

The Advocate of Truth

Salvation of the Lord

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Waiting For The Salvation Of The Lord

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Bond Tennant



Nigeria

“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:26).

As we enter another new secular year, many turn their attention to the ever increasing level of anxiety, apprehension, and fear that is prevalent in every segment of the present world. The statesmen, political and religious leaders, along with the financiers are trying to find solutions to the endless barrage of perplexing (no way out) and distressing problems that confront the whole world.

It is sad, but true, that the majority of the earth’s people go about their daily lives but pay little heed or attention to the true meaning of these problems. They do not consider the wonderful promises of our heavenly Father and the blessings that He has for them. Therefore, mankind continues to wait for the long-promised and future kingdom of God which will be the only solution to the violence, corruption and death that marks our day in prophecy.

Our opening Scripture brings to our attention the need to “hope and to quietly wait” for the salvation of the Lord. This means that we must put our trust and confidence in God as we meditate on His promises found in His wonderful Word of truth.

The word “hope” is also used in this Scripture. This means being in expectation of something. The word also carries the thought of having confidence and trust. We look forward with much anticipation and joy to the future kingdom of our Lord. We must have complete confidence in the promises of God. Psalm 31:24 tells us, “Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.” The Prophet Jeremiah said, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose

hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8).

To wait “quietly” means to do so peacefully and with tranquility. God’s children enjoy an inner peace that comes only from having faith in the blood of Christ. They have confidence in the promises of God. The Apostle Peter describes one who has this trait as possessing a meek and quiet spirit. He said, “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (I Peter 3:4).

Patience is required to wait for something with much anticipation. Patience requires our ability to bear trials and difficulties calmly and without complaint. The Prophet Isaiah addressed the attitude of patient endurance that we all need. He said, “And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you : for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him” (Isaiah 30:18). Again, Isaiah spoke of the true spirit that marks the true children of God when he wrote, “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

In the year 2014, let us abide in the admonition of the Prophet Jeremiah, who wrote, “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:26).

Why Did I Choose God?

By Justine Houseley

Nigeria

Like many of us I was born and raised in the Church. This doesn't necessarily mean that one who has been brought up in the Church will stay in the Church, and this is one of the challenges we have found in the past, continuing on to today, in the youth. Contrary to what some may think, I believe it is good that as young adults and teens we go out and explore our beliefs, and ourselves, because if we do not, how will we know that what we believe in, and what we do for our faith, is genuine? If one continues in the faith of God, it must be true and we must do it for ourselves, our love for God, and for nobody else. Someone who serves God under pressure from others, and not for himself, does the same thing as leading others astray. As members of the Church of God we must love all, judge none, and lead by example. If we do this people will follow.

As a youth in the Church I have always believed in God. There may have been times when I might not have known that. I have questioned my faith, and have explored my beliefs, as all of us once have. As you may know, I have gone through trials that have impacted my life tremendously. As a child I have always been blessed by my family, and have had a rich childhood. My parents have always loved my siblings and me, and have always given us the most memorable experiences with valuable life lessons along the way. I believe that, although we were a very blessed family, we were just typical. Life was good, and there were never any threatening issues.

When my Dad grew very ill, I didn't feel as if it was

actually real. To this day, some of the things that I went through at the time do not seem as if they actually happened. From an outsider's perspective, one may question, after the tragedy that I and others in my family have faced, why do I still believe in God? Why did I choose to continue in this faith when my own father had been taken away from me? The answer doesn't present itself as being simple, although it very much is. It's not obvious to some, but to me this tragedy has only brought me closer to the Lord.

The general question for many is: why does God allow suffering? Why didn't He just create a perfect world? And the answer is that He did. In Genesis 1:31 the Bible says: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Although God didn't create sin, He allowed for the potential for sin by creating the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He didn't do this to provoke man's downfall, but for him to know that the love and faith he had in God was genuine. God, as He foresees everything, knew that man would give in. Why would God want to see this sinful world come about, knowing that man would turn against Him and each other? It is for the same reasons that humans have children. They know well ahead of time that there will be downfalls, and that their children may rebel against them like many of us have. But, it is also for the potential result of happiness and pure joy in each other's love and company. God knows that there will be people in the world who will choose

Him. And even though the world's sin cost the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, this cost is worth spending eternal life with all who have followed and loved Him.

We read in I Thessalonians 5:9, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ". For the past couple of years following my Dad's passing, and my own baptism, I have gained somewhat of an anxiety issue. I find it hard to be alone. My mind is constantly telling me things that I always disagree with, and trying to push me in another direction. Because I have grown stronger in my faith, I have become more of a valuable victim for the devil. Because of this issue, I find it hard to focus when I am praying, and sometimes this situation hits me so hard that I feel as if I am straying away from the Lord. In times like these, I know that it is not my own mind that tells me these things, but a wicked one who is not of me.

First John 5:18-19 informs us: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." When something comes upon me, attempting to lead me astray, I know that I must trust in God to keep me safe. And no matter how hard the devil tries, I must go through trials to prove how genuine my faith is. Ephesians 6:11 counsels us to: "Put on the

whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Furthermore, we are instructed in James 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

One might say that after all the things I have faced, there is absolutely and positively no God watching over me. But, then I say to myself, how about all the wonderful things that have happened to me? I have gone through many jobs, and at such a young age where it is hard to find one, I have been presented with three. I have excelled in high school and have been given so many blessed opportunities throughout those four years of my life. I have been given the opportunity to go to the university of my dreams, which many do not get the chance to do. I have traveled with my family, whom I care so much for, to places I never thought I would ever go. I have amazing friends and brethren who surround me on a day-to-day basis. I am proud to say that God is watching over me and through my trials, and has rewarded me with such success in this life that I will never take for granted. Through God I am stronger, I excel, and He pushes me further. For all these reasons I chose Him and, most importantly, because I love Him. "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).



