

# Bible News Prophecy

July - September 2026

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## FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF: BOB THIEL



### Fall Holy Days

The 'Fall' holy days are almost upon us.

Although I added the calendar dates, pretty much all rest of this article comes from our Statement of Beliefs booklet (available free at [ccog.org](http://ccog.org)).

**The Feast of Trumpets** helps picture the blowing of the seven trumpets in the Book of Revelation announcing events taking place during the 'Day of the Lord' (Revelation 8,9,11:15-18; 15:1-8; 16:1-21; 19:1-21). The last trumpet signals the resurrection of the saints and the second coming of Jesus, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Every seven years, a year of land-rest and debt release begins with this Holy Day (Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:7-11). It runs from sunset 11 September to sunset 12 September in 2026.

**The Day of Atonement**, called "the Fast" in the New Testament (Acts 27:9), helps show our own weaknesses and need to be closer to God (Isaiah 58:5,11). This day shows that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for our sins now (1 John 4:9-10; cf. Leviticus 16:15-16) and those that will be called in the "age to come" (Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; cf. Acts 3:21). It also helps picture that Satan has a role in the sins of humankind and that he will be punished by being bound for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3; cf. Leviticus 16:20-26; Isaiah 14:12-16). It runs from sunset 20 September to sunset 21 September in 2026.

**The Feast of Tabernacles** (Leviticus 23:33-39) which shows a time of abundance, helps picture the millennial kingdom reign (Revelation 20:4-6) of Jesus Christ and His saints on the earth (Zechariah 14:6-21; Matthew 13:1-30; Luke 12:32; John 7:6-14; Acts 17:31; Revelation 5:10, 11:15; 12:9). This future paradise, following the near total destruction that humanity will have brought upon itself through its activities and the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord (Matthew 24:21-31), will help show humanity the advantages of God's way of life. Every seven years, the law is to be read during this festival (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). It runs from sunset 25 September to sunset 2 October in 2026.

**The Last Great Day** helps picture that all who ever lived will have a real opportunity for salvation (John 7:37-38; Isaiah 52:10,13-15; 65:20; Luke 3:6) – an opportunity most will accept (John 7:37-39; Romans 11:25-26; Ezekiel 37:11-14; Hebrews 9:27-28; see also the free online book: *Universal*

*OFFER of Salvation, Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come? Hundreds of scriptures reveal God's plan of salvation).* The New Testament name comes from the Apostle John who wrote, "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38). It runs from sunset 2 October to sunset 3 October in 2026.

History provides references that the early followers of Christ, such as the Gentile Polycarp, observed the Sabbath on the seventh day and the other biblical holy days and festivals (see also the free eBook: *Should You Keep God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*).

Make every effort to attend and keep the Feast of Tabernacles this year like the Apostle Paul did (Acts 18:21).

*Additionally, information on the Feast of Tabernacles is also in this magazine as was taught by the old Radio Church of God.*

## What Happens to Babies Who Die?

*Editor:* Many of our readers are aware that the fate of babies who die was a major factor in getting me, Bob Thiel, to look more into the Church of God as I did not find the explanations I heard as a Roman Catholic and then Protestant scriptural or logical.

For the longest time, we have hoped to provide some more artistic, illustrated, articles. This is the first. In time, we may produce other literature with such illustrated messages.

*This has been a project involving Danna Smith-Casey, Marie Smith, and Chad Branton.*







Daddy, what happens to babies when they die?

Why do you ask?



My friend Sally's baby brother died Monday night, and Lucy said that babies go to be with God when they die.



Then Tommy said that his daddy told him that babies go to a place called "limbo."







Dad: You know I am very happy you ask me that question! In the Bible, the apostle Paul was inspired by God to write in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 in verse 21... "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead."

Now, that first man Paul talked about was Adam, Eve's husband, remember they both ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and brought death for all mankind.

The second Man Paul talked about was Jesus and by His sinless life and His death comes the resurrection. So you see Emily, God has had a wonderful, loving plan from the very beginning.



So, what happens after Sally's brother is resurrected?

That's another great question. Everyone who chooses to live God's way of life now and after the resurrection will get to live with God on a new earth. I will show you where the Bible says it in Isaiah and in the last book of the Bible.



I know what book that is!  
It's the book of Revelation!



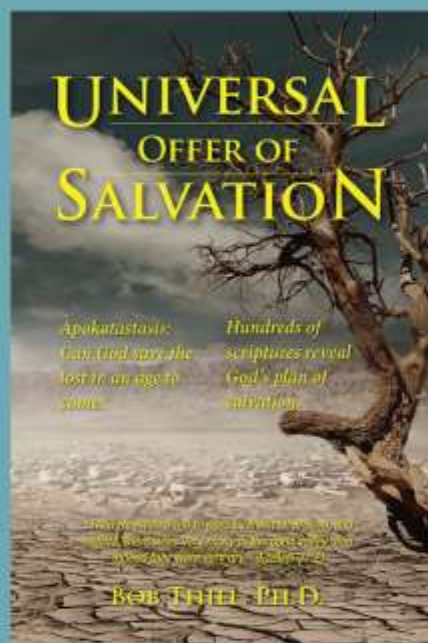
Wonderful Emily! I'll read from Isaiah where it is talking about the time when Sally's brother is resurrected:



1. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."



