

BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY

SHIFTING WINDS OF TRADE

TRADE WARS

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE
THE PASSOVER?

THE NIGHT TO BE
OBSERVED AND THE DAYS
OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Bible News Prophecy

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

Shifting Winds of Trade

The Church of God has warned about trade issues for decades. And in the past year, we have seen many developments that align with what we have been saying that Bible prophecy foretells.

Back in 1971, the late Pastor General of the old Worldwide Church of God, Herbert W. Armstrong wrote the following:

Trade War Looming to Trigger World War III?

Either we start raising high tariff barriers against other countries, starting a TRADE WAR which in time will trigger the nuclear war that will DESTROY US - or, American workers are going to have to MEET the competition of the workers in other countries , by lowering living standards. Obviously American workers are not going to choose to do the latter. And if they don't - well, THE HANDWRITING IS ON OUR NATIONAL WALL. (Armstrong HW. Trade War Looming to Trigger World War III? Plain Truth, March 1971)

And while his basic impression of timing was off it is correct that trade issues will be a factor that will trigger WWII. A war that will be against the USA, Canada, and UK by a power that will reorganize (Revelation 17:12-13). A Europe that is angry at the UK for Brexit and one that is mad at the USA for a host of reasons (including decisions of its President Donald Trump and its Congress).

Several decades ago, Gene Hogberg of the old Worldwide Church of God wrote the following:

ENVISION the startling future of Western Europe. ...

A new Western Europe controlling perhaps half of all world trade, by exclusive arrangements with dozens of nations who produce raw materials.

A "United States of Europe " possessing one single currency - a currency so strong that it will replace the U. S. dollar as the kingpin currency of world trade. A United Europe developing great military strength to protect its unprecedented standard of living and its Number One position in the world. Visionary ideas?

Not at all.

Such a European powerhouse is now just over the horizon. ...

Biggest Obstacle

The biggest obstacle to accomplishing this whole effort still remains. It's the nagging political question. ...

If Britain were not pleased with the way things are going in the Common Market by the end of 1975, she, along with any other dissatisfied member, could quit. In that case Britain would be virtually isolated - cut off from Europe ...

It should be obvious that an expanding Europe will not forever tolerate monetary irresponsibility on the part of the United States - or

look the other way should the U. S. institute protectionist trade legislation. The way things are now developing, it is only a matter of time before the Europeans cut loose from the dollar. They have already put the machinery in motion. ... Should the dollar fail, a new European currency would automatically become the kingpin currency financing world trade. The dollar would become an unwanted commodity. Trading nations around the world would have to trade in the currency of this "beast" in order to survive. (Hogberg G. Rising World Colossus. Plain Truth, May 1971).

Prepare for Trade War

THE Free World's 40-year period of unprecedented prosperity may soon come to a crashing halt. Support in the United States — the West's leading trading nation — for maintaining free trade is crumbling fast.

Instead, there reverberate in the halls of Congress warnings to trade partners to open markets or face the retaliation of heightened tariffs and quotas. ...

Mr. Reagan is painfully aware of where unbridled protectionism could lead. In recently rejecting a protectionist plea from one industry, the President evoked memories of the Depression-era Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act. "Some of us remember the 1930s, when the most destructive trade bill in history, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, helped plunge this nation and the world into a decade of depression and despair," he told a radio audience. "From now on, if the ghost of Smoot-Hawley rears its ugly head in Congress, if Congress creates a depression-making bill, I'll fight it."

But the ghost is rising, and support for the President's trade policy is waning, even from those within his own party.

What Smoot-Hawley Did

Just how disastrous was the Smoot-Hawley bill? The devastating role it played in the Great Depression was explained in the September 5 issue of The Wall Street Journal, in an article written by its editor, Robert L. Bartley. "The stock-market crash of 1929 came in the midst of debate in Congress over the tariff," wrote Mr. Bartley. "It had spent the year adding item after item to the protection list. In mid-1930 the Smoot-Hawley Bill became law, with the highest tariffs in the nation's history." What might have been an ordinary correction, continued Mr. Bartley, "turned into the Great Depression.... As the international accounts closed down, the world economy choked." ...

Dangerous Security Changes

Other experts warn that American political leaders — responding to calls for immediate competitive relief from their constituents — may be ignoring another lesson of the Great Depression; that the severe contraction of world trade gave added impetus to imperialist surges in Asia and Europe, specifically Japan and Germany.

Since 1945 Japan has chosen the mercantile road as its path to power, prestige and national restoration. Germany, specifically the Federal Republic of Germany, is heavily dependent upon world trade, exporting a full third of its manufactured goods.

Access to the U.S. market is central to the economies of Japan and the other nations of the Pacific Basin,

writes National Review executive editor John McLaughlin, “and hence perhaps to their stability.” If protectionism takes hold, what would happen to Japan and to Western Europe, whose economic heart is in Germany? Protectionism, leading to a full-blown trade war, would likely break the extensive joint defence relationships between the U.S. and its primary World War II foes, now allies for the past 40 years.

Americans should then prepare to witness the emergence of a nuclear armed Japan as well as a nuclear armed united Europe with Germany at its core. It’s doubtful whether the American public and its elected representatives have thought out the likely end results of actions now under way.

Former Senate majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr. sounded this warning: “The disastrous Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 was rushed through Congress... and it took 14 years and a world war to straighten out the mess.” (Hogberg G. Prepare for Trade War! Plain Truth, January 1986)

Again, while his timing was premature, events are going in the direction he wrote about. Since that writing the Euro has come on the world scene and it (or a possible replacement) has the potential to dethrone the US dollar as the world’s primary reserve currency.

Notice something, I wrote and posted back in 2008:

Negotiations will continue, and some type of loose agreements will happen. In the spirit of accommodation and personal interest, many of the “standards” of the European Union will be adopted by the USA, Canada and Mexico, as well as by nearly all of

the countries of the world. The Arab nations will most likely agree with many of the standards as they seem to be destined to form a brief end-time alliance with the Europeans.

However, over time it will become increasingly clear that the British will be in more agreement with the Canadians and Americans and that the European Union will be in more agreement with the Mexicans than with the English-speaking nations.

Trade wars and/or serious trade disputes will most likely arise.

The Brits will ultimately decide that they are more supportive of the Americans and Canadians. They will be so much more supportive that they will end up in a trading agreement with them (with the Australians and New Zealanders probably also becoming part of that agreement).

The EU will decide that Mexico and the rest of Latin America are in more agreement with it and thus make some type of serious trading agreement with most (or all) of Latin America. The Vatican will also have influence here as Latin America is highly Roman Catholic.

The Europeans and Americans, however, will continue to have military agreements, though many will be tense about them. (Thiel B. A Combined EU & North American Trade Block Coming? COGwriter.com, March 3, 2008)

Trade wars increase costs and international tensions.

It should also be noted that at least partially due to sanctions talk from US President Trump, in late 2017, China, Russia, and Venezuela took steps to move away from the US dollar as the world’s

primary reserve currency. The eventual loss of the US dollar's status as the world's main reserve currency will harm the economy of the USA in many ways. While that is not going to happen in 2018, trade disputes/sanctions are pushing more of the world away from the US dollar.

Furthermore, with the vote in the United Kingdom to exit from the European Union (called Brexit) and the election of Donald Trump in the USA, this has caused a greater separation from Europe, and the USA and UK both are seeking greater trade ties with each other. Mexico is looking to Europe. Europe is looking to Latin America and Asia.

Notice an item from the German press

Europe must be ready to find new economic partners in Asia when the president destroys the existing world economic order. (Riegert B. The EU has to stand up to Donald Trump. Deutsche Welle, January 31, 2017)

In a sense, this has happened. In 2017, European, and in particular German, leaders were actively courting trade as the USA dropped its participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) and took other steps against certain existing trade arrangements.

US President Trump's statements to the United Nations about trade and "America first" on September 19, 2017, further told parts of the world that the US wants to change trade practices in ways that many nations do not believe will be beneficial—and this helps open the door for the European Union

Additionally, European leaders have stated that they no longer want 'subservience' to the USA and want to put "Europe first" (in contrast to the "America first" campaign slogan that Donald Trump has used).

As far as subservience goes, the Europeans realize that they have been subservient to

the USA as they have depended upon the military of the USA for protection since World War II ended in Western Europe, and then after the fall of the Berlin wall, for military protection in Eastern Europe and the Baltics.

Europe now wants to strengthen its own military, while also increasing its international trade. Europe expects to set the standards for various goods and services as well as the rules for much of the world's trade.

In 2017, the European Union held meetings with Mexico and others in Latin America on trade matters several times. German Chancellor Merkel also went to Argentina to lay the foundations of a trade agreement with that nation as well as Mexico. There were also meetings and trips to Russia, China, and other nations.

The Bible is clear that Europe will rise up to the world's basic surprise as a major military (Revelation 13:1-10; Daniel 11:39-43) and massive trading (cf. Revelation 18) power.

In the Summer of 2017, the Congress of the USA passed a law increasing sanctions against Russia. European allies warned against doing this, but it still became law.

The United Kingdom tended to back the USA position, but those in Europe did not. The Europeans warned that the US sanctions bill could lead to a trade war—a trade war some EU leaders claimed that Europe would win.

While nations do not normally economically 'win' a trade war, political leaders have found them helpful for a variety of reasons.

Trade issues are important and consistent with end time biblical prophecies.

