

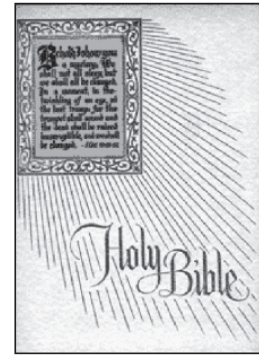
# BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY



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# Red Heifers and the Fate of the World?

Have you heard about the red heifers? Do you know what one is or why they may have any prophetic significance?

First, let's see a definition of a heifer:

heif-er [hef-er] noun a young cow over one year old that has not produced a calf. (Dictionary.com)

Some consider cows are heifers after about six months. Whether it is under or over a year, a 'red' heifer is a female cow that is reddish brown in color which has not produced a calf. They mainly look brown, but with some reddishness.

Certain Jews believe that God will provide a red heifer just before the Messiah will arise. Some farmers have even been raising cattle in the hope of providing the red heifer certain Jews feel is needed. Essentially some feel this is for a type of re-sanctification of the priesthood. Some believe if they have a qualified red heifer that will be a sign that another Jewish temple needs to be built as it could then be sanctified by the ashes of such a heifer.

Without that "red heifer" and/or the related sanctification, the sacrifices the Bible says will be stopped (Daniel 9:27, 11:31) cannot be resumed according to certain Jews.

Thus, if the relevant Jews willing to sacrifice animals believe this is needed, the location of a ritualistically proper red heifer can be a major milestone in the sequence of end-time events.

## A Red Heifer Was Claimed to Have Been Found in 2014

Notice something about the belief about the value of a red heifer:

The Jerusalem-based Temple Institute has taken on the goal of rebuilding the Third Jewish Temple, regarded by Jews and Christians as a precursor to the coming of the Messiah.

The plan is guaranteed to provoke world conflict, since the Islamic Dome of the Rock now sits on the presumed Temple site ...

The organization posted a video this month showing what appears to be a perfect red heifer that is being raised at an unidentified location in the United States.

"In truth, the fate of the entire world depends on the red heifer," the institute says.

"For G-d has ordained that its ashes alone are the single missing ingredient for the reinstatement of biblical purity – and thereafter, the rebuilding of the Holy Temple."

The Temple Institute says purification with the red heifer "reminds us that man has the potential to rise above his transitory physical existence, with all its false sense of hopelessness and misery ... the impurity of death." (Unrue B. Bible condition for 3rd Temple now met? World Net Daily, June 26, 2014)

Finding a red heifer is almost like finding a needle in a hay stack. And the Temple Institute later said the one above was not pure enough.

Also notice the following:

"Tell the Israelites to procure for you a red heifer that is free from every blemish and defect and on which no yoke has ever been laid ..." (Num. 19:2ff).

The Red Heifer is an extremely rare creature. According

to Jewish tradition, during the two thousand years from the time this commandment was given until the destruction of the Second Temple in the first century AD, only nine red cows that met the biblical criteria were ever found.

For a cow to be a Red Heifer it has to be without blemish, one that was never put to work and completely reddish. Jewish law requires keeping the young cow under strict care until it reaches three years old. During this time, leaning on the cow, riding it even once or even putting a piece of cloth on its back disqualifies it from becoming a Red Heifer. (Sadan T. Extremely Rare, Torah-Significant Red Heifer Found in America. Israel Today, June 30, 2014)

Now, I will add that some of the requirements that the Jews have are NOT biblical, so compromise on some points would seem to be possible.

## **There is Already Opposition to the Idea of Animal Sacrifices**

It also should be pointed that many are opposed to animal sacrifices and would oppose things such as sacrificing a red heifer.

In a book I wrote in 2009, I warned that the prophesied “starting of sacrifices in Israel might be perceived as the terrible crime” (2012 and the Rise of the Secret Sect, p. 302) that the King of the North may point to as a reason to stop them as is taught in Daniel 11:31. In late 2014, a court in India banned religious animal sacrifices as barbaric (see India court bans religious animal sacrifices: will this impact the Jews?).

Certain Jewish groups, like The Temple Institute, believe that the fate of the world depends on upon a red heifer being found and then sacrificed. The Old Testament clearly teaches that those who follow it alone (without the New Testament) are to sacrifice animals (e.g., Exodus 12:1-7; Leviticus 16:15-16).

Although, the New Testament does away with this (Hebrews 9:9-12; 10:1-7), the Jews that do not accept that Jesus was the Christ (which is most of them), do not consider that the New Testament is scripture, hence their only religious text commands them to sacrifice animals. And the Bible shows that this will happen again and will be stopped by the final King of the North:

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;

But in the middle of the week

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:27)

31 And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. (Daniel 11:31)

It is not just something like the Indian court decision that I believe that the King of the North may point to. I believe that animal rights' groups will scream in protest against Israel once it allows animal sacrifices again. I also believe that some in the Arab and Islamic world will protest such sacrifices.

Interestingly, notice the following Roman Catholic writings:

Abbot Herman of Lehnin (died 1300) Towards the end of the world “Israel will commit a terrible crime for which it will suffer death.” (Culleton, R. Gerald. The Prophets and Our Times. Nihil Obstat: L. Arvin. Imprimatur: Philip G. Scher, Bishop of Monterey-Fresno, November 15, 1941. Reprint 1974, TAN Books, Rockford (IL), p. 151)

Roman Catholic priest and writer R. Gerald Culleton (20th century): After the birth of Anti-Christ and shortly before the rise of the Great Monarch, the false doctrines were to multiply ... In the last days before Anti-Christ, there are to appear many anti-christs ... Towards the end of the world the Jews are to commit some atrocious crime for which they will be greatly persecuted ... the Great Monarch ... This Lion Monarch ... together with the Great Pope or

Angelic Pastor, shall appear after socialism ...  
(Culleton, pp. 25,27,28,50)

Perhaps “after socialism” may mean after communism falls, like it mainly did in the late 20th century. True Church of God Christians with “Jewish practices,” who could be considered a type of “Anti-Christ” by Greco-Romans, are to be greatly persecuted around the time of the Great Catholic “Lion” Monarch. The “atrocious crime” could refer to the “crime” of pointing out that the modern Roman Catholics are not the faithful representatives of true apostolic Christianity and that their apparent Great Monarch represents not the solution, but the ten-horned beast of Revelation. Or maybe it refers to the Jews re-instituting sacrifices. Or perhaps a combination of factors.

Either way, the King of the North is prophesied to stop animal sacrifices. He may very well state that he is stopping international ‘crime’ by causing animal sacrifices to cease.

## The Bible Teaches About a Red Heifer

Here is what the Bible says about a red heifer:

1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 “This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. 3 You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; 4 and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. 5 Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. 6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. 7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8 And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9 Then a

man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin. 10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them. (Numbers 19:1-10)

Jews have interpreted this to mean that another red heifer needs to be sacrificed for sacrifices to be resumed or for the Messiah to return. While that is not directly stated above, it could be implied from that one is again needed. And if those who want to sacrifice will not do so until they have a red heifer, then in that respect a red heifer is important. Certain Jews, like those of the Temple Institute, have added non-biblical requirements for the ‘tenth red heifer’ that while not biblically essential (and Jesus complained that the Jews in His day did that as well as is recorded in Mark 7:9-13), may be humanly necessary for the Jews to accept a particular red heifer as rabbinically valid.

Some Jews believe that the Books of Daniel and Isaiah tell about a future red heifer, despite the fact that they do not specify one. Notice the following passages that are sometimes cited starting with those in Daniel:

9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

11 “And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. (Daniel 12:9-12)

While certain Jews tie the purification in verse 10 to

the removal of sacrifices in verse 11, the Bible does not tie this in with a red heifer. Some Jews then tie in the following from Isaiah:

18 "Come now, and let us reason together,"  
Says the Lord,  
"Though your sins are like scarlet,  
They shall be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson,  
They shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

Some Jews tie the burning of scarlet in Numbers 9:6 to the above. Yet, while sins can be as scarlet, the Bible is not saying that this is related to a red heifer. It is a call from God to repent. And Christians do this without a red heifer (Acts 2:38) as it is not possible that the blood of bulls or goats to take away sins (Hebrews 10:4). Jesus takes away sins (John 1:36).

Also notice the following:

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:11-15)

Christians do not need any heifer, but certain Jews who reject Jesus' sacrifice think that they do.

While Jesus DID NOT specifically mention a 'red heifer' as a sign to look for in Matthew 24, He did refer to the Book of Daniel, which discusses sacrifices being stopped (Daniel 9:27; 11:31). In order for them to be stopped, they first must be started. And if the Jews who want to re-institute animal sacrifices do not believe that they can without a red heifer, then having one would seem to be of prophetic significance.

## Jewish Teachings and Traditions

The Jews have various traditions about the red heifer. In the Mishnah (Parah 3.5) it was claimed that "Moses prepared the first, Ezra prepared the second, and five were prepared after Ezra."

Supposedly there have been only nine proper prepared ones and the tenth one is what is needed.

Notice the following:

Before the Temple can be rebuilt and Temple worship can be resumed, a perfect red heifer must be found. ... According to Orthodox Jewish authorities, a suitable red heifer cannot even have a single black hair. So, finding such a creature is not easy. According to Jewish tradition, only nine such red heifers were found during the entire time when the first two temples were standing. And if this current red heifer ever does any work or ever mates it will be disqualified. The following comes from a Jewish source ...

The sages infer that the Red Heifer must be completely red — even two black hairs would render it invalid. And it must not have done any work in its lifetime — even having a yoke placed on its back or having mated would disqualify it.