If you would like to know more about God's plan of salvation, check out our free online book **Universal Offer of Salvation**  
**Apokatastasis: Can God save the lost in an age to come?**



## Is the Feast of Tabernacles Commanded in the NEW TESTAMENT?



By Herman Hoeh

*This article was originally published in the Good News magazine in January 1959, hence is in the public domain.*

Is there Proof IN THE NEW TESTAMENT that Christ, the apostle Paul and the New Testament Church observed the Feast of Tabernacles? — and Proof that we too are commanded to observe it?

THE CHURCH OF GOD today is a New Testament Church. And in the New Testament is PROOF — astounding proof — that the apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, kept the Feast of Tabernacles. And PROOF that Christ kept it and that Christ commanded us to do the same!

### **Do We Keep Christ's Words?**

Jesus declared: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). And He said again: "If a man loves Me, he will keep My words" (verse 23).

Notice it! If we love Christ we will be keeping not only His commandments, but also His words!

Jesus said further. "He that loveth Me NOT keepeth NOT My sayings" (verse 24).

Here is the test of whether we are God's Church — the test of whether we love Jesus Christ. If we keep His words and His commandments, we are His Church, His people. This is the teaching of the New Testament, this is New Testament doctrine!

But what are Jesus' commandments? What are His words we should be keeping? Do Jesus' commandments and His words require us today to observe the Feast of Tabernacles?

## **Christ's Commandments or the Father's?**

A commonly assumed idea is that Christ Jesus came in New Testament times to establish different commandments, different teachings from those of the Father. But notice what Jesus Himself said: "The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me" (John 14:24). And also: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

Jesus spoke nothing contrary to the Father's will. Then what Jesus spoke is according to the Father's will. We are also to be judged by what Jesus spoke. Notice it: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Christians — those who love Christ — are to keep Jesus' commandments and His words. Those who reject His words are to be judged by them in the last day!

But do Jesus' words and His commandments include observance of the Feast of Tabernacles? Is keeping the Feast of Tabernacles one of the tests by which we know if we love Jesus Christ? Is keeping this Festival a New Testament teaching?

## **Live by EVERY Word of God?**

Consider the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 4:4. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

This is the teaching of the New Testament. These are the very words of Jesus! These are the words which shall judge us! These are the words which Jesus said those who love Him will be keeping. Then it is plain that God's Church is to be living by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!

Is keeping the Feast of Tabernacles a part of the words which have proceeded out of the mouth of God? Indeed, it is!

But how can we be sure that God commanded the Feast of Tabernacles for New Testament times as well as for Old Testament times? Is keeping the Feast of Tabernacles part of the New Testament example and teaching of Jesus Christ? Did Jesus ever command men to observe the Festival of Tabernacles or Ingatherings forever?

Notice the testimony of Scripture!

## **Who Spoke the Law to Moses?**

A common assumption is that the Father came personally to Mt. Sinai, spoke the Ten Commandments, commanded the judgments and statutes (which included the requirement to

observe God's Festivals) and appeared visibly to Moses. That Jesus Christ the Son did not appear until New Testament times, but when He appeared He abolished all the Father's laws.

On this assumption it is argued that Jesus commanded something different than His Father did in the days of Moses and of the patriarchs.

But this assumption is false!

It was not the Father who came to Mt. Sinai and appeared personally to Moses. It was the One who became Jesus Christ who appeared. It was Jesus Christ who, speaking in Moses' day for the Father, commanded the people to observe the Feast of Tabernacles. Those are Jesus' words in the Old Testament and when He reappeared in the New Testament, He commanded us to keep His words — He commanded US to live by every word of God!

Notice the proof that it was Jesus who commanded His people to observe the Feast of Tabernacles in the Old Testament.

Jesus declared in John 6:45-46: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father."

We are all taught of God, declared Jesus, but no man has ever seen Him except the Son. In other words, God the Father has always spoken through agencies and messengers, never directly to any man except to Christ the Son and to His apostles (2 Peter 1:17). Compare this with John 5:37.

Then it could not have been the Father who spoke to Moses and whom Moses saw. It was someone else who commanded the Festivals to our fathers.

Paul wrote to the evangelist Timothy that the light and glory of God the Father is such that "no man hath seen, nor can see" until composed of spirit at the resurrection (1 Timothy 6:16).

But we read in Exodus 24:9-11: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they SAW the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink" in His presence.

This Divine Person could not have been the Father. No man — except Christ — has seen Him!

Now understand John 1:18: "No man hath seen God AT ANY TIME; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And 1 John 4:12: "No man hath seen God the Father at any time."

Then Who was it that came down from Heaven to command the people to observe the Festival of Tabernacles forever?

## **It Was Christ!**

Jesus said in John 8:58: "Before Abraham was, I AM!"

Jesus existed before Abraham. He said, "I am before Abraham." He did not say, "I was before Abraham," but "I am." In the Greek language in which John was inspired to write, the expression for "I am" is ego eimi. It is the present tense, indicating that Jesus eternally exists. "I am" is the name of the Lord God in Exodus 1:14. Christ is the Lord who spoke to Moses! He is the One who reveals LAW.

When Moses asked the NAME of the One who was about to give the law at Sinai, He replied to Moses, "I AM." That is Christ's name.

Christ therefore existed before Abraham. He said so! "Before Abraham was, I am."

Jesus Christ told Abraham to walk before Him and be perfect. Abraham obeyed. "Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws" (Genesis 26:5). This was not God the Father speaking, because no man ever saw the Father. Abraham and Sarah saw the Lord (Genesis 17:1 and 21:1). This Person must have been Jesus Christ.