Events in the USA and Europe are aligning with the understanding of biblical prophecy that we in the [*Continuing Church of God*](#) hold and teach.

We in the [Continuing Church of God](#) “have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19, KJV).”

Are you ready to take the Passover?



Passover night involves unleavened Bread and Red Wine

By Albert J. Portune

This article was originally published in the Good News Magazine, March 1969 (with scripture citations changed to the NKJV instead of the KJV)

The Passover is a memorial of the death of Jesus Christ who is the Saviour of the world. Partaking of the symbols of His broken body and shed blood mean that YOU have been selected to know and understand God's purpose. Being chosen as one of the ELECT to know God's truth carries sobering responsibilities. We cannot approach this event lightly.

Prelude to Holy Days

The Passover is the first event beginning again God's annual season of Holy Days. His Holy Days reveal God's plan of salvation for the whole world. That plan, hidden from the world in general, reveals why YOU cannot take this event lightly.

That plan reveals that YOU have been called to know and understand God's purpose — AHEAD of the majority of mankind. Jesus said:

[I]t has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. (Matt. 13:11)

The world is not being called now! Only the Elect are being called now. God's Holy Days, revolving around the harvest seasons in Palestine, show that WE are part of the early harvest — representing the Elect. The rest of the world will not be given their opportunity until Jesus returns and the Millennium begins — the late or Fall harvest — (see Lev. 23).

The sobering truth is that we have been called in a special calling or time to qualify ahead of the world, so we can be used by God and Christ to help bring knowledge and salvation to the rest of mankind.

God is vitally concerned with us as we approach this Passover, because of our important part in His plan. He is deeply concerned with our attitude. He wants to KNOW if we are totally surrendered to Him. Now is the time, just before the Passover to examine ourselves to see whether we are truly right with God and in harmony with Him and His plan.

Self-examination

Do you realize that at this coming Passover you could eat and drink DAMNATION? Do you realize how high are the stakes?

God inspired the apostle Paul to write:

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. (I Cor. 11:27-29).

Brethren, this warning wouldn't be in God's Word if there were not mortal danger for YOU. This coming Passover is a vital time, whether you have taken the Passover many times or if this is your FIRST time.

What does it mean to discern the Lord's body? How can we eat and drink unworthily? How can we eat and drink damnation to ourselves? Let's understand.

Getting into focus

God wants us to isolate a very basic and elementary perspective each year at the Passover. He wants us to focus on that elementary concept as we begin again to relive His plan of salvation for mankind. That elementary concept IS salvation. That's what His plan is all about whether it relates to us or the world.

Therefore, brethren, the Passover is a time for us to once again get down to the elementary precepts of our OWN salvation — our OWN relationship to God and His Work. It is a time to examine OURSELVES. A time to look at YOU.

We can get so absorbed in our work or in the "deeper things," the more important things, that we can forget WE have to get OURSELVES and keep ourselves right with God. That's what the Passover is all about.

There is never a time we can allow ourselves to get so busy or so important in our own eyes that we no longer need to get deadly serious about the elementary concepts of salvation that are so intimately associated with the Passover.

The elementary principles

No matter how long we have been in God's Church or how spiritual we have become we are still human beings with carnal nature. Not one of us will ever come to a place in this life when we can afford to forget what we are. Just before the Passover we should take another look — a long, good look!

How did God make us?

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (Rom. 8:7).

Yes, this is the kind of nature God {allowed to be} placed within you! And this is the time of year to especially remember that fact. It is also a time to rehearse and reaffirm what you have done with the knowledge that you have that kind of nature.

The truth of the matter is, God created human nature alien to Him and to His ways. Man's heart is wickedly inclined. He is deceitful, totally opposed to the ways of God. Most men have never seen themselves this way. Most men do not have the slightest awareness they have this kind of nature – but it's true.

Environment too

Not only is man's nature this way, but his environment is also virtually totally alien to God. Mankind does not know that this world is not GOD'S world – yet. God is allowing Satan to rule this world for a time. He is allowing Satan to seduce man through man's carnal, evil nature to want and to imbibe in all the evil things of this world.

Satan is the ruler of this world at present and he is blinding men's minds to the truth that you have been given the privilege to understand.

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (II Cor, 4:3-5).

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is NOT of the Father, but is of the world” (I

John 2:16).

So, in our examination, let's realize what kind of an alien nature we have and what kind of a world we live in.

Light in Darkness

But, brethren, for us who are the Elect, light and understanding has come by the calling of God's Holy Spirit. Through God's infinite mercy YOU were called as one of His Elect to see yourself and your environment as THEY REALLY ARE!

This was a miracle in your life! Do you still realize it?

God sent His Holy Spirit to open your mind to real knowledge. The first thing He opened your mind to see was YOURSELF! You were led to see what human nature was like – what YOU were like.

You didn't like what you saw!

You wanted to be different. So you came to repentance – a change in yourself – because that's what repentance is. The words of the apostle Paul became your words: “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Rom. 7:15, 18, 24.)

So, you came to repentance and you were baptized. You went through an outward SYMBOL of death. Baptism is a picture of death, burial and resurrection. You were immersed in a watery grave and brought up in a type of a resurrection.

4 ... How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the

dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:2-4).

Having seen yourself for what you really were, you wanted to stop being God's enemy. You wanted to stop being deceitful, wicked. You wanted to have all the past evil deeds and thoughts taken away. You wanted to become a new — a different person. You saw that Jesus Christ died for you. You saw why He had to die — to pay the price for your sins, for your evil nature. So you acknowledged Jesus as your own personal Saviour. You asked God to accept the sacrifice of Jesus' life for YOUR sins and rotten nature. You openly before God showed Him by your baptism what you TRULY wanted — for your evil nature to die and to be changed into having the kind of nature that is no longer God's enemy.

When God saw this genuine, heartfelt attitude, He gave you His Holy Spirit and begot you as His own child.

Not The End

But that isn't the end of the story! Now began perhaps the hardest part of all. Having crucified, in a sense, the "old nature," we soon found that the old nature wasn't dead. Though we wished for it to be destroyed, we found it still had life and vigoro.

AND THAT'S JUST THE POINT!

God intended it this way for a vital purpose. God wants us to comprehend the REAL DEPTH OF EVIL, WICKEDNESS AND DECEITFULNESS that is in us. God is allowing us to live on WITH our carnal natures and in an alien environment to teach us how really, profoundly EVIL human nature IS — and He wants us to AGREE with Him that it is — all through this entire Christian living experience.

We know that we have crucified the old man to the intent that the body of SIN (our very nature) might be destroyed (Rom. 6:6). We know that once we are

resurrected or changed at Jesus' return, we will be freed from this kind of nature (verse 7). But, until that time comes, we must reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and living the righteous life (verse 11). The struggle then begins to "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts" (verse 12).

So, as we approach the Passover, we have had one more year to live with ourselves. God IS now asking us once again to partake of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. Has this past year convinced you that you have come to the place that you no longer need the sacrifice of Christ? Or rather has it convinced you that you need it EVEN MORE PROFOUNDLY than ever before?

THIS IS WHAT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY MEANS.

Certainly, you have grown in personal overcoming of sin. Certainly, you have grown in Bible understanding and spiritual knowledge. But have you grown in personally knowing YOU need Jesus Christ more than ever before?

Seen More Deeply?

When we are first baptized we are called "babes" in Christ. Notwithstanding we have come to miraculous and profound knowledge at baptism, we still are just beginning a life of overcoming. We need to grow and mature in understanding and perspective.

[A]s new-born babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (I Peter 2:2).

[B]ut grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Peter 3:18).

As we grow in a deeper and more profound knowledge of spiritual things our ability to see ourselves becomes more acute. We see things about ourselves and our natures that

we never saw at baptism. This is right! It is progress! It is what God intended.

When Paul received God's Holy Spirit and began to grow he found that his more profound knowledge of God's spiritual law made sin appear to become exceeding sinful (**Romans 7:13**). And so it is with us. The longer we live with ourselves in this flesh the more our knowledge of God's perfect spiritual law, that we are privileged to understand, convicts us of the exceeding sinfulness of the carnal human nature.

Each year God commands us to live through again His Holy Days which picture His plan of salvation for the world. Each year we begin again with the primary beginning — the Passover — the acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Each year we should be observing God's Holy Days with greater desire for the fulfilment of His plan because we should have seen the need for it more profoundly than ever before — for ourselves and for the world.

As we start the Holy Days again it should be with a renewed eagerness. It should be with a more fervent desire to take those precious symbols because we know far more deeply their meaning to us and to the world.

It's not with a hum-drum routine approach that we begin each year. We cannot come up to these days in a half-hearted apathetic approach. If we do we may eat and drink "unworthily" — eat and drink damnation unto ourselves. No one is "worthy." Totally understanding how unworthy of Christ's great sacrifice we are, makes us ready to partake of the Passover with full understanding!

God wants His people to approach the Passover with the most earnest and heartfelt desire for the forgiveness of Christ — individually and ultimately for the world.

No other attitude demonstrates a true Christian who has grown as He should through the year.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE PASSOVER?

No man who has lived another year in the flesh with the presence of the Holy Spirit can approach the Passover without a more deep and sincere NEED for the sacrifice of Christ. No man can thus take the unleavened bread of Jesus' broken body and the red wine of His shed blood without, in spirit, falling at the foot of the cross/stake before Jesus' bleeding, dying body and saying, "For me, for me, Oh God, He died!"

19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you ; do this in remembrance of Me."

