

Thanksgiving Thoughts

The Great Commission

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Which Generation?

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Laborers Together With God

The Advocate of Truth



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The Advocate of Truth is the official magazine of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. Box 328
Salem, WV 26426-0328**

**Telephone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248**

E-Mail: cogsevday@aol.com

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**Volume LX II Number 5
November 26, 2012
The Advocate of Truth
USPS 542-940**



Thanksgiving Thoughts

Bond Tennant

This year, the annual Thanksgiving holiday will be celebrated in the United States. It will be a special day for many people. Church services will be held in various communities to give thanks to God for His bountiful blessings to them. Some will observe this day with a true spirit of thanksgiving. Many others will simply accept it as another holiday, and a time to gather with friends and relatives, but with little thought of giving thanks to God. Those who truly worship Him are sincerely thankful for their many blessings.

This year, Thanksgiving Day will be November 22.

In Colossians 3:15-16, the Apostle Paul encouraged his brethren to a deeper sense of thanksgiving and appreciation to our Heavenly Father for His many blessings: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Then he reminded them, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (verse 17).

Yes, it is appropriate to set aside a special day of thanksgiving to the Lord. However, sincere children of God, who are dedicated to Him and to the doing of His Word, consider every day as being one of thanksgiving. They do not wait to give thanks to Him for His many blessings, but they express their thanks before the close of every day in which they have been received. "It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Praise and thanksgiving seem to be closely associated

in the Bible. Thanksgiving is one expression of appreciation to God for all of His blessings. We can express our thanksgiving in the privacy of our minds and hearts, and in the presence of His people. We also can praise God in our prayers. We can praise Him by making known His glorious character.

Peter wrote, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

We can praise God by bearing witness to His love and His giving of His Son and what His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, means to us now and what He will yet mean to mankind in the future.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:4-9).

Yes, Paul expressed this well in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

THE GREAT COMMISSION

By Moises Torres M.



After His resurrection, the Lord appeared to His disciples and had conversations with them for a period of 40 days, in which He gave His last instructions and commandments. Then He said goodbye to them at the Mount of Olives, lifting up His hands and blessing them. It is really interesting to note that the Lord Jesus kept on preaching the kingdom of God after His resurrection, and that He was 40 days with His disciples as a confirmation of His gospel.

Some of these details are mentioned in Acts 1:1-5: “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

These verses confirm that after His resurrection the Lord appeared to His disciples for 40 days. He kept on talking about the kingdom of God, and He gave them His commandments. Maybe after His resurrection the Lord said to His disciples more particular things about the kingdom of God, or maybe in a more intimate way, and with more authority from being resurrected from the dead.

In I Corinthians 15:3-8, the Apostle Paul also says, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

In the commandments the Lord gave to His disciples after His resurrection and before He ascended to the right hand of His Father, there is known what is called THE GREAT COMMISSION. It is described in Mark 16:14-18: “Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

The great commission the Lord gave to His disciples before He was received up into heaven was to preach the gospel to every creature. The one who believes and

is baptized will be saved, but the one who does not believe will be damned.

Mark 16:19-20 tells us what finally happened: “So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

We know that the apostles and the first century Church preached and did many miracles and signs. They cast out devils, spoke with new tongues, took up serpents, and healed the sick by laying hands on them.

Luke 24:44-53 also gives testimony of the GREAT COMMISSION which our Lord gave to His disciples: “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.”

The gospel of Luke records that after His resurrection the Lord Jesus opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures, “. . .and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Repentance and remission of sins are part of preaching the gospel, as well as the resurrection of the dead, and the kingdom of God. This is the great commission given to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection, for it was essential that He rise from the dead to give testimony of the faith and the prophecy.

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

By Rafael Mendoza



A young woman once said, “I sleep with a young man that I like. I don’t want to marry him, and I don’t think that he has the intention of marrying me either. This is not the first time I have lived with a man, and it probably won’t be the last time. I don’t see anything bad about it. If I ever happen to feel like having a baby, then I will see myself being forced by society to get married. But until I get to that moment, I don’t want to know anything about marriage. And if I happen to get married, and things are not working out, there is no way I will let myself be trapped in a miserable marriage.”

After reading these words, we can readily realize the accuracy of the Scriptures which tell us of the time that men will abandon the moral principles which God gave to them. One of these principles is marriage which maintains the spiritual and moral equilibrium in them.

Marriage is the way that God gave to man to find the fullness of divine creation. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:26-27).

God created **MAN**, and he created them male and female. This means that the image of God is not only in the male, but **also in the female**. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). God gave a sublime value to marriage.

When a man and a woman cleave and become one flesh, that is when God views them as one flesh in His image. God instituted marriage and blessed it!

Which Generation Are You?

By Maryane Charles



The *Oxford Dictionary* has the word Generation meaning:
Noun--all of the people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively: *one of this generation's finest songwriters.*

The average period, generally considered to be about thirty years, in which children grow up, become adults, and have children of their own: *the same families have lived here for generations.*

A set of members of a family regarded as a single step or stage in descent: *a third generation Canadian.*

A group of people of similar age involved in a particular activity: *a new generation of actors and directors.*

There are many types of generations spoken of in Scripture. The book of Deuteronomy 1:35 tells us, "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers." The command was given by God to Moses in Numbers 13:2: "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them."

So the twelve spies went out into the Promised Land to see who the inhabitants were and to know whether they were strong or weak (see Numbers 13:18-20). Remember that they had just come from Egypt and saw all the plagues God had poured out upon the Egyptians and the great deliverance by which God brought them out of Egypt, not to mention the parting of the Red Sea to give them safe passage by dry land. They also witnessed the destruction of the pursuing army. Verse 25 tells us, "And they returned from searching of the land after forty

days." We also note that ten of the spies came back with a bad report. They said the people of the land were giants and that their cities were too well equipped and fortified, and they would not be able to defeat them. In short, what transpired is that the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and they rebelled and complained until God was so exasperated with their rebellious attitude that He wanted to disinherit them. He made Moses an offer of wiping them out and starting over with him (see Numbers 14:12). God made the decision to let them wander in the wilderness until that "evil generation" was destroyed. They wandered forty years in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land because of the stand they took for the Lord (see Numbers 13:30). At this point, God told them that all of the men who were twenty years and older would not enter into the Promised Land (see Numbers 14:29). The spies that went to spy out the land did so for forty days. As a result of this bad report, God pronounced judgment that they should wander in the wilderness for forty years to match up with the forty days they had searched the land (see Numbers 14:32-34). Due to their lack of faith and unbelief, God said they would all wander in the desert for the next forty years until they all literally died out in the wilderness. God said that their carcasses would fall in the wilderness, and that their children would inherit the Promised Land. The Scriptures warn that we should not murmur and complain as some of them murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer (see I Corinthians 10:10). Let us read I Corinthians 10:1-2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized

unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” The children of Israel received baptism, and yet they fell short because of their unbelief. The Scriptures warn us that we should take heed lest we also fall after the same example of unbelief (see Hebrews 4:11).