Sinner Worship

By Daniel Cruz

How often do we recall the condition that we were in before coming to know the truth? We give our testimony of how Christ came into our life and changed our views, and how we conduct ourselves as humans. We remember the ugliness and vile nature that we were in. It almost seems grotesque that we were so full of sin, conforming to the things of this world and partaking of her delicacies. However, the love of God shone upon us and

we cry to Him for forgiveness and to take away all those things that had taken us from Him, and "yes!" He hears our cries and forgives us. So, we begin a new life in Christ that is both assuring and peaceful as we attend to the laws of God and the testimony of Christ.

Remember, brethren, that moment that you came to the Lord, how you cried literally to Him for those sins, and you humbled yourself to God? We must worship Him

in the same manner. Luke 18:10-13 records: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." The publican shows us his physical condition and cries to the Lord to restore his spiritual state. He humbled himself before God and acknowledged that he had come into the temple a sinner. The publican spoke from his heart unto the Lord and asked God to make him whole. The other entered the temple as a prideful man. The result is given to us in verse 14: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." God loves humility.

Attending Sabbath services should be a time of rejoicing and reflection on all the things that God does for us. The inscription on the Statue of Liberty could be our anthem when attending services: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." God calls for the sinner to come in this condition. He wants to attend to our spiritual needs and guide us to come before Him. In Daniel 9:18 we learn: "O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies." Daniel expressed humility before God that sins were imputed upon them. He sought the mercies of the Lord and cried to Him with all sincerity. This is an example for us to give God all reverence when we come before Him. God knows our

needs, but we must let them be expressed. Psalm 32:5 reads: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." David confessed all things unto the Lord and gave thanks to God for hearing his cry. He did not do this for any reasons other than to be closer to the Lord, to seek the Father's guidance in his life, and to establish a relationship with God. David was a godly man, and yet he found it necessary to call upon the Lord as a man with sin. His example is that of humility and sincerity towards God.

Worshiping God requires that we continue in seeking Him and the divine nature in which He works. Not relying upon the Father in good and bad times will only make us tattered and worn. The idea that God is only present when we are good is false. He seeks us even more when we are acknowledging our sins and asking Him to restore us to a mint condition. In Titus 2:14 we find these words: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This is God's desire for man and for the sinner that is within us. Our duty is to come out of Babylon and to avoid the pitfalls that are before us. God created us to be subject to Him. We cannot tame this body when it is in sin. We must come humbly and confess the faults that we have to the Lord.

The most beautiful picture that a child of God has, and can witness, is the sinner repenting from his ways and seeking the Lord. He asks God for forgiveness and expresses himself to God. The streams of tears down his face, and the true conviction that a sinner finds, is a wonderful sight. Let us enter our houses of worship with an understanding that we have faults. Yes, we humbly ask the Lord to forgive us and to make us new again.



The Ten Commandments Before Sinai

By David DeLong

Many people believe that the Ten Commandments were first given at Mt. Sinai when the children of Israel were in the wilderness. However, we learn of what the

Lord told Isaac in Genesis 26:4-5: "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the

nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." What commandments and laws did Abraham keep? We will answer that question later in this article.

Whenever the Bible speaks about sin, or iniquity, we know that it is referring to the breaking of God's law (the Ten Commandments). I John 3:4 tells us: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Moreover, we read in the book of Romans concerning sin: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Romans 5:12-14).

This passage of Scripture is likely referring to the formal written law which God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai. But, even before that event sin was in the world and the death penalty was being meted out for sin. God's Ten Commandments, even though they weren't formally written down upon stone until Sinai, were still in force. Otherwise, sin would not be imputed without God's law. In this article I shall prove that all ten of God's commandments were in existence, and thus in force, before He wrote them upon the two tables of stone at Mt. Sinai.

The first of God's Ten Commandments instructs us that we aren't to place any gods before Him. The very first instance of this transgression is when Lucifer wanted to become like God. Isaiah 14:12-14 reads: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

We know this to be the breaking of God's law because Ezekiel 28:14-15, in reference to this episode of Lucifer wanting to be like God, informs us: "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect

in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

Lucifer had been a high ranking angel ("cherub", see Ezekiel 1,10). But, in wanting to be like the most High he had placed himself above (or before) God, and thus had committed iniquity. Another word for "iniquity" is "lawlessness". Before committing this iniquity, Lucifer had been perfect. Then he transgressed God's law and also became a liar and a murderer, breaking two more of God's commandments (see John 8:44).

The second of the Ten Commandments informs us not to make graven images to worship. Though not made with human hands, the sun and moon have themselves become objects of false worship down through history. The Patriarch Job considered this situation when he said: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above" (Job 31:26-28). Job is believed to have lived up to a century or more before the law was given at Sinai. Even in his day idolatry was considered to be an iniquity against God.