20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. (**Luke 22:19-20**).

These words should be more living and personal for you than ever before. ARE THEY?

The Big Picture

Having thus seen the profound need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in our personal lives, we should also have a deeper and more acute desire for the same light and understanding to come to this lost, sin-sick world. Not just in theory, but in fact.

We begin again, with the Passover, picturing God's plan of salvation for the world. It's not just a personal salvation for you alone. There are a lot of human lives going down the drain all around us. The utter hopelessness of a dying civilization sends its groanings up into our consciousness every day.

We who have been given the knowledge of the ONLY way out for the world ought to

groan within ourselves for the time they too can be delivered from the bondage of corruption of which we have been made so acutely aware. Each new year of Holy Day observances should be from a higher level of awareness, with a greater sense of earnestness for their fulfillment.

There is only ONE WORK truly working toward that end... THIS WORK. And you are a part of it.

Has this past year brought you to a deeper dedication? Are you behind God's Work with your very lives and all that your lives can produce? Or, are the Annual Holy Days just another hum-drum routine again?

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16-18)

If you truly believe in God's purpose through Jesus Christ and are ALL OUT for that purpose in YOUR LIFE, then you are properly discerning the Lord's body and are eating and drinking eternal life unto yourself. But if your life and actions show a half-hearted, lethargic support and dedication to His Work – you are eating and drinking damnation to yourself – not discerning, not understanding the full meaning of the Lord's body.

EXAMINE YOURSELF!

Make it personal

Brethren, there is still time to examine yourself and make this Passover a personal thing between you and God. Look deeply

into your life. Have you been just coasting? Were you going to let this just be another routine Passover? If this is true, then you desperately need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the lethargy God's Holy Spirit led you to see in yourself – just as you should have been led to see many other things about yourself this past year.

For every growing Christian each Passover should be a more profound experience in which our Saviour and our God grows more personal, more precious, more wonderful.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE PASSOVER – WILL YOU BE READY?

During supper that Passover evening Jesus rose and girded Himself with a towel and began to wash the disciple's feet (John 13:2-5). Peter, impulsive and naive, didn't want to let Jesus "stoop" to washing his feet. But Jesus said to him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me" (John 13:8) Peter, of course did want to have a part with Christ and consented.

Jesus then said:

12 ... Do you know what I have done to you? 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 13:12-17).

We will wash one another's feet on the Passover. But again, it is an outward symbol of an attitude and action in our lives – one of serving the brethren and being willing to give ourselves in HUMILITY for the purposes of God.

Do you have a part with Jesus Christ? Are you in a foot washing attitude ALL YEAR. That's what the outward symbol of foot washing you will partake of truly means. Are you discerning the Lord's Body? Or, are you perhaps like Peter — not wanting to let the purposes of your God be in the form of a servant. A growing, discerning Christian knows his God has called him to humble himself as a servant of brethren and mankind.

The Time Is Now

So, brethren, the time is NOW. The Passover is just ahead of you. You have had another year to live, experience and grow. The panorama of YOUR LIFE is there before you along with the tableau of the sacrifice of Christ.

3 He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely, He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
(Isa. 53:3-5).

BE READY TO TAKE THE PASSOVER!

The Night to Be Observed and the Days of Unleavened Bread



Unleavened Bread

By Bob Thiel

Passover is on the 14th day of Nisan/Abid. In 2018, this means that Passover will be observed after sunset on the Roman calendar date of March 29th. While many people are familiar with Passover, less seem to be familiar with the 'Night to be Observed' (which is to begin to be observed starting sunset on March 30th in 2018) and the Days of Unleavened Bread. So, this article will focus on that.

Christ is our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) who delivered us from sin (Romans 6:17). The Bible also indicates that Egypt was a type of sin from which the children of Israel had to be delivered (cf. Exodus 13:3; Revelation 11:8). The Bible shows that Christians today live in a world which is a type of spiritual "Babylon" (Revelation 17:1-6).

The Bible shows that Christians will relatively soon be delivered from it *after* God pours out His plagues upon Babylon (Revelation 18:1-8). Several of the plagues listed in the Book of Revelation are similar to those once used in Egypt before God's people were delivered.

The children of Israel left Egypt on the First day of Unleavened Bread.

The Bible, in Leviticus 23:7-8 teaches that both the first and last days of unleavened bread are times for a holy “convocation” (NKJV), a “sacred assembly” (NJB). The evening of the fifteenth of Nisan (which begins that holy day) begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which involved eating (cf. Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:6).

The Bible records the following:

⁴² It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. (Exodus 12:42, KJV)

⁴² This is the observable night of our Lord, when he brought them forth out of the Land of Ægypt: this night all the children of Israel must observe in their generations. (Exodus 12:42, Original Douay Rheims)

For Christians, the Night to Be Observed pictures our taking action to leave spiritual Egypt (cf. Revelation 11:8)--this is something that should cause Christians to rejoice.

Historically, the Night to Be Observed normally involved a festive dinner. The dinner normally included, but was not limited to, unleavened bread.

The Bulk of the Jews Call the 15th Passover

Jewish leaders changed the date and some of their practices associated with Passover. Some rabbinical sources suggest this was because they did not want to keep it the same as the faithful Christians (Wolf G. Lexical and Historical Contributions on the Biblical and Rabbinic Passover. G. Wolf, 1991). But also, probably because of a consumption of a meal on the Night to be Observed and certain traditions, combined with how the Jews tended to deal with the holy days because of the diaspora (the

Jews outside the land of Israel) and calendar issues (Holy Days. Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906), Jews tend to call the Night to Be Observed the Passover as most Jews keep it the evening of the 15th of Nisan/Abib. Some keep both the 14th and the 15th as Passover.

At the time of Jesus, the Sadducees tended to keep Passover on the 14th and the Pharisees on the 15th (Rabbi Jeffrey W. Goldwasser. Why do Jews in America have two Passover Seders?).

Yet, the Bible teaches the two different times are for two different purposes. The Old Testament Passover shows that the children of Israel were protected and did not suffer from the death angel. The New Testament Passover shows, for Christians, that Jesus bore the penalty for our sins Himself through His death.

But, the Night to Be Observed reminded the Jews that they should be thankful for God's deliverance from the bondage of Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:42). For Christians, the Night to Be Observed teaches we are to rejoice and be thankful for the release Jesus provides from the bondage of sin (John 8:34-36).

Certain Jewish scholars do realize that the Bible lists Passover as being at a different date than the festival of unleavened bread:

Lev. xxiii., however, seems to distinguish between Passover, which is set for the fourteenth day of the month, and (the Festival of Unleavened Bread; ἑορτή τῶν ἄζύμων, Luke xxii. 1; Josephus, "B. J." ii. 1, § 3), appointed for the fifteenth day. (Passover. Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906)

Therefore, despite most Jews calling what they keep on the 15th as Passover, the 15th is biblically considered to be part of the seven-day festival of unleavened bread. Because Jews tend to emphasize the departure from Egypt and rely on certain

non-biblical traditions, they tend to mostly observe only the second date.

Exodus chapter 12 discusses Passover and begins with God instructing Moses and Aaron about what they were to teach the people as well as what was going to happen. This instruction included the taking out of a lamb on the tenth day of this first month, called Abib, and saving it up until the 14th day when it was to be killed at twilight — the beginning of the 14th.

Notice something from the following instructions about the Passover:

²¹ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.

²² And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. (Exodus 12:21-22)

The expression "until morning" comes from Hebrew word meaning "the breaking through of daylight," "coming of daylight," or the "coming of sunrise."

So, Israelites did not go out of their homes until after dawn on the 14th. What happened earlier that night?

²⁹ And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock... ³³ And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." (Exodus 12:29,33)

Moses and Aaron did NOT go out during the night - that is an incorrect assumption that many have:

²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"

²⁹ So Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again." (Exodus 10:28-29)

After the death of the firstborn, Israelites had a number of tasks to complete before leaving Egypt. They were to stay inside their houses until morning, the breaking of daylight, burn the remains of the lambs that had not been eaten, go to the villages and cities where the Egyptians lived and ask them to give them silver, gold, and clothing, gather and load up whatever possessions they were to carry and with their herds and flocks travel on foot, for some as much as twenty miles, to Rameses where their organized journey out of Egypt was to begin. Notice:

³⁴ And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

³⁵ And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: ³⁶ And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. ³⁷ And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. ³⁸ And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. ³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither

had they prepared for themselves
any victual. (Exodus 12:34-39, KJV)

The night to be observed is the night that they left Rameses. The night they actually left Egypt.

After doing what God told them to do, they left.

Exodus 13:18 tells us, “the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.” Considering the number of people and the age range, it is remarkable that they were able to accomplish this all by the night after the Passover.

Unleavened Bread

We Christians recognize that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on Passover and that we are to try to live, as He did, without sin and hypocrisy, of which leaven symbolically can represent (Luke 12:1).

The late Herbert W. Armstrong wrote about this:

And, as the Israelites went out with a high hand (Numbers 33:3), in great exultation and elation over their deliverance from bondage, so does the newly begotten Christian start out his Christian life – up in the clouds of happiness and joy. But what happens?

The devil and sin immediately pursue after the newly begotten son of God – and soon the new and inexperienced Christian finds he is down in the depths of discouragement, and tempted to give up and quit.