Once a candidate was found, and there was need for more purifying ash water, the cow would be slaughtered and burned on a pyre, along with a cedar branch, hyssop sprig, and crimson wool. The ceremony took place on the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple Mount.

All of this has huge implications for world events.

Traditionally, many Orthodox Jews have believed that the spotting of a red heifer would herald the coming of the Messiah.

And if this red heifer does indeed turn out to be a suitable candidate, one of the biggest obstacles to rebuilding the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem will have been removed. (<http://www.rightsidenews.com/2014062434494/world/israel/red-heifer-discovered-major-obstacle-to->

the-rebuilding-of-the-jewish-temple-removed.  
html June 24, 2014)

Notice some of what the Temple Institute teaches about the need for a red heifer:

But in truth, the fate of the entire world depends on the red heifer. For G-d has ordained that its ashes alone are the single missing ingredient for the reinstatement of Biblical purity — and thereafter, the rebuilding of the Holy Temple ...

The Divine ordinance of the heifer, beyond the grasp of man's frail intellect, with all the details of its preparation and ceremony, calls out to Israel and to all who seek to cling to the living word of the G-d of Israel: "Purify yourselves! Shake off your despair! Death is an illusion!" Thus it is written, "...but all of you who cling to the Lord your G-d...you are all alive today" (Deut. 4:4) ...

G-d uses many devices to bring His children back to Him. ... the rabbis observed: "And if one should wonder, how could a man turn his life around, and come close to G-d on account of a heifer?! Do not wonder: For it is through the heifer that all of Israel becomes pure."  
([https://www.templeinstitute.org/red\\_heifer/introduction.htm](https://www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/introduction.htm))

The Mishna teaches that up until the destruction of the Second Temple, ashes had been prepared from a total of only nine red heifers. The very first red heifer was processed by Moses himself — as the verse states, "... have them bring you a red heifer." The second was done by the prophet Ezra in the days of the First Temple, and during the entire era of the Second Temple only seven more heifers were used for ashes. This was enough to provide for the nation's needs for purification throughout all those years.

The names of all the High Priests who prepared those seven heifers during Second Temple times are recorded by the Mishna: Simon the Just and Yochanan each made two; El'yhoeini ben Hakof, Chanamel HaMitzi and Yishmael ben Pi'avi processed one heifer each. Thus, from the

time that Moses received the commandment of the red heifer from the Holy One, blessed be He, until the destruction of the Second Temple, purifying ashes had been produced by the hands of these great leaders from a total of nine red heifers.

### **The Tenth Red Heifer Will be Prepared by the Messiah**

In recounting this historical record in his commentary to the Mishna, the great Maimonides ends with the enigmatic statement: "... and the tenth red heifer will be accomplished by the king, the Messiah; may he be revealed speedily, Amen, May it be God's will."

With this amazing statement, Maimonides recounts an ancient tradition — that the tenth red heifer is associated with the Messianic era. Does this perhaps mean that the appearance of a red heifer in these waning end times is an indication, a forerunner of the appearance of the Messiah himself, who will officiate at its preparation?

If there has been no red heifer for the past 2,000 years, perhaps it is because the time was not right; Israel was far from being ready. But now ... what could it mean for the times we live in, to have the means for purification so close at hand? With the words of Maimonides in mind, we cannot help but wonder and pray: If there are now red heifers ... is ours the era that will need them? ([https://www.templeinstitute.org/red\\_heifer/tenth\\_red\\_heifer.htm](https://www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/tenth_red_heifer.htm))

Some believe that the tenth red heifer came prior to the destruction of the last temple. Whether it did or not, the Bible simply does not mention ten red heifers.

### **Not the Abomination, and other Red Heifers have Been Hoped For**

...

Some have wondered if the abomination of desolation

Jesus mentioned in Matthew 24:15 that Daniel taught spoke of is the sacrificing of the next agreed upon Jewish red heifer. Let me simply state that no it is not. That abomination has to do more with the final coming Beast of the Sea of Revelation 13 and not a sacrifice of the Jews.

Some Jews, like those affiliated with the Temple Institute, want to resume animal sacrifices, and believe having a red heifer is a sign that the time is right. An agreed upon red heifer may increase pressure on the nation of Israel to allow such sacrifices – though it may not happen until the deal of Daniel 9:27 is fulfilled.

Many evangelical prophecy watchers seem to believe that a third Jewish Temple needs to be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the Temple Mount area near the Dome of the Rock for many end time prophecies to come to pass.

That belief is in error. An employee of the Temple Institute told me personally that his group did not believe that they needed a rebuilt Jewish Temple to resume animal sacrifices. He basically said is that all they need is an altar, which they have, and permission for the Israeli government, which they expect will happen someday. Years earlier, a representative of the ‘reconstituted Sanhedrin’ emailed me and said the same thing.

It is my belief is that once there is permission to start regular sacrifices, that whichever red heifer may be available then will be considered to be the right and acceptable one (even if it was not so beforehand). Or if the Jews believe that they have a truly qualified red heifer, this will be used to pressure government officials in allowing the resumption of daily sacrifices.

At its Facebook page in June 2021, the Temple Institute posted:

RED HEIFER UPDATE ... we see the great challenge of raising a perfectly red, unblemished red heifer. But this is a challenge given to us by G-d, and, as we all know, there is no greater occupation in life the trying to fulfill the challenges that G-d has set before us. We remain confident that we will meet the challenge at the proper time and

proceed toward our goal of acquiring the ashes of the red heifer. We remain confident that we will meet the challenge at the proper time and proceed toward our goal of acquiring the ashes of the red heifer.

No, getting a red heifer was not and is not the greatest occupation anyone needs to have. But this fixation is getting the Temple Institute looking at different ways to get one.

## Five Red Heifers in 2022?

In 2022 the Temple Institute reported that five red heifers arrived in Israel:

Elul 20, 5782/September 16, 2022

Red Heifers Arrive In Israel! On Thursday, September 15, 2022, 5 PM, 5 perfect, unblemished red heifers arrived in Israel from the USA. A modest ceremony was held at the unloading bay of the cargo terminal at Ben Gurion airport, where the new arrivals were greeted and speeches were made by the incredible people who have put their hearts and souls and means into making this historic/prophetic day become a reality.

Israel365 News reported:

September 16, 2022

The Temple Institute and Boneh Israel made a huge step towards reinstating the Temple service on Thursday when five red heifers landed at Ben Gurion International Airport.

The red heifer was the main component in the Biblically mandated process of ritual purification for impurity that results from proximity or contact with a dead body. Because the elements needed for this ceremony have been lacking since the destruction of the Second Temple, all Jews today are considered ritually impure, thereby preventing the return of the Temple service. ... even in Temple times, an animal that fulfilled the Biblical requirements was exceedingly rare. Failing to produce a suitable

candidate from ranchers in Israel, The Temple Institute began investigating alternative sources for a red heifer.

Boneh Israel, an organization that connects Christian lovers of Israel to the Holy Land, stepped in to help. ... One of the major difficulties was that the government requires tagging calves right after birth. The ear tag creates a hole in the calve's ear, a blemish that disqualifies the calf for the Mitzvah. The farmer explained that because of COVID, the employee who normally puts in the tags did not come to the farm when these five calves were born. ...

The cows were between 5-8 months old. To be suitable for the red heifer ceremony, the cow must be two years and one day old so these heifers will be raised in Israel until they reach the proper age. ...

Chanan Kupietzky, an Orthodox Jewish resident of Efrat ... Chanan pointed out that last year was 5781 in the Hebrew calendar.

"In Hebrew numerology, this is אפשת. That is an acronym for המודא הרפ הנש היהת (it will be the year of the red heifer). The cows we are looking at now were conceived last year," Kupietzky said. "This year is בפשת 5782, an acronym for היהת הנש לארשיב הרפ הנש (It will be a year for the heifer in Israel). In two weeks, we will begin גפשת 5783, the year in which the ceremony of the Red Heifer will be performed. This is an acronym for הלואג הרפ הנש היהת (It will be a year of the Red Heifer of redemption)." ...

According to Jewish tradition, there will only be ten red heifers in human history with the tenth heifer ushering in the Messianic era. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides), the most renowned medieval Jewish scholar known by the acronym Rambam, wrote in his explanation of the mitzvah that "the tenth red heifer will be accomplished by the king, the Messiah; may he be revealed speedily, Amen, May it be God's will." (<https://www.israel365news.com/274830/watch-red-heifers-arrive-in-israel/>)

Let me clearly state that two years past was not year 5781 anno mundi (year of the world), the next one was not 5782, and the from September 25, 2022, through sunset September 15, 2023 is not 5783 despite Jewish claims. Jewish scholars know full well that their 'year count' is off by over 200 years.

On March 8, 2023, the Facebook page of the Temple Institute announced:

The five red heifer candidates that were greeted at Ben Gurion airport this past summer, we are happy to relate, are healthy and thriving.

One of the five, unfortunately, has grown some non-red hairs and is therefore disqualified from becoming the red heifer which can provide the much longed for ashes. The remaining four, however, are still viable candidates. (<https://www.facebook.com/templeinstitute/posts/10151800892524969>)

It should be noted that the Temple Institute only needs ONE, not five, red heifers. And since they believe that there have only been nine in recorded history, at least three of the remaining heifers will one day be disqualified.

## Temple Not Required for Jewish Sacrifices

As far as a temple goes, it should also be noted that many doubt whether the claimed Temple Mount is truly the location of the last Jewish temple. Furthermore, many of the stones from that temple were moved to the Western Hill in Jerusalem, commonly referred to as Mount Zion.

