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BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY



The
**TANNENBAUM
Religion?**

*Should Christians have
Christmas trees?*

**Is Mainstream
'SCIENCE'
Actually Scientific?**

*Science is supposed to be based
on truth and open inquiry--but
is that truly allowed today?*

Is
HALLOWEEN
a Holy Time?
for CHRISTIANS?

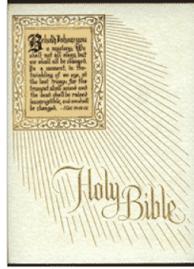
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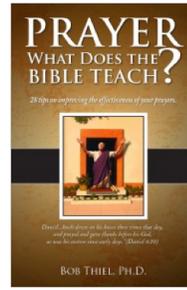
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IS MAINSTREAM SCIENCE ACTUALLY SCIENTIFIC?

Well if scientific means open to all truth and strives to always teach the truth, then no, modern science is often not scientific.

Many scientists seem to make their views on evolution as a religious dogma, though they like to call it scientific. And they are becoming fairly 'activist' in their stifling of the views of people they do not agree with.

Is There Another Side to Evolution?

A free weekly paper in San Luis Obispo County, called New Times, ran an article in its May 1 – May 7, 2015 edition about a science teacher (Brandon Pettenger) at Arroyo Grande High School who received complaints that he was teaching creationism. The article reported that people who seemingly have studied into evolution less than the science teacher, disciplined him for having the courage to attempt to point out some of the scientific flaws of evolution. Then others who also seem to have studied the subject less scientifically than the science teacher condemned him as well.

The New Times followed up that printed article with the following, which I found online:

There's no other side to evolution

Atheists United San Luis Obispo applauds the Lucia Mar Unified School District for pledging to ensure that their teachers understand that creationism and intelligent design are not allowed in science classes. We would like to explain why this policy is just as much in the interest of the religious as the non-religious.

After learning that their son was allegedly being taught creationism in science class, the parents of an Arroyo Grande High School student wrote an email to the teacher, asking him to stop. The teacher responded by saying: "I feel it would be a disservice to my students not to present both sides of the argument." This prompted letters from Atheists United San Luis Obispo and the Freedom From Religion Foundation, which got administrators to take notice.

In explaining the teacher's actions, Assistant Superintendent Tom Fiorentino told the media: "It was the right intent; it was the wrong action," and, "based on my investigation, it was just a way to motivate those 11th-graders into discussion." The Tribune also weighed in, stating "Sorry, but there is no dispensation for teachers who feel it's their duty [to] present both sides of the debate. ... Teaching religious dogma in science class is prohibited—period."

We very much appreciate the support and swift actions of our community to get creationism out of science classes, but we also feel compelled to point out that the justifications for doing so hint of the insidious misconception that there is a scientific controversy about evolution. There is not, and perpetuating this myth only undermines our children's understanding of the scientific method.

The overwhelming majority of the scientific community endorses evolution and rejects creationism and its dressed-up child, intelligent design (ID). A 2015 Pew Research Center poll puts this number at 98 percent. Our federal courts came to the same conclusion in 2005. In the case of *Kitzmiller v. Dover*, the Discovery Institute, supporting intelligent design (ID), and the National Center for Science Education, supporting evolution, brought out their best experts for an exhaustive evaluation of the evidence. This is what the judge, John E. Jones III, a Republican appointed by President George W. Bush, concluded:

"Not a single expert witness over the course of the six week trial identified one major scientific association, society or organization that endorsed ID as science," and, "The overwhelming evidence at trial established that ID is a religious view, a mere re-labelling of creationism, and not a scientific theory." <http://www.newtimeslo.com/commentary/12324/the-debate-evolution-vs-creationism/>

So according to the above, science is partially defined as to whether certain groups hold to a view.

But that is not science. The view "There's no other side to evolution" is not only improper censorship, it is scientifically flawed. The shutting down of legitimate

inquiry is not science.

None of the then so-called 'scientific groups' of the 15th century thought the world was round. Group-think is not science nor should it be portrayed as such.

Furthermore, the acceptance of 'evolution' as the only scientific explanation of how life began is absurd. It is NOT EVEN POSSIBLE.

Science is supposed to be about observation and documentation of facts that are true. There is absolutely no science to demonstrate that life spontaneously began and then quickly evolved.

Getting back to New Times, it did also put a rebuttal article online to the original article in the same issue that had the 'no other view of evolution':

I am writing in response to a letter from the Freedom from Religious Foundation (FFRF) and the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science (RDFRS). The letter was written at the behest of Atheists United SLO and the family of a student at Arroyo Grande High School (AGHS). It was addressed to Jim Hogeboom, superintendent of the Lucia Mar Unified School District, and urges the investigation of Brandon Pettenger, a science teacher at AGHS who the letter accuses of "inserting his personal religious beliefs into the public school classroom." The letter has received attention in the local press and was circulated on the Internet. I write as a concerned citizen and as a parent of a Central Coast New Tech High School student as well as two recent graduates of AGHS.

It is indeed ironic that Atheists United SLO, which promotes itself as a "freethought" organization would lead a campaign to stifle classroom debate and limit academic inquiry. Yet in the letter written by RDFRS and FFRF, they say:

"Any attempt to teach that there is a controversy about evolution is similarly fraught with legal peril. Evolution is as much a fact as gravity. There are not two sides of the evolution argument for Pettenger to present. Teaching a controversy about evolution is like teaching about the controversy that exists between chemistry and alchemy, or astronomy and astrology, or voodoo and medicine. There exists only scientific fact and evidence, and a religious belief that rebels against such evidence. One can, indeed must, be taught in public schools. The other cannot.

"We request that you investigate this matter immediately. If these allegations are founded,

Pettenger must be directed to refrain from promoting religion or attacking evolution in the public school. Courts have upheld the dismissal of teachers in cases like this. At the very least, appropriate disciplinary action should be taken, and the results of your investigation placed in the teacher's file. Please promptly inform us in writing of the steps you are taking to protect the rights of your students."

Threatening schools with legal action and good teachers with dismissal amounts to intimidation and bullying. It's downright intolerant... They want to silence anyone else who might have the audacity to question their evolutionary dogma as well. Their strategy is censorship by intimidation.

The National Center for Science Education defines dogma as "a system of beliefs that is not subject to scientific test and refutation." When an organization claims that "evolution is as much a fact as gravity" or that people must "refrain from attacking evolution in public school" they are treating the theory of biological evolution as if it is infallible dogma that is above critique or refutation. It is not, and should not be treated as such. <http://www.newtimeslo.com/commentary/12324/the-debate-evolution-vs-creationism/>

Schools, in the USA at least, were supposed to teach truth and encourage independent thought. Yet, more and more, the truth is stifled for various false agendas (the homosexual agenda is another that immediately comes to mind). Forcing the teaching of evolution, while stopping scientific explanations in conflict with it is a prelude to a type of the 'famine of the word' which is prophesied to come (Amos 8:11-12).

Do Any Scientists See Flaws of Science?

People who have seen the Ben Stein movie, Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed, realize that the academic community frequently hurts the careers of those who actually have scientific evidence against evolution. Most academics teach that, in violation of the law of biogenesis, primitive life somehow sprung up—it is a false teaching that facts disprove.

Even back in New Testament times, there were those who called error 'science,' which is what evolution as an explanation of the origin of life and the origin of the universe is. Notice:

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing

have erred concerning the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21, KJV) following:

Various scientists know that the facts do not support that life could have spontaneously begun on planet Earth, so they keep looking for other explanations that they hope are more plausible.

They like to point to random changes in DNA coding as explaining changes to all life as well as claim that randomness is what got life to start.

The Gravity of the Situation

A 2014 television series titled *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey* claimed to be a scientific documentary. Yet its science spokesperson, astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson had the audacity to claim that evolution was just as much of a scientific fact as gravity. That is absolute rubbish.

The effects of gravity can be measured, gravitational pull can be calculated, gravity can be directly observed, and gravity is clearly repeatable. Yet, none of that is true of evolution.

While evolution is an opinion of how to view aspects of life and the fossil record, evolution cannot truly be measured, evolution cannot truly be mathematically calculated, evolution cannot be directly observed, and evolution is clearly not repeatable the way modern evolutionist explain it.

Gravity is not random, but some scientists foolishly claim it is equally scientific with evolution that many of them claim IS often the result of randomness.

True science is compatible with the Bible--it is only that which is falsely called science that is not:

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools (Romans 1:20-22).

Many calling themselves scientists have intentionally overlooked what should be obvious. The Bible tells of those that are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7).

As far as how trustworthy modern science is, consider the

Editors of World's Most Prestigious Medical Journals: "Much of the Scientific Literature, Perhaps HALF, May Simply Be Untrue"

Lancet and the New England Journal of Medicine are the two most prestigious medical journals in the world. It is therefore striking that their chief editors have both publicly written that corruption is undermining science.

The editor in chief of Lancet, Richard Horton, wrote...:

Much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue. Afflicted by studies with small sample sizes, tiny effects, invalid exploratory analyses, and flagrant conflicts of interest, together with an obsession for pursuing fashionable trends of dubious importance, science has taken a turn towards darkness. As one participant put it, "poor methods get results". The Academy of Medical Sciences, Medical Research Council, and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council have now put their reputational weight behind an investigation into these questionable research practices. The apparent endemicity [i.e. pervasiveness within the scientific culture] of bad research behaviour is alarming. In their quest for telling a compelling story, scientists too often sculpt data to fit their preferred theory of the world. Or they retrofit hypotheses to fit their data. Journal editors deserve their fair share of criticism too. We aid and abet the worst behaviours... We reject important confirmations. Journals are not the only miscreants. Universities are in a perpetual struggle for money and talent, endpoints that foster reductive metrics, such as high-impact publication. National assessment procedures, such as the Research Excellence Framework, incentivise bad practices. And individual scientists, including their most senior leaders, do little to alter a research culture that occasionally veers close to misconduct... Part of the problem is that no-one is incentivised [to offer incentives] to be right.

Similarly, the editor in chief of the New England Journal of Medicine, Dr. Marcia Angell, wrote in 2009:

It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgment of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor of The New England Journal of Medicine.

In her must-read essay, Dr. Angell skewers drug companies,

university medical departments, and medical groups which set the criteria for diagnosis and treatment as being rotten with corruption and conflicts of interest...

Postscript: Corruption is not limited to the medical or scientific fields. Instead, corruption has become systemic throughout every profession ... and is so pervasive that it is destroying the very fabric of America.

<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2015-06-01/editors-world%E2%80%99s-most-prestigious-medical-journals-%E2%80%9Cmuch-scientific-literature-perhap>

Those who think science is the measure of all truth might want to check the data first.

Here's a quote for you: "A lot of what is published [in scientific journals] is incorrect." Care to guess where those words appeared? Not on a website that questions the "consensus of experts on climate change." Nor do they appear in a publication associated with intelligent design or other critiques of Neo-Darwinism.

They appeared in the April 11, 2015, issue of the Lancet, the prestigious British medical journal.

The writer, Richard Horton, was quoting a participant at a recent symposium on the "reproducibility and reliability of biomedical research."...

He continues, "In their quest for telling a compelling story, scientists too often sculpt data to fit their preferred theory of the world."

We recently saw an example of this in a story about a much-publicized study purporting to show that voters were likely to change their minds about same-sex marriage if they were visited by gay pollsters who shared their stories with them.

Researchers seeking to reproduce the findings found discrepancies in the data and asked the original researcher for the original data. The researcher was unable to produce the original data. This led the lead researcher to request that the study be withdrawn. Even supporters of same-sex marriage acknowledged that the study and the conclusions drawn from it were fraudulent.

<http://www.breakpoint.org/bpcommentaries/entry/12/27474?spMailingID=11525872&spUse-rlID=OTQ0MjM5NDU2S0&spJobID=560044991&spReportId=NTYwMDQ0OTkxS0>

The actual percentage of errors in published scientific studies is probably more than half. There are many contradictions, and those that contradict the Bible are in error. Here is another translation of something that the Bible warns about:

20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge — 21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21, NKJV)

Problems of contradictions of what is called 'knowledge/science' exist to this day. If there ever is an apparent contradiction between the Bible and 'science' remember that the Bible teaches:

4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. (Romans 3:4)

The Bible is scientific and reliable. Not all 'scientists' are.

As a published scientist, I have seen first-hand how biases, money, 'political correctness,' and corruption have affected the scientific community. Researchers who do not promote the product/view that they are funded to research have a tendency to lose future funding.

There are anti-God biases, etc. that affect modern 'science' and this leads to false beliefs which are based on falsehoods that many push to the public as facts.

Do not believe any that blatantly contradict the Bible, no matter how many 'experts' may agree with the contradiction.

IS HALLOWEEN A HOLY TIME FOR CHRISTIANS?



By Bob Thiel

What is Halloween? Where did it come from? Is it a holiday that the God of the Bible approves of? Do Halloween and Christianity belong together?