Notice Exodus 14, beginning verse 10 – as soon as the Israelites saw this great army pursuing them, they lost their courage. Fear came over them. They began to grumble and complain. They saw it was impossible for them to get away from Pharaoh and his army, because

he was too powerful for them. And they were helpless. So it is with us.
Our Strength Not Sufficient!

But notice the message of God to them through Moses: “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord ... for the Egyptians ... ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you!” How wonderful!

Helpless, we are told to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. He shall fight for us. We cannot conquer Satan and sin, but He can. It is the risen Christ – our High Priest – who will cleanse us – sanctify us – deliver us – who said He would never leave us nor forsake us!

We cannot keep the Commandments in our own power and strength. But Christ IN US can keep them! We must rely on Him in faith. Armstrong HW. God’s Holy Days-or Pagan Holidays-Which? Worldwide Church of God, 1976)

Purpose of Festival

But let us learn the full significance of this. WHY did God ordain these feast days? What was His great PURPOSE? Turn now to Exodus 13, verse 3: “...Moses said unto the people, Remember THIS DAY, in which ye CAME OUT from Egypt...” This was the 15th of Abib. Verse 6: “Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and the seventh day shall be a FEAST unto the Eternal... This is done BECAUSE of that which the Eternal did [a MEMORIAL] ... and it shall be for a SIGN” – (miraculous PROOF of identity) – “unto thee upon thine hand, and for a MEMORIAL between thine eyes” – WHY? -“that the LORD’S LAW MAY BE IN THY MOUTH... Thou shalt therefore KEEP this ordinance...”

Oh, beloved brethren, do you see the wonderful meaning? Do you grasp the true significance of it all? Do you see God's PURPOSE? The PASSOVER pictures the DEATH OF CHRIST for the remission of sins that are past. The accepting of His BLOOD does not forgive sins we SHALL commit — it does not give LICENSE to continue in sin — therefore WHEN we accept it, our sins are forgiven only up to that time — PAST SINS.

But shall we stop there? Past sins forgiven. But we are still flesh beings. We still shall suffer temptations. Sin has held us in its clutch — we have been SLAVES to sin, in its power. And we are powerless to deliver ourselves from it! We have been in BONDAGE to sin. Let us understand the picture — the meaning. (Armstrong HW. What You Should Know About the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread. Good News, March 1979)

To what degree should Christians put away sin? Completely, as Jesus taught, “you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Leaven symbolically can be a type of sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Like sin, leaven puffs up.

As seven is God's number symbolizing completeness, Christians are to follow the Passover with seven days of unleavened bread. The meaning and the symbolism is not complete with just Passover. Passover pictures the acceptance of Christ's blood for the remission of past sins and the death of Jesus.

Should we leave Christ symbolically hanging on the tree of His death (cf. Galatians 3:13)? No. The seven days of unleavened bread following Passover help picture to us the complete putting away of sin, the keeping of the Commandments — after past sins are forgiven as the result of Jesus' sacrifice.

The Days of Unleavened bread picture the life and work of the risen Jesus. Jesus ascended to the throne of God where He is now actively at work on our behalf as our High Priest, cleansing us of sin (Hebrews 2:17-18) delivering us completely from its power!

Here is some of what the Hebrew scriptures say about the Days of Unleavened Bread:

¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat — that only may be prepared by you.

¹⁷ So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. ¹⁸ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.” (Exodus 12:15-20)

Leviticus 23:6-8 teaches about it as well. And Deuteronomy 16:16 shows that offerings were expected to be given on the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and the Fall Holy Days.

Originally, there were no “burnt offerings or sacrifices” when God “brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Jeremiah 7:22). They were added because of disobedience (Jeremiah 7:21-27) and the New Testament is clear that we do not need to have burnt offerings or animal sacrifices now (Hebrews 9:11-15).

As we eat unleavened bread each of the days, we realize that we have to avoid sin that is so prevalent in the world around us.

Done Away or Kept?

Were the Days of Unleavened Bread done away? Consider something else that Herbert W. Armstrong wrote:

Not Abolished With Old Covenant

Observe that the Days of Unleavened Bread are a PERIOD, having two high-day SABBATHS. And this PERIOD is established FOREVER — while the Israelites were still in Egypt — before the ceremonial law of Moses had been given or written — before God even proposed the old covenant! What the law of Moses, or the old covenant, did not bring or institute, THEY CANNOT TAKE AWAY! In Fenton's translation, the 17th verse is translated: "consequently KEEP THIS PERIOD AS AN EVER-LASTING INSTITUTION." The whole period is included.

This ALONE ought to prove that the HOLY DAYS — and the seven Days of Unleavened Bread — are binding today, and FOREVER!

Now, if these texts apply to the 15th, not the 14th, as they assuredly do, and is here conclusively proved, then is the Passover established FOR-EVER? Indeed, it is! But THESE texts above refer to the FEAST and not the PASSOVER. In the paragraph beginning Exodus 12:21 the PASSOVER is again referred to, and verse 24 establishes it FOREVER! ...

To observe Passover alone, and then fail to observe the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, means, in the symbolism, to accept Christ's blood, and to continue on in sin — to say ... the LAW is done away, we are under grace, meaning license, to continue in sin!

The seven Days of Unleavened Bread picture the keeping of the Commandments, which is another way of saying the putting away of sin. (Armstrong HW. What You Should Know About the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread. Good News, March 1979)

Early Christians did not believe that the Days of Unleavened Bread were done away. The Apostle Paul endorsed properly keeping the Feast with unleavened bread (1 Corinthians 5:7). He and others still marked/observed it and observed it outside of Judea:

⁶ But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. (Acts 20:6)

If Christians were not keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Holy Spirit would not have inspired this to be recorded like this. Now Philippi was a Gentile town in Macedonia. It was ruled by the Romans--thus keeping these days was NOT limited to a place like Jerusalem. In at least two places in the New Testament, we see that the Days of Unleavened Bread were to be kept in Gentile areas (1 Corinthians 5:7; Acts 20:6).

Consider also the statement “it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread” in Acts 12:3. Since the Gentile author Luke addressed the Book of Acts to another Gentile (Acts 1:1), why would he have mentioned these days if they were unknown to the Gentile Christians and had ceased to exist?

Perhaps it should be added that the spurious 3rd century *Epistula Apostolorum* claims Jesus taught His followers should keep the Days of Unleavened Bread until He returns. While we cannot rely on that document, it does indicate that some were keeping those days into the 3rd century.

Information from outside the Bible reports that the Apostles Paul, John, and Philip, along with Polycarp of Smyrna and other early Christians, kept the Days of Unleavened bread (Pionius. Life of Polycarp, Chapter 2).

Despite this, Canon 38 of the *Council of Laodicea* of the fourth century (c. 363-364) prohibited the observation of the Days of Unleavened bread. Those in the Church of God could not comply with many decrees of this Council which went against the Bible and the early traditions of the faithful.

Therefore, various Sabbath- keepers continued to keep the Days of Unleavened bread afterwards (Pritz. Nazarene Jewish Christianity. Magnas, Jerusalem, 1988, p. 35; Jerome as cited in Pritz, pp. 58,62,63; Ephiphanius. The Panarion of Ephiphanius of Salamis: Book II (sects 1-46) Section 1, Chapter 19, 7-9. BRILL, 1987, p. 117-119) and into the Middle Ages and beyond (Liechty D. Sabbatarianism in the Sixteenth Century. Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs (MI), 1993, pp. 61-62; Falconer John. A Breife Refutation of John Traskes Judaical and Novel Fantyes, pp. 57-58, as cited in Ball B. Seventh Day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800, 2nd edition. James Clark & Co., 2009, pp. 49-50).

As we in the *Continuing Church of God* do not accept that the *Council of Laodicea* spoke for the true Christian church, we still keep the Days of Unleavened Bread. We eat some unleavened bread for each of the seven days as the Bible admonishes (Exodus 12:15; 13:6; 23:15; 34:18). This bread can be made of different grains/nuts

—the use of wheat is not biblically-required.

(It perhaps should be mentioned that one can eat foods other than only unleavened bread during this Feast, it is just that no leavened breads are to be eaten. Also, unlike Passover, the first and last Day of Unleavened Bread are days, like the weekly Sabbath, that one is not to work.)

While some like to allegorize away many portions of the Bible, although there certainly is a spiritual understanding to the Holy Days, there is also a physical one. And the physical observance helps us to better understand the spiritual lessons.

The Days of Unleavened Bread help picture that we Christians are to strive to put sin and hypocrisy out of our lives (cf. Matthew 16:6-12; 23:28; Luke 12:1). By keeping them physically, it helps us to better learn the spiritual lessons that God intended.

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

TEST Number 3 Lessons 9 - 12

Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief
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Church of God

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

This examination is given to help you *better understand* your Bible.

You are now reading the **QUESTIONS SECTION**. It **CONTAINS** the **INSTRUCTIONS** and the **QUESTIONS** you will be asked. Note that there are 80 questions and that they are numbered consecutively **1, 2, 3** etc. Note also that there are *four* possible answers given under each question. These are labelled **A, B, C, D**. *ONLY ONE of these four possible answers is considered to be the RIGHT one!* —the other three are false unless stated otherwise.

YOU ARE TO SELECT THE *ONE* RIGHT ANSWER FROM AMONG THESE FOUR POSSIBLE ANSWERS.

You are to repeat this process for each of the questions asked. This comprises your test. (Generally speaking, the *incorrect* answers are *false* ideas which are taught and believed about the subject.)

Our objective is to give all who have determination to know God's Word the opportunity to understand the *true* meaning of the Bible.