It was the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to Abraham. The Lord also appeared to Enoch and to Cain. He appeared to Adam and He appeared to Eve. He appeared to Isaac and to Jacob. But no man has seen the Father at any time.

So, this Divine Person who spoke in Old Testament times was the One who became the Son. Jesus the Son said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Were Jesus' commandments given to Abraham different from the commandments He gave to Moses — different from the commandments that we observe today? We read that God "changes not" (Malachi 3:6). He is not like men who have human legislatures and must constantly amend their laws. That is man's law. The spiritual laws that God gave are unchanging. Spiritual things do not change as matter does.

The laws that man makes change. But not God's spiritual law.

God expects us to keep the same commandments Abraham kept. Notice it. He said, "Abraham kept my commandments." Jesus also said, "If you will love me, you [we today] will keep my commandments."

Jesus is "the same yesterday [in Abraham's and Moses' day], today [in the apostles' day], and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Therefore, what He revealed in the New Testament must be in agreement with what He said before, since it is His words that are to judge us!

## **What Are the "Words" of the Lord?**

Jesus said "If any man love Me, He will keep My word."

Now let's turn to the book of Exodus. We all know that chapter 20 of Exodus contains the record of the commandments Jesus Christ spoke to Israel. If we now turn to chapter 23 of the book of Exodus, verses 14 to 16, we find man is commanded to observe certain festivals three times in a year. This includes the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread at the beginning of springtime, the Feast of Weeks or the Firstfruits, that is, Pentecost, at the end of springtime, and then, in the fall, the Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles or Ingathering, in Exodus 23:16.

Next, notice Exodus 24:3. "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments, and all the people answered and said, 'All the words which the Lord hath said, we will do.'"

Here are more than just the Ten Commandments. Here we find specifically, definitely stated, the words of the Lord. Moses told them all the words of the Lord.

What is included in the words of the Lord? The requirements to observe the Festival of Tabernacles! (Exodus 23:16)

Remember, Jesus said, "If you will love Me, you will keep My words."

If you love Jesus Christ, you will not only be keeping His commandments — won't be committing adultery, you won't be bowing down and serving idols, you will not be stealing and lying to your neighbor, and you will not be observing Sunday, but rather the Sabbath.

God loved us first by showing us the way to life, and by making it possible for our sins to be taken out of the way through Christ's blood. In similar manner, we return the same love by obedience to God, by observing the commandments.

But Jesus requires more than keeping His commandments. He said, "If you love me you will keep My words." And that included observing the annual Festivals. If you do not observe these days, you do not love Jesus' words! That is New Testament teaching. Jesus was not talking to the Jews of the Old Testament times in John 14:23. He was talking to the apostles of the New Testament Church when He commanded them to KEEP HIS WORDS!

So, it was the One who became the Son who spoke the words in Exodus 23: "You shall observe a Festival three times in the year" — and that included the Feast of Tabernacles.

## **Before the Old Covenant**

But many will respond that the command to keep the Feast of Tabernacles is a part of the Old Covenant — and since the Old Covenant was broken, it is no longer necessary to keep the Feast.

Consider two facts! The Old Covenant was a marriage agreement (Jeremiah 31:32). If a marriage agreement is broken, that does not abolish the laws that regulate marriages. The laws incorporated in the Old Covenant are like the laws which regulate a marriage covenant. They exist before a marriage agreement and regulate it. Israel's breaking of the Old Covenant did not abolish the laws to which Israel agreed.

This brings us to the second fact! The Old Covenant did not institute the Holy Days!

The statutes which regulate the annual festivals existed prior to the Old Covenant. What the Old Covenant did not institute it cannot abolish. The Old Covenant was merely a marriage agreement between God (the Husband) and Israel (the wife) in which the wife agreed to obey the Husband's laws which were already in force. In return for obedience, Israel was physically blessed and provided for above all other nations.

Notice that the statutes which regulate the Holy Days were required to be kept before the Old Covenant was made!

Turn to Exodus 15:26: "If you will diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear unto His commandments, and keep ALL HIS STATUTES, I will put none of these diseases upon you that afflict the Egyptians."

Here is the One Who became the Lord Jesus Christ speaking. He is commanding His people to keep all His statutes before the Old Covenant. These statutes could not have been instituted by the Old Covenant because the Old Covenant was not completed until Exodus 24. The statutes which God was revealing to Moses and the people before Sinai were later incorporated into the Old Covenant — just as the weekly Sabbath (Exodus 20). But the Old Covenant did not begin them. The Old Covenant merely included them. Notice that among all the statutes which were in force before Sinai and later incorporated into the Old Covenant are the requirements to observe the annual festivals — including the Feast of Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-17). If the annual festivals had not already been God's laws, they could not have been included in the Old Covenant!

Here is absolute proof that among the statutes commanded to be kept before the Old Covenant were the laws regulating the annual Holy Days.

### **Began with the Church**

The weekly Sabbath began with man. It was made at creation (Genesis 2). But the annual festivals God gave first to the Church when the Church began. The twelve tribes of Israel were first formed into a Church — a Congregation or Assembly — IN ORDER TO KEEP THE ANNUAL HOLY DAYS. The first time the word Congregation is used for the tribes of Israel is in Exodus 12:3, where the annual festivals are first introduced!

Just as the Sabbath keeps man in a right relationship with his Creator, so the annual Holy Days keep the Church in a right relationship with God. Any group which refuses to keep holy these days God made holy is not in a right relationship with God. Such a group is spiritually like the Egyptians who scoffed at God's festivals!

