the practice of footwashing (John 13:12-17).

Jesus in no way taught that it was not to be an annual Passover, nor did He change the time of day of its observation to a Sunday morning like those who follow Greco-Roman traditions do. Even Greek Orthodox scholars (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America) admit that 1st and 2nd century Christians kept Passover at night like we in the *Continuing Church of God* do in the 21st century (Calivas, Alkiviadis C. *The Origins of Pascha and Great Week - Part I*, 1992).

It probably should be added that the Church of Rome (as well as many of its Protestant descendants) officially teaches that it keeps Passover, though calling it something different in the English language and not keeping it as Jesus did (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1995).

Passover Was on the 14th Not the 15th

Some have been confused about the date of the biblical Passover. The Bible teaches that it was to be kept on the 14th day of the first month of God's calendar (Leviticus 23:5).

In the 6th verse of Exodus Chapter 12, it states that the lamb is to be killed "at dusk" (GWT and Jewish Publication Society translations). The 8th verse says that they are to eat the flesh that night. It is to be roasted and eaten that night. And, yes as one who has killed lambs, one can easily kill, roast, and eat a lamb 'of the first year' (Exodus 12:5) between sunset and midnight—which is basically what the children of Israel did on the recorded Passover in Exodus 12. And technically, they had until morning to have eaten

it per Exodus 12:10. Now the Bible is clear that the angelic Passover occurred "on that night" (Exodus 12:12), the same night of the 14th.

The Bible teaches that Jesus was only to be sacrificed once (1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 9:28; 10:10-14). In the New Testament, it is clear that Jesus kept His final Passover (Luke 22:14-16), and was killed. The Bible shows that Jesus was removed from the stake prior to the 15th. Why? Because the 15th was a "high day" (John 19:28-31), specifically the first day of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:6). Hence, Jesus kept and fulfilled the Passover on the 14th.

Early church history also records that Passover was kept on the 14th of month of Nisan by faithful Jewish and Gentile Christian leaders in the first, second, and third centuries and that it was kept in the evening.

Most leaders who profess Christ claim to observe some version of Passover, though many have changed the name, the date, the time, the symbols, and the meaning—the day commonly called 'Easter' in English was supposed to be a version of Passover by the early Greco-Roman churches.

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ was the Passover lamb sacrificed for us and that we are to keep that Feast with unleavened bread:

⁷ Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed.

⁸ Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:7-8, NAB)

Notice that the feast is to be kept with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The Apostle Paul realized that Jesus was a substitute for the Passover lamb that the Jewish people

used. He also taught that Christians should still continue to observe Passover.

But basically, how were Christians to do this?

The Apostle Paul explains:

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

So, the Apostle Paul taught that Christians were to keep the Passover in the manner that Jesus observed His final Passover with the bread and wine. And that was at night as remembrance or memorial--a memorial is an annual, not a weekly event.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* correctly notes that "Jesus chose the time of the Passover... took bread, and...he broke it" and also gave it to be eaten.

It is documented in the Bible that Jesus broke unleavened bread and passed it to His followers to eat. Jesus also passed the wine to His followers to drink a small amount. We in the *Continuing Church of God* pray, break and distribute unleavened bread, and distribute wine for His faithful followers to consume. Yet, the Church of Rome (like many others) no longer breaks unleavened bread (it uses a whole 'host') nor does it *usually* distribute wine for its followers to drink (the distribution of wine is considered optional by the Church of Rome, and it is often not done in Protestant churches).

What About 'As Often...You Proclaim'?

How often should Passover be taken?

Jesus stated, "**For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.**"

Consider that it is Jesus' *death* that this commemorates.

Christ's death reconciles us to God (Romans 5:10) and Jesus gave His life for our salvation (John 3:16-17; Hebrews 5:5-11). His death teaches us that Christians are not to have sin reign over our mortal bodies (Romans 6:3-12). The Christian Passover is the annual commemoration of Jesus' death.