Notice that the Bible shows that during the time of Ezra animal sacrifices in the Temple were made before the second Jewish Temple was built:

2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses the man of God.  
3 Though fear had come upon them because of



the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening burnt offerings. 4 They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. 5 Afterwards they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the Lord. 6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, although the foundation of the temple of the Lord had not been laid. (Ezra 3:2-6)

So, while a red heifer is at least desired for the Temple Institute to sacrifice, an actual rebuilt temple on the Temple Mount is not.

That being said, the Temple Mount area is a likely location for end time sacrifices to resume, especially considering that the Temple Institute insists that it is the correct location (which is truly debatable).

On December 10, 2018, the reconstituted Sanhedrin (which maintains ties with the Temple Institute) did perform a ritualistic sacrifice to “purify” their altar.

If Jews will not resume regular animal sacrifices until there is a red heifer, then looking out for one seems to be a sign that ties in with end time prophecy. The Bible shows that the Jews will again have animal sacrifices (cf. Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). The fact is that The Temple Institute and others are taking steps that are consistent with that.

As far as timing goes, the Bible shows that the stopping of the animal sacrifices occurs just prior to the start of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21) and what is commonly considered to be the end of the world.

As Jesus said, “And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” (Mark 13:37)

As far as the fate of the world, notice that it depends on God, not a red heifer:

19 For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of

the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. 20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days. (Mark 13:19-20)

While we may well see a red heifer acceptable to the Jews, the fate of the world is not dependent upon one.

But the fact that the Jews think that they may have one, suggests that we may be getting very close to the resumption of daily sacrifices and the end of the church age.

## What Does It Mean - Bring Every Thought into Captivity to Christ?



(Pixabay photo)

**By Lynn E Torrance**

*This was published in the old Good News magazine in December 1962 by the old Radio Church of God (a group that no longer exists) — the copyright was not renewed and so this article is in the public domain.*

Here’s how you can rule over the thoughts of your mind!

ARE you plagued by thoughts you know are wrong — by thoughts you desperately want to stop thinking?

Do you find yourself unable to master — to resist — the bad thoughts of your mind?

Why are some of you always having to fight wrong thoughts, but yet, somehow are never quite able to overcome them?

## We Must Overcome

Does God command us to do the impossible? No! For with God's help "all things are possible." You can learn to cast every wrong thought out of your mind.

God commands you to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Does that mean every thought? Yes! Here is how God makes it possible. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to command, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Jesus Christ did not sin. His mind was perfect. All His thoughts were pure.

To rule over the thoughts of your mind, you must have the mind, the attitude, the determination, the character Jesus had. You can have that same mind — that same power — through the Holy Spirit. But you must also exercise your will to resist fleeting evil thoughts.

Christ commands us to become perfect, even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), You CAN do as Christ commands!

## Learn to Recognize Wrong Thoughts

Some of you are thinking wrong thoughts without even realizing that you are allowing your mind to become enslaved (Romans 6:16). You must learn to detect wrong thoughts immediately so you can cast these thoughts from you before they become so firmly implanted in your mind that you are unable to drive them out.

There is one sure way you can learn to recognize what a wrong thought is. Open your Bible to see if your thoughts are producing the fruits of God's Spirit.

Are your thoughts producing "love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23)?

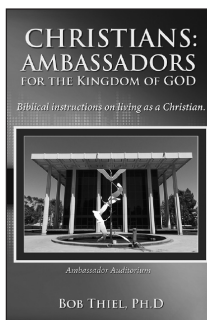
Any thought that does not produce joy, love and peace is a wrong thought. The thoughts that are in captivity to Christ produce the fruits of the Spirit. Any thought contrary to God's law, any thought of criticism, accusation, lust, hatred, doubt, discouragement, adultery, fornication, envy, jealousy, is a wrong thought.

Jesus Christ warned that entertaining, harboring, dwelling upon evil thoughts breaks God's law. He said, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (mind)" (Matthew 5:28). Those who think such thoughts shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:21).

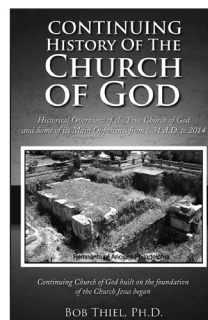
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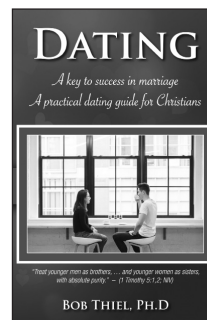
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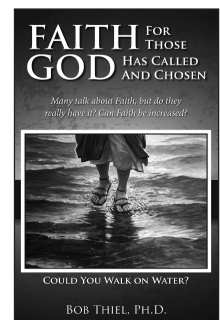
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## You Must Want to Overcome

When you allow evil thoughts to remain in your mind — when you allow them to conceive — the result is that you are sinning “... when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ...” (James 1:14-15). You must repent — you must stop thinking these thoughts.

Many of you realize that you frequently entertain evil thoughts, but you do not always know how to repent, how to cast them out of your mind.

Some of you are sorry when you think wrong thoughts. But merely being sorry does not stop you from sinning — being sorry is not repentance unless there is also the will, the action to bring about a permanent change.

Repentance means change. It means STOP sinning. Yet, we must realize the carnal mind doesn't really want to repent. You must earnestly ask God to give you the God-given desire to repent, to STOP sinning.

The strong desire to stop sinning is a gift which we receive from God only when we ask for it with strong supplications.

When God gives us the gift of repentance, we must then use it. We must STOP sinning.

## Resist Wrong Thoughts Immediately

The key to overcoming a wrong thought is to resist it immediately.

The very split second a wrong thought comes into your mind, PRAY INSTANTLY — DO NOT DELAY. If you are in public, pray silently. Ask God for the power to cast this wrong thought out of your mind, ask to be cleansed of this evil thought.

Don't make the often-fatal mistake of letting evil thoughts dwell in your mind. You must cast them out immediately. The longer you allow evil thoughts to fester in your mind the harder it becomes to cast them out — for all carnal human nature loves to sin.

The carnal mind does not have the power to resist evil — to instantly pray to God whenever a wrong thought strikes. That power comes from God through the gift of His Holy Spirit. You have to ask for this power, the power which God is more willing to give you than you are to ask for.

Ask, God will give you the power to pray instantly when a wrong thought attacks your mind. Jesus Christ promises, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

The Holy Spirit inspired David to say, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments” (Psalms 119:60).

## How to Replace Bad Thoughts with Good Thoughts

Casting an evil thought out of your mind is only the beginning.

Realize that you cannot leave your mind a blank or it will be overcome by still more evil thoughts.

You must not only ask God to give you the power to cast wrong thoughts out of your mind, but you must also immediately ask for the power to fill your mind with good thoughts — thoughts which produce the fruits of the Spirit.

REMEMBER that you must always maintain a close contact with God.

Then you can ask for and receive His power instantly, split-second quick, when you need it.

## How to Become More Converted

Have you continually called out to God for help to overcome a wrong thought only to find out that God seemingly failed to give you the power you needed in order to overcome?

Did God fail to keep His promise that “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21)?

NO! “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).  
“God ... cannot lie” (Titus 1:2).

If you believe the Scripture is true, then you must acknowledge that you somewhere failed your part.

Why have you failed? Why couldn't you bring your thoughts under control?

The surprising answer is: the carnal mind sins because it wants to.

If your carnal mind still has the upper hand to such an extent that you cannot stop thinking wrong thoughts, you have not learned to abhor evil. The thoroughly converted mind is one that utterly abhors evil!

You need to go to a private place and fall on your knees and pour out your heart to God until you really know that you are converted by God's Holy Spirit, until you know God has given you the power to overcome.

You may even have to spend hours in FASTING and PRAYER — earnest, determined, persevering supplication — until you know that God has heard you.

Persevere in Bible study and prayer until the mind of Christ living in you has changed your outlook on life from a worldly, fleshly, materialistic viewpoint to an obedient, spiritual one — until you have, as the Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to command. “Set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

When you become deeply converted by the mind of Christ living in you, you will hate evil as God hates evil. You will abhor thinking evil thoughts. You will become more like God. You will stop sinning because your desire to obey God will become stronger than the carnal human desire to sin. You will stop sinning because you will stop wanting to sin.

The key to success is that you will be putting Christ's words, His thoughts into your mind. The more you let the words of your Bible imbue your mind, the less room there will be for any evil thought to cross your mind. You cannot replace evil thoughts by keeping

your mind empty or by always thinking about that evil thought. You must fill your mind, concentrate your mind on the word of God, on doing God's will.

The Almighty God, who is faithful, promises, “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8).

So, consider there are not only physical principles involved in the seventh commandment. We are to pursue the truth of God and strive to faithfully be one with God (John 17:11).

## Keep in Contact

Once you become thoroughly converted, you must always maintain such a close contact with God that you will be able to instantly ask for and receive the GREAT POWER you need in order to resist the evil and replace it with the good.

How do you maintain this close contact?

You maintain this close contact by submissive obedience to God's will and by spending as much time in Bible study and prayer as is necessary for you to have Christ's mind ruling in you. Then you will be instantly able to ask for and receive the POWER to overcome.

Eternal Life is worth the effort! You must never fail!  
Be vigilant!

REMEMBER that to keep from yielding to sin — even JESUS CHRIST had to offer up prayers to God with strong crying and tears (Hebrews 5:7).

## Be Vigilant

After God has given you the victory — DO NOT LET DOWN. The key to continued overcoming is to BE VIGILANT. Be on your guard! Be awake! Be prepared!

That is where many of us stumble. There is something you must do.

The Apostle Paul told us how to remain steadfast overcomers. He said, “Take unto you the whole

armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done (overcome) all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13).