When the Congregation of Israel — the Church in Old Testament times — began to sin (began to be in a wrong relationship with God) and to break these laws, God temporarily added — after the making of the Old Covenant — various physical rituals and sacrifices which were imposed on every day of the year until the coming of Jesus Christ to shed His own blood for our sins (Hebrews 9:10 and Galatians 3:19). These temporary, physical laws did not exist prior to the Old Covenant (Jeremiah 7:22-23). They were given only to the Old Testament Church for a limited duration. Jesus never practiced these ritualistic laws. You cannot find one place in the New Testament where He set us any example to keep them. But He did keep the Feast of Tabernacles as an example for us — and He commanded those who love Him to keep His words, which included the observance of the annual festivals.

Now we come to the New Testament. What do we find as its teaching?

### **Nailed to the Cross?**

Were the annual festivals a part of the ceremonial law that added "till the seed should come"? Were the Holy Days "nailed to the cross"? After everything was nailed to the cross DO WE STILL FIND THE APOSTLES AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OBSERVING THESE DAYS?

In 1 Corinthians 5:8 Paul commands the Gentiles to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. "Let us therefore keep the feast," he exhorts the Gentile converts at Corinth. By becoming neglectful of the Feast, the Corinthians were allowing the leaven of sin to creep into their midst.

Notice what this means. Either Paul was not the apostle of Jesus Christ and was trying to re-establish what was already abolished, or else the laws regulating the festivals were not abolished at the cross! Isn't that plain. Paul would have been without any authority whatsoever to command these Gentile converts to "keep the feast" unless it was still God's law to keep the Holy Days of God.

Now notice the examples of Paul himself planning to keep an annual festival. The first is found in Acts 20:16. Paul is rushing by Ephesus in order to be at Jerusalem. Why does Paul want to be at Jerusalem? — in order to preach to the Jews? Not at all! Notice how this verse reads: "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, TO KEEP the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem."

Paul was determined to KEEP the day of Pentecost with the Headquarters Church before launching on a campaign into Spain. Many translations obscure the real meaning of this verse. The original, inspired Greek word here translated "to keep" is *genesthai*, which is an infinitive

form of ginomai. The King James and other versions incorrectly render it "to be." The Greek word for "to be" is einai, but Luke was inspired to use genesthai here in Acts 20:16 which can mean among other things "to keep, to celebrate, or to solemnize a festival" according to the Analytical Greek Lexicon.

This same root word is used in Matthew 26:2, which ought to be translated: "Ye know that after two days the Passover is celebrated ..."

So here we have two important examples of Paul — 1) commanding the Gentiles to observe the Days of Unleavened Bread and 2) planning to KEEP the day of Pentecost with the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem.

But what New Testament examples are there for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles?

### **Feast of Tabernacles in the New Testament**

We have two ways of knowing what Christians ought to do. One is by the examples of Scripture, the other is by explicit command of the Scripture. We have already seen that Christ gave an explicit command in the New Testament that we should keep His words — that His words included the keeping of the annual festivals. Now let us turn to the examples of Scripture to see if Jesus and Paul kept the Feast of Tabernacles.

Turn, first, to 1 John 2:4-6. "He that saith, I know Him and keepeth not His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso KEEPETH HIS WORD, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

Notice that the apostle John teaches us to keep the words of Jesus and to follow the example of Christ. What was Christ's example?

The last autumn before He died, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Tabernacles!

The entire seventh chapter of the Gospel according to John is devoted to what Jesus said and did at that Festival. Because of the Jews, Jesus did not go to Jerusalem with his family but separate from them (verses 8 and 10). He did not appear publicly to teach in the temple until the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles (verse 14). John records parts of the sermon of Christ delivered on the last great day of the Feast in 30 A.D., beginning with verse 37.

### **Paul Kept Feast of Tabernacles**

Paul obeyed Jesus Christ. Paul kept the Holy Days Jesus commanded. That included the Feast of Tabernacles. Where, in Scripture, do we find Paul keeping this festival? Turn to the book of Acts for the answer!

God used Paul to reach the Gentiles with the Gospel. In 50 A.D., Paul crossed over from Asia into Europe and began to preach the gospel at Philippi "on the day of weeks" — Pentecost — according to the original Greek (Acts 16:13). Most versions improperly render the Greek expression "on the sabbath day", but the original inspired Greek means Pentecost. This was exactly 19 years to the day since the Holy Spirit came in 31 A.D. (Acts 2). After a few weeks at Philippi, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), Berea (Acts 17:10) and at Athens (verse 16), Paul came to Corinth in the late summer of 50 A.D. After spending several sabbaths teaching in the synagogue (Acts 18:4), Paul continued to hold meetings in the house of Titius Justus (verse 7) for "a year and six months" (verse 11). This brings us to the spring of 52 A.D.

After a riot stirred up against the Apostle was quelled, we read the following about Paul: "And Paul after this tarried there a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria" (Acts 18:18). It must now have been well into the summer of A.D. 52. The Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost — the two festivals near the beginning and end of spring — were now past.

To continue with Paul's journey. On his way from Corinth to the port of Syria, "he came to Ephesus" and "entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, I MUST BY ALL MEANS KEEP THIS FEAST THAT COMETH IN JERUSALEM: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus" (Acts 18:19-21).

Paul planning to keep the feast with the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem? Indeed! That is what the Scripture says!