“There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother” (Proverbs 30:11). We are living in the time of a generation consumed and filled with self. Everything is about self, and nothing is about meeting the needs of others. It’s all about what they want, and it does not seem to matter who they trample under foot in order to achieve these "wants." Romans informs us that today’s generation is “Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful” (Romans 1:31). II Timothy 3:3 goes further to say, “Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.” In stark contrast, our Lord and Savior went about doing good (see Acts 10:38), including praying for others (see John 17:15,20).

The generation I grew up among was taught to respect their elders, have religious and moral values, to study and work hard in order to achieve, and to provide for their families. Today’s generation is being taught to laugh at anyone who believes in God, have little or no values, and that experimentation of any kind is good. As children of God, we are expected to be different both by precept and example. I dare say that certain qualities which were in us prior to baptism should not be displayed in our lives after we have received water baptism. The Scriptures

testify, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:11). We are called to “...walk circumspectly, not as fools...” (Ephesians 5:15). Many are called, but few are chosen. This does not imply that our destiny has been predetermined or predestined before we are born. God has given mankind a choice, but it is still in God’s power or will to do the calling. David was known as a man after God’s own heart. However, he sinned against God, and he was rebuked. He repented and was forgiven. God has a plan of salvation for everyone who wants to accept it, because the Scriptures tell us that the Lord is “...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). We have to do what God says in order to be saved. He will take care of the rest. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9). Our aim should be that when our Lord returns, the door should not be shut to us. A great multitude left Egypt. From that original great company, two men entered the Promised Land. We are awaiting for our Redeemer to return with our promised kingdom. Are we ready? Are we tuned into the world or the things of God? Let us be found in the generation that is looking for the imminent return of our Lord and Savior from heaven. Maranatha.

I ask you again, which generation are you?



THANKS BE TO GOD

By Carlo Rasmussen (deceased)

The Apostle Paul wrote these words in his second letter to the brethren who were at Corinth. The full sentence is, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift” (II Corinthians 9:15). Paul wrote here of the grace of God which abounded in the Corinthian Church of God. In

verse 11, we read where we “Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” This same thought applies to the Church of God today, for when we are full of the race of God and receive the bountiful blessings God gives to us,

we give thanks. There is a special reason why we should be especially thankful to the Lord in these times. Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

At the present time, God has seen fit to place the world in the period of time called the dispensation of Grace. We are privileged to live in an age when one need not come through animal sacrifices and ceremonial ordinances to reach the Lord God. This is the time, or age, of grace. To many, this is a mystery. Paul writes of it as a mystery. God has chosen this to be as a mystery for it will only be revealed to those who truly seek Him with all sincerity and truth. Upon a humble and sincere search of the Scriptures (see II Timothy 2:15), the Lord will reveal the truth in His own time and way. This period of “grace” wherein we live has been so misunderstood through the tricks of Satan himself. There is a deception as to what has actually been accomplished for the world and what is expected of the world. There are those at one extreme who claim the understanding that in this time of grace we no more need to be mindful of the moral code, the Ten Commandments. They claim the Commandments have been “nailed to the cross.” On the other extreme, there are those who say we must also observe the ceremonial laws, or feast days of the Mosiac Law. Neither of these two extremes is the will of God for this present age of grace.

Thanks be to God for the revealed truth to all who sincerely seek it in the Scriptures. Let us thank the Lord, who has shown a more sure way than that of total lawlessness or total bondage. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). Let us consider this truth as we prayerfully study the living Word of God.

Thanks be to God for the comfort of knowing His Ten Laws of Love continue to remain in effect and as steadfast and sure as the Lord Himself. We are reminded of this in John’s first letter where he writes, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (I John 2:4). The Law of Love is the only guide for the life of the true child of God. John further writes that it is a “sin” to disobey, or transgress the law (see I John 3:4).

It is from breaking one of the Commandments whereby sin is committed. From failing to truly love God and our

fellow man, we commit sin. The only way to fully understand what really is sin is to gain full knowledge of the Ten Commandments. The Apostle Paul confirms this in Romans 7:7 where he writes, “...I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” This same thought applies to all the Ten Commandments of God, the Royal Law. Within these judgments is revealed also everything necessary to allow all men to live together in peace. There is no other law with this end in mind that has been written, which has not already been covered within the Ten Commandments. The spiritual guidelines are pointed out within the first four Commandments, for therein we see how to show our love for God Himself. Here we have that “First and great commandment” spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 22:37-38. For any to claim that they know the Lord Jesus and then deny a portion of what He represented would be sin, for He represented all the Royal Law. If we deny the Law, we then deny Jesus. If we deny Jesus, He also will deny us before the Father in heaven. It is a true saying that we do not receive salvation from keeping the Ten Commandments. The Commandments are our divine daily guide, wherein is made known the complete will of God to man. Salvation comes only through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. Should we stumble in our daily walk, or find ourselves moving away from God’s will, (the Ten Commandments), then we humbly come to God and ask forgiveness and are under the Blood of Jesus Christ through the grace of God. The grace of God is unmerited favor wherein all of God’s children are. At the time God has forgiven us, we again become free from being under the Law, and we maintain ourselves within the boundaries thereof.