Concerning the third commandment, not taking God's name in vain, we see a situation with Pharaoh who blasphemed the name of God. In Exodus 5:1-2 Moses and Aaron had a meeting with Pharaoh. "And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." When Pharaoh asked the question, "Who is the LORD...?", he wasn't reverently wanting to know God. This was a type of challenge, even an insult, in putting down the God of the Israelites.

A similar situation (though long after the law was given on Mt. Sinai), occurred with Rab-shakeh, whom Sennacherib the king of Assyria sent against Jerusalem to besiege it. Rab-shakeh blasphemed God when he said: "Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?" (II Kings 18:35). Chapter 19, verses 3-4 informs us that Rab-shakeh's words were blasphemy. King Hezekiah's servants brought a message to the Prophet Isaiah. "And they said

unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left." The Lord destroyed the Assyrian army (see II Kings 19:35-37).

The point of this is that blasphemy, or reproaching the name of God, was as sinful in Pharaoh's day as it was in Rabshakeh's day. The Lord sent ten great plagues against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God, however, turned Pharaoh's hardness of heart into a lifting up of His name. Romans 9:17 reads: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

The fourth commandment, observing the Sabbath day, was being kept (or broken) before the children of Israel came to Mt. Sinai. In Exodus, chapter 16, we find the Lord giving instructions to Moses and the Israelites concerning the gathering of manna. "Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (verses 26-28).

Sabbath observance, as we can see, was commanded by the Lord before Mt. Sinai. It was already a part of His "commandments and...laws". Therefore, we can know without a shadow of doubt that Abraham was also keeping the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath, because, as we have already stated, "...Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5).

Honoring one's father and mother is what the fifth commandment is about. Ham, the son of Noah, did just the opposite when he committed some sort of perversion against his father. We find this episode, including Ham's punishment through his son Canaan, in Genesis 9:24-27: "And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

The sixth commandment forbids the murder of another person. Cain became a murderer when he killed his brother Abel. We know of this situation from Genesis 4:8-12. "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

Even before this murder the Lord had spoken to Cain, in verse 7, about not committing sin: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Therefore sin, or the transgression of God's law, was clearly evident when Cain murdered his brother.

Not committing adultery is the will of God in the seventh commandment. Joseph, the son of Jacob, was careful not to get involved sexually with another man's wife. Potiphar's wife made improper advances towards Joseph which he repeatedly rejected. Genesis 39:7-12 records a part of this story. Notice that Joseph called adultery "sin against God". "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me:

and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out."

The eighth commandment tells us plainly, "Thou shalt not steal". After Jacob had served Laban for a number of years, he left with his family, and belongings, abruptly. When Laban had found this out, he pursued Jacob. Later, he overtook Jacob and looked for his idols which he accused Jacob of stealing. Jacob answered: "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not" (Genesis 31:32-34).

This action by Laban angered Jacob. We learn in verse 36: "And Jacob was wroth, and chided with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?" Therefore, we know that Jacob considered stealing a "trespass" and a "sin". There can be doubt that God's commandments were in force before Sinai.

One is not to bear false witness according to the ninth commandment. Abraham broke this commandment and caused another man great grief. "And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife" (Genesis 20:1-3). Abimelech had taken Sarah because of Abraham's statement that she was his sister. We then learn concerning Abimelech: "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (verse 6).

The tenth commandment is about not coveting. It appears that Jacob coveted both Esau's birthright and his blessing (see Genesis 25:27-34; 27:6-33). He ended up with both before his conversion from sin.

THE RED SEA

by Betty Whetstone

*The children of Israel were jubilant,
The Pharaoh had just set them free;
But now they were facing a problem,
How to cross the mighty Red Sea.*

*The Pharaoh had long been hard-hearted
By keeping them slaves in the land;
He just couldn't come to acknowledge,
They would be freed by God's mighty hand.
Pharaoh stubbornly refused the miracles,
Brought about just so he could know
When God said, these are my children,
I demand you to now let them go!
The death of the first born in Egypt,
Finally softened Pharaoh's hard heart;
Just go, he was glad to tell them,
And Israel did happily depart.*

*Now their camps had the mountains behind them,
The roaring Red Sea in their face;
They proceed to then blame Moses
For leading them to die in that place.*

*They were stopped by the mountains behind them,
And a mountain of water before;
Pharaoh's army coming up swiftly,
And their spirits then fell to the floor.
But as usual God had their answer,
And told Moses to stretch forth your rod,
And the sea just humbly then parted,
And Israel crossed over dry shod.
The army came quickly behind them,
Vowing the victory to see;
But the waves flowed together and drowned them,
And the victory they did not live to see.
The sea waves then flowed together,
Chariots and horsemen did all disappear;
Showing us that when God is with us,
We never have anything to fear.*

--from Exodus 14



The Law Magnified

By David DeLong

Nigeria

"Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:19-21). This passage of Scripture is referring, in prophecy, to the Lord Jesus Christ. When He came to earth as a man, He put God's law into its proper place of being honorable. One of the reasons that He needed to do this was because some of the leaders in Israel had added man-made traditions to God's law. For instance, regarding the Sabbath commandment, some were apparently teaching that it was wrong to look into a mirror on the Sabbath and so be tempted to pluck out a gray hair.

In this article it is my intent to show how Jesus set God's law free from such traditions and how He taught that the law is to be kept inwardly, in a spiritual manner, and not just outwardly. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 7:14: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews anticipated the time when some in Israel will once more be a part of God's people. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10).