Which Feast? Obviously, the Feast of Tabernacles! The spring festivals were already past. The two late summer or early autumn Holy Days, Trumpets and Atonement, could be held at any of the local congregations. Here was a major festival being held at Jerusalem in the autumn. The only major festival that occurs in the autumn is the Feast of Tabernacles! Paul told the Ephesians that he "must by all means keep this feast" with the Headquarters Church in Jerusalem. Paul had just completed his first journey into Europe with the gospel. He felt he had to report the progress of the work to the Headquarters Church and the brethren in Palestine (verse 22). What better time than to do so while keeping the Feast of Tabernacles!

Here is the example of Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. After years in the ministry, he is still KEEPING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

### **Verse Left Out in Corrupted Manuscripts**

Acts 18:21 appears correctly in the King James Version of the Bible. But numerous modern versions leave out that portion of the verse which tells of Paul's intention to keep the Feast. This verse, in its entirety, belongs in the Bible. It has always been in the Greek "Received Text" —

which is the inspired text handed down to the Greek speaking world by the original true Church of God. The Overwhelming majority of Greek Manuscripts have this verse in it.

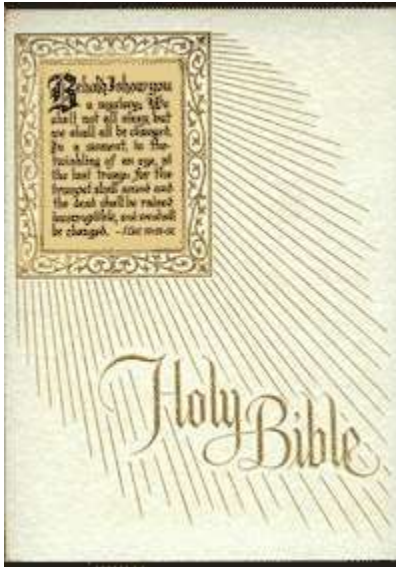
The only manuscripts which leave it out are those copied in Egypt and in the Latin speaking portions of the Roman Empire. There would have been no reason to add this verse to the Bible if it were not there originally. BUT THERE IS EVERY REASON WHY MEN WOULD LIKE TO REMOVE IT FROM THE INSPIRED TEXT! The Catholic version of the Bible leaves it out as do almost all modern Protestant versions of the Bible. But these are just the churches who do not want to keep this feast!

Here, brethren, is proof from the New Testament — from Christ's teaching and example, and the apostle Paul's example — that the New Testament Church is commanded to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. How plain the Scripture is when we are willing to believe and practice what it reveals!

More on the holy days and Christians observing them can be found in our free eBook, available at [ccog.org](http://ccog.org), titled *Should You Keep God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*

# STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE

## Lesson 27: God's Sabbath, Part 1



**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 21<sup>st</sup> century (though much of the original writing has been retained). It also has more scriptural references, as well as information and questions not in the original course. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural references are to the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson Publishing, used by permission. The KJV, sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version is also often used. Additionally, Roman Catholic-approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.

WHICH day is the true Sabbath of God? WHY does God command man to rest on His holy Sabbath today? And HOW do we make it a "delight"? Learn the wonderful truth in this revealing lesson!

**WHY REST ON GOD'S SABBATH DAY?**

Do YOU know that God has a "sign" by which He RECOGNIZES His spiritual children? And do you know that only those having this SIGN will be born into His ruling Family (Exodus 31:16-17; 20:10-12)?

That vital, OVERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT "sign" is God's SABBATH DAY!

Yes – GOD'S Sabbath!

Not a "Sabbath of the Jews," or any "day" that seems more or less important to any man, or group of men – but THE Sabbath of Almighty God Himself!

### **Does it Make Any Difference?**

"But" you might ask, "what does any 'day' have to do with entering into the happy, glorious world tomorrow and the very Kingdom of God?"

IT HAS A GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH IT!

To human beings using only fallible HUMAN reasoning, it may seem "strange" indeed that God would place stress and importance on a SPECIFIC "DAY" OF THE WEEK! "WHY," some might REASON, "would God want me to rest on ONE day of the week more than any other?"

God declares:

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.  
9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

"What real DIFFERENCE does it make anyhow?" ask others.

It makes a TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE – TO ALMIGHTY GOD!

You either accept His way, or you do not.

You are going to learn the surprising and truly satisfying PLAIN truth about God's SABBATH DAY!

### **God Blesses the Obedient**

Noah "walked" with GOD (Genesis 6:9). They were that friendly! And because Noah "walked" in OBEDIENCE to God, He saved Noah and his family from the great flood that destroyed sinful mankind (Genesis 6:11-14, 17-18). That was REAL FRIENDSHIP!

And after the flood we know that Abraham also became an OBEDIENT friend of God (James 2:23, 21). Abraham and Christ (Melchizedek) were very CLOSE friends (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-3) – right here on this earth – at the present site of the city of Jerusalem.

And what was the RESULT of this close friendship? Because Abraham continued in this OBEDIENT relationship with God (Genesis 26:5), God promised him the greatest and most abundant blessings imaginable – this WHOLE EARTH for an inheritance, SONSHIP IN GOD'S FAMILY, and ETERNAL LIFE with which to enjoy it (Genesis 26:4; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:29; 4:1-7)!

But God blessed Abraham EVEN MORE because of his loving obedience and mutual friendship! God placed before Abraham's spiritual offspring – we who become his "seed" through Christ – the SAME OPPORTUNITY to receive these SAME GREAT BLESSINGS!