Then the Apostle Paul told us how to acquire this armour of God. “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

Notice this important point, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; PRAYING ALWAYS with all prayer and supplication” (Ephesians 6:13-18),

God does not do it all for us. Unless we put forth DILIGENT effort, we cannot be called OVERCOMERS.

But on the other hand, if we had the power to do it all, we should not need to ask God that Jesus Christ help us overcome our wrong thoughts.

Jesus Christ commands us to be persistent in asking for God’s strength. He commands us “always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).

## Pray for Others

Don’t fail to show God how much you appreciate the power of His Holy Spirit, the power to overcome.

Rejoice, for Jesus Christ, who cannot lie, has promised, “To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame” (Revelations 3:21).

Diligently pray that God give ALL of us whom He is calling in this end time the Spirit-led power, not only to cast evil thoughts from our minds, but also the power to fill our minds with thoughts that are pleasing to the Almighty Creator God who has called us to become members of His Family.

Editor’s note: Some additional scriptures to consider are as follows:

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5-6)

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. (Philippians 4:8-9)

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

Thinking about the right things makes keeping out the wrong ones much easier. Yes, with God’s help you can control your thoughts.

# Jesus is the slain goat of the ancient atonement ceremony



1860 Warsaw page of Leviticus (Wikipedia)

By Bob Thiel

From sunset September 24th through sunset September 25th is the Day of Atonement for 2023.

In the original Hebrew, the Bible calls the day Yom Hakippurim (which is Hebrew for “Day of the Atonements”).

The original rites and practices for the Day of Atonement are set forth in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus (cf. Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 23:27-31, 25:9; Numbers 29:7-11). It is considered to be a time for fasting, during which no food or drink are to be consumed:

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. 27 It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls ... 32 It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath. (Leviticus 23:26-27,32)

This fasting is historically how the phrase “afflict your souls” has been interpreted by the Jewish community to mean fasting (this is also verified by such passages as Psalm 35:13; 69:10 and Isaiah 58:5), unless one is somehow ill, and thus is already afflicted. Evening to evening means from sunset to sunset.

In the New Testament, the Day of Atonement is referred to as “the Fast” (Acts 27:9). The fact that this day was referred to that way (or even at all) is an indication that it was observed by Christians after Christ’s resurrection. The Bible clearly shows that so-called Jewish holy days, such as Pentecost were observed by Christians after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2:1).

A unique ceremony related to the Day of Atonement is discussed in Leviticus 16:

8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for Jehovah, and the other lot for Azazel. 9 And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for Jehovah, and offer him for a sin-offering. 10 But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be set alive before Jehovah, to make atonement for him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:8-10, ASV)

8 And Aaron hath given lots over the two goats, one lot for Jehovah, and one lot for a goat of departure; 9 and Aaron hath brought near the goat on which the lot for Jehovah hath gone up, and hath made it a sin-offering. 10 And the goat on which the lot for a goat of departure hath gone up is caused to stand living before Jehovah to make atonement by it, to send it away for a goat of departure into the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:8-10, YLT)

Christians note the parallels between the first of the two goats with Jesus and the second of the two goats with Satan (the Azazel goat).

Such as Jesus does get killed, but that Satan does not.

The slain goat — which is the one goat there identified as the sin offering — represents Christ who actually dies for our sins. Notice Leviticus 16:15-19:

15 Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. 16 So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. 18 And he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. 19 Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

Christ’s sacrifice is an atonement sacrifice to reconcile us to God. Notice what the Apostle Paul wrote:

18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

The late Pastor General of the old Worldwide Church of God, Herbert W. Armstrong, wrote:

Now the goat which God selected through lot, to represent Christ was slain, as Christ, its antitype was slain. But the other goat selected by God to represent Azazel was not slain, but was driven, alive, into an uninhabited wilderness. It was not a resurrected goat, symbolizing the resurrected Christ, for it never died. The uninhabited wilderness, to which this goat was driven, cannot, as we shall show, represent heaven, where Christ went. Heaven is neither uninhabited, nor a wilderness.

After God designated which goat represented Christ and which Azazel, the high priest (verse 11) killed the bullock for a sin offering for himself, then took the burning coals of fire and the sweet incense into the Holy of Holies, also sprinkling the blood of the bullock before the mercy seat, typical of the throne of God, covering the tables of testimony (the law). This the high priest was required to do in order to purify himself to officiate, and to represent Christ as High Priest. In the antitype, this was not done, for Christ, our High Priest, had no need of this purification as the typical substitutionary priests did.

Now the Levitical high priest was ready to go out and officiate.

Next, the goat which God selected by lot to represent Christ, as the sin offering of the people, was killed. Thus, the sins of the people were borne by the goat, even as Christ, finally, once for all, bore our sins on the cross. But Christ rose again from the dead and ascended to the throne of God in heaven. ...

As soon as the slain goat was dead, who went

within the veil, presenting the blood of this goat before the typical throne of God?

Leviticus 16:15-16 "Then shall he [the high priest] ..."

And so it was the high priest taking blood within the veil, to the mercy seat, that typified the risen Christ figuratively taking HIS blood, once for all, within the veil to the very throne of God in heaven, there to intercede for us as High Priest. Surely this is so plain a child can see.

The slain goat represented the crucified Jesus. The high priest, by taking the blood of this slain goat into the veil to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, a type of God's throne, represented and did the work of the risen Christ, who ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, there interceding as our High Priest. (Pagan Holidays or God's Holy Days Which?)

The Holy Days of the Hebrew scriptures have applicability now and all help point to Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement included a ceremony where the Azazel goat was sent to the wilderness (Leviticus 16:1-10). Christians see this sending of the Azazel goat away as picturing the time during the millennium when Satan will be bound and sent away for a thousand years in the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-4). This means that Satan will not be able to tempt and deceive during that time. The Azazel goat was not slain, nor is Satan pictured being slain.

Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, a goat is not sacrificed by Christians to observe this day (cf. Hebrews 10:1-10).

Yet, although Jesus was our Passover lamb sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7-8) and He was slain only once (Hebrews 9:28), we also see a time other than Passover where Jesus is ceremonially slain.

Why?

Many have speculated, but there look to be scriptural clues, along with the fact that this happens before the release of the second goat.

Why two sacrifices since Jesus was only sacrificed once?

Because of how the biblical holy days picture God's plan of salvation.

The biblical festivals begin with the sacrifice of Jesus (Passover), putting out sin (Days of Unleavened Bread), and the calling of the firstfruits in this age (Pentecost) – which is the beginning of the Church age (cf. Acts 2). The Church age ends when Jesus returns after the last trumpet is blown (Feast of Trumpets sets off a sequence of seven trumpets). The Day of Atonement comes after the Feast of Trumpets and, in sequence, happens AFTER the church age ends.

Jesus' Passover sacrifice pictured His sacrifice for those called during the Church age, whereas the Atonement sacrifice pictures that Jesus did NOT JUST DIE FOR THE ELECT but for all (cf. John 3:16-17). That is also related to Him returning the second time for salvation!

This is a truth that has been restored in the Continuing Church of God.

This age lasts until Jesus returns, which He does on the seventh and last trump (1 Corinthians 15:52), which is one of the trumpets pictured by the Feast of Trumpets. After the church age is over, Jesus' sacrifice will be accepted by more than the elect of the church age. It is NOT because Jesus will get sacrificed again.

Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Passover shows part of why He is the author, and the Day of Atonement helps show us He is the finisher (as does His return with the last trumpet on pictured by the Feast of Trumpets).

So, although the Greco-Roman-Protestants tend to think the atonement was just a past event, this understanding of the Day of Atonement points to a

future time – and shows an aspect of God's plan of salvation that most seem to have missed.

As Christians, this picturing of Jesus as the goat of the atonement also shows us that we are not 'better' than others (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31) and that although we are the ones who have accepted Jesus' Passover sacrifice now, others will accept His atoning sacrifice later (see also our free book, online at ccog.org, titled Universal OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation).

Since the Bible calls Satan "the god of this age" who has "blinded" the world (2 Corinthians 4:4), most have been blinded and have not yet been covered by the sacrifice of Jesus. Yet this will happen for nearly all who will be called – either in this age or the age to come (Matthew 12:32). Showing the sacrifice, ceremonially after the church age ends on the Day of Atonement, helps demonstrate that the sacrifice of Jesus was not just for those called in the church age, as God's plan includes offering salvation to all, and not just today's elect.

By showing the sacrifice prior to the other goat being released, this shows that Jesus was not taking away the sins of Satan.

Jesus took the penalty of all human beings. But it doesn't apply to humans until after God calls us and grants us repentance (John 6:44) and we come to be willing to repent and we come to believe. Not only in Jesus, but we believe the Son and we believe the Father, that is, we believe what They say. Also, we prove it by repenting, being baptized, being granted the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) and actually trying to live as They would have us live (cf. 1 John 2:6).

People attempting to be faithful to the Bible have observed the Day of Atonement and we faithful in the Continuing Church of God continue to do so in the 21st century.



# Should modern Christians keep the Feast of Tabernacles?



**CONTINUING CHURCH OF GOD**  
**FEAST OF TABERNACLES**

**"DO NOT FEAR, LITTLE FLOCK,  
FOR IT IS YOUR FATHER'S  
GOOD PLEASURE TO GIVE  
YOU THE KINGDOM"**  
**Luke 12:32**

The "Feast of Tabernacles" is a 7-day Biblical pilgrimage festival, also known as the Feast of Booths, the Feast of Tabernacles, or "Tabernacles (it is immediately followed by an eighth day, so normally it is considered to be a pilgrimage of at least 8 days).

Should Christians keep it? How would Christians keep it now in the 21st century?