We will now quote God's law, the Ten Commandments, as a reference to show how Jesus magnified this law. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou

shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (Exodus 20:3-17).

The first commandment is about putting God first in all areas of our lives. It is about loving Him supremely and

with all of our beings. Jesus actually quoted from the Old Testament when He said: "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38; see also Deuteronomy 6:5). Putting God first means to follow God and His Word no matter what the consequences are. Paul wrote: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1). This is the greatest honor that we can give to our heavenly Father.

The second commandment is about worship. It is associated with the first commandment in that a person will worship what is supreme to him or her. If that supremacy consists in one's self, gaining wealth, another person, an idol, etc., then that is what the person will worship. When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus told him simply, but truthfully, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). It is also very important how we worship God. Jesus explained this to the Samaritan woman with these words: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Many do not understand the importance of these words. Not only is the proper attitude through the Holy Spirit ("in spirit") a requirement, but one must also worship God "in truth".

What is the proper attitude with which one is to worship God? This attitude must involve contriteness of heart and a repentance from sin. Isaiah 57: 15 reads: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Our attitude must also consist of forgiveness toward those who have sinned against us (see Mark 11:25-26). Worshipping God in spirit means that the worship must be from the heart and not expressed in vain repetitions (see Matthew 6:7).

A worshipper of God must also worship Him in truth. Although one can worship God twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week if that was possible, one requirement is that we meet together on the seventh-day Sabbath. Leviticus 23:3 informs us that the Sabbath is a "holy convocation" which refers, in this case, to an assembly of persons called together as the Lord directs. This truth is

ignored by many people today. Thus, many worshippers do not worship God in truth, no matter how much spirit they think they have.

As pertaining to the third commandment, there are many ways to take God's name in vain. It can, of course, be done by swearing and cursing, but also through disobedience to the Word of God. Paul wrote to the Jews at Rome: "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Romans 2:22-25).

Not only is one not to take God's name in vain, but Jesus taught His disciples to sanctify that name. In Matthew 6:9 the Lord said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." In His great intercessory prayer, Jesus linked the manifestation of God's name with obedience. John 17:6 records: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."

Those of us who keep the fourth commandment have a blessed time of physical and spiritual rest upon the Sabbath day. Jesus magnified the Sabbath by freeing it from the many man-made traditions which had made it a burden to keep. Furthermore, He taught that it is right to do God's will upon the Sabbath. We find such a situation in Matthew 12:9-13: "And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

On another occasion, Jesus healed an impotent man by the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. John 5:5-9 gives

us this story. "And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."

Concerning the fifth commandment, once again we see that some of the religious leaders in Israel had compromised God's law by their added traditions. An occurrence of this is found in Matthew 15:1-6. "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

It seems almost unimaginable that some people would rather use their money for other purposes than to take care of their parents in a time of need. But this is what was apparently taking place among some of the scribes and Pharisees in ancient Israel. It seems that these leaders were pledging the money, that could have helped their parents, as a gift supposedly dedicated to God. Then they believed that they were free from the responsibility of honoring their parents. Jesus said that doing this makes "the commandment of God of none effect". Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

For the sixth commandment we go back to the book of Matthew. In chapter 5 Jesus magnified this law to involve the intentions of the heart. He said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judg-

ment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (verses 21-24).

The seventh commandment was magnified by Jesus to also include a person's heart motives. In Matthew 5:27-30 we find: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Many people have fallen victim to the sin of adultery by letting their eyes and minds wander into forbidden places. This includes, in today's world, pornographic magazines and videos. Even King David was not immune to the sin of adultery which he committed with Bath-sheba. In II Samuel 11:2-3 we learn why David committed adultery. "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

In the first place David, after seeing Bath-sheba washing, should have turned around and went back into the king's house. That would have abated his lust. In the second place he should not have sent someone to inquire about her. And knowing that she was married to Uriah should have been a third incentive for him not to get involved with her. David fell into Satan's trap--a trap that he sets for each person.

Solomon, David's son by Bath-sheba (see I Kings 1:11), possibly knew about his father's affair. In any case

he counselled his own son about the dangers of falling into the sin of adultery. He wrote in Proverbs 5:20-23: "And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray."

Concerning the eighth commandment, we know that Jesus condemned stealing (see Matthew 19:18). Our Lord, however, went beyond not stealing to say that one should give up his or her goods (or service) willingly. For instance, He counselled us in Matthew 5:40-42: "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Furthermore, in Luke 6:30 He taught: "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."

Though one should not give just to receive back again, Jesus said that the one who does give will receive. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (verse 38). So we see that Jesus magnified this commandment as well.

Finally, Paul summed up the teaching on the eighth commandment by writing: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

The ninth commandment is about telling the truth. It warns us not to bear false witness against our neighbor. There are many ways that one can bear false witness. Perjury in a court of law is perhaps the most serious because of the harm that can be done to another. But gossiping about another person can bring serious damages to someone's reputation.

In the law of Moses, two or three witnesses were required before punishment was administered. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death" (Deuteronomy 17:6).