God is always the close, loving friend of those who obey Him. He says, "You are My FRIENDS if you do whatever I COMMAND YOU." (John 15:14)

It is within God's plan to become a very close friend of all who lovingly obey His wishes. And God shows great love in return by doing WONDERFUL THINGS for them!

God is going to shower those of us who now learn our lessons of loving obedience with far GREATER blessings than we can imagine! He says, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who LOVE Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

## **God's PURPOSE for Humankind**

God is LOVE (1 John 4:8). And the way of God's love is GIVING and SHARING. As our loving Friend and Father, God wants to SHARE with us the glory and riches of His Kingdom – His Divine Family!

And so, God reveals His great PURPOSE for mankind to His obedient friends: " Let Us make man in OUR image, according to Our likeness; ..." (Genesis 1:26). And "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us; that we should be called the (SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN) SONS OF GOD ... we know that, when He (Christ) shall appear, we shall be LIKE HIM ..."! (1 John 3:1-2, KJV)

God's plan is to create GODS out of mortal mankind – very Sons and Daughters of GOD'S DIVINE FAMILY!

Notice Christ's earnest desire to make friends of humanity so they may become God's spirit born Sons: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's LIFE for his FRIENDS." Christ said (John 15:13).

Then Christ proceeded to show the extent of His great love for humankind by laying down His OWN LIFE for the world – laying down His precious life for all who would become His OBEDIENT friends – FOR YOU AND FOR ME!

Christ is overjoyed to be the close Friend of us all and will do GREAT THINGS for us if we become His obedient friends “SUBMIT to God (OBEY HIM). ... Draw NEAR to God (as His OBEDIENT friend),” James was inspired to write, “and He will draw near to you (as YOUR loving Friend and Father)” (James 4:7-8).

## **Sabbath Pictures Eternal "Rest"**

In addition to Christ's great sacrifice for us, what else did He say He would do? Notice: Jesus said, “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden (be my OBEDIENT friends), and I will give you REST”! (Mathew 11:28) A GIFT! And what kind of rest is this? – "GLORIOUS REST"!! (Isaiah 11:10.)

As our loving Friend and Father, God wants to give each of us His greatest gift of all – ETERNAL LIFE – glorious, eternal "rest" in the KINGDOM OF GOD!

In the fourth chapter of Hebrews, the apostle Paul plainly shows us that RESTING from our daily labors on God's Holy Sabbath Day PICTURES our glorious future as spirit-born Sons in God's Family! He shows that Sabbath keeping actually pictures "REST" FROM OUR STRUGGLES AGAINST SIN which God promises to give His obedient children (Hebrews 4:1-11).

When born of God's Spirit, we will no longer suffer the DOWNWARD PULLS of our carnal flesh and SINFUL human nature. We will then possess the MIND OF GOD in full. We will have the ability to remain PERFECTLY OBEDIENT to God's will FOREVER! (1 John 3:9.)

And when born into God's Kingdom – when we become very Gods – we will also possess the same kind of gloriously radiant and POWERFUL spirit body that Christ and the Father now have! We will no longer be LIMITED by our weak mortal bodies. For it is then that we will possess the powerful capacity for infinite accomplishment with our supremely efficient SPIRIT BODIES! Bodies that will be, by comparison to our weak mortal bodies, GLORIOUSLY EFFICIENT AND EFFORTLESS!

God promises to give us all of this when we become His spirit-born Sons! Isn't it astonishing what God will do for us if we now become His OBEDIENT friends and SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN children?

## **Eternal Life Offered to ALL Mankind**

God promises His gift of eternal life to all peoples of the earth who become, SPIRITUALLY speaking, "Abraham's seed" – those who surrender themselves to the will of Christ and are

SPIRITUALLY BEGOTTEN by the Holy Spirit. "If you *are* Christ's, then you are ABRAHAM'S SEED, and HEIRS according to the promise." (Galatians 3:28-29)

As Abraham's "seed," we become heirs of the same promise made to Abraham – the promise of eternal life and sonship in the Kingdom of God. But only if we obey God and REST from all our labors on God's weekly Sabbath Days which PICTURE this glorious future (cf. Hebrews 4:1-11).

God reveals this great SPIRITUAL truth to those who have become sick of the pagan ways of this world and have begun to OBEY Him. He reveals it as a Friend to a friend.

But only those who CONTINUE TO OBEY God's command to keep the Sabbath will finally enter the glorious "rest" of God's Kingdom and receive the gift of eternal, spiritual life!

### **No Sabbath/Commandment Keeping – No Holy Spirit**

God, who is the loving Friend of mankind, offers us the priceless gift of His Holy Spirit. A gift which imparts all the peace and joy the human heart really longs for. Yes, and ultimately ETERNAL LIFE – eternal "rest" from this carnal, mundane life!

But to WHOM will God give the precious gift of His Holy Spirit? What does God expect of those who are recipients of His Spirit? Notice the answer in Acts 5:32: "the Holy Spirit ... God has given to those who OBEY HIM." – OBEY His TEN COMMANDMENTS, which includes SABBATH KEEPING!

To carnal man, there is SEEMINGLY no earthly reason whatever to keep a sequence of Sabbath Days. Man, so he reasons, could rest as well on other days he would choose for himself.