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures a culminating event in God's plan. After Jesus died for our sins to redeem humankind, and after He sent us the Holy Spirit and picked out a people for His Name to become kings and priests to reign with Him on earth (Revelation 5:10), and after His Second Coming, and after He has finally placed all the sins upon the head of Satan separating both him and the sins from the presence of God and His people (making us finally joined at-one with Him, atonement), then we are ready for that final series of events, the commencement of the establishment of the millennial Kingdom of God on earth.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the spiritual and material abundance that will occur during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ when people will keep God's laws without Satan's deceptions (Revelation 20:1-6). This is in contrast to what is happening now in a world deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9). Satanic

deception, which will be gone then (Revelation 20:1-3), is part of why most who profess Christianity have been misled by 'nice' false ministers as well as why many of those ministers have been misled (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Jesus himself, kept the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day, and also taught it per John 7:10-37.

Here are some instructions about it from the Hebrew scriptures:

33 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the Lord. 35 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it.

41 You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths. (Leviticus 23:33-35,41-42)

13 "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, ... 14 And you shall rejoice in your

feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. 15 Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

16 “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. 17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you. (Deuteronomy 16:13-17)

God had ancient Israel dwell in booths/tabernacles ('sukkos' in Hebrew) in the wilderness for decades before they entered the promised land. Those booths, in a sense, pictured that they were only heirs to the promised land. Even during the Millennium, when the Kingdom of God is ruling over mortal nations, the mortal people will be only heirs to the Kingdom. They must overcome and grow in knowledge and wisdom to inherit the promises.

God says of Ephraim (sometimes portraying a type of all Israel in scripture) that they will “dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the feast” (Hosea 12:9, Douay-Rheims). Israel, in the wilderness, was a type of all people who must go through trials and tribulations to inherit the promises (1 Corinthians 10:11).

They were sojourners, waiting to inherit the promises of God.

We Christians are to realize that we have no permanent city in this age and look to the one to come (Hebrews 13:14). The staying in temporary dwellings during the Feast of Tabernacles helps remind us of that. Christians should attend church services, if possible, each day of the Feast of Tabernacles to learn (Deuteronomy 31:10-13; Nehemiah 8:17-18), being living sacrifices, which is our “reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

The Feast of Tabernacles is a time to rejoice (Deuteronomy 14:26; 16:15). The use of the related tithe (commonly called “second tithe”) shows that this is to be a time of abundance (Deuteronomy 14:22-26), but also that the ministry should be taken care of in this age (Deuteronomy 14:27). The Feast of Tabernacles helps picture the time of millennial abundance. This gives us a glimpse into the time after Jesus returns.

The millennium represents the seventh day of God’s 7,000-year plan. Interestingly, every seven years, the book of the law was commanded to be read at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). This helps picture that the law, including the Ten Commandments, will be kept in the millennium, as the Bible shows the law will be taught then (Isaiah 2:2-3; more on the commandments can be found in our free online booklet *The Ten Commandments*). It is living according to God’s laws that will bring blessings and abundance during the millennium.

We Christians now await the coming millennium and the change that occurs at the last trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:52), which is also called the first resurrection:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4)

The Bible shows that after Jesus gathers the Church to Himself, and after He is seated on His throne where we will be ruling with Him, He will gather the nations before Him and say to the Christians:

34 Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34)

Now, those who keep the Feast of Tabernacles look forward to this as it helps picture the millennial kingdom.

Related to the first/second century, the 20th century the Roman Catholic Cardinal Jean Danielou wrote:

Did the Jewish Christians retain the Jewish feasts while giving them new meaning? ... the Feast of Tabernacles was certainly kept in the month of September by Jewish Christianity as by the Jews. (Danielou, Cardinal Jean-Guenole-Marie. *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*. Translated by John A. Baker. The Westminster Press, 1964, pp. 343,345)

This temporal Messianism had a strong influence on Christians in the form of millenarianism, which had its centre in the Asiatic environment to which both Papias and Cerinthus belonged. This Messianic agitation was connected with the mystique of festivity, which belonged essentially to the Feast of Tabernacles. (Ibid, pp. 345-346)

Cardinal Danielou seemed to see references to the Feast of Tabernacles in the Shepherd of Hermas (ibid, pp. 341-345), which would indicate that around then some in Rome also observed it – though he believed that they later transferred it to become something else.

Others have also reported that early Christians kept the Feasts.

That said, Gentile Christians were keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. In the early second century, Papias of Hierapolis, who seems to have been a Gentile, said:

[T]here will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth.

The Bible shows that after Jesus gathers the Church to Himself, and after He is seated on His throne where we will be ruling with Him, He will gather the nations before Him and say to the Christians:

34 Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matthew 25:34)

The observance of the Feast of Tabernacles is a

shadow of the coming millennial kingdom of God that faithful Christians have kept since New Testament times.

## Where Can it Be Kept?

The Feast of Tabernacles is essentially a ‘pilgrimage’ (Psalm 84:1-5) period, meaning it usually involves travel outside of one’s normal community. Jesus ‘tabernacled’ with humans when He was here (As the Greek word ἐσκήνωσεν in John 1:14 can be translated per Green JP. *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Baker Books, 1996, 5th printing 2002, p. 282).

While some falsely claim that the Feast of Tabernacles from the past through current times must only be kept in Jerusalem, this is in error. The children of Israel were not even in Jerusalem for centuries after the commands for its observance in Leviticus 23 were recorded — hence Jerusalem was not an initial option for them. The Bible shows the Feast of Tabernacles can be kept in cities other than Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8:15; cf. Deuteronomy 14:23-24). During the second temple period (530 B.C – 70 A.D.), Jews often kept it elsewhere (Hayyim Schausse noted, “Sukkos was a great festival even outside of Jerusalem.” Schausse H. *The Jewish Festivals: A Guide to Their History and Observance*, 1938. Schocken, p. 184).

It may also be of interest to note Polycarp of Smyrna in the 2nd century (*Life of Polycarp*, Chapter 19.) and certain others in Asia Minor in the late 4th century kept the Feast of Tabernacles in Asia Minor, not Jerusalem. This is confirmed by sources such as the Roman Catholic saint Jerome (*Patrologia Latina Volumen MPL025 Ab Columna ad Culumnam 1415 - 1542A*) and research done by the 20th century Cardinal Jean Danielou (Danielou, Cardinal Jean-Guenole-Marie. *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*. Translated by John A. Baker. The Westminster Press, 1964, pp. 343-346).

A nineteenth century anti-millennial scholar named Giovanni Battista Paganini wrote the following about the Egyptian Bishop Nepos of the third century and those who supported the millennium:

... all those who teach a millennium framed according to Jewish ideas, saying that during the millennium, Mosaic law will be restored ... These are called Judaical Millenarians, not as being Jews, but as having invented and upheld a millennium according ... The principal authors of this error were Nepos, an African Bishop, against whom St. Dionysius wrote his two books on Promises; and Apollinaris, whom St. Epiphanius confound in his work against heresies. (Pagani, Giovanni Battista. Published by Charles Dolman, 1855, pp. 252-253)

It should be of interest to note that neither Bishops Nepos nor Apollinaris were Jews but were condemned for having a religion that had “Jewish” beliefs. And since Apollinaris is called a Greco-Roman Catholic saint, it should be clear that the respected non-Jewish Christian leaders in the early third century clearly did hold to ideas that were condemned by the allegorists. The fact that they held to “Mosaic law” is evidence then that they both understood the meaning of and kept the Feast of Tabernacles, but with a Christian emphasis.

The Greco-Roman bishop & saint Methodius of Olympus in the late 3rd or early 4th century taught that the Feast of Tabernacles was commanded and that it had lessons for Christians:

For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, so by a figure in the seventh month, when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in, we are commanded to keep the feast to the Lord, ... it is commanded that the Feast of our Tabernacles shall be celebrated to the Lord ... For like as the Israelites, having left the borders of Egypt, first came to the Tabernacles, and from hence, having again set forth, came into the land of promise, so also do we. For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, came first to the resurrection, which is the true Feast of the Tabernacles, and there having set up my tabernacle, adorned with the fruits of virtue, on the first day of the resurrection, which is

the day of judgment, celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath. (Methodius. Banquet of the Ten Virgins, Discourse 9)

The Roman Catholic priest and scholar Jerome said that Nazarene Christians kept it and that they believed that it pointed to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ (Patrologia Latina Volumen MPL025 Ab Columna ad Culumnam 1415 - 1542A). This keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles by Nazarene Christians in the late fourth century was also confirmed by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox saint Epiphanius of Salamis.

## **Christian Differences from the Israelites**

Mainly based upon New Testament scriptures, Christians keep the Feast of Tabernacles a bit different than the Israelites did.

Records indicate that the Feast of Tabernacles seems to have been kept in Europe during the Middle Ages (Ambassador College Correspondence Course, Lesson 51. “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place ...” Rev. 12:6. 1968). It was also kept specifically in Transylvania in the 1500s (Liechty, pp. 61-62), at places without palm branches. There is some evidence to suggest that it was kept in the Americas in the 1600 and 1700s. It was kept by the old Radio Church of God and Worldwide Church of God all around the world in the 20th century.

We in the Continuing Church of God continue to keep it in places around the world and we also teach that the Feast of Tabernacles points to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God.

The Feast of Tabernacles has been observed by many modern Christians in either tents or motel/hotel rooms functioning as “tabernacles”— temporary dwellings — and not just in palm-branch huts that the Israelites normally used. The New Testament shows that Christians have a different tabernacle (cf. Hebrews 8:2; 9:11-15), which is consistent with not having to personally to build a palm-booth. The Bible shows that the children of Israel dwelt mainly in tents per Exodus 33:8 (and sometimes other apparently temporary, per Deuteronomy 4:45-49, homes) while

they were in the wilderness for forty years and that God considered those as “tabernacles” per Leviticus 23:43. Living in tents or motel rooms is a similar type of temporary dwelling/tabernacle today.