By the answers you give to our examination questions, you help show if you have the desire to learn and are doing your best. The final judge as to whether you *know* your Bible and are living by it will be God Himself. He is the One you had better seek to please. It is *He* who is able to give you eternal life.

Your eagerness to study and to make the most of your opportunity is what really counts. The exact grade you might make is not too important to you or to us. Naturally, however, we expect a somewhat high percentage of correct answers from you.

Answer as many questions as you can without referring to the previous lessons you have studied. If you find any difficult questions, then *refer to the lessons*. We expect you to do so!

Notice that these questions are divided into four parts—corresponding to the four lessons. We advise you not to cover more than one lesson at a sitting. Take sufficient time to understand each question.

Here are two **EXAMPLES TO SHOW YOU HOW** to answer the questions:

Read the *first question* of this test.
 The right answer to select, of course, is
 "C." Here is the second example:
 Notice question number 2 on the next
 page. The correct answer is "B." That
 is all there is to it! It is very simple
 and fast.

The procedure is always the same.
 Now continue with question 3 in the
 same manner...

God Reveals Himself!

1. Which ONE of these four statements is true?
 - A. We should accept - without question - the word of our local minister concerning God's existence, or non-existence.
 - B. God DOES not COMMAND us to prove all things.
 - C. God commands us to prove He exists.
 - D. There is no way of proving God exists - you just have to accept the teachings of the Bible on blind faith.
2. Which ONE of these four statements is true?
 - A. We all have plenty of time in which to prove God exists - His punishment of this rebellious world is far in the future.
 - B. The sooner each person proves there is a God, the better they fare.
 - C. People already know God is not dead - His eternal existence need not be proved.
 - D. Martians in flying saucers from "outer space" are going to invade
3. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
 - A. Sensitive sound equipment exists which can "hear" spirit beings.
 - B. Laboratory test equipment exists which can "see" spirit beings.
 - C. Man has the ability to "feel" spirit beings, thereby proving they exist.
 - D. Humans can KNOW that God - who is spirit - does exist because He fulfills, by actual events, the prophecies He made long ago.
4. The way to study the Bible with this Correspondence Course is
 - A. to study the lessons ONLY - not the Bible.
 - B. to just LOOK UP the Bible references, but never bothering to make notes in your lessons or Bible.
 - C. to never consult a Bible Dictionary.
 - D. to look up all Bible references, actually STUDY them, and make notes in your lessons and Bible occasionally.
5. God's throne
 - A. is located in the second heaven.
 - B. is on Mount Zion in Palestine today.
 - C. is not on spiritual Mount Zion.
 - D. is in the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem.

this planet and take over its affairs.

6. Which of the following tells of the House of David?
 - A. A tablet of Moses.
 - B. James' ossuary box.
 - C. Tel Dan Stela.
 - D. Nothing, since there is no evidence.
7. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
 - A. God has no earthly TYPES of heavenly things.
 - B. The earthly Jerusalem is a TYPE of the heavenly Jerusalem.
 - C. The heavenly Mount Zion was never to have an earthly type.
 - D. God's plan is not dual.
8. We will:
 - A. never be able to see spiritual objects.
 - B. see spiritual objects only when we "go to heaven."
 - C. be able to see spiritual objects when we are BORN of God - transformed at the resurrection into spirit beings.
 - D. be able to see spiritual objects only if we experience the fires of Gehenna.
9. Does God, by describing Himself in Revelation 1:13-16, want us to make any conscious attempt to picture Him mentally to ourselves?
 - A. No - it would be wrong to do so.
 - B. There is no purpose in knowing anything about what God looks like.
 - C. Yes - so He may seem more personal and real to us.
 - D. We are not to really believe this is what He looks like.
10. When those who qualify are finally glorified, they will:
 - A. look dull and drab.
 - B. shine as the sun, but have no greater power.
 - C. shine as the sun and have great power.
 - D. look no different than they do in their present mortal bodies.
11. Who is the one great Supreme Being over all?
 - A. Christ, for He has always played the outstanding role in relation to man.
 - B. God the Father.
 - C. There is no supreme head - the Father and Christ are of equal authority.
 - D. The Father and Christ alternate in assuming the supreme authority.
12. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE? Jesus Christ:
 - A. was the One who was most often known as LORD/YHVH God by the Old Testament nations.
 - B. was the Word, but not the Logos.
 - C. had beginning of days.
 - D. is often called the Father.

13. One of the two members of the God Family has become known as the FATHER

- A. because we positively know He has existed longer than the Logos.
- B. Because of the relationship between He and Jesus the Christ.
- C. because it has gradually become the custom of religious denominations to call Him "our Father."
- D. because He created the Logos before He created the universe.

14. Has God eternally existed?

- A. Christ had never existed before in any form until the Father begot Him.
- B. No - the Father reveals He ORIGINATED eons ago.
- C. Only the Father has eternally existed.
- D. Yes - God tells us so in the Bible.

15. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. The Divine Person who became Jesus Christ was not the "Spokesman" of the God Family in Old Testament times.
- B. When Christ conquers all on earth, He will no longer be subject to the Father.
- C. The words "In the beginning God ..." (Genesis 1:1) do not refer to the time when the God Family created the universe.

D. The Bible refers to the deity of Father and the deity of the Son.

16. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. The Father and Son are never spoken of together as "God."
- B. Christ and the Father do not always agree about things.
- C. The word "LORD" can mean "The Self-Existent."
- D. The Bible teaches the personhood of the Holy Spirit as defined by trinitarians.

17. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. No one can know any of the "hidden" knowledge of God.
- B. Man's finite mind cannot account for God's great knowledge.
- C. There is a limit to God's understanding.
- D. Humans can count the total number of stars.

18. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. God knows the billions of stars by name.
- B. God does not know the general attitude of people.
- C. God's communications system is limited by the speed of light.
- D. Humans, with their advanced scientific knowledge and modern technology, will soon surpass the greatness of God.

19. Eternal life is possible:

- A. through "spontaneous generation."
- B. only if given as a free gift from God.
- C. through natural changes in dead matter.
- D. by a mixture of gases.

20. Does God impart His power to humans? There are

- A. no records of God ever doing such.
- B. records which show He has given certain men supernatural power to do many miraculous things.
- C. no promises that we can receive His same Holy Spirit of power.
- D. no records showing how we can acquire it.

21. The Holy Spirit:

- A. has nothing to do with God's mind.
- B. is not very powerful today.
- C. is the very power and essentially mind of God which can become a PART of you.
- D. is in everyone at birth.

22. God's Spirit energy:

- A. is not everywhere.
- B. is a visible thing.
- C. has no useful function.
- D. is the power which accomplishes His will throughout the universe.

Prophecy Is a Proof of God!

23. One reason some people today do not believe there is a God:

- A. is God has left no physical evidence to prove He exists.
- B. the skeptic is afraid and fails to realize the sureness with which His prophecies are being carried out.
- C. His prophecies have been proved unreliable.
- D. they lack the mentality to prove He exists.

24. God's fulfilled prophecies have:

- A. been carried out only in broad detail.
- B. been carried out only in a hazy fashion.
- C. been carried out to the minutest detail.
- D. never been proof of His existence.

25. Prophecy proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is a God because:

- A. no human being could ever foretell future events with such exactness.
- B. it is in the Bible and most people really believe the Bible.
- C. ministers say it does.
- D. this Course says it does.

26. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. The world believes prophecy is a proof of God.
 - B. Prophets of God often prophesied of both Old Testament events which were LATER fulfilled, and events of our day which are now BEING fulfilled.
 - C. Our economic forecasters can predict as precisely as God.
 - D. Our human weather forecasters can foretell as accurately as God.
27. Most people have:
- A. heard so much truth everywhere that they know they can accept Bible prophecy without question.
 - B. studied and proved Bible prophecy and God's existence.
 - C. not come to realize that their very existence will depend on proving the veracity of Bible prophecy and the existence of God.
 - D. a knowledge of the United States in prophecy.
28. Does God claim He can foretell INFALLIBLY?
- A. No - He hedges.
 - B. Yes - because He has the POWER to bring about His prophecies.
 - C. His word says He can.
 - D. He is reluctant to make such a claim.
29. Does God say that humans have the same power to bring about future events as He has?
- A. Yes.
 - B. No.
 - C. He says nothing one way or the other.
 - D. He says humans can with their technology.
30. The BIG error many of the world's educated make in not accepting the Bible as the infallible Word of God is that they:
- A. ASSUME Bible prophecies are not exact or applicable.
 - B. are much more eager to do the will of God than they should be.
 - C. do not believe the skeptics.
 - D. believe implicitly the Old Testament, but not the New Testament.
31. What is the real basic cause of all human woes?
- A. Humankind's ability to make peace.
 - B. Humankind's ability to organize to suppress evil.
 - C. Rebellious human nature.
 - D. Humankind's inability to pick the right doctor.
32. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
- A. The fact that man has never established permanent peace among men is not visible evidence that God's Word is being fulfilled.