But KEEPING, or NOT keeping God's Sabbath Days REVEALS AN ATTITUDE! Keeping them shows a WILLINGNESS to forsake our OWN thoughts for periods of time specified by God. It shows a WILLINGNESS to learn – to study, to think and to meditate on the really important matters of the universe – and an ATTITUDE TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF GOD-LIKE CHARACTER!

And keeping God's Sabbath reveals an attitude of SIMPLE OBEDIENCE just because GOD says so! – although all carnal HUMAN REASONING says "no." To the carnal, unrepentant mind, Sabbath keeping seems so unfathomable, unnecessary, and sometimes ANNOYING! (Although to the REPENTANT, spirit-begotten mind, the Sabbath is eagerly looked forward to every week.)

Sabbath keeping plainly is a TEST of our ATTITUDE to reveal whether we REALLY want to OBEY and DEPEND on God and RECEIVE His Holy Spirit!

So now let's understand exactly how God created the weekly Sabbath, HOW it is to be kept holy, and WHY it is so valuable to us today.

## **LESSON 27**

## Origin of God's Weekly Sabbath

1. Who created everything that exists? John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:16.

COMMENT: JESUS CHRIST is called the "Word" – the "SPOKESMAN," as the original Greek in John 1:1 may be translated. Jesus has been with the Father from the beginning of the earth, and ALL THINGS were made by Him – by Jesus Christ!

John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1 take us back to the same time in prehistory -- to the original creation of the universe. Both verses reveal that the two supreme beings composing the God Family created all things.

The Greek word translated into English as Word in John 1:1 is Logos. It means "spokesman" or "one who speaks" or "something said." It was actually the Logos -- the Spokesman, the Word of the God Family -- who "spoke, and it [the creation] was done" by the power of the Spirit of God:

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,  
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.  
7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;  
He lays up the deep in storehouses.  
8 Let all the earth fear the Lord;  
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.  
9 For He spoke, and it was done;  
He commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalms 33:6-9)

And so, everything was created and made by the divine being who later became the human Jesus Christ:

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:15-17)

2. What did God do on the FIRST day of what we call Creation Week? Genesis 1:3-5.

COMMENT: God the Father and God the Son constitute the present God Family. It was the God who later became the SON who is spoken of here. He did the actual creating, with the sanction of the God who became the FATHER.

3. And what was done on the SECOND day? Genesis 1:6-8. And did God use a THIRD day on which to do something else? Verses 9-13. And a FOURTH day to make still other things?

Verses 14-19. And a FIFTH day for creating another class of things? Verses 20-23. Then did God create animals and MAN on the SIXTH day? Verses 24-26, 31.

COMMENT: We see by the foregoing verses that God made and created all these things in just the first SIX DAYS of CREATION WEEK.

4. What did the Divine Person – who later became the human Jesus Christ – do on the day IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING His creation of man? Genesis 2:2-3. Christ did not rest because He was tired and weary from His work of creating, did He? Isaiah 40:28. Then He obviously did it for ANOTHER REASON! Did this final ACT of Christ on the SEVENTH day COMPLETE the works of God's creation? Refer to Genesis 2:2 again and write down Hebrews 4:3-4.

COMMENT: God brought the Sabbath into existence. He did so by RESTING on the SEVENTH day. This act of resting therefore MADE the Sabbath Day A PART OF GOD'S CREATION! Notice: "... On the SEVENTH DAY (not before or after it) God ended His work (of creation) which He had MADE ..." (Genesis. 2:2).

The Sabbath law was in effect since no later than Adam. The reason that we say 'no later' is that Lucifer and his followers also may have known about it.

God REVEALED the commandments to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Why? So that they and their progeny could know what sin IS and AVOID it!

The scriptures plainly show us that the Sabbath was made during the SAME seven-day period of time that man was made. And it was made by the Divine Person who later became Jesus Christ. It was made on the LAST of SEVEN LITERAL 24-HOUR DAYS and was made an intrinsic PART of man's environment!

5. What else did God do to the seventh day? Genesis 2:33.

COMMENT: Notice that God "BLESSED" the seventh day and "SANCTIFIED" it. SUCH AN HONOR WAS NOT CONFERRED UPON ANY OF THE PRECEDING SIX DAYS. When God BLESSES SOMETHING, He bestows His divine favor upon, and His DIVINE PRESENCE in that thing. He is especially near at that time.

The very word "sanctify" means TO SET APART FOR A HOLY USE OR PURPOSE! By RESTING on the seventh day, God "sanctified" it – set it apart – from the other six days of the week. In so doing He made the SEVENTH day HOLY!

Thus, we see that by the very act of resting on the seventh day, Almighty God put His divine favor upon and set apart for holy use and purpose the most ENDURING thing there is – a certain space of time which comes around REGULARLY EVERY SEVEN DAYS!

And by setting aside the first Sabbath in this way, God also made EVERY FUTURE SABBATH – EVERY SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK – HOLY ALSO!

## **Made for HUMANS**

1. Was God's resting on the seventh day an EXAMPLE to show Adam – the first human – and all humankind that WE SHOULD REST from our work on this day? Exodus 20:11.
2. Did God make the Sabbath for Adam only, or just for the Jews, or for ALL of MANKIND? Mark 2:27-28. Is the whole human race COMMANDED to keep God's Sabbath? Exodus 20:8-10; Exodus 16:23,30).

COMMENT: Christ said that at creation the Sabbath was made for MAN – FOR ALL HUMANKIND! Adam was the first human; therefore he stood as the REPRESENTATIVE OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE which has descended from him.