The Bible shows Christians need not make animal sacrifices/offerings (Hebrews 9:9) like the burnt offerings which the children of Israel used to provide during the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:36-37). Instead, we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, which is our reasonable service (Romans 12:1) —which normally includes regularly attending church services during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Some may wonder why attending services is done for all the days at the Feast of Tabernacles, yet this is not required for the Days of Unleavened Bread. The basic scriptural reason is that the command says, “You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days ... Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses” (Deuteronomy 16:13,15), but that is not so stated related to the Days of Unleavened Bread — the commands for it says to eat unleavened bread for seven days in Leviticus 23:6 and Deuteronomy 16:3, as opposed to observe the feast for seven days (we make a ‘sacrifice’ the seven days of unleavened bread by eating unleavened bread on each of the days). The Bible also says to be in temporary dwellings during the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:42) but does not state this related to the other Holy Days.

Since Satan will be bound for the millennial reign (Revelation 20:1-2), there will be less deception then. Going away for the time of the Feast of Tabernacles and meeting daily helps picture a time when the world will be quite different than it now is.

“Your Kingdom Come!” (Matthew 6:10).

## Strangers and Pilgrims

The Apostle Peter taught:

1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The Apostle Peter continued with:

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.”

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:1-12)

By attending the Feast of Tabernacles, Christians help show that we who “were not a people” are “His own people.”

Now, let’s consider what happened to those who were faithful from the Old Testament:

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the

earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Hebrews 11:13-16)

The faithful of old believed the prophetic word themselves instead of being part of the world. We need to be willing to be sojourners and not think of ourselves as part of the world. Christians are to accept the prophetic word, “[f]or the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10).

By making a pilgrimage to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, Christians are showing that they are looking for a better country — that of the coming Kingdom of God.

### **The Bible Teaches that the Feast of Tabernacles Will Be Kept in the Millennium and God Will Ultimately ‘Tabernacle’ with Us**

Bible prophecy shows that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept in the millennium:

16 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be that whicheckver of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zechariah 14:16-19)

So, the Bible teaches that God will expect all to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in the future. Even Roman Catholic commentators recognize that God’s plan

includes the Feast of Tabernacles. A Roman Catholic commentary on passages in Zechariah 14 states:

In the meantime such as before persecuted the Church shall be converted, and with great devotion will celebrate the festivities, and exercise religious rites to Gods honor: and shall merit great rewards. (The Original And True Douay Old Testament Of Anno Domini 1610 Volume 2, p. 824)

The kingdom of God will replace all the kingdoms of this world (Revelation 11:15), and this festival helps picture this by separating (cf. Revelation 18:4; 1 John 2:18-19) Christian pilgrims (1 Peter 2:1-12) from their usual routine.

The keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles gives us a glimpse in this age of what will happen in the future millennial kingdom. The Bible also shows that later, “the tabernacle of God” will be on the earth “and He will dwell with” us (Revelation 21:3).

Keeping the Feast of Tabernacles now is a foretaste of things to come in the Kingdom of God.

In modern times in the 7th day Church of God groups, the Feast of Tabernacles is one of the most important holy days as it lasts the longest and normally requires a great deal of preparation and travel to be able to attend. But it is normally the physical and spiritual highlight of the year for those that do observe it.

The Feast of Tabernacles also helps give us a glimpse into the coming millennial Kingdom of God which motivates us to live as Jesus wants us to and to teach what Jesus wanted proclaimed. That Kingdom is closer than it ever has been before and will become reality in the 21st century.

The Feast of Tabernacles begins at sunset September 29 and runs through sunset the Last Great Day on October 7 in 2023.

Information on where it is intended to be held throughout the world in 2023 can be found online at the following link: <https://www.cogwriter.com/fot2023.htm>.

# STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE



## LESSON 23B: ORIGIN OF FALSE EDUCATION

**Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief**

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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.

### Origin of False Education

True education began in the Garden of Eden. Immediately after creating the first man, God began instructing Adam in the WAY of abundant living and eternal life.

FALSE EDUCATION also started in Eden when Satan

came along. He planted DOUBTS in Eve's mind. He PERVERTED what God had taught the first man and woman! Let's begin to understand.

1. Did God BEGIN Adam's education by teaching him what to eat? Genesis 2:16. Did this include the fruit of the "Tree of Life," which we know represented the Holy Spirit and eternal life? Verse 9. Was the instruction in verse 16 actually a COMMAND given by Almighty God?
2. Did God also WARN Adam that the fruit of one tree would be POISONOUS – FATAL – for him to eat? Verse 17. What was God REALLY teaching Adam in these verses?

COMMENT: By showing Adam what to eat, God began to teach him the WAY of life which results in great physical and spiritual blessings. And in showing him what not to eat, God began to point out ANOTHER WAY of life which PRODUCES misery, anguish and untold suffering – the way which ultimately ends in EVERLASTING DEATH!

3. Now let's momentarily jump ahead about fourteen centuries to be sure we understand. Did God place before ancient Israel TWO DIFFERENT WAYS of life? Deuteronomy 30:19. Were they FREE TO "CHOOSE" which way they would go? Did God ADVISE, and in fact, COMMAND Israel (as He did Adam) to "choose LIFE" – to choose the way of OBEDIENCE to God which results in great blessings?

COMMENT: Man has been a FREE MORAL AGENT from the beginning. Each of us is FREE TO CHOOSE whether to live God's way and reap tremendous blessings or REJECT His way and experience a MISERABLE LIFE of curses ending in DEATH!

4. But what did Satan, the Serpent, LYINGLY instruct Eve concerning God's warning? Genesis 3:4. And what did gullible mankind – Adam and Eve – DO after listening to the Devil's very appealing deception? Verse 6. Didn't this SEEM – to their carnal human way of reasoning – like the "pleasant" and proper course to follow, even though God warned that disobedience would result in DEATH? Same verse.

COMMENT: Satan offered the first humans a COUNTERFEIT WAY to abundant living and eternal

life. It is the way of following the dictates of human nature which actually leads us AWAY from God and all we really desire.

THIS is the wretched and miserable way mankind has followed ever since – the way which results in suffering and death! Influenced invisibly by Satan and his demons, and assured visibly by Satan’s HUMAN AGENTS, man has readily yielded to his own downward pulls.

God wants us to learn from Adam and Eve’s terrible example, so we WON’T FOLLOW IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS!

5. Did Jesus call Satan the “father” or originator of all lies? John 8:44.

COMMENT: The Devil personally taught in the Garden of Eden – and has continued to teach through supernatural thought implantation and through his human “ministers” – that obedience to God is NOT NECESSARY for salvation!

These false teachers will tell you there is NO way by which you, PERSONALLY, can keep God’s commandments. They teach that Christ kept God’s Law FOR YOU, and that all you have to do to be “saved” is just believe that He did, and “accept” Him as your Savior.

6. Did Jesus say that calling Him “Lord” was enough to be saved? Matthew 7:21-23.

COMMENT: Certainly, He did not. Instead, Jesus condemned those for practicing “lawlessness.”

There is a Satanic “mystery of lawlessness” that looks to be related to professing Christians who believe that they do not need to keep God’s Ten Commandment law, etc. and/or there are so many acceptable exceptions to it and/or there are acceptable forms of penance to break God’s law, so while they think they have a form of God’s law, they are not keeping a form of Christianity that Jesus or His apostles would recognize as legitimate.

Many of the Greco-Roman Catholics seem to be like the Pharisees who violated God’s commandments by reasoning around them, while claiming that their traditions made this acceptable – Jesus denounced that approach (Matthew 15:3-9)! Isaiah also warned that people claiming to be God’s would rebel against

His law (Isaiah 30:9). This is something we, sadly, see to this day.

This “mystery of lawlessness” was “already at work” (2 Thessalonians 2:7) when the apostles were alive. This is also related to something that the Bible warns against in the end times that is called “Mystery, Babylon the Great” (Revelation 17:3-5).

It is a mystery to many who profess Jesus because many do not believe that they need to keep the law as God laid it out. Many Protestants tend to claim Jesus ‘fulfilled the law’ and/or had it ‘nailed it to the cross.’

Certain Protestants tend to believe that if they ‘love Jesus’ that is how they are keeping the law. But those that believe that have deceived themselves:

3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:3-6)

Lawlessness is a mystery to nearly all who consider themselves Christian.

Many of the world’s minister are merely CONTINUING Satan’s false teachings by urging humankind to go ahead and disobey God, meanwhile assuring us with the Devil’s LYING words, “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4) .

God MEANS what He says! Disobedience to Him results in DEATH!

Notice what Jesus taught concerning salvation: “But if you want to enter into {eternal} life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS” (Matthew 19:17). That IS WHY God commands us to REPENT and begin OBEYING Him. He wants to GIVE US ETERNAL LIFE!

God does not command us to do the impossible. In Acts 2:38, He instructs us to “REPENT, and let every one of you be BAPTIZED ... and you shall receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT. God PROMISES to give us His Spirit of LOVE and POWER by which we CAN KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS – but ONLY if we first fulfill His



conditions!

7. Could there have been a CHANGE in God's standards and requirements since Christ's death? Matthew 5:17-19 and Hebrews 13:8. Therefore, has God's message always been one of OBEDIENCE to His Law?