Halloween is an old English word which means “hallowed evening.”

It is now specifically observed by many on October 31st.

Origins of Halloween

Halloween contains many of the remnants of an autumn holiday celebrated by the Druids called Samhain (apparently pronounced “sah-van” though some say SAH win or SOW in--and apparently meaning “summers end”).

There historically have been pagan figures with names that are similar to this. For example, there was a Celtic hero named Samain or Sawan who supposedly owned a magical cow.

In other pagan religions, there was Samana (“the leveler”) the name of an Aryan God of Death (a.k.a. Yama, Sradhadeva, Antaka, or Kritanta) according to the ancient Veda scriptures of Hinduism and Shamash was the Sun God of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Some of the ideas for modern costumes came via France.

Essentially, the timing of Halloween seems to be related to certain movements of the sun. Notice the following:

Halloween is date of astronomical interest. It has to do with seasons: Halloween is a cross-quarter date, approximately midway between an equinox and a

solstice. There are four cross-quarter dates throughout the year, and each is a minor holiday: Groundhog Day (Feb. 2nd), May Day (May 1st), Lammas Day (Aug. 1st), and Halloween (Oct. 31st).

“Long ago, the Celts of the British Isles used cross-quarter days to mark the beginnings of seasons. Winter began with Halloween, or as they called it, Samhain,” says John Mosley of the Griffith Observatory.

“Halloween marked the transition between summer and winter, light and dark -- and life and death. On that one night, according to folklore, those who had died during the previous year returned for a final visit to their former homes. People set out food and lit fires to aid them on their journey -- but remained on guard for mischief the spirits might do.” (Spooky Astronomy. <http://spaceweather.com/present/10/31/07>).

Notice that in Asia, versions of this day, somewhat like the Celts and the pre-Hispanic Mexicans, it is celebrated near the first of August:

Japan has its own Halloween-type celebration known as “O-bon,” an old Buddhist holiday meant to honor ancestors. It takes place in mid-August or July. Graves are visited and cleaned, food offerings are made, lanterns are hung in front of houses to guide spirits, and a ritualized dance called “bon-odori” takes place to welcome them. On the last day of O-bon, to guide spirits on their journey, the Japanese partake in a ceremony called “Toro nagashi,” in which paper lanterns are floated down a river.

O-bon originates from the Chinese Buddhist celebration of “Ullambana,” which has the same notion that during this time, spirits are able to move among us.

The Ullambana Sutra, a traditionally Indian story, is the scripture that addresses this day, with the story of Mahamaudgalyayana, a disciple of Buddha, whose mother had been reborn into a lower realm. Though interpretations of the story vary, Buddha’s instructions to his student mirror modern practices of the day, which is to offer food and pray for the souls of both living and dead relatives. People also would give donations to monks.

The current celebration in Taiwan and China of the Ghost Festival pays homage to this Buddhist holiday, but includes the practices of burning money, clothes and goods, which are believed to then make it to the spirit world in full, as well as the release of paper boats and lanterns into rivers (Meaning, sanctity of Halloween is lost in translation St. Cloud Times, MN -

Oct 21, 2007 <http://www.sctimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071021/OPINION/110210041/1006/NEWS01>).

Hence, the foundations of Halloween include many items that certainly are not of Christian origin.

Satan has successfully gotten many of his holidays endorsed by many cultures and religions of the world.

There is actually also another day, somewhat like Halloween, that is observed April 30th mainly in parts of Europe, which is called Walpurgis Night (otherwise known as the Witches' Sabbath). It is also not Christian, though some have tried to tie it in with a Catholic saint.

Jack-o'-Lanterns

One improper claim of the origin of jack-o'-lanterns is somewhat amusing.

The Irish have a story that a man named Jack died who was too much of a miser to be with God and was not allowed to be with the devil since he had played practical jokes on him. Since Jack had nowhere to go, he was to walk the earth carrying a lantern until Judgment Day.

In Ireland, originally, carved turnips were used for jack-o'-lanterns, though most now use pumpkins.

Here are some more likely origins:

According to historian Ronald Hutton, in the 19th century, Hallowe'en guisers in parts of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands commonly used jack-o'-lanterns made from turnips and mangelwurzels. They were "often carved with grotesque faces to represent spirits or goblins". In these areas, 31 October to 1 November was known as Samhain and it was seen as a time when spirits or fairies were particularly active. Hutton says that they were also used at Hallowe'en in Somerset (see Punkie Night) during the 19th century. Christopher Hill also writes that "jack-o'-lanterns were carved out of turnips or squashes and were literally used as lanterns to guide guisers on All Hallows' Eve." Some claim that the jack-o'-lanterns originated with All Saints' Day (1 November)/All Souls' Day (2 November) and represented Christian souls in purgatory. (Jack-o'-Lantern. Wikipedia, viewed 04/05/15)

Guisers are people in disguises, such as mummers and those wearing a mask.

Certainly, jack-o'-lanterns are not biblical.

Adopted by the Church of Rome

Because of compromise with pagan practices, the Church of Rome ended up with a holiday at the same time as the one the Druids held. The Catholic Encyclopedia teaches:

All Saints' Day

In the fourth century, neighbouring dioceses began to interchange feasts, to transfer relics, to divide them, and to join in a common feast; as is shown by the invitation of St. Basil of Caesarea (397) to the bishops of the province of Pontus. Frequently groups of martyrs suffered on the same day, which naturally led to a joint commemoration. In the persecution of Diocletian the number of martyrs became so great that a separate day could not be assigned to each. But the Church, feeling that every martyr should be venerated, appointed a common day for all. The first trace of this we find in Antioch on the Sunday after Pentecost. We also find mention of a common day in a sermon of St. Ephrem the Syrian (373), and in the 74th homily of St. John Chrysostom (407). (Mershman, Francis. "All Saints' Day." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 1. Nihil Obstat. March 1, 1907. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 11 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01315a.htm>>)

Of course, "All Saints Day" was NOT a biblical nor apostolic practice. Furthermore, two points related to John Chrysostom and one related to Ephrem of Syria should be mentioned.

The first is that a careful reading of his 74th homily (which supposedly is where he declared this observation according to The Catholic Encyclopedia) shows that he discussed the deaths of prophets, but it is not clear to me that John Chrysostom declared the "Christian" observation of something that resembles "All Saints' Day."

The second is that John Chrysostom was a hater of Jews and was opposed to biblical practices, including the biblical Holy Days (John Chrysostom. Eight Homilies: Against the Jews. Preached at Antioch, Syria in the Fall of 387 AD. Medieval Sourcebook: Saint John Chrysostom. Fordham University.). So even if he somehow was endorsing something, since he was NOT POSSIBLY a true Christian, his possible endorsement is irrelevant.

As far as Ephrem of Syria goes, he wrote that "Antichrist" would be against idols. The Bible is clear in Revelation 13 that this will not be the case as the two beasts mentioned

both endorse idols/images.

For many reasons, including his lack of biblical understanding, Ephrem's possible endorsement is irrelevant.

Furthermore, notice something from The World Book Encyclopedia:

The Druids, an order of priests in ancient Gaul and Britain, believed that on Halloween, ghosts, spirits, fairies, witches, and elves came out to harm people. They thought the cat was sacred and believed that cats had once been human beings but were changed for punishment for their evil deeds. From these Druid beliefs come the present-day use of witches, ghosts, and cats in Halloween festivities...The custom of using leaves, pumpkins, and corn stalks as Halloween decorations comes from the Druids. The early peoples of Europe also had a festival similar to the Druid holiday...In the 700s, the Roman Catholic Church named November 1 as All Saints' Day. The old pagan customs and the Christian feast day were combined into the Halloween festival [Halloween. World Book Encyclopedia, vol 9. Chicago, 1966: 25-26].

We see that scholars recognize that pagan elements were incorporated into a festival that the Church of Rome decided it needed to have at the time the Druids had a similar celebration.

One article at the mislabelled Protestant publication Christianity Today starts out with the statement:

"I love Halloween" (Mendenhall D. A Halloween Solution. Christianity Today, October 31, 2005. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/novemberweb-only/13.0.html>).

In the past Christianity Today has sold various trinkets associated with the observance of Halloween (one year, it was advertising Jack-o-lantern car magnets when I checked).

One headline at the mislabelled Christianity Today was:

"Why Should the Devil Get Halloween?" (Rivadeneira C. Christianity Today, October 29, 2010. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2010/october/why-should-devil-get-halloween.html> viewed 10/01/13).

Well the simple answer is that it is NOT a biblical holiday and the Bible says not to worship the true God like the pagans worshipped their deities.

Anyway, my main points are that Halloween is of pagan

origin, it was not endorsed by the Bible nor the original Apostles, and that many have compromised to adopt it.

From the old Radio Church of God

Notice what the old Radio Church of God taught about the observation of Halloween:

What about you and your children? What comes to your mind when thinking about Hallowe'en? The truth of the Bible? Not at all! Instead, weird and FRIGHTENING MASKS — persons PORTRAYED AS WITCHES AND DEMONS. Pumpkins and turnips hollowed out in the shape of EERIE-LOOKING faces! Lighted candles are placed inside to help bring out the more frightful side of these carvings. Dough is baked into small figurines RESEMBLING WITCHES AND SPIDER'S WEB CAKES are baked by the dozen for this occasion. Children, dressed up in the most revolting garments, are let loose on the neighbors, trying to scare the daylight out of them. Let's be honest. I have before me the Good Housekeeping's Book of Entertainment, which my wife picked up from the local library. On page 168 of this much-read book, there is a section on what to do on Hallowe'en. Notice the astonishing advice given! "Halloween decorations are quite as important as the food. When planning them, remember that if the room is to be dimly lit (preferably by candle and FIRELIGHT) the decorations must be bold to be effective. Orange, black and red, THE DEVIL'S COLOURS, are the colours associated with Halloween and THIS SCHEME SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT as far as possible Have paper streamers and lanterns hanging from the ceiling, or, if you would like to have something less usual, you could make a giant SPIDER'S web with black and orange strings, or in narrow strips of crepe paper coming from the four corners of the room, complete with a LARGE SPIDER — one of the DEVIL'S FAVOURITE FOLLOWERS." Notice where the stress lies! Read further of the black magic associated with this festival. "To decorate the walls, make large silhouettes of CATS, BATS, OWLS AND WITCHES ON BROOMSTICKS For the supper table small WITCHES WITH BROOMSTICKS can be made by using lollipops on 4-inch sticks." Weird lanterns, witch-balls, and witches' cauldrons are some other objects, the book suggests, which must fit into the evening somehow. How pagan can you get?

NOWHERE does the Bible command us to observe Hallowe'en. Hallowe'en and other common festivals which people observe in the Christian-professing world have NO BIBLICAL BASIS. They originated in paganism. The testimony of history stamps Hallowe'en as a HEATHEN festival. It's built on a PAGAN FOUNDATION.

Your Bible warns: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). Which is the BASIS of YOUR practice and belief? Turn to Deuteronomy 12:29-31 and read God's condemnation of Hallowe'en! (Marx, Gerhard O. The Origin of Halloween. Plain Truth Magazine, October 1967).

Despite the truth of this, many non-Catholics have also compromised to observe this heathen festival.

Jesus is the Same

The condemnation of such pagan practices remain in the Bible irrespective of the opinions of men to the contrary.

Remember the Bible teaches:

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
9 Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines (Hebrews 13:8-9).

Neither Jesus nor true early Christians ever observed Halloween.

Certainly Halloween contains many pagan practices that Christians should realize are "strange doctrines." Therefore, irrespective of the opinions and traditions of men, true Christians still do not celebrate pagan holidays like Halloween.

We in the Continuing Church of God do not condone the celebration of pagan holidays like Halloween nor similar days such as 'Walpurgis Night.'

The light of scripture eliminates any ambiguity about Halloween. That is why we in the Continuing Church of God do not observe it.

The Bible has warnings about the time of the end:

12 lawlessness will abound (Matthew 24:12).

1 Now the Spirit expressly says in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. (I Timothy 4:1)

Halloween is a lawless observance that involves deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Notice something else the Bible teaches:

29 "When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, 30 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you

do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' 31 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (Deuteronomy 12:29-32)

Halloween is not in the Bible, yet its observation is something that many have 'added' to their life.

Of course, the core of Halloween is a pagan holiday and should not be celebrated on any day, Sunday or otherwise.

Christians and Halloween do not belong together.

Halloween places emphasis on pagan religious practices, and participation in them is futile at best, and biblically considered to be abominable. Christians should rely on the Bible for doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16), including doctrines related to the celebration of religiously related days. Halloween is clearly not a biblically sanctioned holy day and should not be observed by any who claim to believe the Bible.

THE TANNENBAUM RELIGION



White House Christmas Tree

By Bob Thiel

Most who profess Christianity, as well as many who do not, now celebrate the holiday known as Christmas. Many bring in evergreen trees as part of their celebration of it. Since neither Christmas nor use of trees for such purposes are not enjoined in the Bible, where did they come from?