It is RIDICULOUS to think that the Sabbath was made only for the Jews, since the first Jew was not born until over 2,000 years LATER! Judah, a son of Jacob, was the father of the Jewish family and nation (Genesis 29:35).

3. WHY was the Sabbath made for man? HOW did God intend it to serve man's needs? Exodus 20:8 and Deuteronomy 5:12-14.

COMMENT: Notice that God made the seventh day of the week HOLY – and on His authority as our Creator He commands us TO KEEP IT that way! The Sabbath, then, is HOLY time. Yet it was made for man – for ALL mankind – to be a GREAT BLESSING for ALL humanity!

Our Creator knew that we MORTALS would need a period of rest from our physical labors and for the WORSHIP OF GOD every seventh day. This is the BASIC PURPOSE for which the Sabbath was created.

Each of us tends to become overly absorbed in our daily cares, our work and our pleasures during the week. Our Creator foresaw that we would need a time set apart – His Sabbath Day – as a consecrated time when we can completely forget our daily routine and DRAW CLOSER to the Creator God in study, meditation and prayer.

Modern man DESPERATELY NEEDS this period of time in which to have real communion with God Who is creating him to become His glorified Son! Time in which to think upon God, to worship Him, to pray, to study and meditate upon the PURPOSE of his human existence and upon GOD'S REVEALED LAWS OF LIFE. God knew that all of this would add great strength and meaning to man's life during the next SIX days of each week.

The Sabbath is truly one of the greatest BLESSINGS God has bestowed upon the human family!

When we keep the Sabbath Day as God intends, we are showing our FAITH, our belief, in God's promise of a FUTURE eternal "rest" – glorious SPIRIT LIFE in the Kingdom of God – just as we illustrate in the act of baptism our faith in the PAST death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

By resting on the Sabbath, we are, in a sense, "ACTING OUT" the KINGDOM OF GOD – our future as the Spirit-born Sons of God's glorious Family!

*To be continued in the next edition of this magazine.*

## ***Continuing Church of God Radio Log***



In addition to being online in the English language at [www.biblenewsprophecy.net](http://www.biblenewsprophecy.net) and other languages at [www.bnpi.net](http://www.bnpi.net), there are numerous radio stations the *Bible News Prophecy* radio program is on.

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

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

### **Far East and North America**

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### **Kenya**

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### **Ghana**

OTEC 102.9 FM, Kumasi – 7:00 am Sunday  
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**Video:** <https://bbsradio.com/bbsradiotv/bbs-radio-tv-2.html>

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### **Multimedia**

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By Bob Thiel

**Q: There are no eligible singles in my geographic area. The *Continuing* Church of God does not basically allow its ministry to marry people who are not Church of God Christians. Why? I like someone who is of a different faith, but we have almost everything else in common. We like the same movies, the same sports, the same music, and have a similar cultural background. How could we go wrong marrying each other? Why shouldn't I marry someone who is not a true Christian?**

**A.** One of the most important elements of a good marriage is sharing. It's fine, and even desirable, to share interests. But for a marriage to be truly happy, it must be based on the sharing of common beliefs about really important matters, the spiritual or religious matters, such as the purpose of life, the right approach to child rearing and the proper role of a man and woman in marriage. These types of critical things are among the most important things in a marriage.

The reason that the *Continuing* Church of God does not basically allow its ministry to marry people who are not Church of God Christians is because of admonitions in the Bible, such as the following one:

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."

17 Therefore

"Come out from among them  
And be separate, says the Lord.  
Do not touch what is unclean,  
And I will receive you."  
18 'I will be a Father to you,  
And you shall be My sons and daughters,  
Says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

Those not of the real Christian faith walk in darkness and lawlessness. The non-Christian is an unbeliever.

For another reason, consider that younger people who get married are likely to have children.

What kind of children does God want you to have?

"Godly offspring" (Malachi 2:15).

That is a problem when one parent is a real Christian and the other is not.

Religious matters will affect every marriage and can either bind it together or tear it apart. Give your marriage the best chance for success. Marry someone who believes as you do on the important spiritual areas.

Do not deceive yourself that it is best for you and God wants you to marry an unbeliever.

Jesus taught:

12 For there are different reasons why men cannot marry: some, because they were born that way; others, because men made them that way; and others do not marry for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven. Let him who can accept this teaching do so. (Matthew 19:12)

As Christians we are to live "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4) as well as believe and "know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

It may be that it is NOT best for you to ever marry. Or it may be that is not God's will for you to marry until after you have learned certain lessons.

Either way, trust God (Proverbs 3:5-6). And if marriage is best for you, circumstances can change and you will be able to marry God's way.

# Fulfilling Matthew 24:14 And Matthew 28:19-20

*Continuing Church of God* [www.ccog.org](http://www.ccog.org)

Daily Bible Prophecy News [www.cogwriter.com](http://www.cogwriter.com)

**BIBLENEWSPROPHECY.NET** Radio messages of biblical and prophetic interest, plus online links.

**CCOG.ASIA** This is a website focused on Asia. It has articles in many Asian languages.

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

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

**CCOGAFRICA.ORG** This is a website targeted towards those in Africa.

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

**CDLIDD.ES** La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios. This is our Spanish language website.

**CG7.ORG** This is a website targeted towards those interested in the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

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



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*The Bible News Prophecy program is on commercial, shortwave, and online radio.*

The *Continuing Church of God* also uses printed and electronic magazines, books, personal visits, and weekly letters to the brethren to support Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20.