Thanks be to God for His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom He gave because of His love for the world. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). In Jesus Christ, we have the center of the plan of salvation for all who will accept Him according to the Scriptures. Before Jesus died on the cross, He said: “It is finished.” At that time, the large veil in the temple was torn into two parts (see Mark 15:38). Now the most holy place of the Levitical Priesthood was opened for all to see. The ark had already been removed. Jesus Christ is now our Priest officiating within the Most Holy Place in heaven unto the

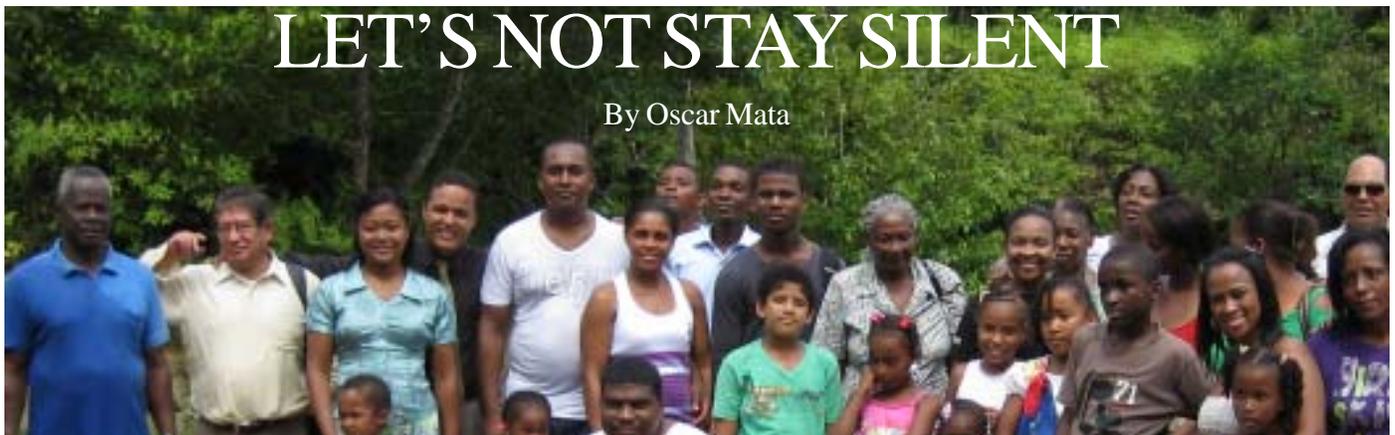
Father for our sins. Here also would be revealed for all to know that those ceremonies and binding regulations of the feast days had passed away.

The spiritual usefulness of the Levitical Priesthood was dead for all was now exposed. Now they had become the mere symbols of that to which they testified, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the time had come when the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth partaken of daily in our lives through the Scriptures, within the heart of the believer. Now the Feast of Tabernacles would also become a daily spiritual feast where the indwelling Holy Spirit of God would abide within the heart. Our bodies now become the "tabernacle" of God. Pentecost now represents the beginning of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and we would do well to consider a reminder of Pentecost each time a new babe in Christ is begotten and a spiritual life is begun through Jesus Christ at baptism. Yes, dear reader, as Jesus said, "It is finished". Now we are under the Melchisedec Priesthood with Jesus

Christ as the High Priest. No more is there a need to observe the Mosaic Law in this age.

The age of grace is truly a wonderful age for the believer of God. It is a time for all the nations of the world to come and accept the Lord in the fashion He desires most, through a humble and sincere heart. This the Lord values above all else in His creation. Soon this age will come to an end. This time will have reached its fullness, and the age of grace will give way to the last recorded period of time in the Scriptures. Let us continue to press onward in this present time wherein the grace of God abounds towards all in Christ. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

--Reprinted from the November 12, 1979
Advocate of Truth



“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:39-42).

When the Samaritans got to the place where Jesus was, they were convinced of everything the Samaritan woman told them. Jesus stayed there two days. At that time, Jesus talked and further convinced the population

of that city. They were convinced that Jesus was indeed the Savior of the world.

That woman didn't need to make a great speech to lead souls to Christ. She only needed to speak the little things she knew about the Lord. Many of us do not want to speak about the Lord until we have theological knowledge or profound doctrinal subjects. Certainly, this is important, but what is more important is that you and I talk to others about what we know about Christ and what He has done for us. We can talk to others about what we have seen and heard about God and about the redemption offered through Christ.

LET'S NOT STAY SILENT. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WITHOUT CHRIST AND WITHOUT HOPE.

Laborers Together With God

By David DeLong



"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9). In the above verse we read about three awesome concepts. First, the Apostle Paul included himself and Apollos, as well as the Corinthian church, as being laborers together with God (see verse 8). This was a great privilege as well as a great responsibility. Then he compared the church to a farm and then to a building, both being the work of the Lord.

We read more about the comparison of the church to God's farm in verses 6-8. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." This farm concept is still a valid comparison of the churches of God today. Notice that "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." Every person has a job to do with respect to God's work, and each will be rewarded accordingly.

Jesus used the farm concept for the work that believers are called to do with respect to evangelism. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?

behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours" (John 4:35-38).

Next, the Apostle Paul compared the Corinthian church to a building. "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:10-15).

Even though it is God who gives the increase in His

work of creating and sustaining the Church, each member of the Church must prepare himself or herself to fulfill the role that each has been called to in laboring together with God. Paul is not hesitant to even call himself a wise masterbuilder. This, of course, was a role given to him by "the grace of God". But he was expected to use that role and, most probably, to increase his skills in performing this very important duty.

Paul said that he had laid the foundation of the Church which is Jesus Christ. Others are to build upon this foundation. Jesus is the very cornerstone of that foundation as we read in Ephesians 2:19-22. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

The Apostle Peter put it this way: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (I Peter 2:5-6). Members of God's Church are "lively stones" and a "holy priesthood". Therefore, they all have very important positions to function in as they help in the work of the Lord.

Back in I Corinthians 3, Paul declared that believers are able to build either "gold, silver, precious stones", or "wood, hay, stubble" upon this foundation. What did he mean by this? An old saying goes something like this: "when everything has been past, only what's done for Christ will last." Therefore, the gold, silver, and precious stones would refer to the things that have been done for Christ's honor and glory. These things, built upon the foundation of Christ, will endure the fire of God's scrutiny or judgment, and the person will receive a reward for his or her work.