- B. Humankind will eventually establish world peace without God's supernatural intervention.
 - C. God, who knows the basic cause of human woes, foretold from the start the degree of unhappiness this world would experience.
 - D. God never foreknew where man's rebellious nature would lead.
33. God's prophecy of human strife down through the ages proves He exists because people:
- A. try as they may, can't thwart it.
 - B. knowing their own limitations, have now all turned to God for the power to change their human nature.
 - C. knowing it is a decree from God, accept it meekly as true.
 - D. always recognized it proves His existence.
34. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
- A. God's prophecy of race history is wrong.
 - B. Japheth's descendants have not been enlarged.
 - C. Ham's descendants have always stood above all.
 - D. God predicted King Cyrus.
35. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
- A. God foretold key parts of the world's history in advance.
 - B. God does not always foretell accurately.
 - C. God has yet to predict future history.
 - D. Prophecy is only for the past.
36. God shows us He exists today by:
- A. bringing to pass many end-time prophecies foretold centuries ago.
 - B. not allowing a ten-kingdom European union to arise.
 - C. letting world events shape themselves.
 - D. leaving "hands off" this world's affairs.
37. Terrorism:
- A. is only a modern phenomenon?
 - B. can only be caused by descendants of Japheth.
 - C. was prophesied to happen in these end times.
 - D. can never involve people from the Middle East.
38. Jesus taught that the true church:
- A. would be a little flock in this age.
 - B. would not be subject to persecution.
 - C. would dominate much of the world in this age.
 - D. would be headquartered in Rome for the entire church age.
39. God's most faithful Church in the end of the age:

- A. sets the pattern which all denominations follow.
- B. is great in membership.
- C. is the only one which fills the description of the one He said He would cause to exist (Revelation 3:7-13) in the end-time.
- D. proclaims a message joyously received by everyone.

40. Once Bible prophecy has proved to us that God does exist, what are we to do?

- A. Forget the whole matter.
- B. Accept Him as our Ruler and follow His laws for abundant living.
- C. Make no change in the way we are living.
- D. Not be concerned about the future.

Creation Proves the Bible True

41. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. Evolution is a proven fact, not a theory.
- B. Creation is not scientific.
- C. Evolution is an unproved theory.
- D. Scientific discoveries always contradict the Bible.

42. If you take the Bible literally, and believe that it means what it says,

- A. you believe that evolution is true and there "is no other side to evolution."

- B. you are exposing your ignorance.
- C. you may be exposed to ridicule.
- D. you will become confused and lose out on eternal salvation.

43. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?

- A. Only God could have created matter in the beginning.
- B. God probably had nothing to do with fashioning the earth.
- C. Matter may have always existed.
- D. God does not have the power to create anything.

44. What is an importance of URANIUM?

- A. Its radioactivity proves that there has been no past eternity of matter.
- B. It proves that God does not exist.
- C. It proves nothing.
- D. It is important only in atomic warfare.

45. Since matter has not always existed,

- A. there is no need of a Creator.
- B. matter could have evolved of itself out of nothing.
- C. its existence today demands a Creator.
- D. we can know nothing about the origin of anything.

46. The existence of life:

- A. is fully explained by evolution.
- B. is a proof that God must exist, because life is not an inherent property of matter.
- C. is a result of "spontaneous generation."
- D. is purely the result of "electro-chemical action."

47. According to the Theory of Evolution, all the different kinds of life:
- A. must have been created by God.
 - B. developed from one single-celled protoplasmic mass.
 - C. do NOT give rise to new and different kinds of life.
 - D. are of supernatural, rather than natural, origin.
48. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
- A. You can be a true Christian and still believe in evolution as the origin of life.
 - B. Evolution is a proof that the Bible is not scientific.
 - C. You cannot be a true Christian and believe in evolution as the origin of life.
 - D. Communism is unalterably opposed to evolution.
49. Which one of the following men proved that life can come only from life - that it cannot spring spontaneously from dead matter?
- A. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher.
 - B. Redi, an Italian.
 - C. Charles Darwin.
 - D. Karl Marx.
50. The "Law of Biogenesis" states that:
- A. biology is a proof of evolution.
 - B. the book of Genesis is unscientific.
 - C. dead matter will, by itself, produce life.
 - D. life can come only from life.
51. According to the Theory of Evolution,
- A. mammals became reptiles.
 - B. the unintelligent savage is the result of degeneration.
 - C. humankind was a gradual transition from some lower animal similar to the anthropoid ape.
 - D. man sprang suddenly from monkeys.
52. The many varieties of life which cover the earth:
- A. arose from a process of unintelligent evolution.
 - B. prove that simple kinds gradually become new and different and more complex kinds.
 - C. disprove the Genesis account of creation.
 - D. always naturally stay within the bounds of the original kinds which God produced at creation.
53. According to the Book of Genesis,
- A. God created the universe.
 - B. many new kinds can arise.
 - C. animal life existed in the ocean bottom millions of years before plant life developed on the land surface.
 - D. all life began by evolution.
54. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?
- A. Mutations, sudden changes in nature, do not produce totally new KINDS.

- B. A new variety is merely a variation WITHIN a Genesis kind.
 - C. New varieties will vary until they become NEW KINDS.
 - D. Mutations are not a proof of evolution.
55. We may properly conclude that:
- A. humans often willingly and deliberately ignore the evidence of the flood.
 - B. no ancient cities were ever buried by the flood in Noah's day.
 - C. fossils were all buried over a period of millions of years.
 - D. the simplest fossils were always buried first and the more complex fossils on top, proving evolution to be true.
56. Which ONE of these four statements is TRUE?
- A. The simpler forms of life are always found buried in the lower strata.
 - B. Complex forms of life never occur at the very bottom of strata.
 - C. Evolution is proved by the logical order in which fossils are found buried.
 - D. The simple and complex forms are usually jumbled throughout the strata.
57. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?
- A. The fossil strata of the pre-Adamic destruction were laid in rapid succession since plants are often found piercing through successive beds of stone!
- B. All the strata were formed since Adam, and as a result of the Flood in Noah's day.
 - C. The tracks of fleeing animals, preserved in the fossil strata, prove that successive layers were laid rapidly, because footprints would have been obliterated in a few days' time.
 - D. Most of the fossils of the pre-Adamic world were buried alive and suddenly.
58. God ORIGINALLY created the earth:
- A. perfect and beautiful.
 - B. in chaos and confusion.
 - C. a hot molten mass unfit for life.
 - D. covered with clouds and thick darkness.
59. The earth BECAME a desolation before Adam's time:
- A. because of the sins of pre-Adamic human beings.
 - B. because of the sin of the angels who rebelled against God.
 - C. because God likes to destroy things.
 - D. because of purely natural conditions.
60. In the first two verses of Genesis,
- A. a perfect creation and its destruction are revealed.
 - B. the account of the first day of the ADAMIC creation week is recorded.

- C. proof is given that God originally created the heavens and earth not more than 6000 years ago.
- D. we learn that the earth was created in chaos.

61. Evolution leads to:

- A. at least a form of atheism.
- B. a firm belief in God.
- C. a comprehension of the purpose of life.
- D. a knowledge of the origin of things.

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY PROVE THE BIBLE TRUE

62. The Bible is:

- A. a pious fraud.
- B. man's first attempt to gather up primitive traditions and make them appear AS the work of a supreme being.
- C. a book of fables and myths.
- D. an inspired revelation from God.

63. The religious leaders of the world believe that the Bible:

- A. contains fables and myths about God, and is not really a revelation from God to man of essential knowledge.
- B. ought to be obeyed, because the God who inspired it has authority over human affairs.
- C. is an inspired revelation from God of vital knowledge that man needs to understand.

- D. is the inspired Word of God Himself, and should be followed in every detail.

64. The people who do NOT believe and practice what the Bible says

- A. still can understand the meaning of present world events.
- B. know the goal for which human beings were put on earth.
- C. can never fully understand the lessons of the past, nor know in advance what the future holds.
- D. can still determine for themselves what is right and wrong.

65. The evidence of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible

- A. has not been rejected by worldly scholars.
- B. can be disproved by science.
- C. has been rejected by the world because it knows that if the Bible were proved infallible, people would have an obligation to obey it.
- D. can be disproved from accurate historical records.

66. In the Jewish Talmud, which is a historical record of Jewish practices and beliefs, the Jews state that Jesus Christ

- A. performed miracles of healing and of casting out demons.
- B. never existed.
- C. performed His miracles by the very power of God.
- D. is the promised Messiah foretold in Scripture.

67. The non-Christian Jewish historian of the first century, Josephus, declares that
- A. Jesus is a myth, invented by Gentiles.
 - B. James was a brother of Jesus who was called Christ.
 - C. John the Baptist was an evil man.
 - D. there is no evidence to support the belief that Jesus had any disciples.

68. The authority and the inspiration of the Bible have been
- A. repudiated by many without properly being tested.
 - B. recognized by all translators of the Bible.
 - C. the foundation for the religious practices of all the churches.
 - D. rejected only by atheists.

69. Most people
- A. take for granted what the churches say about the Bible.
 - B. examine the Bible for themselves to see what it actually says.
 - C. naturally want to resist their lusts and practice what the Bible says.
 - D. do not want to believe fables because they prefer the truth.

70. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?
- A. People often reject the truth of the Bible as out-of-date in this space age.
 - B. It is easy for people who have been brought up in various

churches to grasp the truth of the Bible.

- C. Human beings naturally think their ways are better than God's ways.
- D. War, sickness and suffering are the penalties of the wrong way of life.

71. The expression "Thus saith the Lord," which is found hundreds of times in the Bible, means that

- A. God speaks with authority to us through the Bible.
- B. we do not need to do what God says.
- C. the prophets who wrote the Bible falsely attributed their own human ideas to a God.
- D. we should believe whatever the churches say about the Bible.