COMMENT: We need to realize the Devil and his demons are literal, LIVE, and ACTIVE spirit beings whom we must RESIST! They are able to conceive of all kinds of ways to appeal to the downward pulls of our evil human nature.

Because of these downward pulls, Adam and Eve immediately followed Satan's false teachings. For the Devil's ways APPEAL to various lusts!

Down through the centuries, carnal-minded humans have continued to reject God's revealed way of life. So today we find ourselves living in a confused and deceived, chaotic civilization. Every phase of this Babylonish system we live in is established on principles diametrically CONTRARY to the laws of God!

8. WHY has humankind been so willing to "fall" for Satan's lies from the beginning? Romans 8:7; 1:21-22, 28.

COMMENT: These ancient people, led by their REBELLIOUS CARNAL MINDS, did NOT want to follow the way of life God revealed in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, they REJECTED God and His true knowledge.

As the ancients groped in the dark, seeking to learn about "the unknown" without God to lead them, they SPECULATED their way into the pagan philosophies that have come down to us today – the teachings of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus and Virgil – which have formed the VERY BASIS OF MODERN EDUCATION!

And so even as the ancients "DID NOT LIKE TO RETAIN GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE" (cf. Romans 1:28), modern education has no place for GOD or His divine revelation – the Holy Bible!

This, then, is the origin of TODAY'S educational system! It begins by saying that science, apart from God and the Bible, has all the real answers. It launches

people on the road of human search for "truth" and "understanding" WITHOUT God. It follows the way which "SEEMS RIGHT" to the carnal mind – the way which ends in UTTER OBLIVION! (Proverbs 16:25)

God reveals that His inspired Word is the very BASIS or FOUNDATION of all true knowledge. But today nearly all continue to base their ways of life upon the opinions of other GOD-REJECTING, CARNAL-MINDED HUMANS. And so, our modern educational system is a CONFUSION of some truth mixed with MUCH ERROR!

We need to understand that spiritual conversion involves the process of UNLEARNING this wrong knowledge, as well as LEARNING God's true knowledge. But we can't begin this process until we first look into God's Word to see what He REALLY TEACHES – to learn the basic knowledge God intends us to LIVE by and BUILD upon!

## Warnings Against False Teachers

1. Does Jesus warn us against FALSE ministers? Matthew 7:15. And did Paul warn that the DEVIL'S ministers would MASQUERADE as God's true ministers? 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

COMMENT: Jesus warns us to beware of those who SEEM to be God's ministers but are in reality – though unwittingly – the "ministers" of the Devil!

2. Christ calls upon all people to REPENT (Matthew 4:17). But was the "mystery of INIQUITY" – a religious system of LAWLESSNESS not calling for repentance and obedience to God – already at work a very short time after Christ's death? 2 Thessalonians 2:7, KJV.
3. Did this movement have its ministers, some of whom even claimed the rank of "apostle"? 2 Corinthians 11:12-13. And was Paul sorrowful because he knew they would try to deceive the Corinthians? 2 Corinthians 11:3-4.

COMMENT: Although numerous deceivers, like those called Gnostics, left the early Church, drawing away disciples after them, there was an even more dangerous apostasy which infiltrated the true Church and affects the bulk of professing Christianity to this day.

In instructing the evangelist Timothy, the apostle to the Gentiles told him:

2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Timothy 4:2-4) THE TITHE IS THE DEBT THAT YOU OWE GOD. This debt is FIRST in time and principle. Pay your debts to God, make Him your PARTNER in your finances, and receive His blessing in temporal affairs. This will enable you to pay your debts, or to get a job, or to have your needs supplied more quickly than if you evade His debt.

This was in the days of the apostles and evangelists. MANY who fellowshiped in the local congregations of the early Church, after about two generations, did not endure sound doctrine because they had not repented and received the Holy Spirit. They elected teachers who, for the sake of money, pleased their wishes by preaching fables – the enticing fables of mysticism, sun-worship, and other aspects of paganism that were engulfing the Roman Empire.

To this day, many believe fables over the Bible, especially when it comes to holidays vs. God's holy days. Many also believe twisted understandings of scriptures, which have misled many.

But instead of leaving the local congregations and forming their own sects, as some Gentiles did at first, some of the false preachers remained within the congregations and soon began to expel the true Christians. In the letter of the Apostle John to Gaius, we read:

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. (3 John 9-10)

The true Christians, who alone comprised the true Church, were being put out of the visible, organized congregations. They were the SCATTERED ones of whom John said:

1 Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (1 John 3:1)

Because many did not know what Jesus really taught and how He really expected His followers to live, most in the world do not recognize true Christians to this day!

Both Paul and John warned Christians against being improperly involved with the those of the "other" group:

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will dwell in them  
And walk among them.  
I will be their God,  
And they shall be My people."

Notice that Christians are NOT to be linked with practices associated with idols. Also notice:

17 Therefore  
"Come out from among them  
And be separate, says the Lord.  
Do not touch what is unclean,  
And I will receive you. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)  
4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying,  
"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. (Revelation 18:4-6)

## In the Western Roman Empire,

In the Western Roman Empire, where Paul died, the state of Christianity was even more advanced along the paths of error. The name Christian was being borne away by leaders who crept into the fellowship of the Church of God and who, in the name of Christ, deceived the MANY into following their false teachings.

4. What did Paul warn concerning our TIME when this world would be in its death throes – just as the end of this age looms imminent? 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

COMMENT: Do you realize the full significance of this dangerous condition? It means the vast majority of professing Christians today believe in FALSE doctrines of salvation!

The churches of this world have a DEAD FAITH which is mere belief in Christ, WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO GOD! They HAVE NOT REALLY REPENTED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS – a CONDITION required for salvation. God says a dead "NO WORKS" faith produces only DEATH! (James 2:14-26; Romans 6:23.)

Jesus taught: "IF you want to enter into {eternal} life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Matthew 19:17). Then He enumerated enough of the Ten Commandments to show it was this particular law that must be obeyed AS A CONDITION to receiving eternal life.

You can't EARN eternal life. God GIVES it as a FREE GIFT – but only to those who "keep the Commandments" – God's Law. He will not give eternal life to those who CONTINUE LIVING IN SIN. And what is sin? "Sin is the TRANSGRESSION of the LAW" (1 John 3:4, KJV). Eternal salvation is only given to those that OBEY HIM (Hebrews 5:9).

5. Is the Law, which includes all of GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, immutable and eternal? Psalm 111:7-8.

COMMENT: For six thousand years the world has been going the WAY that "SEEMS" RIGHT TO MAN. NO WONDER it is in such chaos and confusion!

The WAY OF THIS WORLD has brought much

unhappiness, emptiness, discontent, poverty, sickness, disease, chaos, and despair to people! And, without massive repentance soon, will lead to the destruction of all flesh if God were not to intervene (Matthew 24:21-22).

The sooner the bulk humanity begins to live by God's Law, the sooner all will profit – both physically and spiritually!

God says: "SEEK the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. LET THE WICKED FORSAKE HIS WAY, And the unrighteous man HIS THOUGHTS; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; ... For He will abundantly pardon. "For My THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD" (Isaiah 55:6-8).

THIS is the WAY to salvation! THIS IS the way to FIND God! SEEK HIM by forsaking YOUR OWN WAYS AND THOUGHTS – the WAYS YOU have thought to be right in your own eyes!

Since the BIBLE contains GOD'S WAY, we must turn solely to its teachings for guidance. It becomes OUR GUIDE FOR RIGHTEOUS AND SUCCESSFUL LIVING! That is why Jesus said man shall live by EVERY WORD OF GOD! (Matthew 4:4).

The Bible must be the SUPREME AUTHORITY over our lives. We must therefore, and henceforth, STUDY the Bible – NOT just carelessly, but STUDY to LEARN GOD'S WAYS, and to LIVE by EVERY WORD OF GOD, instead of by human conscience!

## What Repentance IS and Is NOT!

1. Did Christ say that people can actually WORSHIP Him, acknowledging that He is Lord, and yet not enter His Kingdom? Matthew 7:21. How else can they WORSHIP Him, and yet not be born of God at Christ's coming? Matthew 15:8-9. Then WHO WILL enter God's Kingdom? Matthew 7:21, last part.

COMMENT: It's difficult to believe, but it's true – in TODAY'S religious confusion MILLIONS have supposed they had salvation spiritually – they think they have BELIEVED ON Jesus Christ – but are NOT SAVED and have NOT RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT because they REFUSE to obey God (cf. Acts 5:32; Hebrews 5:9).

Listen to what else Jesus said about people who want to worship Him WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO God's Commands: "Howbeit IN VAIN do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of MEN. For, LAYING ASIDE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, ye hold the tradition of MEN ... Full well ye REJECT the Commandment of God, that ye may keep your OWN tradition" (Mark 7:7-9, KJV).

Most people would rather do almost anything else than to truly surrender to God. The carnal nature, influenced by Satan, REBELS at the thought of submitting to God's Law! Therefore, people have substituted their own laws and customs for God's commandments, thinking they can still receive salvation by merely BELIEVING in Christ as their Savior.

2. Human nature wants to BE right, but it doesn't necessarily want to DO right! So, people often say, "Well, here's the way I look at it" – thus putting themselves in the place of the BIBLE. If it "looks right" to them, it becomes their law. In other words, they try to be SELF-RIGHTEOUS.

Just what does Isaiah 64:6 say about our "righteousness's"? And what did Jesus say about those who "trusted in THEMSELVES that they were RIGHTEOUS"? Luke 18:9-14.

3. What is the end result of this world's kind of SORROW, or "repentance"? 2 Corinthians 7:10, last part. But what kind of sorrow for sin does God accept, and where does it lead? Verse 9 and first part of verse 10.