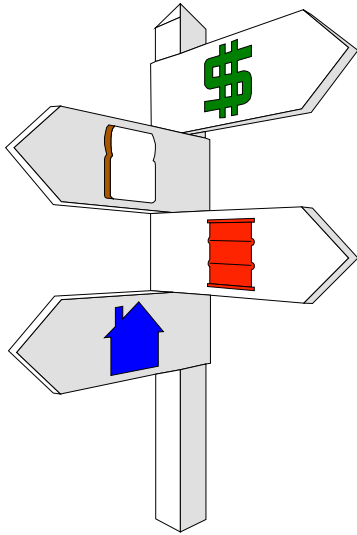
If a false witness committed perjury, then the law stated that the false witness would receive the punishment of the

accused. "If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deuteronomy 19:16-21; see also Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20).

In Matthew 5:38-39, Jesus did not magnify the law of Moses, but rather He superseded it with these words: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

The worst case in history of the use of false witnesses was against Jesus, Himself. Matthew 26:59-61 reads: "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." Jesus magnified the ninth commandment by always promoting the truth. However, all liars will end up in the Lake of Fire (see Revelation 21:8).

The tenth commandment concerns greed. Jesus taught: "...Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:15-21). Thus, Jesus magnified this commandment.



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 666 Stigma

Many are like the man in the following article when it comes to the number 666.

Man Quits Job Over "Satanic" 666 On Tax Form

A Tennessee maintenance worker says he quit his job because his W-2 tax form was stamped with the number 666.

Walter Slonopas said that accepting the number would have condemned his soul to hell. That number is considered the "mark of the beast" in the Bible's Book of Revelation describing the apocalypse.

The company that handles payroll for Contech Casting says the number meant Slonopas' form was the 666 th mailed out.

--From Wire Reports

Random Thoughts

You may wonder why the last days in this column called *The Signs Of The Times* are emphasized. It is because the signs of the times all point to the last days. The last days and the signs of the times cannot be separated. All the earthshaking troubles and upheavals that the world now experiences were foretold by our Lord Jesus Christ as signs of the first phase (part) of His second coming to catch away His dead and living saints to transport them to the New Jerusalem.

Let us quote Jesus' own words in Matthew 24:3-14 to see the many things that would transpire in the last days. "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these

things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Notice that verse 14 tell us that "this gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness." That does not mean that its purpose is to convert everyone.

Remember that Elder David DeLong stated in a previous article that the last days began right after Jesus' first advent. Jesus said "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:34). Therefore, the generation of which Jesus spoke is the period between His first advent and second advent.

You can see that the items in *The Signs Of The Times* are mostly, if not all, about the many natural disasters and

social troubles in the world. Scripture does not record many uplifting events to transpire during the last days. This is especially true for those who do not consider and know our Lord. But the true child of God knows that these things must be, and he knows these events and troubles cannot separate him from God's love. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

We find the many social ills of the world in the last days recorded in II Timothy 3:1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away (do not do the same as they)."

Scoffers

I am in contact with many who do not believe that the signs of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 24 are signs of His return. They belong to the group spoken of in II Peter 3:3-6. Let us quote it. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."

The many things that Jesus foretold in Matthew 24 are now taking place in the world. Is it wise to believe that He will not return after witnessing the many events in Matthew 24 which are occurring?

Let me tell you a story. For about seven years, some friends of our daughter said that they were coming to Texas from West Virginia to visit her. They made the same promise each of those seven years. Behold, they finally came for the visit. Our daughter had given up on them! For many, it is the same when thinking of the return of Christ. He has promised to return, and more than that He

has given us several reliable indicators to point to it.

In conclusion, let us be mindful of these signs of the times of our Lord's return. Yes, many sincere people do not understand God's words and instructions although they read the Bible. They are easily deceived. It is as though there is a veil over their eyes, to some extent, just like the Jews. However, after He establishes His kingdom, Isaiah 25:6-7 tells us that this veil will be no more: "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations."

"...Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Hot Temperature--Hot Temper?

I read an article in the *Houston Chronicle* entitled, **Study: Hotter temperatures may lead to hotter tempers.** Let us consider just the first paragraph which reads: "As the world gets warmer, people are more likely to get hot under the collar, scientists say. A massive new study finds that aggressive acts like committing violent crimes and waging war become more likely with each added degree."

This may be true for the ungodly masses. But the child of God, who meditates upon God's Word, keeps his mind and thoughts under control and is not affected by the weather. The Apostle Paul wrote, "...I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). The environment has no control over the spirituality of the child of God!

Solo Dads

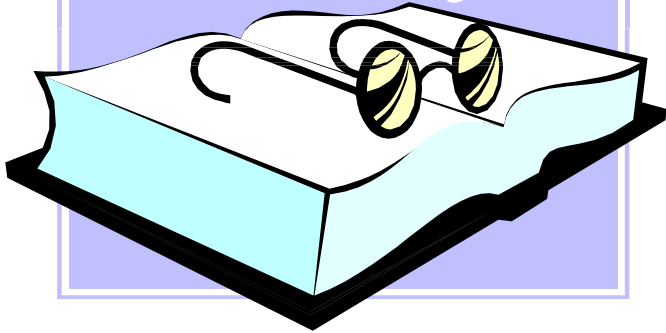
I read that more fathers are going solo (single) raising their children. Much of this is due to the breakup of the family unit. Some of these incidences may be because of the death of the mother. This is understandable!

I also am informed that solo dads fare better financially than moms. A few months ago, in this column, it was reported that women fall behind in wages paid for their work. This may be the main reason why this is true.

Equity is lacking in this case. We long to see the time when the promise of Psalm 98:9 will come to pass: "... for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Is it true that the women and the disciples went to the wrong tomb after Christ's resurrection as some believe?