72. The accurate preservation of the Bible

- A. can never be proved.
- B. has been disproved by the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- C. is illustrated by the Isaiah Manuscript found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- D. is of no real importance to us today.

73. Which ONE of these four statements is FALSE?

- A. There are slight variations in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible.
- B. God permitted these minor scribal changes in spelling and word order so that those who spoke Hebrew and Greek would always understand

- the Bible even though the language gradually changed.
- C. These minor changes do not change the important messages of the Bible.
 - D. Variation in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible are so extensive that the meaning of the Bible has been lost.
74. The various translations of the Bible
- A. are so contradictory that it is almost impossible to know what God really says.
 - B. are essential because the English language is gradually changing over the centuries.
 - C. were never intended by God.
 - D. should never have been made because the Bible was never intended to be read personally by the common person for himself.
75. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible
- A. is perfect.
 - B. should never be read by anybody.
 - C. was translated by Communists as a plot against Christianity.
 - D. is far from perfect, but is accurate enough to be a reasonably faithful rendering of the Word of God.
76. Do we have all the Bible?
- A. Yes, except for the Apocrypha which should be added to the Bible.
 - B. We can never be sure if we do.
 - C. No, we do not.
 - D. Yes, we do; for we have proof that the Bible has been accurately preserved.
77. Is there historical proof that the Patriarchs of the Bible really lived?
- A. There is no proof.
 - B. The evidence is too scanty to be of any value.
 - C. Perhaps, but the proof has been totally lost over the centuries.
 - D. Of course there is, for many ancient towns and cities in Mesopotamia were named after many of them!
78. Did the nations of antiquity regard "Noah's Flood" as historical fact?
- A. Many of them recorded it as historical fact.
 - B. They wrote nothing about it.
 - C. They denied it ever occurred.
 - D. We cannot know as all their records have perished.
79. Is there evidence that the Bible account of Joseph in Egypt is true?
- A. No evidence has so far come to light.
 - B. The story of Joseph has been proved a Jewish fable.
 - C. Abundant testimony proves that Joseph was a historical person.
 - D. It does not matter if there were evidence; for the Bible is as undependable as ordinary MAN-MADE books on history.

80. Are the critics RIGHT in their claim that the Book of Daniel is a forgery?

- A. No, they are not. Not one verse of the Book of Daniel has ever been proved historically untrue. Many verses have been proved true.
- B. Yes, because the miracles recorded in the Book just could not have happened. Miracles are impossible.
- C. We cannot be sure.
- D. Part of it is a forgery and part of it is historically true. Now That You've Finished

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Keep this question section. File it in your notebook at the end of the Lessons it covers. Review these questions now and then. Why? Because the review will give you the opportunity to impress the true answers more firmly upon your mind.

Also, a review of the three false answers, given here for each question will aid you to realize more clearly some of the false ideas which you may have taken for granted. You will thereby grasp and retain the truth much better when it is presented to you.

ANSWERS TO TEST 3:

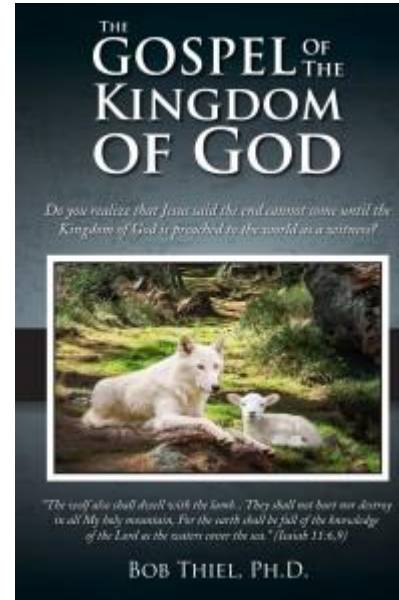
1- C	10 -C	19 -B	28 -B	37 -C	46 -B	55 -A	64 -C	73 -D
2- B	11 -B	20 -B	29 -B	38 -A	47 -B	56 -D	65 -C	74 -B
3- D	12 -A	21 -C	30 -A	39 -C	48 -C	57 -B	66 -A	75 -D
4- D	13 -B	22 -D	31 -C	40 -B	49 -B	58 -A	67 -B	76 -D
5- D	14 -D	23 -B	32 -C	41 -C	50 -D	59 -B	68 -A	77 -D
6- C	15 -D	24 -C	33 -A	42 -C	51 -C	60 -A	69 -A	78 -A
7- B	16 -C	25 -A	34 -D	43 -A	52 -D	61 -A	70 -B	79 -C
8- C	17 -B	26 -B	35 -A	44 -A	53 -A	62 -D	71 -A	80 -A
9- C	18 -A	27 -C	36 -A	45 -C	54 -C	63 -A	72-C	

Grade Yourself:

Simply count the number of questions you missed. Your grade percentage will be next to that number below:

1-99	9-89	17-78
2-97	10-87	18-77
3-96	11-86	19-76
4-95	12-85	20-75
5-94	13-84	21-73
6-92	14-82	22-72
7-91	15-81	23-71
8-90	16-80	24-70

The Gospel of the Kingdom and the United Nation's Objectives



By Bob Thiel

Does humanity have the solutions?

The world faces many problems.

Many people are hungry. Many people are oppressed. Many people face poverty. Many nations are in serious debt. Children, including unborn ones, face abuse. Drug-resistant diseases concern many doctors. Major industrial cities have air too polluted to be healthy. Various politicians threaten war. Terrorist attacks keep happening.

Can world leaders fix the problems facing humanity?

Many think so.

New Universal Agenda

On September 25, 2015, after a key-note speech by the Vatican's Pope Francis, the 193 nations of the United Nations (UN) voted to implement the "17 Sustainable Development Goals" of what originally

was termed the *New Universal Agenda*. Here are the UN's 17 goals:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive

societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

This agenda is supposed to be fully implemented by 2030 and is also called the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. It aims to solve ailments facing humanity through regulation, education, and international and interfaith cooperation. While many of its objectives are good, some of its methods and goals are evil (cf. Genesis 3:4). This agenda, also, is consistent with Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* encyclical. Pope Francis called the adoption of the *New Universal Agenda* "an important sign of hope."

As a follow-up to the UN agreement, there was a meeting in Paris in December 2015 (officially titled *21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*). Pope Francis also praised that international agreement and advised nations "to carefully follow the road ahead, and with an ever-growing sense of solidarity."

Nearly all the nation in the world agreed to the Paris accords, which had specific environmental goals and financial commitments. (Then US President Barack Obama signed a document to commit the USA to this in 2016, but in 2017, US President Donald Trump stated that the United States would NOT accept the agreed to Paris accords. This caused international outrage and has helped isolate the US from Europe and many other parts of the world.)

While no one wants to breath polluted air, go hungry, be impoverished, be endangered, etc., will human attempts the goals of the United Nations' 2030 agenda and/or the Paris accords solve the problems facing humanity?

The Track Record of the United Nations

The United Nations was formed and established on 24 October 1945, after World War II, in order to prevent another such conflict and to try to promote peace in the world. At its founding, the UN had 51 member states; there are now 193.

There have been hundreds, if not thousands, of conflicts around the world since the United Nations formed, but we have not yet had what could be described as the third World War.

Some believe that international cooperation like the United Nations claims to promote, combined with the type of interfaith and ecumenical agenda that Pope Francis and many other religious leaders are trying to promote, will bring peace and prosperity.

However, the track record for the United Nations to do this has not been good. In addition to the numerous armed conflicts since the United Nations formed, multiple millions are hungry, refugees, and/or desperately poor.

Over a decade ago, the United Nations set forth to implement its *Millennium Development Goals*. It had eight “development goals,” but this did not succeed, even according to the UN itself. So, in 2015, its so-called “17 Sustainable Development Goals” were adopted. Some are optimistic. Some consider it a utopian fantasy.

As far as utopia goes, on May 6, 2016, Pope Francis said he dreamed of a humane European utopia that his church could help that continent attain. Yet, the Bible shows that the Pope’s dream will turn out to be a nightmare (cf. Revelation 18).

There May Be Some Cooperation and Success, But ...

Merriam Webster’s Dictionary states that utopia is “an imaginary place in which the government, laws, and social conditions are perfect.”

The Bible teaches that humanity cannot solve its problems on its own:

²³ O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. (Jeremiah 10:23, NKJV throughout unless otherwise indicated)

The Bible teaches that international cooperation will fail:

¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways;
¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known. ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Romans 3:16-18)

Yet, many humans are working towards their view of a utopian society and even sometimes try to involve religion. But almost none are willing to follow the ways of the one true God. It is not that there will be no progress towards any of the United Nation’s or the Vatican’s goals. There will be some, as well as some setbacks.

Actually, and probably after massive conflict, a type of international peace deal will be agreed to and confirmed (Daniel 9:27). When it is, many will falsely tend to believe that humanity will be bringing about a more peaceful and utopian society.

Many will be taken in by such international ‘utopian progress’ (cf. Ezekiel 13:10) as well as by various signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). But the Bible says such peace will not last (Daniel 9:27; 11:31-44), despite what leaders may claim (1 Thessalonians 5:3; Isaiah 59:8). The idea that, apart from Jesus, humanity can bring utopia in this ‘present evil age’ is a false gospel (Galatians 1:3-10).

If humanity is utterly incapable of truly bringing about utopia, is any type of utopia possible?

Yes.

What Gospel did Jesus Preach?