COMMENT: It is commonly believed that a TEMPORARY REMORSEFUL FEELING over past mistakes and mere ACCEPTANCE of Christ is all there is to being "saved." Are you like many others who have "made their decision for Christ" in this manner, and have "given yourself to Him" to be saved BY HIM, without any further effort on YOUR PART?

God says such "repentance" is totally unacceptable and will end in DEATH!

True repentance – "Godly sorrow" – means to TURN AROUND AND BEGIN LIVING THE OPPOSITE WAY – GOD'S WAY! THAT was Jesus' message! (Luke 13:3; Matthew 19:17.) We cannot allow our carnal God-rejecting minds (Romans 8:7) to continue ruling our bodies if we are going to be acceptable to God and

born into His Kingdom!

4. If one has truly repented and received the Holy Spirit, will his whole mind be RENEWED SPIRITUALLY – will his thinking and outlook become CHANGED from what it used to be? Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-10.

COMMENT: A true Christian is a NEW SPIRITUAL CREATION being created into God's CHARACTER IMAGE. Although it is a spiritual matter, involving God's Holy Spirit, this CHANGE takes place in the MIND.

We are to become a NEW CREATION (Galatians 6:15). God's spiritual creation is still going on, in us! We are now mere CLAY of the dust of the ground. God is the Potter – we are the clay (Isaiah 64:8). We must, on our own decision, with our own complete submission, and even with our own effort accompanying, yield so that the Master Potter may completely remake, refashion, reshape our vile characters into the holy, righteous, spiritual, and perfect character of GOD.

One of the first things we need to realize, that has been utterly overlooked by most is that Adam's creation was NOT COMPLETED!

The first chapter of Genesis – called the "creation" chapter – does not actually record the completed creation at all! Humanity's creation was not finished! Read that amazing truth again! Be sure you understand!

What was created, as revealed in Genesis 1, was the PHYSICAL creation – the mortal, physical man and woman – the physical material with which to create the SPIRITUAL CREATION!

The Bible plainly reveals this. What God is actually creating in the human family is THE CROWNING, SUPREME MASTERPIECE OF ALL HIS WORKS OF CREATION! And that will be – when finished – billions – yes BILLIONS – of humans converted into perfect SPIRITUAL CHARACTERS! The spiritual Creation is still in progress!

And once it is done, all humans that ever lived who will obey God will be able to give love in their own individual ways to make eternity better for themselves and everyone else!

The FIRST step towards being that new creation is to hear. The SECOND step which is ACCEPTANCE of, and FAITH in, Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, also takes place in the mind. The THIRD step is to a spiritual renewal of the mind is REPENTANCE. Repentance literally means “a change of MIND.”

The FOURTH step is baptism, after which God PLACES WITHIN our minds the gift of His Holy Spirit which RENEWS, or changes, the mind with God’s spiritual knowledge and understanding (see also our free booklet, online at ccog.org, titled About Baptism).

Notice something from the Statement of Beliefs of the Continuing Church of God booklet:

Notice two other translations which uses more common language:

**FAITH, REPENTANCE, ACCEPTING OF JESUS, JUSTIFICATION, RECONCILIATION, AND BAPTISM**

Other than being drawn/called by God (John 6:44; Matthew 22:14; see also the booklet: Is God Calling You?), the first clear step in becoming a Christian is to hear (which can include reading as opposed to literal hearing) as “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Then one must believe in Jesus with all one’s heart “the Way” He is taught about in the word of God (Acts 8:37, 24:14). Thus, only those capable of developing faith from understanding the word of God can properly be considered to be baptized as truly Christian (though, young children of at least one Christian parent, however, are designated as “holy” per 1 Corinthians 7:14).

Accepting the message of Jesus leads to “repentance from dead works and of faith toward God” (Hebrews 6:1), which means to change our past ways of living that are contrary to God’s law (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11), baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), and the “laying on of hands” (Hebrews 6:2; cf. Acts 8:14-17) so “you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). God’s Holy Spirit is given to those who “obey Him” (Acts 5:32).

Christians are “justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9) and “reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

Baptism is with water (cf. John 3:23). The Greek word bapto literally means “cover wholly with fluid.” The full immersion at baptism helps picture our total surrender to God (Romans 6:3-13). The New Testament shows that the Holy Spirit was given to the baptized through the laying on of the hands of Christ’s ministers, such as apostles or elders (Acts 8:17; 9:17; 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6) or others properly designated by them to do so (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:14-17; John 4:2).

5. Is a spirit-begotten Christian being created to PERFORM “good works”? Ephesians 2:10 and 4:24, KJV. Notice the words “created in RIGHTEOUSNESS and true holiness” in Ephesians 4:24, KJV. And what is “righteousness”? Psalm 119:172. Then isn’t it plain that true repentance is accompanied by OBEDIENCE to God? Acts 5:32. OF COURSE IT IS!
6. Must true Christians also GROW in God’s grace and knowledge? 2 Peter 3:18.

COMMENT: In other words, though we perhaps have never thought of it in this light before, true spiritual conversion is education! And TRUE EDUCATION LEADS TO CONVERSION – A CHANGING of our minds to think and act more as GOD does and says in His textbook for righteous living.

If the experience of repentance does not lead to our thinking and doing completely differently than we used to, it is NOT TRUE REPENTANCE!

Human beings are the highest mortal being God created on earth. And the human MIND IS the highest part of a human’s faculty which, above all else, elevates humans above animals. God intends that our minds be developed, trained, and USED to His honour and glory!

To be continued in part 23c.

# Questions and Answers



By Bob Thiel

## **Q: What Should a Lay Member Do Toward Spreading the Gospel?**

A: Most people, when they are converted, feel it their responsibility to argue their friends, neighbors and relatives into conversion. Others want to preach.

You cannot argue or talk anyone into conversion! The best way to bring another to conversion is not to try talking someone into it, but live as a proper example, and pray to God instead!

However, you should be able to answer questions:

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (1 Peter 3:15-16, KJV):

Part of the purpose of church publications and sermons is to provide you information to help you do that (cf. Ephesians 4:11-16 – and if you are Philadelphian, to one day “instruct many” (cf. Daniel 11:33).

It is the responsibility of the ministry to preach the gospel to the world. If anyone in the world does not want to listen, they can close their mind and turn from the truth. God does not force anyone to listen in this age.

The old Radio Church of God taught:

The responsibility of lay members is to set a good example before the world, and before

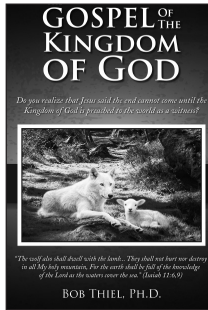
their relatives and friends. That is the way you can influence other people most. Notice I Peter 3:1-2: “Likewise you wives, be submission to your husbands, so that some, thought they do not obey the Word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives” (RSV).

Here is the instruction of an apostle of Jesus Christ: Wives, influence your husband by deeds, not words. Do not try to argue your mates – or anyone else – into conversion. That will only drive them further away from the truth. Set them the right example by living by every word of God, by being submissive to your husbands, instead of trying to dominate them. This is the greatest mistake most women make. And husbands ought to love their wives and be considerate of them, but not force them to be converted. That never works. The time to speak is when another asks you a question. “Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious” – not argumentative – “so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:5-6, RSV). (Plain Truth, November 1956)

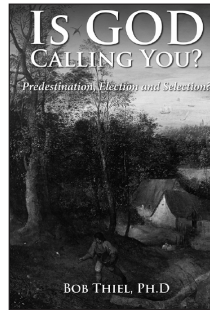
We are to be gracious and kind and that will help build character in all of us and be a better example for others. Beyond that, pray, obey God, support the work financially, volunteer to help the church where you can (editing, translating, social media support, research support, possibly assist with sermons, assisting at services, etc.), and live as a Christian.

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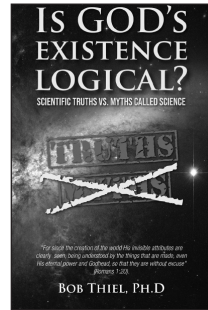
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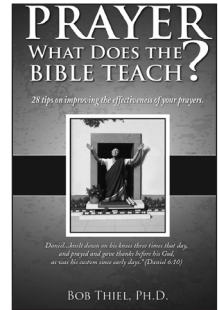
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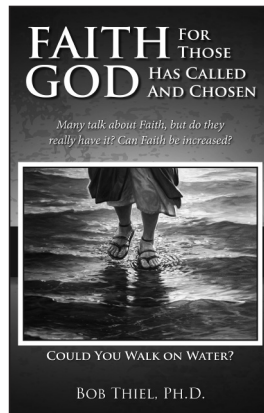
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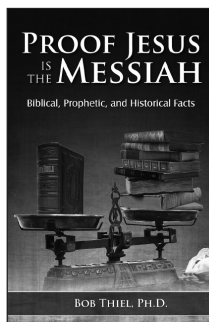
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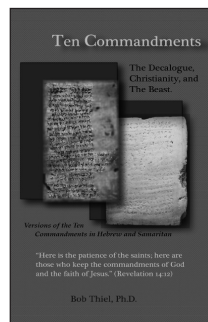
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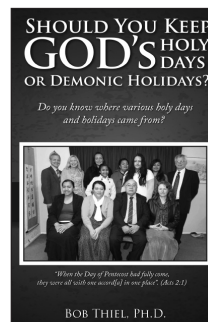
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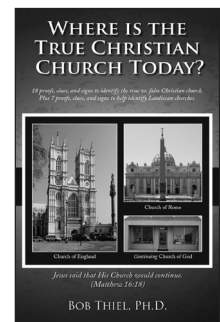
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