What, however, would refer to the wood, hay, and stubble? As tragic as it may be, some believers build

upon this foundation not things which honor Christ, but rather things which honor themselves. Jesus warned about doing things which bring glory to one's self. He said in Matthew 6:5-6: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

All of this is addressing either positive or negative works which a believer might do. Even if a person's works are negative, and therefore are destroyed, Paul says that that person still can be saved. How is that possible? Doesn't negative works equate to a loss of salvation? Not necessarily. It all has to do with what is in a person's heart. That is why we must judge our motives often so that we can determine why we are doing the things we do. If we detect that our works for the Lord are of a selfish nature, we should repent. Remember the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3? They were told to repent from their lukewarm works. The Lord even admonished them, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire" (see verse 18). This would give them gold to build upon the foundation of Christ.

Building wood, hay, and stubble upon the foundation may also refer to something else. In the beginning of I Corinthians, Paul mentioned brethren who were "carnal" or "babes in Christ". "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (verses 1-5).

By siding with certain leaders in the church, these carnal believers were causing divisions. Perhaps their intentions were right in their own eyes, but the results led to

"envying, and strife, and divisions". Certainly none of this activity could stand the fire of God's judgment. Neither will such activity today in the Church of God stand up to such fire. All carnality will be burned up. The Lord will not tolerate wrong doing in His holy temple (see verse 16). May we always build gold, silver, and precious stones upon the Church's foundation. When we do so, we are bringing glory to God, not to men.

I Corinthians 12 tells us various ways that we can be laborers together with God. Verses 4-11 reads: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

In this passage we read the phrase "every man". However, each believer, man or woman, is meant to be included in the gifts mentioned above. There are many different gifts, administrations, and operations, but the Lord directs the work for each person. Each one must cooperate with the Lord in this great work by using the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, and the others which have been given by the Lord. The use of God's gifts are a sacred trust, and every disciple has at least one gift which has been given to him or her. Some disciples have been given many gifts (see Matthew 25:14-30). From the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25, we know that the Lord expects a return from the gifts He has given.

Furthermore, not only are we to cooperate with the Lord in His work, but I Corinthians 12:12-26 makes it clear that we are to cooperate with other members of the Church as well. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or

Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

From the above passage we see that everyone in the body of Christ is needed in the work of the Lord. This is so because "God (has) set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." If we are a member of Christ's body, the Church, we can know for certain that the Lord has a particular job for us to do and a place He has given us to do it in. That doesn't necessarily mean that we will be in the same area for the rest of our lives. The Lord chooses our work and our location(s). We also know that everyone is needed in God's work because, "much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness."

Another passage of Scripture which lists a number of gifts from the Lord is located in Romans 12. We read: "For as we have many members in one body, and all mem-

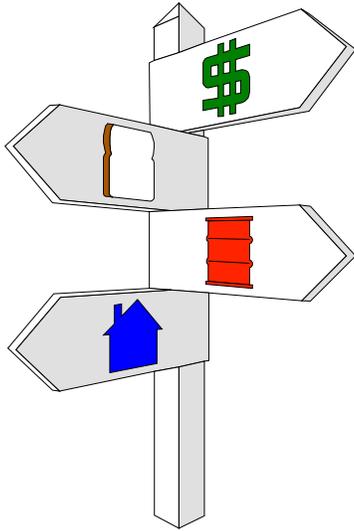
bers have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (verses 4-13).

Ephesians 4:1-16 has more to offer upon the subject of gifts which are given to God's followers. Paul wrote: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby

they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

In this case some of the gifts given to the Church are men who have been called into various positions of authority. We have seen that Christ is the foundation and the chief cornerstone of the Church (see again I Corinthians 3:10-11; Ephesians 2:20). Then, under Christ's authority, are the apostles, prophets, and teachers. I Corinthians 12:28 informs us, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." We found in Ephesians 4 that the positions of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are for "...the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (verses 12-15). No one can make himself an apostle, prophet, teacher, or any other position. These are a calling of God which are confirmed by the proper authorities in the Church.

Let us heed the admonition of Paul that, "ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called". Brothers and sisters, do you know the gift(s) which have been given you for the work of the Lord? Do you know your "vocation" whereby you may serve Him all your days? God has given His people these gifts so that the body of Christ may grow and be healthy. There are many ways that these gifts may be expressed: through song, writing, Bible study and many other ways. May we never forget that we are "laborers together with God".



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

The Evil Of Astrology Is Widely Practiced

There are two words that are often confused. They are *astrology* and *astronomy*. *Astrology* is the divination of the supposed influences of the stars and planets on human affairs and terrestrial events by their positions and aspects. *Astronomy* is the study of objects and matter outside the earth's atmosphere and of their physical and chemical properties. Astrology is forbidden by the word of God, but astronomy is not. Let us ponder the following article.

Astrologers see election troubles, but world won't end

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS – Will president Barack Obama win re-election? Will the world end Dec. 21, as some say the Mayan calendar predicts? Will the economy ever improve?

If you ask 1,500 astrologers contemplating planetary alignments here this week, the answers are yes, no and yes.

The astrologers, representing 30 countries, are in the city's famed French Quarter for the United Astrology conference held every four years. This year, there is no shortage of predictions.

"If you thought that the election of the 2000 race was crazy, that's nothing compared to what's going to happen November of 2012," said astrologer Michael Lutin, an astrology columnist for Variety Fair magazine for 25 years. That's because Mercury goes into what's known as

retrograde on November 6, Election Day. Retrograde in astrology refers to the optical illusion of a planet moving backward, causing changes or disturbances in areas of life represented by that planet.

In 2000, Mercury was in retrograde when controversy swirled in Florida in the race between George W. Bush and Al Gore. The outcome of that election wasn't known for more than a month after balloting.

"There could be tabulation problems, problems with the polling machines. Vote absentee to make sure your vote is counted," said New York City astrologer Shelly Ackerman.

Houston Chronicle

Many wish to know the future. Astrology is an attempt to satisfy this desire. People in many cultures the world over practice astrology. Regardless of the accuracy of the predictions made in the above article, astrology is an abomination unto God.

I read that according to a Gallup poll taken in June of 2005, 25 percent of Americans believed that the stars affected their lives. We can visualize that the percentage is much higher in this year of 2012.

There are many books on astrology in the public libraries. Web pages on astrology are numerous. Horoscopes appear daily in many newspapers and magazines across the nation.