Jesus DID NOT say to do this ceremony AS OFTEN AS YOU DESIRE, only that when you do it, you are proclaiming His death. The Greek term for often in 1 Corinthians 11:26, *hosakis*, is used one other time in the New Testament. It does not mean as often as you desire UNLESS the Greek term for "you desire," *thelo* or *ethelo*, is also present (which it is in Revelation 11:6; the only other place in the Bible this particular term is used). However, since this is NOT present in 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul is NOT telling us to observe the Lord's Passover as often as WE desire, but that when we are observing it on Passover, it is not just a ceremony, it is showing Christ's death.

Furthermore, Paul wrote this:

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

Paul is clearly teaching that to take this bread and wine, one must examine oneself. The

deleavening that is supposed to accompany Passover helps us focus on our faults and sins, and thus helps fulfill this command from Paul to examine ourselves. As deleavening can take lots of effort, this also supports the concept of an annual examination (people were not removing leaven every day or week).

The New Testament records that both Jesus and Paul taught to observe the Passover in the Christian manner. And that was an annual observation.

Footwashing

Footwashing helps show humility and that even the followers of Christ still tend to have areas that need to be cleansed (cf. John 13:10).

Jesus taught that His followers should do this:

¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (John 13:13-17)

Relatively few who profess Christianity wash feet like Jesus said to do. But we in the *Continuing Church of God* follow Jesus' instructions on this annually.

Sources Outside of Scripture

It is not just in the Bible that we see that Passover was kept annually by Christians. History records that the faithful kept Passover annually on the 14th from the time of the original apostles and throughout the ages.

There is some interesting information in the corrupted text known as *The Life of Polycarp* What is interesting is that it suggests

that the Passover observation in Asia Minor may not have first come to Smyrna from the Apostle John, but even earlier from the Apostle Paul.

The Life of Polycarp suggests that New Covenant Passover with unleavened bread and wine was to be observed during the season of unleavened bread. It states that heretics did it another way. And that writing is also supportive of the idea that the unleavened bread AND wine were taken, and were taken ANNUALLY.

History records that the biblically-listed apostles (including Philip and John) as well as Bishops/Pastors Polycarp, Thrax, Sagaris, Papius, Melito, Polycrates, Apollinaris, and others kept the Passover annually on the 14th. The Roman, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican Catholics all consider those leaders to have been saints, yet none of those faiths follow their examples on this.

The historian Eusebius reported that Bishop/Pastor Apollinaris of Hierapolis in Phrygia of Asia Minor wrote in the late 2nd century that Christians were to keep Passover on the 14th:

The fourteenth day, the true Passover of the Lord; the great sacrifice, the Son of God instead of the lamb, who was bound ...and who was buried on the day of the passover, the stone being placed upon the tomb.

Jesus ate and kept the Passover on the 14th, was killed on the 14th, and was buried on the 14th. This was not on the 15th, and in the year of His death, this was NOT on a Sunday. Jesus would have taken the Passover just after sunset and would be killed during daylight and be buried before the sun set again (to start a new day).

In the late second century, Bishop/Pastor Polycrates of Ephesus sent a letter to the Roman Bishop Victor when Victor tried to force the observance of Passover on a Sunday instead of the 14th.

In his letter, Polycrates:

- 1) Said he was following the teachings passed on from the Apostle John.
- 2) Said that he was being faithful to the teachings of the Gospel.
- 3) Relied on the position that teachings from the Bible were above those of Roman-accepted tradition.
- 4) Said he was being faithful to the teachings passed down to him by earlier church leaders.
- 5) Showed he was then the spokesperson for the faithful in Asia Minor.
- 6) Said he and his predecessors observed the time of unleavened bread.
- 7) Refused to accept the authority of a non-biblical Roman tradition over the Bible.
- 8) Refused to accept the authority of the Bishop of Rome--he preferred to be separate (cf. Revelation 18:4).
- 9) Stated that his life was to be governed by Jesus and not opinions of men.