ANSWER: In order for this to be true, we would have to conclude that the women went to the wrong tomb, that Peter and John ran to the wrong tomb, that the Jews then went to the wrong tomb, followed by the Sanhedrin and the Romans who went to the wrong tomb. Also, we would have to say that Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the tomb, went to the wrong tomb. That cannot be!

QUESTION: What is one proof that Jesus was not Michael the Archangel in the Old Testament?

ANSWER: One proof that Jesus was not Michael the Archangel in the Old Testament is that in Daniel 10:13, Michael is specifically called "one of the chief princes." "One of the chief princes" indicates that Michael is one among a group of chief princes. We are not told how large that group is. However, the fact that Michael is one among equals proves that he is not unique. By contrast, the Greek word used to describe Jesus in John 3:16 (God's only begotten Son) is *monogenes* which means unique or one of a kind. Jesus is not a chief prince, but He is rather unique because He is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

QUESTION: Will you please write about the Battle of Armageddon? Does it occur before or after the seven last plagues are poured out?

ANSWER: Men are muddled and confused about the Battle of Armageddon. They realize that it will be fought, but they do not understand the things which must come to pass before this great battle.

First, the worried conditions are not yet to a full as many more worries and greater trembling will be the lot of all nations. This confusion started when Israel became a nation and has been steadily increasing ever since. And tension will increase as the things transpire which must transpire before the Battle of Armageddon.

When the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt, God had to pour out plagues on Egypt to soften them so that they would be glad to let His people go. While God was pouring out these plagues, Israel was segregated so that none of the plagues came upon them.

In this age, at the Battle of Armageddon, God's people will also be segregated. Let us see how this will be: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:15-17) This is the “reaping phase” of His coming. See Revelation 14:14-16.

To where are the saints caught up? Jesus says, “... And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together” (Luke 17:37). Remember the Battle of Armageddon comes as the seventh plague, so let us see if any of them have been poured out prior to the catching up of the saints. “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God” (Revelation 15:1). Notice they are FILLED UP with the wrath of God so none of them have been poured out before this time. What was to be seen at the same time? “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God” (Revelation 15:2).

We find that the Lord reaps the earth. This corresponds to the period of the seven last plagues. See Revelation 14:17-20. Verse 19 calls it the “great wine press of the wrath of God.” Now as this is the wine press of the wrath of God, let us see what the wrath of God really is. “And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever” (Revelation 15:7).

When the nations are gathered against Judah and Jerusalem, the Lord comes down to earth from the New Jerusalem, bringing the saints with Him. Zechariah makes mention of this event: “... and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee” (Zechariah 14:5, last part).

In speaking of the judgment of the great whore and the beasts that help her, John says, “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

Let us sum up briefly events as they come: The Lord descends from heaven and the saints of all ages are resurrected. The living saints at His coming are caught up with the resurrected saints to meet the Lord in the air. Then the angels with the vials FULL of the wrath of God are seen and the saints are seen on the “Sea of Glass” or in the New Jerusalem. The angels proceed to pour out

the plagues, and under the sixth plague unclean spirits go out to gather the nations to Armageddon. Armageddon is the seventh plague. During this time, Jesus leaves the New Jerusalem and comes to earth bringing all the saints with Him. Here He is victorious, and Gentile times end, no more to come to power. From that time, the saints take over the rule of the earth for one thousand years.

It is important that we remember that the saints are resurrected and changed before the Battle of Armageddon. If you look for the change while Armageddon is on, you will miss it because it is already passed. May you, dear reader, think upon these things and read to see if they be true.

QUESTION: What is the best scriptural definition of the Gospel?

ANSWER: I Corinthians 15:3-4 perhaps is the best scriptural definition of the Gospel. It reads, “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.” In this passage, we find four components of the gospel: (1) man is a sinner; (2) Christ is the Savior; (3) Christ died as man’s substitute; (4) Christ rose from the dead. Paul and the other apostles preached this Gospel. We must also preach this Gospel.

QUESTION: In many of the church services that I have attended, it seems to me that the appeal to follow Christ is linked to deliverance from sickness, from financial problems, from unhappiness etc. Even when this is not true, it seems that the appeal to follow Christ is based more on emotion than on truth. Do I just imagine this, or am I just too picky?

ANSWER: You have a genuine concern. This generation is obsessed with numbers and a weird view of success that reflects the values of this world rather than the truth of God. Many assume that all people can be persuaded to buy any product if the advertising hype and sales pitch are right. Many churches offer music and entertainment to get one “in the mood.” Billions have been spent by corporations on research and advertising in order to peddle their products to the public. That mentality has also entered many churches today.



Costa Rica





Apostle Moises Torres (left) and Elder Osman (top left) with some of the brethren in the church in Costa Rica.



A church service of the brethren in Costa Rica.

LESSON I

JEHOSHAPHAT, KING OF JUDAH

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 17:1-19.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 17:3.

“And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim.”

NOTE: In our last lesson we studied about the reign of Asa, king of Judah. Jehoshaphat is now king of Judah, and we will see whether he was a righteous ruler or if he was an unjust one as many of the kings have been that we have studied about.