The Bible teaches that a utopian society, called the Kingdom of God, will replace human governments (Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:15; 19:1-21).

When Jesus began His public ministry, He began by preaching the ***gospel of the Kingdom of God***. Here is what Mark reported:

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

The term gospel, comes from the Greek word transliterated as *euangelion*, and means "good message" or "good news." In the New Testament, the English word "kingdom," related to God's kingdom, is mentioned approximately 149 times in the NKJV and 151 in the *Douay Rheims Bible*. It comes from the Greek word transliterated as *basileia* which signifies the rule or realm of royalty.

Human kingdoms, as well as God's kingdom, have a king (Revelation 17:14), they cover a geographic area (Revelation 11:15), they have rules (Isaiah 2:3-4; 30:9), and they have subjects (Luke 13:29).

Here is the first public teaching from Jesus that Matthew records:

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23).

Matthew also records:

³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 9:35).

The New Testament shows that Jesus will reign forever:

³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:33).

Luke records that the purpose that Jesus was sent was to preach the Kingdom of God. Notice what Jesus taught:

⁴³ He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent" (Luke 4:43).

Have you ever heard that preached? Did you ever realize that Jesus' purpose for being sent was to preach the Kingdom of God?

Luke also records that Jesus *did* go and preach the Kingdom of God:

¹⁰ And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God (Luke 9:10-11).

Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God should be the top priority for those who would follow Him:

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

³¹ But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. ³² Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:31-32).

Christians are to SEEK FIRST the Kingdom of God. They do this by making this their top priority by

living as Christ would have them live and looking forward to His return and kingdom. Yet, most who profess Christ, not only do not seek first the Kingdom of God, they do not even know what it is. Many also falsely believe that being involved in worldly politics is what God expects from Christians. By not understanding God's kingdom, they do not

live now as they should or understand why humanity is so flawed.

Notice also that the kingdom will be given to a little flock (cf. Romans 11:5). It takes humility to be willing to be part of the true little flock.

Although humans like to think we are so smart, there are limits to our understanding, yet God's "understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5).

That is why it will take God's intervention to fix this planet.

While many believe *in* God, the vast majority of humans are unwilling to live as *He* truly directs. Notice the following:

⁸ He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you But
to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk
humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

To walk humbly *with* God is not something humankind has truly been willing to do. From the time of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-6), humans have chosen to rely on themselves and their priorities, above God's, despite His commandments (Exodus 20:3-17).

The Book of Proverbs teaches:

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And
lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In
all your ways acknowledge Him, And He
shall direct your paths. ⁷ Do not be wise in
your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart
from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Yet, most people will not truly trust in God with all their hearts or wait for Him to direct their steps. Many say they will do what God wants, but do not do it. Humanity has been deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9) and has fallen for the lusts of the world and the 'pride of life' (1 John 2:16).

Therefore, many have come up with their own religious traditions and secular governments,

because they think they know best. However, they do not (cf. Jeremiah 10:23) nor will most truly repent.

That is why humanity needs the Kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 24:21-22).

God's Ways Are Right

The truth is that God is love (1 John 4:8,16) and God is NOT selfish. God's laws show love towards God and our neighbor (Mark 12:29-31; James 2:8-11). The ways of the world are selfish and end in death (Romans 8:6).

Notice that the Bible shows real Christians observe the commandments:

¹ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:1-3)

All of God's "commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). His ways are pure (1 Timothy 1:15). Sadly, many have accepted various forms of "lawlessness" and do not realize that Jesus did NOT come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17), by explaining their real meaning and expanding them beyond what many thought (e.g. Matthew 5:21-27). Jesus taught that "whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19) (the terms 'Kingdom of God' and 'kingdom of

heaven' are interchangeable).

The Bible teaches that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). Many claim to follow Jesus, but will not truly believe His teachings (Matthew 7:21-23) and will not imitate Him as they should (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1). "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, KJV) and all have sinned (Romans

3:23). However, the Bible shows that mercy will triumph over judgment (James 2:13) as God truly has a plan for all (cf. Luke 3:6).

Human solutions, apart from God's ways, will not work. In the millennial kingdom, Jesus will rule with "a rod of iron" (Revelation 19:15), and good will prevail as people will live God's way. **ALL the world's problems exist because societies of this world refuse to obey God and His law.** History show humanity is not capable of solving the problems of society:

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:6-8)

Christians are to focus on the spiritual, and are granted God's Spirit to do so in this age (Romans 8:9), despite our personal weaknesses:

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ

Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— ³¹ that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Christians are to glory in God's plan! We walk by faith now (2 Corinthians 5:7), looking above (Colossians 3:2) in faith (Hebrews 11:6). We will be

blessed for keeping God's commandments (Revelation 22:14).

The Bible says that Christians will rule with Jesus, but do you realize that means that real Christians will actually rule over cities? Jesus taught:

¹² "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

¹⁵ "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶ Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' (Luke 19:12-19)

Be faithful over the little you have now. Christians will have the opportunity to rule over real cities, in a real kingdom. Jesus also said, "My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12). God has a plan (Job 14:15) and a place (John 14:2) for those who will truly respond

to Him (John 6:44; Revelation 17:14). The Kingdom of God is for real and you can be a part of it!

At the start of 2016, the journal *Science* had an article titled "The power of crowds" that indicated that artificial intelligence and crowdsourcing could solve the "wicked problems" facing humanity. Yet, the article failed to understand what wickedness was, let alone how to solve it.

Cooperation, apart from following the true ways of God, is as doomed to fail in the 21st century as it was back after the Great Flood when humanity cooperated to build the failed Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).

Problems in the world, in places like the Middle East (despite expected temporal gains, e.g. Daniel 9:27a; 1 Thessalonians 5:3), will not be solved by humans—we need the peace of the Kingdom of God (Romans 14:17).

The problems of international terrorism, despite expected gains, will not be solved (cf. Ezekiel 21:12) by the deceived in the United Nations (cf. Revelation 12:9)—we need the joy and comfort of the Kingdom of God.

The problems of the environment will NOT be solved by international cooperation, as the world's nations will help destroy the earth (Revelation 11:18), but they will be solved by the Kingdom of God.

The problems of sexual immorality, abortion, and selling human body parts will not be solved by the USA (cf. Revelation 18:13), but by the Kingdom of God.

The massive debt that the USA, UK, and many other nations have will not be solved through international brokering, but ultimately (after destruction per Habakkuk 2:6-8) by the Kingdom of God.

Ignorance and mis-education will not be solved by the United Nations—we need the Kingdom of God. Religious strife will not truly be solved by any ecumenical-interfaith movement agreeing to salvation apart from the true Jesus of the Bible. Sin is THE PROBLEM in the world and for that, we need Jesus' sacrifice and His return in the Kingdom of God.

Hunger issues will not be solved by genetically-modified organisms which are putting parts of the world at risk of famine due to potential crop failures—we need the Kingdom of God.

Modern medical science does not have all the answers for human health—we need the Kingdom of God.

The massive poverty in parts of Africa, Asia, and elsewhere, while benefiting for a time from end time 'Babylon' (cf. Revelation 18:1-19), will not solve the problem of poverty—we need the Kingdom of God.

The millennial phase of the Kingdom of God is a literal kingdom that will be established on the earth. It will be based on the loving laws of God and a loving God as leader. The saints will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6). This kingdom will include those truly in the Church of God, but no scripture states that the Kingdom of God is actually the Church (Catholic or otherwise). The Church of Rome has opposed the millennial teaching, and later it will more powerfully oppose the Bible's gospel message as we get closer to the end. This will likely get significant media coverage which may help fulfill Matthew 24:14.

In its final phase, the Kingdom of God will include the "New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:2) and of its increase there will be no end. There will be no more unrighteousness, no more sorrow, and no more death.

Preaching and understanding the gospel of the Kingdom of God is an important theme of the Bible. Old Testament writers taught about it. Jesus, Paul, and John taught about it.

The oldest 'Christian' sermon to survive outside the New Testament (often called *2 Clement*) taught about it. Early second century Christian leaders, like Polycarp and Melito, taught about it. We in the *Continuing* Church of God teach it today.

The Kingdom of God is the first subject that the Bible shows Jesus preached about (Mark 1:15). It was also what He preached about after the resurrection (Acts 1:3)—and it is something Christians should seek first.

The gospel is not only about the life and death of Jesus. The emphasis of the gospel that Jesus and His followers taught was the coming Kingdom of God. The gospel of the kingdom includes salvation through Christ, but also includes teaching the end of human governments (Revelation 11:5).

Remember, Jesus taught that the end would not come until after the gospel of the kingdom was preached to the world as a witness to all the nations (Matthew 24:14). And that preaching is happening now.

The good news is that **the Kingdom of God is the solution to the problems facing humanity**. Yet, most do NOT want to support it, nor hear it, nor want to believe the truth of it. God's Kingdom is eternal (Matthew 6:13), while "this world is passing away" (1 Corinthians 7:31).

Proclaiming the true gospel of the Kingdom of God is something that we in the *Continuing* Church of God are serious about. We strive to teach all things that the Bible teaches (Matthew 28:19-20), including the Kingdom of God (Matthew 24:14). While we await that kingdom, we need to learn and follow God's ways and comfort others who want to believe the truth. Shouldn't you support the proclaiming of the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God? Will you believe the gospel of the Kingdom of God?

WACHOPO MATHAYO 24:14
KOD MATHAYO 28:19-20

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