Astrology points to the accuracy of the prophecy found in II Timothy 3:13, "But evil men and seducers shall wax

worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” Matthew 24:24 tells us, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

Ancient beliefs, which have been proven wrong, are much of the basis on which astrology is built. Let us name some of them. For example, astrology assumes that the earth is the center of the universe. Astrologers believe that there are only seven (instead of nine) planets and that some of the planets are gods. Astrology assumes that there are four elements comprising all matter instead of the one hundred plus elements which are now known. Their assumed elements are earth, water, fire and air which are not elements at all.

I do not know how you think, but I think that astrology offers control of all aspects of life and an escape from having to be accountable to God. Following God is a challenging and demanding path. There are always those who think that they have a better way. Proverbs 14:12 tells us, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

Another thought about astrology is that it is idolatry. It worships the creation more than the Creator. Mankind has claimed power for the stars and has proven Romans 1:25 to be true – “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...” A sincere belief in astrology does not make it right because it is founded on deception.

I heard someone say that there are Christian astrologers. This is a contradiction of terms because the basic claims of astrology go against the teachings of the Bible. Therefore, astrologers all fall into one category. That category is deceivers. The child of God knows that there is no divinity in the sun and no fate in the planets. He knows that there is no future of any man that can be read in the stars. The child of God knows that any who profess to have knowledge of the future outside of any knowledge revealed by God are deceivers, liars, falsifiers who claim powers which they do not have.

Astrology is not only wrong because it is inspired by Satan, but also because it is vain, wrong, and condemned by God. The last part of Proverbs 24:28 states, “deceive not with thy lips.” Deceit is among the thirteen evils announced by Jesus in Mark 7:22.

Astrology was condemned in Israel. “Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment (sorcery), nor observe times (astrology)” (Leviticus 19:26). “Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it” (Isaiah 47:13-14). Astrology is still an abomination to the Lord!

An Observation

I read an article entitled EARTHWEEK in the *Houston Chronicle*. One of its features was called **Signs of the times**. Let it be quoted: “The rash of wildfires, heat waves and severe storms that the United States experienced in recent weeks is a clear indication of the new climate reality that we must all learn to cope with, according to a joint advisory by a team of leading atmospheric scientists. Since Jan. 1, the U.S. has set more than 40,000 high temperature records, but fewer than 6,000 low temperature records. This is in contrast to most of the 20th century, when record highs and lows pretty much balanced out over time. The researchers gave their analysis and predictions at a briefing convened by the science organization Climate Communication.”

The above quotation reinforces the truth that the "signs of the times" which are occurring before Jesus comes to rapture (take from the earth) the saints continue unhindered and getting more severe.

Point To Ponder

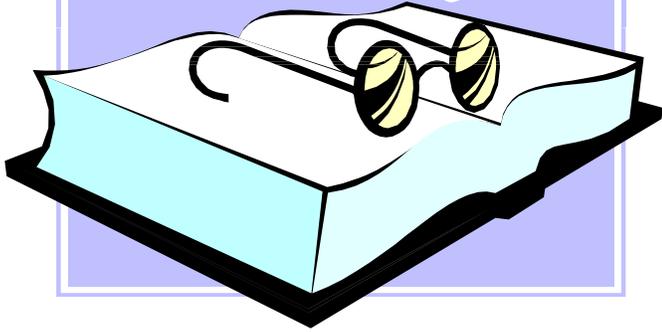
Looking through an insert of a newspaper, I read that confidence in organized religion is at a new low in America. The insert read that 56 percent of Protestants expressed confidence in the church. Only 46 percent of Catholics did. It said that Americans are still generally a very religious people although on their own terms.

The question to ask is if one can follow Christ on his own terms. Christ established the church with helps and governments. Anyone who follows Christ on his own terms is denying the very Christ by his actions.

B.T.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What is true liberty in Christ? How does it differ from other types of liberty?

ANSWER: *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines liberty as "freedom or release from slavery, imprisonment, captivity, or any other form of arbitrary control." In the world, the principle of liberty has a wide variety of applications. We have civil liberty, political liberty, individual liberty, and personal liberty.

Just to know the dictionary meaning of the words liberty and freedom, and to know their application in human dealings, does not really explain what it means to be "made free" by the truth, and to enjoy "liberty in Christ." **"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:31-32). For example the dictionary tells us that liberty is to enjoy exemption from imprisonment. However, our liberty in Christ does not guarantee that we will not be literally imprisoned. Throughout the ages, many of our Lord's faithful have been permitted to suffer in prison. Many of them died there!

Liberty is also considered to be freedom from slavery and bondage. However the followers of Jesus are not free from all slavery and bondage. They are bondslaves of Jesus Christ. In the days of the first century church,

many of them were actual slaves owned by earthly masters. Jesus said, **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"** (Matthew 11:29-30).

When one is in bondage to another for any reason, the expression is often used, "His soul is not his own." Certainly, from the standpoint of human standards, such a person does not enjoy liberty. But to the Child of God, the Bible says, **"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"** (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Being free from the control of another is also considered to be liberty. The Children of God do not enjoy this aspect of freedom. They have voluntarily put themselves under the control of their Lord by accepting the headship of Christ. Freedom of conscience is also a form of liberty, from the human standpoint. However, the conscience of the Child of God will not permit him or her to do or say anything that is contrary to the will of the Head, Christ Jesus. To the follower of Christ, this is not a mere theory or platitude. It is a serious reality which often checks the desires and plans of the flesh.

Those who have taken Christ's yoke voluntarily are held in restraint by it. Others may plan their lives to suit their own fancies. They may decide where and how they

will live, and whom they choose for their special friends, with the thought of only getting as much satisfaction and enjoyment out of life as possible. But the yoke of Christ restrains the true Child of God from doing this. They have been “bought” and belong to Another. They can only do as Christ wills! They can only say, “I will go where you want me to be, dear Lord.”