Are you familiar with the term 'tannenbaum religion'?

Where did that expression come from? Do you or others you know practice some version of a 'tannenbaum religion'?

What is a Tannenbaum? Who Uses Them?

Tannenbaum is a German term literally meaning "fir tree." It is the German term for a Christmas tree.

The use of trees in pagan worship goes back thousands of years. Various trees (for example, the Irmensul, Thor's Oak and the figurative Yggdrasil) held special significance for the ancient Germanic tribes, appearing throughout historic accounts as sacred symbols and objects.

Later, trees got promotion from the Catholic saint Boniface and later heavy promotion by the former Roman Catholic priest Martin Luther. Martin Luther and Boniface essentially claimed that the triangular shape of fir trees pointed to their trinitarian conceptions of the Godhead, hence this was part of their justification for why trees should be used in Greco-Roman-Protestant worship.

Notice also the following:

The first decorated tree was at Riga in Latvia, in 1510. In the early 16th century, Martin Luther is said to have decorated a small Christmas tree with candles, to show

his children how the stars twinkled through the dark night (The Chronological History of the Christmas Tree Copyright © 1998-2007 Maria Hubert von Stauffer. <http://www.christmasarchives.com/trees.html> viewed 12/22/07).

Back in the 16th century, Catholics warned that Martin Luther's promotion of Christmas trees was a pagan form of idolatry.

Notice also the following:

Protestantism was sometimes referred to as the "Tannenbaum religion" (Mantle: 7) (Translated from German as shown in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, Volumes 82-83. 1979, p. 289).

The Tannenbaum (which simply means "fir tree") came to be associated, apocryphally or not, with Martin Luther. Because of that, many Catholics in Germany once disdained it. The "aversion of many Catholics went so far," Mr. Brunner writes, "that at the end of the nineteenth century many simply called Protestantism the 'Tannenbaum religion.' "

As late as the 1930s, the Vatican was recommending manger scenes instead of Christmas trees as a more theologically sound sort of decoration. (Felton E. The Stranger in the House: Christmas trees arrived in England and America only in the mid-19th century. Wall Street Journal, November 16, 2012)

Both the Old and New Testaments condemn idolatry:

4 'Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:4)

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Corinthians 10:14-15)

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (1 John 5:21)

While Martin Luther and his followers condemned some of the idolatry of Rome, they turned to pagan idols like trees.

The Church of Rome condemned Christmas trees because of their pagan origins as well as the fact that the Bible teaches nothing about the use of evergreen trees in conjunction with the proper worship of Jesus.

At least as late as 1896 century, Roman Catholics claimed that the use of evergreen trees made Protestantism the "Tannenbaum religion" (Moser Dietz-Rüdiger. *Bräuche und Feste im christlichen Jahreslauf: Brauchformen der Gegenwart in kulturgeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen.*

Edition Kaleidoskop, 1993, p. 107).

Despite the initial condemnation of Christmas trees, those associated with the Church of Rome later adopted them.

Growing up in the 20th century in a Roman Catholic household, my parents always had an evergreen tree in the house related to Christmas. When my wife Joyce and I visited a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school in 1990, we saw a 'Christmas tree' in every classroom.

Are these trees Christian or pagan?

In the 21st century, a Roman Catholic author wrote:

So we don't reject the use of trees at Christmas time because they were pagan, we continue to use them, because as symbols of life they now point to Christ. (Killian Brian. Halloween, as autumn celebration, reminder God's name is hallowed. Catholic Online International News. 10/31/06).

So, although these trees are known to be pagan, those who have intentionally adopted pagan practices endorse them.

What About Christmas?

Perhaps, it should also be added that The Catholic Encyclopedia teaches:

Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church ...

Natalis Invicti. The well-known solar feast, however, of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date. For the history of the solar cult, its position in the Roman Empire, and syncretism with Mithraism, see Cumont's epoch-making "Textes et Monuments" etc., I, ii, 4, 6, p. 355... (Martindale C. Transcribed by Susanti A. Suastika. Christmas. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III. Copyright © 1908 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

Helios Mithras is one god...The 25 December was observed as his birthday, the natalis invicti, the rebirth of the winter-sun, unconquered by the rigours of the season (Arendzen J. Mithraism. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume X. Nihil Obstat, October 1, 1911. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911).

The birthday of the sun god Mithras was what the pagan sun-worshipping Roman Emperor Constantine observed. He wanted his followers to observe it as well and it ended up getting officially adopted in the fourth century by the Greco-Roman bishops as 'Christmas.'

The World Book Encyclopedia notes:

In 354 A.D., Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun (Sechrist E.H. Christmas. World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 3. Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, 1966, pp. 408-417).

Scholars, including Roman Catholic ones, realize that Christmas was not a biblically, nor apostolically, enjoined date and that its observance is related to worship of pagan sun gods.

Since early faithful Christians did not celebrate any birth dates, including December 25th, there was no way that they were using Tannenbaums as part of their worship.

The Bible and the Use of Trees in Worship

But what does the Bible teach about the use of evergreen trees?

Let's start with something that the Catholic accepted English translation of the Bible, Douay Old Testament Of Anno Domini 1609 (DOT), teaches:

2 Thus saith our Lord: According to the ways of the Gentiles learn not: and (a) of the signs of heaven, which the heathen fear, be not afraid: 3 Because the laws of the people are vain: because the work of the hand of the artificer hath cut a tree out of the forest with an axe. 4 with silver and gold he hath decked it: with nails and hammers he hath compacted it, that it fall not asunder... (Jeremie/Jeremiah 10:2-4, The Original And True Douay Old Testament Of Anno Domini 1609. Prepared and Edited by Dr. William von Peters, Ph.D. Copyright © 2005, Dr. William G. von Peters. Ph.D. 2005 copyright assigned to VSC Corp.).

29 When the Lord thy God shall have destroyed before thy face the nations, that thou enterest in to possess, and thou shalt possess them, and dwell in their land: 30 beware lest thou imitate them, after they be subverted at thy entering in, and thou require their ceremonies, saying: As these nations have worshipped their Gods, so will I also worship. 31 Thou shalt not do in like manner to the Lord thy God. For all the abominations,

that our Lord doeth abhor, have they done to their Gods, offering their sons and daughters, and burning them with fire (Deuteronomy 12:29-31, DOT).

Even Catholic translations of the Bible show that God does not approve of trees that are decorated in worship or other practices associated with pagan worship. This is also shown in Protestant-preferred translations of the Bible, like the King James Version. Such things should not be done by Christians.

Furthermore, notice that using green trees as part of worship was condemned by God thousands of years ago:

2 'You must completely destroy all the places where the nations you dispossess have served their gods, on high mountains, on hills, under any spreading tree; 3 you must tear down their altars, smash their sacred stones, burn their sacred poles, hack to bits the statues of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. (Deuteronomy 12:2-3, New Jerusalem Bible, NJB, a Catholic translation) adaptations

2 Destroy all the places in which the nations, that you shall possess, worshipped their gods upon high mountains, and hills, and under every shady tree: 3 Overthrow their altars, and break down their statues, burn their groves with fire, and break their idols in pieces: destroy their names out of those places. 4 You shall not do so to the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 12:2-4, DOT).

16 Beware lest perhaps your heart be deceived, and you depart from our Lord, and serve strange Gods, and adore them (Deuteronomy 11:16, DOT).

9 When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee, beware lest thou have a mind to imitate the abominations of those nations...12 For the Lord abhorreth all these things, and for these abominations he will destroy them at thy coming. (Deuteronomy 18:9,12, DOT)

Catholic translations of the Bible show that spreading shady trees, like evergreens, were not to be part of the worship of the true God--and that people should not be deceived and serve such strange customs or use other pagan practices.

The Truth About Tannenbaums

The Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, warn against idolatry.

Tannenbaums were part of ancient pagan religious practices that the God of the Bible condemns.

Consider also the following:

24 God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24, NJB)

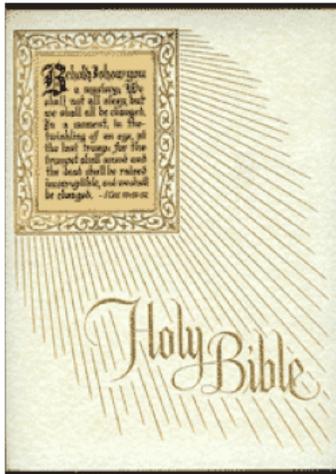
The truth is that Christmas reminds us that people are often unwilling to worship God as He intended. Christmas shows us that, in this age, many prefer pagan substitutes that they rationalize as somehow acceptable if they pretend the holiday is about Jesus.

Those who truly believe Jesus' words, "Human beings live not on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4, NJB) will not celebrate a compromised pagan holiday such as Christmas because it contains practices and symbols warned against in the Bible and was never enjoined upon true believers to practice.

Early Christians did not celebrate Christmas, and to this day those faithful in Church of God groups such as the Continuing Church of God still do not celebrate it.

Nor do we bring evergreen trees into our homes in an effort to worship God with something that He specifically stated He did not want used in His worship.

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE



Lesson 7: Ending Your FINANCIAL Troubles

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.

THINK OF IT!—1000 years of peace and prosperity, a happy new world in which nobody has any financial troubles. That is the coming UTOPIA—the wonderful World of Tomorrow!

But why isn't there a utopia today? Why is there no one thing that plagues more people today than the constant worry of making ends meet—the constant round of serious financial difficulties in which MANY of you find yourselves?

Let us UNDERSTAND!—there is a reason, a CAUSE for it (cf. Deuteronomy 28:15-20,44)!

Stupendous DEBT

When you stop to think about it, consider that never in the history of the world were any nations so seemingly rich as are the Anglo-English-speaking nations, the western European countries, and some of the Asian lands. Although the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand possess many more developed resources and national wealth, most of these same nations owe public and private debts so HUGE that the next ten generations will not be able to pay them off!

The USA alone owes over \$18 trillion in national public debt! That is over \$227,000 of debt for a family of four! Relatively few US families could pay 'their share' of this.

Furthermore, the federal public debt is rising at an incredibly high rate. Notice what has happened since the current Administration has controlled the White House according to data from the US Treasury:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Federal Public Debt</u>
01/20/2009	\$10,626,877,048,913.08
08/20/2015	\$18,151,300,217,506.79

And this total does not include unrecognized debts nor personal, corporate, state government, and local government debt.

The USA is the most indebted nation in the history of humanity. Total admitted Federal and local debt is estimated to hit approximately \$22 trillion by the end of 2015. Then, according to Forbes, there are actually \$127 trillion in unfunded liabilities.

And on a per capita basis, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is one of the most indebted nations on the earth itself. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have their own debt issues as well, plus they have sold off rights to significant amounts of their resources to Gentile nations. But even if they did not have any debt, those nations are all truly dependent upon the United States for defence. Over time, the pressure from social situations, politics, and debt have greatly impacted defence spending in the USA.

Debt and social program spending contributed to the demise of the ancient Roman Empire. In many ways, the USA is following the Romans, except worse.

Notice the following table.

Category	Portion of Total Federal Spending			
	1960	1970	1980	1990
Social Programs	21%	32%	44%	44%
National Defence	53%	42%	26%	25%
General Government & Debt Service	19%	18%	21%	25%
Economic Affairs & Infrastructure	6%	7%	7%	5%
Public Order & Safety	0%	0%	1%	1%

Category	Portion of Total Federal Spending			
	2000	2010	2012	2013
Social Programs	54%	61%	60%	61%
National Defence	19%	20%	21%	20%
General Government & Debt Service	21%	13%	14%	14%
Economic Affairs & Infrastructure	5%	4%	4%	4%
Public Order & Safety	1%	1%	2%	2%

<http://www.justfacts.com/nationaldebt.asp>

For many years Bob Thiel has written that we would see further shifts away from spending on national defence by the USA and more towards social programs. And while there can be some occasional spikes in the other direction, the basic direction for federal spending in the USA is towards more social programs. It should also be understood that interest rates are currently artificially low—the time will come when they will rise and this will be part of the fiscal disaster that will hit the USA.

Thousands of years ago, God inspired to the prophet Habakkuk to record the following:

2 Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 4 “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:2-4)

Notice that the prophecy that is being discussed is for the appointed time of the end. It is a prophecy for our time—and will affect the proud. Also notice that the Bible says that he who reads it, meaning understands it at the proper time, should run. The time will come when God’s Philadelphian Christians will have to flee (Revelation 12:14-16), this may include running (cf. Matthew 24:16; Jeremiah 12:5).

Notice what Habakkuk was told to warn of:

5 “Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, He is a proud man, And he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as Sheol, And he is like death, and

cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples. 6 “Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases What is not his — how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges’? 7 Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty. 8 Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it. (Habakkuk 2:5-8)

Since the above prophecy in Habakkuk will be fulfilled at the time of the end (cf. “The message was true, but the appointed time was long...in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come,” Daniel 10:1,14). Daniel 8:19, 11:27,29,35 use the same Hebrew term for “appointed time” as Habakkuk 2:3, while Daniel 10, using a different term, ties the latter days to the time in Daniel 8:19.