Would you follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles like Polycrates did?

Because early Christians kept Passover on the 14th, they and others who did so were labelled Quartodecimans (Latin for *fourteenths*) by many historians.

The early Christians realized that Passover had to do with God's plan of salvation. Notice that by 180 A.D., Bishop/Pastor Melito of Sardis wrote:

Now comes the mystery of the passover, even as it stands written in the law...The people, therefore, became the model for the church, and the law a parabolic sketch. But the gospel became the explanation of the law and its fulfillment, while the church became the storehouse of truth...This one is the passover of our salvation. This is the one who patiently endured many things in many people...This is the one who became human in a virgin, who was hanged on the tree, who was buried in the earth,

who was resurrected from among the dead, and who raised mankind up out of the grave below to the heights of heaven. This is the lamb that was slain.

Passover was kept annually on the 14th of Nisan by the faithful and others in later centuries. Catholic scholars record this occurred in the 4th, 5th, 6th-8th and later centuries. Various Church of God writers have traced its observance from the time of the apostles to modern times.

Greco-Roman scholars recognize that aspects of Passover, like footwashing, were also observed by those they considered to be early faithful Christians.

Passover is the first annual feast listed in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus. Passover helps picture salvation and grace for Christians. It should be noted that early Christian writings most often refer to it as the Passover and not "the Lord's Supper." While some may 'spiritualize' away the necessity of Passover's observance, leaders considered to be saints by the Greco-Romans and the Church of God did keep it literally.

We in the *Continuing* Church of God still do so today. We keep Passover and include the historical, and biblical, practice of washing one another's feet.

The Plan from the Beginning

Passover shows that God had a plan before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20) to send Jesus to die for our sins, that God loves us (John 3:16), that God can deliver us, and that His Son suffered and died for us. Passover shows that Christians are freed from sin by His death and not to remain in sin (Romans 6:1-5).

But simply accepting the sacrifice of Jesus is not all there is to God's plan of salvation.

Various people keep the beginning of God's feasts of salvation by somewhat recognizing Passover and/or Pentecost, but never go on to know the "depth of the riches" (cf. Romans

11:33) of God's grace (2 Peter 3:18) pictured by the other biblical feasts.

Christians should keep the Passover. And keep it the biblical way.

Christ is not only the author/beginner of our salvation (Hebrews 5:9), but is also the finisher of our salvation (Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 1:1-9). His true followers keep His Spring and Fall Holy Days. For more information, please check out our free booklet, "Should You Observe God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?" Available at www.ccog.org

**Fulfilling: Matthew 24:14
and**

Matthew 28:19-20

Continuing Church of God

www.cog.org

Daily Bible News Prophecy

www.cogwriter.com



CCOG.ASIA This is a website focused on Asia. It has articles in Mandarin Chinese as well as some in English, plus some items in other Asian languages.

CCOG.EU This is a website targeted towards Europe. It has materials in many European languages.

CCOG.IN This is a website targeted towards those of Indian heritage, and includes materials in Hindi.

CCOG.NZ This is a website targeted towards those in New Zealand.

CCOGAFRICA.ORG This website is targeted towards Africa, it has material in many African languages

CCOGCANADA.CA This is a website targeted towards those in Canada.

CDLIDD.ES La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios. This is the Spanish language website for the Continuing Church of God.

PNIND.PH Patuloy na Iglesia ng Diyos. This is the Philippines oriented website with items in English and Tagalog.



BibleNewsProphecy channel
www.youtube.com/BibleNewsProphecy

ContinuingCOG channel
www.youtube.com/continuingcog

ContinuingCOG Africa channel
www.youtube.com/ccogafrica

The Continuing Church of God
also uses radio, printed and
electronic magazines, books,
and weekly letters to the brethren
to also support

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