We can see then that liberty in Christ is something quite different from the ordinary human concept of liberty. When Jesus said to those who believed on Him, that they would know the truth, and that truth would make them free, they replied, “...**We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?**” (John 8:33). Jesus’ answer to that question was, “...**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed**” (verses 34-36). The thought presented here is clear. Our liberty in Christ is freedom from control by the great taskmaster, Sin. The taskmaster is referred to as the body of sin which is to be destroyed as a result of Christ’s crucifixion and our crucifixion with Christ. **“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin”** (Romans 6:6-7). In verse 12 of Romans 6, Paul explains. **“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”**

Being free from sin does not mean that sin has been destroyed in our mortal bodies. It only means that we have been made free from the penalty of sin which is death. We must not willingly continue in sin that grace (forgiveness for these sins) may abound. **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”** (Romans 6:1-2)

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:25). Jesus said that if we continue in His Word, we will be His disciples. We will know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. The words of Jesus, the Ten Commandments, outline the will of God and make up this perfect law of liberty. It is

obedience to this law which makes us free from the law of sin and death. **“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”** (Romans 8:1). Therefore, we enjoy personal liberty only within the confines of the Divine will.

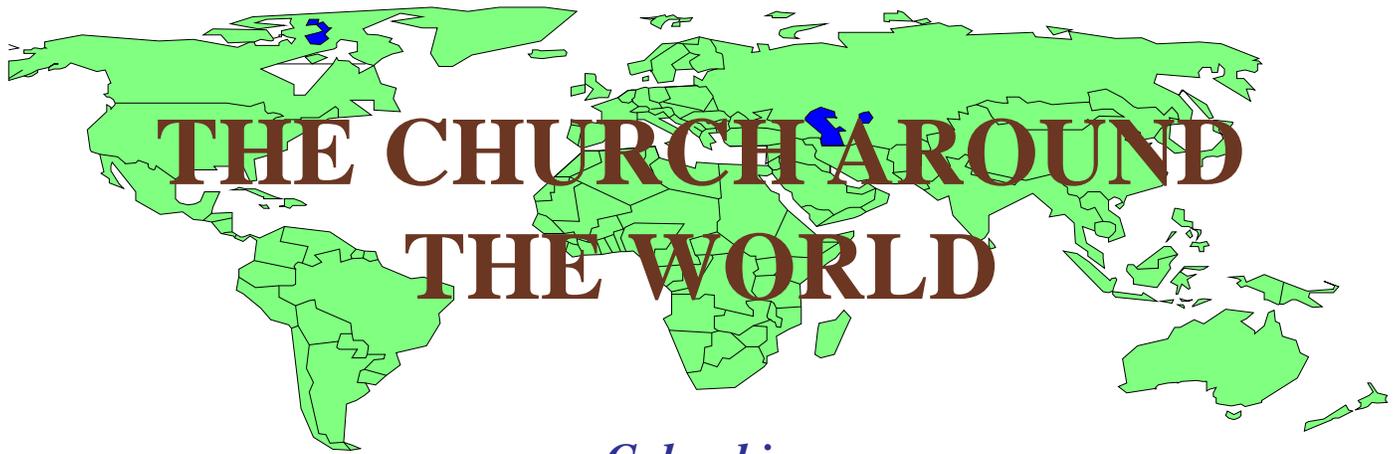
QUESTION: I am planning on starting a new business. Will you please give me some Bible rules to follow in regard to my business?

ANSWER: The following is a list of six principles:

1. Be truthful: “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Colossians 3:9).
2. Be dependable: “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:37).
3. Be trustworthy: “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another” (Proverbs 25:9).
4. Be honest: “And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous” (Exodus 23:8).
5. Be fair: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).
6. Do all things legally: “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Romans 13:7).

QUESTION: What difference does it make whether Christ appears before the millennium or after the millennium?

ANSWER: The difference is that if His coming is to be delayed a thousand years or more it could not possibly be a present and blessed hope. It is great to know that He may come for us at any moment, and it is upon this ever-present possibility that the Word of God gives exhortation to every child of God. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:2-3).



Colombia

Apostles laying hands on brethren from Colombia.



Baptisms being performed in Colombia.



LESSON I

SAUL'S COMPLETE DISOBEDIENCE
(PART 2)

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 15:12-35.

Golden Text: I Samuel 15:28.

“And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that King Saul disobeyed God again. He was to destroy the Amalekites and all that they had. But he kept King Agag alive and the best of their animals. We will now learn what happens to King Saul.

1. What did Samuel tell Saul when they met the next morning? I Samuel 15:12-15.
2. In I Samuel 15:18 and 19, Samuel asked Saul why he had not completely obeyed the voice of the Lord. What was Saul's reply to Samuel? I Samuel 15:20-21.
3. Which would have been better for Saul, obedience or sacrifice? I Samuel 15:22.
4. What will the Lord do to Saul for his disobedience? I Samuel 15:23.
5. What did Saul ask of Samuel in I Samuel 15:24-25?
6. What was Samuel's reply to Saul? I Samuel 15:26-28.
7. Did Samuel then destroy King Agag? I Samuel 15:33.
8. Did Samuel see Saul again before his death? Did the Lord repent that He had ever made Saul king over Israel? I Samuel 15:35.

LESSON II

DAVID SECRETLY ANOINTED TO BE KING

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 16:1-13.

Golden Text: I Samuel 16:12.

“And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.”

NOTE: In our past lessons, we have learned that Saul at first had great success, but his success rapidly went to his head. Humility gave place to pride, and through disobedience to God, God rejected him. Now, we shall learn who is to take King Saul's place.

1. What did the Lord instruct Samuel to do in I Samuel 16:1?
2. What was Samuel to do when he went to Jesse the Bethlehemite? I Samuel 16:2-3.
3. Did Samuel obey the voice of the Lord? I Samuel 16:4-5.
4. When Samuel looked upon the first son, Eliab, did he think this was the one who would be king? I Samuel 16:6.
5. How did the Lord tell Samuel he was to look on a person? I Samuel 16:7.
6. How many more of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel? Were any of these chosen? I Samuel 16:8-10.
7. Were there any more sons and, was he brought before Samuel? I Samuel 16:11.
8. Describe David. Did the Lord want this son for Israel's king? I Samuel 16:12-13.

LESSON III

KING SAUL MEETS DAVID

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 16:14-23.

Golden Text: I Samuel 16:21.

“And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer.”

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson that David was anointed King without Saul’s knowledge. We will now learn what happens when Saul and David meet and what they do for each other.