1. What did Jehoshaphat do in the land of Judah? II Chronicles 17:2.
2. Was the Lord with him? Why? II Chronicles 17:3-4.
3. Did he have riches and honor? II Chronicles 17:5.
4. What did he take away from Judah? II Chronicles 17:6.
5. In the third year of his reign, whom did he send out to the cities of Judah? What was their duty? II Chronicles 17:7-9.
6. Why did the people not make war against Jehoshaphat? What did the Philistines bring to the king? II Chronicles 17:10-11.
7. Describe Jehoshaphat's greatness? How many men of war did he have? II Chronicles 17:12-14.

LESSON II

JEHOSHAPHAT FORMS AN ALLIANCE
WITH AHAB (PART 1)

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 18:1-15.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 18:1.

“Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.”

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson that Jehoshaphat was a good ruler who prospered and waxed great during his reign because he feared the Lord. Now we shall study part of chapter 18 to see how he joined forces with Ahab.

1. Jehoshaphat now has riches and honor. After several years, where did he go? What happened while he was there? II Chronicles 18:1-2.
2. When Ahab asked the king if he would go to war with him, what was King Jehoshaphat's reply? II Chronicles 18:3-4.
3. The king of Israel demanded 400 prophets who gathered together. What did Ahab say to the prophets, and did Jehoshaphat wish the advice of someone else? II Chronicles 18:5-6.
4. Who was the man whom the king of Israel said he might inquire? Did Ahab like this man? II Chronicles 18:7.
5. Did they send for this certain man? What was his name? Where did the two kings sit for the prophets to prophesy before them? II Chronicles 18:8-9.
6. What did Zedekiah say to the kings? What did all the prophets prophesy to them? II Chronicles 18:10-11.
7. What did the messenger say to Micaiah when he went to him, and did Micaiah promise to speak what God would say to him? II Chronicles 18:12-13.
8. The kings asked him if they should go to battle. What was his reply? II Chronicles 18:14.
9. Was the king doubtful that he was telling the truth? II Chronicles 18:15.

LESSON III

JEHOSHAPHAT FORMS AN ALLIANCE WITH AHAB (PART II)

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 18:16-34.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 18:22 (first part).

“Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets...”

NOTE: We have learned in our past lessons that Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance. He joined forces with Ahab, and at this point they are about to seek the advice of Micaiah. Let us see if this prophecy is good or evil.

1. What did Micaiah tell the king in II Chronicles 18:16?
2. Read II Chronicles 18:18-22, and then tell what the prophet told Ahab and Jehoshaphat.
3. What did Zedekiah do and say to Micaiah in II Chronicles 18:23?
4. What did the king of Israel command his men to do with Micaiah? II Chronicles 18:25-26.
5. The king of Israel and the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. What did they do before they went to battle? II Chronicles 18:28-29.
6. What had the king of Syria commanded his captains to do? II Chronicles 18:30.
7. Did the Lord help Jehoshaphat when he cried for help? II Chronicles 18:31.
8. Did the captains pursue him again? Why? II Chronicles 18:32.
9. Was the king of Israel wounded? How long did he fight against the Syrians? II Chronicles 18:33-34.

LESSON IV

JEHOSHAPHAT RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

Scripture Reading: II Chronicles 19:1-11.

Golden Text: II Chronicles 19:9.

“And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.”

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that King Ahab of Israel was killed at the battle of Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord and was spared from death. Now he returns to Jerusalem, and let us see what instructions he gives the Levites, judges and priests.

1. Who came out to meet Jehoshaphat as he returned to Jerusalem? What did he say to the king? II Chronicles 19:1-3.
2. Where did the king go to gather back the people unto the Lord God? Whom did he set up in the land? II Chronicles 19:4-5.
3. What instructions did he give to the judges? Do you think he gave them good advice? II Chronicles 19:6-7.
4. Whom did he set up next in the kingdom? II Chronicles 19:8.
5. What were his instructions to them? II Chronicles 19:9-10.
6. Who was to be the chief priest over the people? Who was ruler of the house of Judah? What were the Levites to do? II Chronicles 19:11.
7. Read the last sentence of verse 11 again. That was King Jehoshaphat’s final advice to his rulers. Don’t you think that was good admonition and something we should remember and apply to our own lives?

ANDY WAS AFRAID

By Dorothy Walter

One day Mother told Ross, Andy's older brother, that she and Daddy were going to have to make a business trip to the city.

"We will be gone for two days. Do you think you and Andy will be all right here until we come home?"

"Sure," said Ross. "We'll get along fine." He turned to Andy. "We'll play we're on a camping trip while the folks are gone."

Andy had never gone on a camping trip. He wasn't sure whether he wanted to try one or not.

"It will be fun," said Ross.

"Who will cook our dinner?" Andy asked.

"I will," said Ross. "You never saw such fine stew as I can make. Last year at summer camp I learned to make a lot of things like stew and camp biscuits and pancakes." He grinned at Andy. "You can help me, and we'll make out fine."

Mother hurried around and got things ready for the trip. Andy didn't think too much about it until he saw Mother and Daddy drive away in the car. Then he began to think about the big, empty house with no one in it but Ross and himself. Then he thought about Mother and Daddy being gone all night.

As it got later and later, Andy began to feel worse and worse. The more he thought about the night coming, the more unhappy he felt. He began to cry.

"Why, Andy", Ross said, "What's the matter? Are you lonesome?"