Despite the misunderstandings of many, Habakkuk 2 was not fulfilled in its entirety anciently. Also, it makes little sense that Habakkuk’s writings would be directed towards the modern nation of Israel as it does not have enemy creditors. It must be a nation or group of nations with some prominence at the appointed time of the end. As far as “violence of the land” as a contributing factor, this would seem to include crime, military missions, and perhaps riots/civil unrest. Might it also include promotion of violent sports?

Dr. Thiel believes that, in the USA, factors such as legalizing abortion, redefining marriage, the increasing public acceptance of immodestly dressed females, pornography, violent sports, covetousness, and other sins are the root cause of its economic problems (cf. Deuteronomy 28:15-20,44).

The Bible warns of debt and destruction as a curse for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:47-52; Habakkuk 2:3-8), and the USA is in more debt than any country on the planet ever has been.

SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG! We have lost all sense of the value of money. And no wonder. What most people simply don’t know, today, about their financial problems is that the ETERNAL CREATOR set definite LAWS in motion— invisible, yet inexorable laws, which regulate personal economic conditions. A KNOWLEDGE of these laws would teach us to recognize the right value of money—would give us joy and happiness by keeping us from life-long financial slavery.

Decades ago, a poll of thousands of Americans revealed that not more than 3% of the people ever heard about these divinely established FINANCIAL LAWS. And not even 1% of the people follow these laws that regulate our prosperity! Is it much wonder that the USA is now in so much debt as its leaders go further and further from what the Bible teaches?

World Ignorant of these LAWS

Let's understand how these FINANCIAL LAWS would operate to bring about a utopia—both nationally and individually—if we obey them. But many do not have true faith (cf. Luke 8:18).

Everything produced—money and the things money will buy—basically comes from the earth (with some minor amounts from meteors, the moon, etc.). You didn't produce the earth—GOD produced it! You merely apply certain energy in thinking and planning and in labor to the EARTH, which GOD created and OWNS. Where does the energy you expend really come from? It comes from God. You do not create it. You merely utilize what GOD supplies.

God even set your thinking process in motion. You are entirely dependent on Him for your life—for every breath you breathe.

Yes, all has come from God. It is GOD who sustains, preserves in motion, guides and directs all the natural forces and energies. God is not merely a Creator of long ago. He is the living DIRECTOR today. It is GOD'S LABOR—His thinking, planning and creating—that really produces all.

Therefore, GOD HAS A CLAIM TO OWNERSHIP OF ALL YOU HAVE taken for granted that you PRODUCED. His claim is VALID. It is PRIOR to yours. God Almighty says: "The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). These inspired words are repeated in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 10:26.

Yes, even the money—the gold and silver—is God's. " 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:8).

Only the foolish would DARE to deny this claim of God! Let us admit, then, that our income BELONGS to God! It is His to do with as HE wills in carrying out His PLAN.

How God's Law Regulates Your Wealth

God is concerned about you. He has your interest and

welfare in mind. Therefore God set FINANCIAL LAWS in motion regulating that portion of His WEALTH which your thinking and labor extracted from the earth and developed.

God's LAW concerning what you earn is like a contract. He allows you to work on HIS EARTH, to use a part of the earth for food and other materials for your livelihood—to utilize its soil, its timber, its water, its coal and oil, and to manufacture products from it. In turn, God wants YOU to understand you are WORKING WITH GOD IN PARTNERSHIP—MAINTAINING AND DEVELOPING WHAT HE CREATED.

But GOD IS GENEROUS. In this partnership, God TURNS OVER TO YOU as your own not 5% or 20% or even 50%—but most of what you produce. And even the amount which He reserves for Himself He spends for the purpose of disseminating to the PEOPLE His message, His laws of life, that free us from financial fears and worries and give us peace of mind and enduring happiness, abundant joy and LIFE ETERNAL!

Think of it! GOD USES THE ONE TENTH of all that we produce TO HELP IMPROVE US materially and spiritually, and to reveal to this UNHAPPY STARVING WORLD THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS LAWS WHICH, IF OBEYED, WOULD PRODUCE UTOPIA! He keeps NOTHING for Himself (there is another 10% God expects you to save so you can keep and enjoy His holy days per Deuteronomy 14:22-27, and God expects support for the poor; cf. Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Galatians 2:10).

God's financial laws are for HUMANITY'S GOOD. OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW BRINGS BLESSINGS. "PROVE ME [by returning to God His tenth] now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:10, KJV).

When we violate His laws, we bring CURSES upon ourselves—fears and worries, frustration, unhappiness and death! "You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation." " 'In what way have we robbed You?' IN TITHES and OFFERINGS" (Malachi 3:8-9).

But God has ordained it that if He receives His rightful 10%, as a partner, of what is produced from the earth, the 90% which He gives us will grow bigger and accomplish more for us than we alone could ever have done with the entire 100%. God actually pays us for keeping the CONTRACT! "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, Says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:12).

It is time we understand the duties we owe God. The nations today have robbed God by withholding their tithes

and are under a curse. **BUT YOU, INDIVIDUALLY, CAN PROSPER BY TITHING!** Many in the time of ancient Israel did not believe God or have the faith to trust Him to bless them for giving. If you are a Christian, do you have the faith to tithe or do you violate the Apostle Paul's admonition and walk by sight instead of by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7)?

God's Commission To His Church

Today you are seeing prophecy fulfilled before your very eyes! You are beginning to realize that only an all-powerful God could foretell the present state of world affairs.

Now dire events are about to fall on an unbelieving world unless those in it repent of their ways which have brought conditions in this world to a chaotic climax. Prophecy shows the vast majority will not repent—only a few will. Christ knew this.

Nevertheless, in spite of the poor reception which Christ knew this world would give the Gospel Message, what did He command His apostles to do? He commanded them, "You shall be witnesses to Me [witness that Christ would return to put down rebellion and rule the world] . . . to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

Do you grasp the meaning of this?

THE APOSTLES WERE COMMANDED BY CHRIST TO WARN THE PEOPLE OF THE WRATH CHRIST WILL ADMINISTER, AT THIS SECOND COMING, TO THOSE WHO WILL NOT TURN FROM THEIR CRIMES. Also, WHEN THE UNREPENTANT WILL SAY, WHEN THE PLAGUES FALL, "BUT WE HAD no warning FROM GOD," THE GOSPEL MESSAGE WHICH THEY HEARD WILL BE A witness AGAINST THEM THAT GOD did WARN THEM, BUT THAT they WOULDN'T HEED!

Did Christ command the faithful—His disciples of our day—to carry out this same command? Yes! Here it is: Christ, addressing the disciples of His day concerning the spreading of the gospel warning said, "You will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Matthew 10:23). Obviously, this was addressed not only to His apostles of that day—for they are dead and Christ did not come before they died—IT IS A COMMAND FOR CHRIST'S PRESENT-DAY DISCIPLES—AND THEIR CO-WORKERS NOW!

Remember also that Christ said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

Right now, at the end of this age, the true "Philadelphian" ministers of God are doing this. You do not hear other ministers properly warning this world of the dire things God is going to inflict upon an unbelieving and disobedient

world with fully-biblically correct prophetic positions, do you? No! It is not a pleasant thing to do—to preach an unpopular message. Yet, time and again we have seen in these lessons that is just what Christ has commanded His TRUE followers to do. Are you one of the true followers of Christ?

This is the great commission of God's church today—to see that this warning—this message is carried to all corners of the earth just before Christ comes. With His unchanging foresight, God has provided a WAY by which this great worldwide work is to be FINANCED—FOR IT does TAKE MONEY for God's ministers to carry the message FREE to all the world by AM/FM & internet radio, printed literature, YouTube television, internet sites, and personal evangelism.

God could provide the money miraculously. He could even have His angels proclaim the message to the world now (and they will later have a part Revelation 14:6-11). But that is not His way now, for He is working through us—we humans—so that each of us can gain experience and show our obedience.

This lesson, like the others, is extremely important to you. HAVE YOU PRAYED to God that He will give you understanding of this lesson?

LESSON 7

Christ Has Work to Do

1. Does God the Father have work to do? John 5:17. Does CHRIST HAVE WORK TO DO also? Same verse. Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34) and "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Consider also Acts 13:41 (which partially quotes from Habakkuk 1:5).
2. Who created all things? Hebrews 1:2; Genesis 1:1. Who did the actual work? Hebrews 1:2.
3. In addition to being Creator, what great office does Christ hold today? Hebrews 4:14. Is He merely a priest or is He high priest? Same verse. Who appointed or called Him to this office? Hebrews 5:8-10. Note especially verse 10.

COMMENT: A PRIEST SERVES GOD ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE. Christ is the Father's great high priest—the one and only great high or chief priest. He is heir to all things (Hebrews 1:2).

4. What order or rank has Christ? Hebrews 5:6. Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:17, 21; Hebrews 6:20.
5. To whom did Abraham pay tithes in the Old Testament? Hebrews 7:1-2; Genesis 14:18-20. Was He God's priest? Hebrews 7:1. What did Abraham pay? Hebrews 7:2. How much is a tithe? Leviticus 27:32. What did Jacob pay? Genesis 28:22.
6. Who was this Melchizedek mentioned in the Old Testament?—was He to live always? Hebrews 7:3 first part. Was this priest "King of Righteousness"? Verse 2. Only God is completely righteous. Therefore this Melchizedek had to be one of the Godhead and would have to be high priest. Since Melchizedek is "the priest of God Most High" (Genesis 14:18), this describes Melchizedek in terms that could not apply to a human (Hebrews 7:1-3).
7. Abraham saw this person. Then could this person have been the Father? John 5:37. What was this Melchizedek to be "made like" later? Hebrews 7:3, KJV. And was He to remain always (abide . . . continually) a priest? Same verse. Then, as there could not exist two great HIGH priests of God in Christ's day, doesn't this show that CHRIST WAS MELCHIZEDEK, THE HIGH PRIEST of the Father IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES?

COMMENT: "MelchiZedeK" is the Old Testament Hebrew word for the New Testament Greek word "MelchiSedeC." The foregoing facts clearly indicate that Christ existed as the high priest of the Father in Old Testament times.

8. Did Christ exist as the "Lord God" of Israel then? Compare 1 Corinthians 10:4 with Deuteronomy 32:3-4 and John 8:56-58.

Is Jesus Christ who is the "Rock" also the "Lord"? Has anyone ever seen the Father? John 1:18. When will the Father come down among His people? Revelation 21:1-3; 22:1

COMMENT: Christ was the God whom the people knew in the Old Testament. Nowhere does the Bible show that the Father has ever come down visibly to intervene in the affairs of this earth.

9. Didn't Melchisedec—the God of the Old Testament who became Christ—personally speak to Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:9-13.
10. Did Melchisedec, in HIS OFFICE as the Father's High Priest, INSTRUCT ADAM AND EVE in the laws of the Father, after creating them? Genesis 2:16-17, 9. Did Adam sin? Job 31:33; 1 John 3:4; Romans 5:12, 14; 3:23.

Is there sin when God has not given a law commanding a course of action? Romans 5:13.

COMMENT: Adam and Eve had the choice of doing the things which God allowed. Or they could do the things God did not allow, and thereby sin. They chose to sin. They broke His Law. Melchisedec's work was to instruct them.

11. When Abraham was travelling toward the land of Palestine, where was Melchisedec—the one who in the future became Christ—located? Genesis 14:18. What was Melchisedec's position in addition to being the Father's High Priest? Same verse. What does "King of Salem" mean? Hebrews 7:2.

COMMENT: The name "Jerusalem" means "City of Peace." Here we find the "King of Peace" ruling over Jerusalem, the "City of Peace" as the High Priest of the Father.

What seems to be the first reference in the Bible about Jerusalem comes from the following passage:

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. (Genesis 14:18)

While the above uses the term "Salem," the Jewish first century historian Josephus said that this was actually a reference to Jerusalem:

So Abram, when he had saved the captive Sodomites, who had been taken by the Assyrians, and Lot also, his kinsman, returned home in peace. Now the king of Sodom met him at a certain place, which they called The King's Dale, where Melchisedec, king of the city Salem, received him. That name signifies, the righteous king: and such he was, without dispute, insomuch that, on this account, he was made the priest of God: however, they afterward called Salem Jerusalem. (Josephus. Antiquities of the Jews, Book 1, x, 2)

This also is confirmed in the Bible in the Psalms as the place in Judea with the tabernacles at that time was Jerusalem:

1 In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. 2 In Salem also is His tabernacle,

And His dwelling place in Zion. (Psalms 76:1-2)

Since the Bible refers to Melchizedek as "the priest of God Most High" (Genesis 14:18), describes Melchizedek in terms that could not apply to a human (Hebrews 7:1-3), and teaches that Jesus is our High Priest (Hebrews 6:20), there has long been a divine connection to Jerusalem that precedes the time that there were any children of Israel (Abram/Abraham was the grandfather of Jacob/Israel).