1. After David is anointed King, what happens to Saul? I Samuel 16:14-15.
2. What did Saul’s servants suggest he do? I Samuel 16:16.
3. Did Saul agree to what his servants suggested? I Samuel 16:17.
4. How did the servant describe David in I Samuel 16:18?
5. Did Saul send for David? I Samuel 16:19.
6. Did David go to see Saul, and what did Saul think of him? I Samuel 16:21-22.
7. Did David play his harp for Saul, and what happened to Saul? I Samuel 16:23.

LESSON IV

GOLIATH--GIANT OF THE PHILISTINES

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 17:1-11.

Golden Text: I Samuel 17:4.

“And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose

height was six cubits and a span.”

NOTE: In I Samuel 16, we learned that David was anointed king of Israel. It could not have been done openly for Saul would have killed David. Its purpose was to give David a chance to train himself for the office. Now, we shall begin our study of David and the giant, Goliath.

1. With whom was Saul engaged in battle? I Samuel 17:1-2.
 2. Where did the two armies stand? I Samuel 17:3.
 3. Who was champion of the Philistines? I Samuel 17:4.
- NOTE: Goliath was 9 feet tall.
4. Describe Goliath’s armor. I Samuel 17:5-6.

5. What was the spear like, and what did it weigh? I Samuel 17:7.

NOTE: A weaver’s beam is a large heavy piece of wood that is on the back part of a loom.

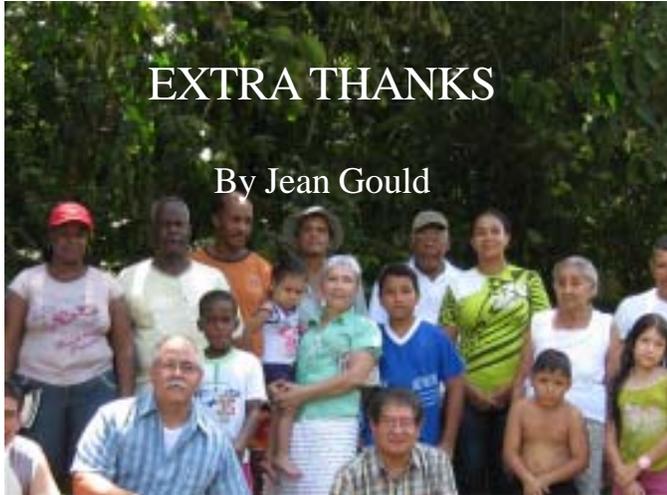
6. How did Goliath challenge the Israelite armies? I Samuel 17:8-10.
7. Were the Israelites afraid of Goliath? I Samuel 17:11.

FINDING GOD

**I helped a little child to see,
That God had made a willow tree,
And He became more real to me.
I tried to lead a child through play,
To grow more Christ-like every day,
And I myself became that way.
I joined a junior child in prayer,
And as we bowed in worship there,
I felt anew God's loving care.
Lord keep us ever quick to see,
By guiding children we find Thee.
-Mabel Niedermeyer**

EXTRA THANKS

By Jean Gould



It was on Monday, coming home from school, that Billy found the little yellow dog. He was standing under a tree in the rain, crying softly. His fur was matted, and little streams of water ran down his nose and off his paws. He stared at Billy with such sad, pleading eyes - there was just nothing to do but stop and pet him. And the next thing Billy knew, he was bringing the pup home, wondering what Mother would say.

One look at the little dog was enough to tell Mother he needed help, and pretty soon the puppy was warm and dry and had a good meal inside him. When Father came home, they decided to put an ad in the paper, and if no one came for the dog, Billy could keep him. "But you will be the one to look out for him, Billy" Mother said. And she told him all he must do to care for his pet.

Billy nodded, feeling very important. He gave the dog a bath, fixed a place for him to eat in the kitchen and to sleep in the basement. He listened every time that the phone rang, afraid it might be someone answering Father's ad in the paper.

But no one called, and no one came. So now the little yellow dog belonged to Billy, and he had to choose a name for him.

"Buff would be a good name," said Billy to the little yellow dog one day early in November. The puppy wagged his tail and looked at Billy with big soft brown eyes that looked out from shaggy yellow fur.

"Now, Buff," Billy went on, "You must not chew up slippers or leave any biscuit around or bark all night long."

"Woof" said Buff, which meant, "I'll be a good dog."

Billy fixed Buff's collar, gave a short whistle, and the two of them started down the street together. Billy felt very proud and happy.

Halfway down the block, children started running up to them. A new dog was something special.

"Oh, I say, what a nice dog!" It was Linton, the English boy, who came up first with his twin sister Leslie, "Hello, old fellow!" He said, taking one of Buff's ears in his hand and holding it up. When he let go, and the ear flopped down over Buff's eye.

"He's cunning! Laughed Leslie. "What's his name, Billy?"

"Buff," said Billy.

Jimmy came up then, and Marjorie and Mary Sue and big Bob. They all crowded around, asking questions about Buff and admiring him. The little dog stood quietly and let everyone pet him, feel his fur and those long ears, and didn't mind a bit.

"He's a good pooch, all right," said big Bob at last. And Billy knew Bob was right.

After that Buff was part of everything that went on. He came running to meet Billy every day when school was out, and the two of them went off together. Buff learned to do tricks like catching a piece of biscuit when Billy tossed it in the air, rolling over on his back, and he would jump through Bill's arms when he held them together like a hoop. Billy felt sure there had never been another dog like Buff.

And then, just three days before Thanksgiving, it happened. When Billy came home from school that afternoon, no Buff came running to meet him. "Mother," called Billy, "have you seen Buff?"

"He was outside waiting for you a while ago," Mother said.

Billy looked all around the house, but there was no sign of Buff. He went down the street calling, "H' yuh, Buff; h' yuh, Buff!" But no little dog came running answering to his call. And no one in the block had seen the little dog either.

Billy was worried. His brothers Todd and Tim, took

their bikes and rode around looking, but they couldn't find Buff. Mother called the animal shelter, but they said no lost dogs were turned in that day. When Father came home, he said they must put another ad in the paper, only this time it would be in the "Lost" instead of the "Found" column. Billy felt two big tears coming as he thought of Buff being lost.

For the next two days Billy stayed close to the house when he came home from school, thinking he'd hear some news about Buff. But not a word came; and by thanksgiving morning, Billy felt all hope was gone. It was about ten o'clock when he saw the big auto drive up. He saw a man get out and behind him came a little yellow dog. It was Buff! It was his very own Buff!

"Is this the place" began the man as Billy ran and popped the door. But he couldn't finish. For with a glad bark, Buff jumped up and greeted Billy with great laps of his tongue. And Billy hugged the little dog as hard as he could. "I guess this is the place, all right," laughed the man.

Then he explained that Buff had come home with his dog Spot. "I'd have brought him back before this," the man said, "but I was called out of town. The first thing I did when I got home was to look in the paper for an ad. I guess Spot wanted company, and invited Buff to come home with him!"

The whole family thanked the man for returning Buff. Todd and Tim crowded around Buff, petting and hugging him. "Let's take him outdoors", suggested Todd. And the three boys decided to take a romp in the yard with Buff.

Presently Mother called them to come in and get washed for Thanksgiving dinner. When everyone was around the table, Father gave the blessing the way he always did, offering thanks for food, home, health, and family and God's loving care. He finished, but Billy's lips moved a moment more before he looked up.

"What's the matter? Did I leave out something, Billy?" asked Father.

"Oh, no. That was just extra thanks - for Buff!" smiled Billy.

SCRAMBLED BIBLE SAINTS

Do you recognize the following Bible characters? Look hard, but here's a tip: each name begins with the letter "S".

1. Olsema
2. Hasra
3. Lsisa
4. Oolmsno
5. Asnasnu
6. Umslae
7. Laus
8. Isomn
9. Petnseh
10. Neosmi

SINGING BIRDIE

By Barbara Sauder Millard

**I watched a little birdie
 In a green willow tree.
 He cocked his wee, shiny head
 And sang this song to me;
 "I'm just a little birdie;
 God made the birds, you know,
 To cheer the hearts of children
 As days come and go,
 I'm just a little birdie;
 I cannot jump or play. I just sing the love of God
 All through the long, long day.
 I'm just a little birdie
 In a green willow tree,
 Singing praise to Jesus.
 Won't you come sing with me?"**

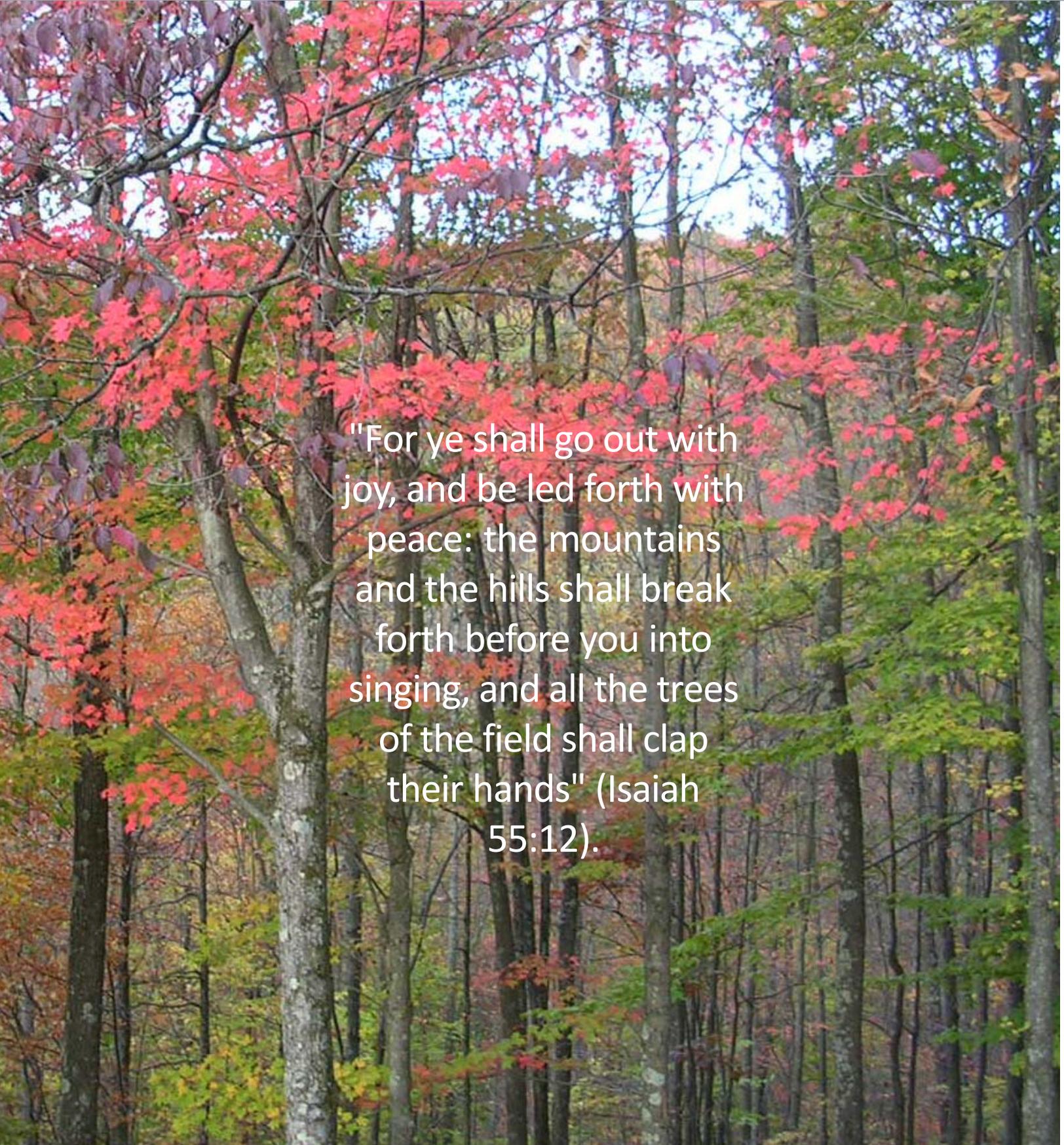
ANSWERS:

Scrambled Bible Saints

1. Salome
2. Sarah
3. Silas
4. Solomon
5. Susanna
6. Samuel
7. Saul
8. Simon
9. Stephen
10. Simeon

The Advocate of Truth
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"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isaiah 55:12).