12. What did God do when ABRAHAM PAID TITHES TO MECHISEDEC? Genesis 14:19-20. How plain that tithing was known from early times! Was Melchisedec personally conducting His duties as High Priest of the order of Mechisedec even into Abraham's time? Genesis 14:18-19.

13. Did Abraham continue to obey God's laws, which included the law of tithing? Genesis 26:3, 5.

COMMENT: It is evident that Melchisedec had taught God's laws—the law of tithing among them—in considerable detail, long before Moses. MELCHISEDEC USED THE TITHES HE RECEIVED IN FURTHERING OF GOD'S MINISTRY.

14. God has given to Abraham more material blessings than any man on the face of the earth. Read Genesis 12:1-3. Why has He done this? Genesis 26:3, 5. Isn't this in part, because Abraham tithed? Hebrews 7:2.

Tithing Done Anciently

1. Did Abraham's grandson, JACOB, TITHE? Genesis 28:22. WHAT IS A TENTH? Leviticus 27:32. Will Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be resurrected into the Kingdom? Luke 13:28.

2. What did Melchisedec promise to do for Abraham's offspring because Abraham kept God's commands? Read again Genesis 12:2-3.

COMMENT: Later, in Jacob's day, there was a drought. Abraham's descendants went to Egypt to escape it. There they became captives of the Egyptians for over two hundred years. Then Melchisedec (the Word, the Lord of the Eternal God of the Old Testament, the Christ of the New Testament) had Moses deliver them from their long captivity.

3. Had Abraham's descendants, ISRAEL, FORGOTTEN the commands—the SPIRITUAL LAWS of God—while in this long captivity? Exodus 16:23. God had to identify again which day was the Sabbath. Did GOD begin to REVEAL HIS SPIRITUAL LAWS AGAIN TO THE PEOPLE BEFORE they CAME TO MOUNT SINAI? Exodus 18:15-16. Why did Melchisedec have to rebuke some of them? Exodus 16:28.

4. Did Melchisedec, shortly afterward, make known in full the laws of the Father? Exodus 20. Did MELCHISEDEC MAKE KNOWN AGAIN the fact that TITHES MUST BE GIVEN? Leviticus 27:32.

5. Did Israel continue to keep these laws (including tithing)? Jeremiah 7:22-24. Note especially verse 24.

6. Then, because they broke His laws, what did Melchisedec command them to do? Read Leviticus 4, the entire chapter. These were only part of the old Mosaic law of rituals. Why were these ritualistic laws added? Galatians 3:19. Does this verse then prove that there were other laws already in existence which were being TRANSGRESSED?—God's spiritual laws of righteous and prosperous living? Verse 24.

COMMENT: It was only after Israel disobeyed the laws of righteous and prosperous living (the Ten Commandments, tithing, and others which define right from wrong) which Melchisedec had again made known to them, that Melchisedec commanded Moses to establish an endless routine of backbreaking rituals and sacrifices. These ceremonies involved HARD WORK for all concerned.

These ceremonies were ADDED as a result of sin—as reminders that the people were already breaking spiritual laws regulating human life. Read again Jeremiah 7:22. The apostle Paul designated this added ceremonial and ritualistic law as a "law of works."

TITHES Furthered Old Testament Ministry

1. We have traced tithing from the time of Adam and Eve down to the time of Moses and have seen that God requires the first tenth of all that is produced. Why can the Father claim this amount? Psalm 24:1; 1 Corinthians 10:26.

2. Does the Father consider this as RENT? Compare Job 41:11 and Romans 11:34, 35. THEN SHOULDN'T ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE PAY TITHES?

COMMENT: Because God found in Abraham a man of great obedience, God honoured Him and his descendants by revealing His Spiritual laws of righteousness and joyous living to them more fully than to any other people on earth. But God's laws are living forces—they are in action at all times. They apply to everyone everywhere, throughout all time!

3. As we have seen, up to the time of Moses, this tithe had been paid directly to Melchisedec who used it for the service of God's ministry. What GREAT CHANGE did Melchisedec command in the time of Moses—JUST AFTER THE PEOPLE REFUSED TO OBEY GOD'S SPIRITUAL LAWS FOR JOYOUS LIVING—AS TO WHOM was TO RECEIVE THE TITHE? Numbers 18:21; 2 Chronicles 31:4-5.

4. Did Melchisedec set apart one whole tribe out of the

twelve tribes of Israel to minister these hard rituals? Numbers 3:6-7; 8:11. This tribe composed the Levitical Priesthood.

5. What different use was to be made of this tithe for that time? Numbers 18:21. Did Melchisedec let the Levitical ministry receive the first tithe with which to carry on the physical work, instead of Himself?

COMMENT: Remember, the tithes belong to Melchisedec. The tithes were paid directly to Him in patriarchal times for the purpose of carrying on God's ministry to individuals. But in the days of Moses, MELCHISEDEC ORDERED SOMETHING NEW—the tithes were PAID TO HIM THROUGH MEN ACTING AS HIS REPRESENTATIVES. God's ministry through the Levites became a material, ritualistic ministry of reminding a NATION of their failure to OBEY His laws. Consider! TODAY GOD'S MINISTRY MUST REMIND THE WHOLE WORLD!

The Levites USED THE TITHES TO MINISTER TO the PEOPLE IN THE MANNER GOD HAD COMMANDED FOR THAT TIME. Melchisedec still supervised BUT stepped into the background, letting MEN carry out the plan of God.

6. What were even the Levitical priests commanded to do? Numbers 18:26. Tithe? Had you ever noticed that before?
7. What is anyone who refuses to tithe? Malachi 3:8-9.

COMMENT: God, as owner of all things, does not need anything. TITHING TEACHES FAITH AND OBEDIENCE! Malachi 3:10:

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

8. Where any tithes used for widows or orphans? Deuteronomy 26:12-15.

COMMENT: This was an additional tithe that was given every three years (or actually on years 3 and 6 of a seven-year cycle). This provided support for widows, orphans, ministers, and sometimes others.

In the New Testament, caring for widows (Acts 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:3-10) and the poor was not to be neglected (cf. Galatians 2:10). We in the Continuing Church of God spend a significant proportion of the tithes and offerings received supporting widows, orphans, and the extremely poor in places such as Africa and Asia.

Freewill Offerings

1. In addition to tithes, did the ISRAELITES GIVE FREEWILL OFFERINGS? 2 Chronicles 31:14; Ezra 3:4.
2. Will offerings be "required" in the soon-coming millennium? Ezekiel 20:40. What does the word "REQUIRE" mean? SEE YOUR DICTIONARY!

Many have misunderstood the subject of tithing because of certain Scriptural references to two other tithes commanded in ancient Israel. Now let's see how the Bible differentiates these tithes.

3. In addition to the extremely important FIRST TITHE, did the High Priest Melchisedec – the Christ of the New Testament – command Israel to lay aside any other tithes? Deuteronomy 14:22-26. What were they to do with this tithe? Verse 23. Why? Same verse.
4. Where did they have to go to eat? Deuteronomy 14:23. Was it a time of rejoicing? Verse 26. How often was it to be saved? Verse 22.
5. As the first tithe was taken of the very first fruits of any income, wouldn't it be first tithe? And as this was yet another tithe coming after the first, wouldn't it be the SECOND TITHE?

COMMENT: Unlike the second tithe, the first tithe belonged to God. The second tithe belonged to the people to be used as He commanded them.

6. Was Israel commanded to lay aside one other tithe in addition to the first and second tithes? Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26:12-15.

Was it to be done as often as the first and second which were yearly? Note carefully Deuteronomy 14:28, 26:12. What was it to be used for? Deuteronomy 15:29, 26:13. What would one receive for doing this? Same verses.

God specifically calls this tithe a "holy tithe" (Deuteronomy 26:13). Because of the seventh 'year of release/rest' (Leviticus 25:1-7), third tithe was collected only for years three and six of a seven year cycle (the cycle was based upon the 'civil year' in the Hebrew calendar and began with the first day of the seventh month of Tishri.

Interestingly, immediately after Deuteronomy 14:29, the Bible discusses the seventh year of release and also make provisions for the poor:

- 1 At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. 2 And this is the form of the

release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord's release. 3 Of a foreigner you may require it; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, 4 except when there may be no poor among you; for the Lord will greatly bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance 5 only if you carefully obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. 6 For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you. (Deuteronomy 15:1-6)

Thus, since there were no chapter breaks in the original Hebrew text, you can see that the third tithe is somewhat tied to the every seven year release of debts. And the children of Israel paid third tithe during years three and six of the seven year cycle.

Though some have disputed whether or not the children of Israel paid more than one tithe, the expression tithes (the plural of tithe) is used 17 times in the Old Testament.

As this tithe was to be laid aside at only lengthy intervals, wouldn't it be the THIRD TITHE?

COMMENT: The three tithes just mentioned cover all the tithes Melchisedec commanded Israel.

7. Did Melchisedec command any "free will offerings" of Israel? Deuteronomy 16:16-17. How does the BIBLE interpret its phrase "NOT APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD EMPTY-HANDED"? Verse 17 (cf. Exodus 23:14-16; Exodus 34:18-24; 2 Chronicles 8:13).

COMMENT: The three times mentioned here were outstanding festival seasons which God commanded be kept in commemoration of His great PLAN. Free-will offerings were made on the multiple occasions.

Israel gradually refused to obey God. Their sins cut them off from Him. Captivity followed.

8. How are believers to honor God? Proverbs 3:9.

Melchisedec Ministry Reappears!

MELCHISEDEC of the Old Testament next RE-APPEARED AS THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. As High Priest, he came as the Lamb of God to sacrifice Himself for the sins

of all those who had lived before His coming and for the sins of those who would live after Him, so they could enter the coming Kingdom of God.

He came to qualify over Satan as ruler of this world. He came to train messengers who would proclaim to an unbelieving and slumbering world His imminent return to establish His government here on earth. HE IS CHRIST—OUR PRESENT HIGH PRIEST!

How is He furthering God's great PLAN in our day?—the time of the crisis at the close of this age? What has He commanded YOU to do as your part?

1. Did Christ Himself clearly explain the coming Kingdom to the people of His day? Matthew 13:10, 11, 13, 15. How did He speak to keep them from fully understanding it? Verse 10. Read also Mark 4:11-12. Did He ever speak to the multitude except by a confusing parable? Mark 13:34. Because Jesus did not expect that most people would understand it in this age. He called it a mystery:

11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables (Mark 4:11).

2. Did Christ, however, explain clearly to His disciples, in private, the meaning of His teachings regarding the Kingdom? Matthew 13:36. Note the words, "Then Jesus sent the multitude away." Compare this with Matthew 24:3. Did the disciples come to Him openly?

How plain it is that Christ was TRAINING His DISCIPLES to carry the message of the coming Kingdom of God CLEARLY to the people.

3. After Christ had taught His disciples, what did He COMMAND them? Matthew 10:5-7, 27. Did they carry out His commands to PREACH THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Acts 8:12; 19:8.

4. Where did Christ command His disciples to carry their message later? Matthew 24:14. Christ's second coming was not in the apostles' day, was it? Then, isn't this a COMMAND FOR CHRIST'S DISCIPLES of TODAY? Jesus taught that the end of this age would not come until after the gospel of the kingdom was preached to the world as a witness to all the nations (Matthew 24:14).

5. What else did Christ command His disciples to do? John 21:15-17. Aren't they to "feed the flock of God" spiritual knowledge? 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28.

6. Why didn't Christ preach the gospel to the world

Himself instead of assigning the work to His disciples? Luke 19: 12, 15. Also, Hebrews 4:14. Where is He now? Hebrews 4:16; Mark 16:19. What is He doing? Hebrews 7:25. Isn't this His work now?

7. Doesn't the work of Christ as High Priest involve administering the Holy Spirit to His disciples throughout this church age? Acts 2:33, 38. Does Christ give the Holy Spirit to those that obey Him? Acts 5:32.
8. How did Paul say he had the power to perform mighty wonders? Romans 15:19. Did Christ tell the disciples to wait for it? Acts 1:4, 8. Did they receive it? Acts 2:4. Did Christ have it? Matthew 1:20. Do Christ's followers have it today? Acts 2:39.
9. Were there also to be false disciples—false ministers or disciples (of the Devil)—who will teach different (false) gospels? Galatians 1:6-9. And who will preach about a different spirit? 2 Corinthians 11:4.

Support of New Testament Ministry TODAY

Let's compare the support of the Old Testament Levitical Priesthood with the support of the New Testament ministry which has followed it today.

IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES—between the time of Moses and Christ—under the Old Covenant, God's ministry was purely national, for Israel alone. Its blessings were purely material—promises of earthly wealth and power in return for obedience. There were no spiritual promises for salvation. A constant round of animal sacrifices were required as a reminder of sin, so they could be allowed to remain in their land. They had no promise whatever of salvation, for the Holy Spirit, which makes a change of nature and salvation possible, was not promised until after Christ came and ascended. John 14:26; 16:7; Acts 2:38.

Melchisedec (the one who became Christ) selected the Levites as His ministers. Every Levite was a priest, or minister. MELCHISEDEC ORDAINED A CHANGE IN THE TITHING LAW—HE TURNED THE TENTH HE HAD ALWAYS PERSONALLY RECEIVED OVER TO THE LEVITES FOR MINISTERING HIS WORK.

He thereby transferred receipt of the tithe from Himself to the support of the LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD. There was no spreading of the Gospel. God's PLAN then called for the LEVITES to teach the people the law in the LETTER. THE PEOPLE WERE COMMANDED TO GIVE TO THEM.

TODAY, there is no Levitical priesthood—the Levitical

ministers are gone. Melchisedec, "who abides as High Priest continually," assumed the form of a mortal man, and sacrificed Himself for the sins of all mankind. So the Father has made available His own Holy Spirit, the power which makes possible the keeping of God's LAW IN THE right SPIRIT—or attitude. Christ came to this earth to inaugurate A NEW KIND OF MINISTRY—A SPIRITUAL MINISTRY!—a ministry of SALVATION, a ministry of WARNING, of PROPHECYING of His imminent return as world ruler!

Christ chose His original twelve disciples, or ministers then. Today all true ministers of Jesus Christ are called by a special spiritual call from God through His Holy Spirit. Christ, commissioning His ministers today, says "This GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD as a witness to all the nations, and THEN the END (of this age) will come." (Matthew 24:14)

Has Christ commanded YOU to do your part today by supporting God's new ministry in its new work, just as He commanded the Old Testament people to support His ministry then?

What is YOUR Part?

1. Does Christ belong to an ORDER of priests? Hebrews 6:20. Who made Him so? Hebrews 7:21. As High Priest of the Melchisedec order (Hebrews 6:20), has Christ added other ministers to this priesthood since His first coming? Acts 1:2. How did He appoint them? Note the last word in this verse.

COMMENT: How plain it is that CHRIST'S MELCHISEDEC ORDER OF PRIESTS EXISTS TODAY. Naturally, it would have to! For the true ministers of this order will "not have gone through the cities of Israel [ancient Israel's descendants today] before the Son of Man [Christ] comes (Matthew 10:23).

THESE MINISTERS ARE THE true MINISTERS OF GOD—CARRYING ON A MINISTRY BEGUN BY THE APOSTLES AND CONTINUED BY THEIR SUCCESSORS—US TODAY! We, today, are carrying on Christ's commanded ministry of salvation, warning and prophesying!

2. Who actually does Christ's work? John 14:10; 15:5. Notice the words "in me" in John 14:10. Through what force is this work done? Luke 4:14; Matthew 1:20. Did He promise His disciples great power to aid and guide them to carry out His commands? Acts 1:8; 2:4.
3. HOW DOES GOD COMMAND HIS WORK TO BE FINANCED TODAY? Hebrews 7, verses 1 through 13 gives the answer! Read each of these verses carefully.

What is God talking about in these verses?—TITHING? Read verses 2 and 5. How did God say He had the Melchisedec order financed in ancient times to carry on His work when (He who was to become) Christ was its only member? Hebrews 7:1-2.

4. How did God say He had the Levitical priesthood, which followed it, financed to carry on His work? Hebrews 7:5.
5. As the Levitical priesthood has now been replaced by the Melchisedec order of ministers, what CHANGE has God commanded made in the old TITHE LAW SO that His new MINISTRY can RECEIVE YOUR SUPPORT to carry on the work He commands for TODAY? Hebrews 7:12.
6. Didn't Christ verify the fact that people should TITHE today? Matthew 23:23. Note the words "These you ought to have done."

COMMENT: The terms 'tithe,' 'tithing,' or giving a 'tenth' occur ten times in the New Testament (NKJV), thus it is a New Testament subject.

Jesus taught:

"For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42).

The Book of Hebrews teaches:

"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"...Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, For he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law" (Hebrews 7:1-2,8-12).

Is this talking about a change so that the ministry receives the money instead of the Levites? Yes, "Do you not know

that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:13-14). <http://www.cogwriter.com/tithe.htm>

Notice that the New Testament shows that it was necessary for the Levitical priesthood to change:

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar (Hebrews 7:11-13).

But might argue that the above also talks about the law that people received.

That is true.

But what law?

Certainly not the ten commandments because they were given before the Levitical priesthood came into existence.

Not only were the ten commandments in affect before they were given at Mount Sinai (this is documented in the articles at www.cogwriter.com Were the Ten Commandments in Effect Before Mount Sinai? and Job and the Ten Commandments), the Levitical priesthood did not even come into being until after Moses came down from Mount Sinai. And because of this, the Levitical laws were given later.

The Bible shows that because the Levites decided to be on God's side, that God made them His priests. Notice the following accounts:

25 Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD's side, come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. 27 And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' " 28 So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses.

And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29 Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother." (Exodus 32:25-29). (Read also Numbers 1:49-53; Numbers 3:5-13).

Later, the ordinances and laws of the Levitical priesthood were given.

Please understand that the Bible makes it clear that the sacrifices were not part of the original law that God wanted obeyed. And that the Levitical sacrifices were added because of the sins of the people:

22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.

24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers (Jeremiah 7:22-26).

God always wanted to be obeyed.

Yet the truth is that since the Israelites never would obey God, He implemented the sacrifices, even though His plan was always that they would obey Him. That is why the Bible speaks of a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-33). For more information read: Which Laws/Regulations Are Superseded/Done Away? Which Remain? What About the 613 Mitzvot? <http://www.cogwriter.com/lawsdoneaway.htm>

7. Should a minister today be allowed a livelihood through preaching the gospel? 1 Corinthians 9:14.

As shown earlier, the provisions of tithing changed after Jesus' resurrection as He became our high priest (Hebrews 7).

The New Testament is clear that the ministry is entitled to compensation:

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy

of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more?

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:11-14)

Those who believe the New Testament realize that the ministry is entitled to compensation.

Paul taught that he had a right to the money from members (1 Corinthians 9:14), but also sometimes felt they would not have been able to accept that understanding when he was with them (1 Corinthians 9:11-13).

Notice Christians are to generously support the church physically, starting with the ministry:

6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:6-10)

COMMENT: This also shows that money is something to share.

Hebrews 7 further shows that the money the Church was entitled to included the tithes that previously had been paid to the Levites. While Dr. Bob Thiel personally feels that he is biblically entitled to be compensated (beyond being reimbursement for expenses, etc.), he, like the Apostle Paul, has forfeited taking a regular salary from the (Continuing) Church of God and for the current time; he makes his family's income another way (owning a business

that he works at part-time; the Apostle Paul made tents per Acts 18:3), as there are other needs in the work that he has placed as a higher priority during this “present distress” (1 Corinthians 7:26).

Jesus taught, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4), which is how we should all try to live our lives. Jesus also taught, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34)—should we not be about our “Father’s business” (cf. Luke 2:49)?

Now perhaps it should be mentioned that, the late Church of God Pastor General Herbert Armstrong was poor—incidentally poor—for much of his ministry. Yet, there is no scripture that says ministers are supposed to be poor. The Levites, on average, were better off financially than the other tribes of Israel—this is also consistent with the records of secular history—the high priest was also probably the wealthiest man in all Israel. However, if the Levites only received 10% of the net growth in agricultural wealth, after people ate what they needed as some who have departed from the faith now teach, the Levites would not have been able to survive. Tithing was to be done on all (cf. Hebrews 7:2)

Recall that Paul specifically wrote “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” The expression double honor refers to salary/wages. Thus Paul was not saying ministers are supposed to be poor, but are entitled to decent compensation, so hopefully no Christian will be resentful nor take offense for those ministers who receive a salary.

Tithe to WHICH Church?

Hartford Institute estimates there are roughly 350,000 religious congregations in the United States (http://harr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html#numcong). There are many denominations, religions, groups, independents, and sub-groups that claim to be Christian.

Christ said, “I will build My Church”—one Church! Matthew 16:18. He did not say He would build MANY churches! ONLY ONE CHURCH—the one most faithful Church that is preaching the true New Testament gospel of the Kingdom of God of which Jesus is the living Head and High Priest—MUST receive your tithes and offerings. Which church?—God’s Church!

God’s true Church must “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19-20), “preach the gospel in all the world as a witness”

(Matthew 24:14), and “publish the gospel among all nations” (Mark 13:10). “and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14). How else can you tell which is His Church? God describes it vividly to you in your Bible so you will not err. To give to a different church would be WORSE than not at all!

1. What was to be the HISTORY of God’s Church after Christ’s time?—was it to be PERSECUTED by the Devil and to flee into the wilderness sometime after the apostles died? Revelation 12:4-6. Matthew 10:23.

COMMENT: A woman is sometimes used by God to symbolize His true Church (2 Corinthians 11:2). God’s true Church has always been SMALL IN NUMBER (Luke 12:32; Romans 9:27) and has suffered much persecution (John 16:2-4; Luke 21:12; John 15:20; Matthew 24:9; Matthew 5:10-12). Toward the end of this age, though, it was prophesied to GROW IN POWER until its MESSAGE—the warning, witness, and gospel—would reach the entire earth.

2. The Greek translation for the word “church” is ekklesia (Strong’s Number: #1577 ἐκκλησία ekklesia {ek-klay-see’-ah} from a compound of G1537 and a derivative of G2564; a calling out, that is, [concretely] a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both):—assembly, church. <http://lexiconcordance.com/greek/1577.html>).

True Christians—who make up the church (Greek ekklesia, literally, the “called-out ones”)—are like foreign ambassadors. “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

The predominant biblical name of the true Church in the New Testament is “Church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16, 22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15).

Throughout Christian history, the true church has normally used a version of the expression “Church of God” (or “the churches of Christ,” cf. Romans 16:16) though often with another word with it (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:15).

This is important! This name identifies! Did God say that His own Church in these last days would deny His name—would deny being the Church of God—or, WOULD THEY Keep IT? Revelation 3:8. Note the last five words! WHAT IS THE NAME OF OUR CHURCH? THE Continuing CHURCH OF GOD.

Could the church of Smith, then, be God's Church? So isn't it obvious, then, to WHICH Church God's TITHES SHOULD GO TO in these latter days? One that is called the Church of God—but not just any Church of God (cf. Revelation 3:9, 14-22)—the one truly leading the Philadelphian final phase of the work (Revelation 3:7-13; Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20; Romans 9:28).

3. The FIELD is NARROWED down to the churches having the name of "Church of God." BUT did Christ WARN that there would even be some churches bearing the name of "Church of Christ," or "Church of God" which would NOT be His Church? Matthew 24:5; Revelation 3:9. Doesn't this show that there would come those who will say they are Christ's ministers, acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ, deceiving the people—perhaps because THEY, THEMSELVES are deceived—making their churches appear as God's Church, while teaching dis-OBEDIENCE?

COMMENT: Today, there are churches bearing the name of "Church of God," and "Apostolic Church of God" which are not doing God's will in carrying out His commanded witness-warning these end days. They have appropriated God's name. Therefore, in addition to seeing that God's true Church does bear the name of Church of God, let's notice FURTHER IDENTIFICATION in God's own description OF HIS CHURCH—ITS CONDITION IN OUR DAY!

It should also be understood that during this 'Laodicean era,' Jesus prophesied that there would be many who are part of compromised churches (Revelation 3:14-22). Although the Laodiceans are actual Christians, they do not have the proper works of God nor sufficient love of the truth Revelation 3:14-22. Even though they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, they will NOT be protected from Satan's wrath during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:17). This differs from the true Philadelphians who will be (Revelation 3:7-10, 12:14-16).

4. Is GOD'S CHURCH TODAY to have great power? Revelation 3:8.

COMMENT: Notice how God identifies His Church. God's Church does not consist of a vast organization of great churches with large membership. On the contrary, those who compose His Church are relatively FEW IN NUMBER. It is not, one might say, yet even well known, despite all the influence it is exerting.

Recall that Jesus taught, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32) and the Apostle Paul taught, "at this present

time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5). Neither a little flock nor a remnant are particularly large. For more details, also check out our booklet titled Continuing History of the Church of God.

Jesus also taught that the true church would be hated by the world (Matthew 10:22) and persecuted (Matthew 10:23). He also taught only a few would find the way to eternal life in this age (Matthew 7:14; 20:16). The Apostle Jude indicates that the number of saints in this age would be relatively small (Jude 14), as did the Apostle Paul (Romans 11:5) and the Apostle John (cf. Revelation 14:1-9). The Bible shows the true church faced tribulations (cf. John 16:33) and many who falsely claimed to be part of it would arise (Acts 20:29-31; Revelation 3:9).

5. What has God NOW set before His Church? A DOOR? Revelation 3:8.

6. Does a "DOOR" signify the opportunity to carry the Gospel TO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES? 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13.

COMMENT: Perhaps this would be a good time to mention that the Continuing Church of God reached millions of people in over 215 countries and territories within its first four months of existence through the internet, radio, personal contact, and the printed word. On average we have reached one hundred thousand different people over the internet in a month and about one to ten million other computers are reached monthly by our Google campaign. We have reached many millions via radio (as being a radio guest) since formation (plus we also have an online radio presence).

According to AWstats, people in over 220 countries/territories have accessed our websites. According to YouTube our videos have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times by people in at least 215 countries/territories.

Other than COGwriter.com, here is a listing of various Continuing Church of God (CCOG) websites:

BibleNewsProphecy channel
Bible News Prophecy Flipboard
BibleNewsProphecy online radio
CCOGAfrica channel
CCOG.africa Africa
CCOG.asia Asia
CCOGCanada.ca Canada
CCOG.org Main CCOG Site
CCOG.eu Europe
CCOG.in India
CCOG.nz New Zealand

CDLIDD.es Spanish Language
ContinuingCOG channel
PHIND.ph Philippines

We are reaching people in the English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Hindi, Kiswahili, Dholuo, Ekegusii, French, Italian, Dutch, German, Serbian, Norwegian, Korean, and Tagalog (Philippines) languages. We have had our Bible News Prophecy magazine produced in multiple languages with additional languages expected in the future.

Despite our limited financial resources, the Continuing Church of God has been highly effective reaching people around the world.

We Christians are to preach this “gospel of the kingdom in all the world as a witness to all the nations” (Matthew 24:14), “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19), as this ultimately will result in followers from “all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9; cf. Daniel 7:14). Thus, it makes sense to get materials into whatever languages God will open up to us (cf. Revelation 3:7-8; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12).

7. Should the faithful church be reaching all the world? Matthew 28:19-20.

COMMENT: Since the formation of the Continuing Church of God, Dr. Thiel has visited the Middle East, preached in North America, preached in South America, preached in New Zealand, preached in Europe, reached people directly in Asia, and preached in Africa. Dr. Thiel has been involved now in baptizing people of all inhabited continents except South America and he expects that to happen in the future—especially as much of our materials have been translated into the Spanish language (by a South American volunteer). The CCOG evangelizing pastor for Africa has travelled throughout Africa to preach the truths of the Bible, as well as to baptize. Others are providing a witness in other lands as well. Fruits are being born (John 15:16; Luke 7:43-45; Matthew 7:17-20).

CCOG has reached millions around the world over the radio as well as millions reached over the internet. CCOG has also sent requested printed literature to all continents and does so on a regular basis. This includes booklets produced in English and in other languages.

The gospel must be preached--and we in the Continuing Church of God are doing it.

The true gospel is being preached, the sick are being healed—the works of Jesus are being performed by this Church today as Jesus prophesied.

We are SUBSIDIZED BY NO ONE! REACHING PEOPLE TAKES TIME AND MONEY. OUR WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH VOLUNTEER EFFORTS, PRAYER, AND GOD’S SPIRIT, AS WELL AS TITHES AND OFFERINGS RECEIVED FROM THOSE WHO, AS CO-WORKERS, ARE INTERESTED IN FURTHERING THE WORK GOD HAS COMMANDED TO BE DONE AT THIS TIME—THROUGH THE ONES HE HAS CHOSEN TO DO IT! We do not ask the public for contributions, but we are commanded by God to tell the people His LAWS. It is up to them whether they wish to OBEY GOD!

8. Is Christ to COME QUICKLY after the “door” has been opened to us, and we have spread God’s message? Revelation 3:11

9. Do you know, from your own experience, any other organization anywhere which is CRYING OUT as BOLDLY as this one is, to the people to REPENT before God smites this world with the destruction He has prophesied? Read Luke 24:47, for proof that God’s Church today is fulfilling Jesus command. What does God command His real ministers to do? Isaiah 58:1.

10. How DOES GOD TELL YOU TO RECOGNIZE HIS OWN MINISTERS? Matthew 7:15, 16.

COMMENT: We are reaching people around the world and providing them true Bible knowledge. God has used this work to be a witness to the truth and to bear fruit.

What human figure does God use to describe the GREAT RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS of this world today? Revelation 17:1, 5. Has SATAN his CHURCHES and ministers? 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

11. DOES GOD TIE THE WORK OF PROCLAMATION TO THE ‘END’? Matthew 24:14.

COMMENT: The proclamation of the true Gospel of the Kingdom leads to the final end! God ALSO commands, “Go . . . teach all nations . . . to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:19, 20, KJV). The ministers of the great religious systems are shirking God’s commanded duty! They are TEACHING CONTRARY TO WHAT GOD COMMANDED.

The *Continuing* Church of God fulfils God’s qualifications to be His most faithful and true Church today. NO OTHER GROUP does. All of these other groups fall seriously short at some point in FULFILLING the DESCRIPTION GOD GIVES of His end-time Philadelphian church (cf. Revelation 3:7-13). Further details can be found in our free booklet *Where is the True Christian Church Today?*

The *Continuing* Church of God believes that its top priority

needs to be to complete the work of Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20, which is part of the final phase of the work.

What is the “final phase of the work”?

The transitional phase of the work, which has occurred over the past couple of decades, is over. The beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:4-8) and the final phase of the work has begun. What should you do if you wish to support the final phase of the work?

To answer the question, JUST WHAT IS THE WORK?, Herbert W. Armstrong personally wrote:

But Christ said to His Philadelphia era Church, that because we have but little strength, He would OPEN THOSE DOORS TO US (Rev. 3:8)” (Letter 11/19/76).

The PURPOSE for which Christ built the Church exemplifies its WORK...1) To ANNOUNCE to the world for its witness the coming Kingdom of God...2) To prepare the people to whom God adds to the Church... God has always worked with humans. He has worked with O N E M A N at a time...The WORK consists of proclaiming the Gospel, by radio, by television, in print (Armstrong HW. JUST WHAT IS THE WORK? PASTOR GENERAL’S REPORT - VOL.3, NO.6 February 6, 1981)

Notice that Herbert Armstrong believed that God mainly worked through the leadership of one man at a time to lead various phases of the work. Scripture, shows for example, that the mantle passed from Elijah to Elisha (2 Kings 2:9-15). The ‘mantle’ would currently be with the person/group that truly functioned as the ‘pillar and ground of truth’ (1 Timothy 3:15).

Who is the one man at this time?

The O N E M A N at this time is Dr. Bob Thiel who while assisting in the directions of others who are supporting him, is proclaiming Christ’s Gospel of the Kingdom by radio, via YouTube “television,” via internet articles, in person, and in print as he functions as the human leader of the Continuing Church of God. It is the highly dedicated in the real Church of God that will finish the human part of the final phase of the work before (Matthew 24:14-15) and during (Revelation 11:3-14) the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord. Presuming no significant organizational changes, for many reasons, the final phase of the work will organizationally be led by the Continuing Church of God (throughout Church of God, COG, history there have been significant organizational changes, so one must be cautious as more can happen).

The final phase of the work seemingly began during the time that Jesus referred to as the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:4-8), and will include the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord, and does not end until the return of Jesus Christ.

It should be noted because of their lack of proper prophetic understandings and various compromises, other groups cannot be leading the final phase of the work. The groups that seem to act like they are do not fully realize the ramifications of the following verses:

10 Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully (Jeremiah 48:10)

4 For the word of the Lord is right, And all His work is done in truth. (Psalms 33:4)

Various groups, knowingly and unknowingly are teaching error and are not truly leading the final phase of the work. The Laodicean churches do not have the right and true work (cf. Revelation 3:14-22).

Since the coming ecumenical power is prophesied to deceive the world (Revelation 13:4,8) and use signs and lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12), those who know their God need to have the spiritual strength and knowledge to resist (James 4:7).

The Bible teaches:

40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 41 ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.’” (Acts 13:40-41)

And most Christians will not believe it, even though they were told and could see the truth if they were willing.

The final phase of the work involves:

- Putting a priority on boldly proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom to the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14).
- Preparing for the ‘short work’ (Romans 9:27-29).
- Understanding that it is not to be done by our own strength but by God’s Spirit working through His people (cf. Zechariah 4:6).
- Restoring information that was lost (Mark 9:12).
- Educating the remnant of the Philadelphian era about the truth about doctrine (Mark 9:12; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15), family relationships

(Malachi 4:5-6; Ephesians 6:1-4), and early church history (Jude 3), so that they can participate personally as God calls them in the end (1 Peter 3:15; Daniel 11:32).

- Educating the remnant of the Philadelphian era about the truth about prophecy (1 Thessalonians 4:13; 2 Peter 1:19) as well as Satan's plans to deceive (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Timothy 4:1), so that they can participate personally as God calls them to in the 'end times' (1 Peter 3:15; Daniel 11:32).
- A demonstration of faithfulness by those who are strong and who know their God at the end to instruct many (Daniel 11:32-33).
- Enduring whatever persecutions come from being willing to make such proclamations (Luke 21:12-19).
- The prophecies, testimony, miracles, and death of the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3-13).
- Support of the two witnesses (cf. Revelation 11:3-4; Zechariah 4:1-14) by those Christians in and not in the place of protection in the wilderness (Revelation 12:14-17; 14:12-13; 17:14).
- The testimony of the three angels (Revelation 14:6-11).
- Enduring to the end (Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13) and the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom (Revelation 11:15).

The final phase of the work includes proclaiming that it is the good news of the coming kingdom of God (Matthew 24:14) and not supporting the Great Monarch/Beast kingdom of man, as God's kingdom is what humanity needs and what God wants His people to proclaim. That is what we in the Continuing Church of God are striving to do—and we have reached millions of people in over 220 countries and territories through the internet, radio, personal contact, and the written word.

The final phase of the work will be done, Jesus will return, the Beast power will be destroyed, and the millennium will commence.

Do you have the courage to support the final phase of the work through your prayers, tithes, offerings, and volunteer efforts?

GENERAL SUMMARY

Tithing is mentioned 10 times in the New Testament.

God uses tithes, offerings, prayers, and volunteer efforts to do His work for those who are truly willing to be led by HIS Spirit.

Gospel proclamation often has financial costs. Ministers are entitled to be paid.

Jesus taught, "For where your treasure is, your heart is also" (Luke 12:34).

The bottom line is that the 'fruits' of not paying tithes are not good.

While some who believe that they are part of the Church of God do not believe that God expects them to tithe, they should consider if God expects Christians to give less than the carnal Israelites?

The apostles felt that the work should not be hindered in administering to the widows, but that providing for the widows needed to be done--both needed to be done, both needed financial support (cf. Acts 6:1-4).

Jesus taught that humanly devised substitutes do not add up as far as God is concerned (Mark 7:9-13). The logical conclusion, then, is that tithes should be paid by Christians. We in the Continuing Church of God do teach first, second (related to festival attendance), and third tithe.

Do you have the right attitude? Do you know to whom should you tithe? Here is what the old WCG booklet Tithing taught:

Tithing and the Give Way

GOD'S way is one of giving! God Himself is the greatest giver in the universe. Jesus followed this "give" way of life as a human being. He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). From the very creation of man, God has been steadily giving to humanity. He began by giving the first man, Adam, a wife. He then gave the first human family dominion over the earth and its animal population -- including a fabulous, beautifully landscaped garden in which to dwell.

God also gave Adam and Eve laws to govern their conduct -- so they could live happy, abundant, productive, fulfilled lives. From time to time throughout history He has expanded those basic laws to cover, in principle, every aspect of human conduct.

That great God continues to sustain the life-support system of His Creation: the sun rises to warm the earth day by day; the rain enables plant life to drink nutrients from the ground. Note the words of David: “Thou [God] dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face to shine, and bread to strengthen man’s heart” (Ps. 104:14-15, RSV)...

The Giving Attitude

The true spirit and attitude of giving is at the heart of Jesus’ instruction in the “Sermon on the Mount.” “Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you” (Matt. 5:42, RSV). Luke’s account picks up this theme and expands on it: “And if you lend [or give] to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return [the true spirit of giving]; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:34-36, RSV).

And then Jesus goes on to show that the true spirit and attitude of giving brings on an automatic ‘boomerang like’ effect. “Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (verse 38, RSV). This vital principle is threaded throughout the pages of the Bible.

But should we then give just in order to get? By no means! A giving person gives out of a spirit of genuine generosity. When he or she receives, such a person treats it as a totally unexpected blessing and turns around to give more. The true giver, as it were, looks around in absolute bewilderment when he receives. Seeking to get is disastrous to the spirit of giving! Remember it was Jesus who said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Giving on a person-to-person basis is required of all true Christian men and women. But when it comes to preaching the gospel on a worldwide front (see Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 1:6-8), it requires an organized body of believers to accomplish that task! One person simply doesn’t possess the required resources. Of course, the question then emerges: To whom or to what organized body should we give our tithes and offerings?

To Whom Should We Tithe?

It would be nice if we, as humans, could give our tithe to God personally. But for obvious reasons that’s a little unrealistic today! The only other alternative is to give it to whatever group appears best to represent God on this earth. In Moses’ time it was the Levitical priesthood which carried out His Work. Today it is the Church of God which is fulfilling God’s commission to preach and publish the gospel around this sick and dying world of ours.

This Work, like no other in this era of modern history, is bringing the true gospel to the nations of the world. Before you commit yourself to supporting any “Christian” work, you owe it to yourself to make sure you have correctly identified the true Church of God...

This worldwide Work of God is collectively striving to fulfil the great commission originally given to the early Church -- to preach and publish the gospel to this generation with all the zeal that God’s Spirit can provide! We sincerely believe that tithing is a biblical and godly practice -- ideally suited for the financial support of preaching the gospel!

Today, that gospel preaching work is led by the Continuing Church of God. It takes money to support the work.

Here is what the Statement of Beliefs of the Continuing Church of God states about tithes and offerings:

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

The Bible teaches that “And all the tithe of the land . . . is the Lord’s” (Leviticus 27:30). The most faithful Christians followed Jesus’ admonition to tithe (Matthew 23:23) and the Apostle Paul’s to give offerings (1 Corinthians 9:1-14). While in the time of the Old Testament, tithes were given to the Levitical priesthood, in the Church Age, this has changed to those representing Christ’s ministry (cf. Hebrews 7:1-12). Through tithes and offerings, Christians serve God by supporting the preaching of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:9), supporting the ministry (1 Timothy 5:17-18), the Church (2 Corinthians 9:6-14), attendance at His festivals (Deuteronomy 14:22-26; Acts 18:21), administrative needs of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14), and the care of the needy (Deuteronomy 26:12-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14; Galatians 2:10).

God has commanded that we carry His warning-witness message to all the world. But God knows it TAKES MONEY

to pay for radio, printing press, internet/websites, and YouTube television editing services. We cannot charge for our YouTube television programs (the time and resources that go into making YouTube videos). We cannot charge for our booklet and magazine publications as God has commanded that His GOSPEL GO FREE to all: "Preach saying, the Kingdom of heaven is at hand . . . Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7-8). God places the financial responsibility of furthering His gospel work upon you! He commands you to do this and will hold you responsible.

Soon, as we have just seen in previous lessons, the United States, Britain, and other descendants of ancient Israel, are to be in national captivity—just prior to Christ's coming. Why?

Malachi 3 gives the answer. This prophecy can be for no other time—look at the date! It can be for no other than those people living in the day of Christ's second coming (verse 2). Always Israel has erred (verse 7). God says to those in our land today—you, if you are guilty, "You are cursed with a curse, For you have ROBBED ME, Even this whole nation . . . in tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:9, 8).

What do you think God will do? Something different than He has always done for disobedience? No! Listen! Joel 1 says He will weaken us with famine, then Ezekiel 5:5, 12 shows He will raise a foe who will remove us from our land. The United States hasn't paid God His rent, so our people will be removed from this land!

What do you think God will do to you, IF YOU PERSIST in disobeying His commands? The treatment will be no different—He will REMOVE YOU FOREVER FROM THE EARTH.

THIS IS A SERIOUS THING—and the time is not far away when this nation is to experience God's first step in removing our people from their land. BUT you, individually, can escape IF you study God's commands and bring your actions into line with them. GOD SAYS HE HAS COMMANDED US TO PAY TITHES AND OFFERINGS, BUT MOST HAVEN'T!

If you desire to obey God in this vital matter, send your tithes and offerings to the address given here.

Those who wish to send tithes and offerings to support the work of God can send them to:

- Continuing Church of God
- 1248 W. Grand Avenue
- Grover Beach, CA 93433 USA

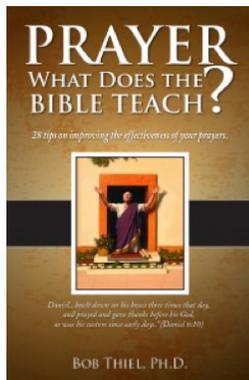
We also accept PayPal (go to www.ccog.org).

For those who wonder, perhaps it should be mentioned that all the tithes and offerings collected thus far by the Continuing Church of God have been used to proclaim Christ's gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 24:14) and other end time aspects of the work (Revelation 3:7-13), teaching those things He commanded (Matthew 28:19-20), preparing for the short work (Romans 9:28), supporting the poor, widows and orphans (Galatians 2:10; 1 Timothy 5:3; James 1:27) mainly in Africa and Asia, and relatively minor amounts have been spent for administrative aspects of the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14).

Tithes and offerings bless the giver (cf. Acts 20:35; Malachi 3:10).

Whether you do or do not send money will make no difference in your receiving the Study the Bible Course. We give as our funds allow. The Gospel must go free!

TWENTY-EIGHT TIPS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE PRAYERS: PART 2



Continuing Church of God booklet on prayer

By Bob Thiel

This is the second of a multi-part series on prayer.

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

In the previous article, prayer was defined, and four tips were discussed. In this article, five additional tips, starting with what we will call tip five are covered.

Tip Number 5: Worship God in Spirit

Humans have a tendency to be physically-minded and often want physical representations to worship God. Yet, Jesus taught that God wants to be worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Notice also something that the Apostle Paul wrote:

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

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (Romans 8:6-9)

Icons are not spirit. All icons are physical objects. Not one adequately conveys the truth about the image of the Father or the Son. Thus, no one should use icons or other idols as 'an aid' to worship or pray.

The Apostle Paul was pleased that pagans had interest in God, but he told them that true God was not to be worshiped with idols nor icons:

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:22-31)

While some have said that having icons around reminds them to pray, the Apostle John wrote:

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (1 John 5:21).

He did not say that idols/icons should be around to encourage prayer. The pagans did that. And the

Bible teaches that the true God does not want to be worshiped as other gods have been (Leviticus 18:24-30; Deuteronomy 12:29-31).

The Bible points to God's throne being in the far north (Psalm 48:1,2; Job 37:22; Isaiah 14:13; Ezekiel 1:4) and when I pray, I tend to look towards the heavens to the north, presuming God's throne is above that (cf. Isaiah 40:22). This helps remind me that God rules the expanses of the universe, not that He is confined to some trinket made of wood, silver, and/or gold.

Now, it should be noted that God, in His mercy, does sometimes choose to answer the prayers of the unconverted. This is not only documented in the Bible (e.g. Judges 16:30; 1 Samuel 3:9), but even in some scientific studies in the 21st century verify that prayers involving those who are not truly converted are of value. God also does hear children (cf. Luke 18:17) and seeks godly offspring (Malachi 2:15).

If someone you know sincerely prays to God, God may hear them as He knows that their ignorance of His ways is not always deliberate and that their personal sincerity is real.

Sometimes when God is calling someone (John 6:44), God will cause miracles to occur and/or answer certain prayers to encourage them. But no one should believe that if they remain in a state of sin, that God is pleased or is somehow obligated to answer.

Tip Number 6: Resist Satan

People often tend to ignore Satan, but his influences are real. Satan deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9).

Satan does not want you to pray to the true God or to trust Him. Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and he broadcasts his rebellious attitude. Satan provides a lot of temptations (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:5) and wants you to be selfish, and not show the love that God wants you to.

Satan has little problem with selfish prayers. Satan wants you to focus on yourself and your perceived needs. Selfish prayers are warned against in scripture:

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:3)

The devil wants you to think that you deserve something and not really believe God (e.g. Genesis 3:1-6). Satan wants you to have a selfish attitude. When you are tempted to think thoughts that are not in alignment with God, you should say a silent prayer and attempt to draw closer to God:

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:7-10)

This is very effective when practiced. And it should be practiced all the time. If you want prayers answered and wish to have godly character built within you, resist Satan's temptations and draw near to God.

Tip Number 7: Don't Fight God

This should be obvious, but don't fight God. Yet many Christians do.

The Bible shows that Jonah rebelled against what God wanted him to do (Jonah 1:1-3), so God took strong action (got Jonah swallowed by a great fish, Jonah 1:17) to get Jonah to do what he should have done. And even later after he did it, Jonah was upset about it (Jonah 4:1-4).

Consider that the previous rebellion of the children of Israel against God was "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). In the New Testament, before becoming the Apostle Paul, Saul realized that something wasn't right about his persecution of Christians, but resisted doing the right thing until Jesus stopped him (Acts 26:12-15).

Resist Satan (James 4:7), do not resist God, be willing to change (Revelation 3:19), and do not fight God (cf. Acts 23:9). Satan rebelled against God and wants you to as well. You can succeed:

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

You might be thinking:

“What, me fighting God? I obey God and really try to keep His commandments. You must be referring to others.”

If that is what you are thinking, consider how you react sometimes when you are cranky, fatigued, tempted, experiencing certain moods, or feeling overwhelmed.

Conscientiously pray to resist Satan and submit to God. Many do not really wish to be led when tempted. But they should.

Recall that Jesus said:

33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:33)

So, if you are or wish to be a real Christian, do not fight God. Be willing to be led by His Spirit and be willing to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

Tip Number 8: Pray for Others

Pray for others.

The word pray/prayed in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word transliterated as palal (paw-lal') to entreat, intercede, pray, make supplication. The first time it is used in the Bible (NKJV) was when Abraham was to pray for someone else (Genesis 20:7,17).

Many people really do not want to pray for others, but that lack of effort on their part is wrong. Many want others to pray for them, but tend not to pray for many others.

Samuel said it would be a sin for him not to pray for others:

23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; (1 Samuel 12:23)

Paul prayed for the Colossians and Thessalonians:

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (Colossians 1:9)

11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our

God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

The Apostle John also prayed for the physical needs of people:

2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

It is more than just leaders that are to pray for others. The Apostle James wrote that Christians were to “pray for one another” (James 5:16).

Jesus taught:

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:44-45)

35 It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

It is blessed to pray for others, including enemies, but many do not do it. Remember to bless and this often can immediately help you. Many feel that they will get to praying for others after they feel they are taken care of. Yet, selfishness is not what prayer is all about—we are to be God’s sons!

Tip Number 9: Pray for Your Needs

Can you pray for your needs?

Certainly. It is okay to pray for what you need. Do not neglect to do so. James taught:

2 Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (James 4:2)

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:16-17)

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. (James 5:13)

Many think that they can always rely on themselves,

so they do not properly pray. Yet, the way humans live and die shows the fallacy of that.

All of us need help when we are born, and most of us need assistance before we die. In addition, we all could use God's interventions and blessings throughout our lives.

We should not neglect to ask God who supplies every good gift (James 1:17). Many people pray only when they and/or loved ones are facing difficulties. It is fine to pray then, but that is not what prayer is all about.

As never before, as we see the end approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25; Luke 21:34-36), true Christians should be drawing near to God in prayer. Yet some true Christians have confessed that they have not prayed for days, weeks, or even months.

We are not to wait long to talk to God, but should:

6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. (Isaiah 55:6, NKJV throughout, except where otherwise noted)

Also, don't you want to support the work of God as we get closer to Jesus' return (cf. Matthew 6:33; 24:14)? While that work ultimately involves the entire universe, God's work in this age includes HIS people.

Which means, that while many feel that they could better serve God if He answered their prayers a certain way, the reality is that YOU and your spiritual state are more important than you probably think. God may not answer prayers the way people want Him to, because God wants to help perfect His people more than probably most realize. Do your part, God will do His.

Notice what followers of Jesus have been told:

28 And we 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)

If you believe that ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE THAT LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE, then presuming you love God and were called, whatever God does in response to your prayers means that He has answered them in a way that HE KNOWS is best for you.

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

MOVED TO GROVER BEACH, CALIFORNIA



By Bob Thiel

Because of the need for more storage space, the main office for the *Continuing Church of God* has been relocated to Grover Beach, California.

We moved into the most cost-effective building we could find (and Dr. Thiel's business, and not CCOG, is paying for the space).

Our new address is:

- *Continuing Church of God*
- 1036 W. Grand Avenue
- Grover Beach, CA 93433 USA

Grover Beach is one of the "five cities" of the Five Cities region of California. It is next to Arroyo Grande (where the office used to be) and Pismo Beach. Grover Beach is roughly half-way between Los Angeles and San Jose, California, at the coast.

We also hope that by having the additional space, we will be better able to produce literature in a more timely and effective way.

Being in a larger facility will help as we have materials in multiple languages, which requires more storage than when we first began.

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



Continuing Church of God www.ccog.org
Daily Bible News Prophecy www.cogwriter.com

CCOG.AFRICA This is a website targeted towards Africa. It has information in English, Kiswahili, Dholuo, and other languages.

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

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

CCOG.IN This is a website targeted towards those of Indian heritage.

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

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

PNIND.PH Patuloy na Iglesia ng Diyos. This is a website targeted towards those in the Philippines or those of related heritage.



BibleNewsProphecy channel
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The leading pastor in *Continuing Church of God* is a regular radio guest using radio to reach audiences in many areas.

The *Continuing Church of God* also has Bible News Prophecy radio:
www.biblenewsprophecy.net and www.biblenewsprophecy.net/mobile-radio.

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

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Dr. Bob Thiel

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