Andy shook his head. Then he nodded. He did miss Mother and Daddy. He didn't want Ross to know that he was afraid to stay alone. He was afraid of the dark. Even when Mother and Daddy were home, he was sometimes afraid if they were too far away from him in the house. Now he and Ross would be all alone. He cried harder and harder.

"They'll be gone only two days," said Ross. "They'll be home before we now it." Ross patted Andy on the shoulder. "Come on, let's go make some waffles for supper. That ought to keep us busy for a while."

Ross had never made waffles, but he followed the

recipe in Mother's cookbook, and the waffles turned out quite good. But Andy didn't enjoy the waffles very much. His fear made a big lump in his throat, so that it seemed that his food couldn't go down very well.

After supper they washed the dishes. Then they fed Noodles, their dog, and put him to bed for the night.

"I want Noodles to stay in the house," Andy said.

Then Ross understood. "Are you afraid?" he asked.

Andy nodded. "I don't like the dark. I can't see where things are. I can't see what's there."

"I remember when I was little," said Ross. "I was afraid of the dark, too. Mom always had to leave a light on in my room."

"You were afraid?" Andy asked. He had never thought about his big brother being afraid of anything.

"Sure," said Ross. "Most children are afraid sometimes."

"Are you afraid now?" Andy asked.

"No," said Ross. "You see, God is with us even though Mom and Dad aren't. He can take care of us even better than they can. So what is there to be afraid of?"

"But it's so dark," answered Andy.

Ross put his arm around Andy. "When Mom found out that I was afraid she told me to pretend that the night was a lovely, soft, dark blanket that covered up the world at night so little animals and little boys and girls could go to sleep. It would be hard to sleep with the sun shining. God made the lovely night blanket so we could have it dark for sleeping."

Andy thought about that. "We'd get really tired without our good sleep, wouldn't we?" he said.

Ross nodded. "God knows what is best for us. He knows we need sleep and rest. So He makes it easier for us to sleep." He smiled at Andy. "Would you like to sleep with me tonight?" He asked. "It might be fun to stay together." He reached for the Bible. "We ought to have worship first," he said as he opened the Bible. "There's a verse I like that always helps me when I'm afraid of something. It goes something like this, 'What time I am afraid, I will be trustng Thee.'"

"I will trust in Thee," said Andy softly. "That's a good thing to do, isn't it?" Thinking about the verse and saying it would help him not to be afraid any more.

COLORWISE

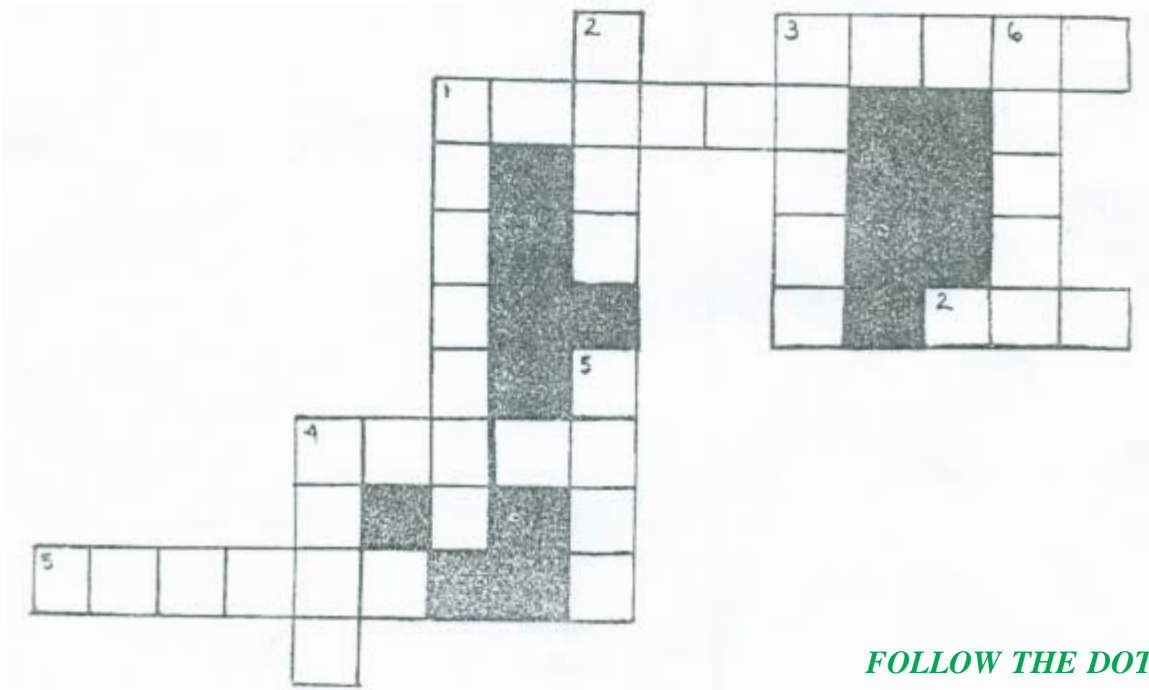
Fill in this crossword puzzle with the names of the colors you find in the Bible verses.

ACROSS

- 1. Exodus 38:25
- 2. Matthew 16:2
- 3. Genesis 30:32
- 4. II Kings 19:26
- 5. Exodus 36:37

DOWN

- 1. Exodus 36:37
- 2. Exodus 36:37
- 3. Exodus 38:8
- 4. Exodus 39:15
- 5. Exodus 35:9
- 6. Joel 1:7



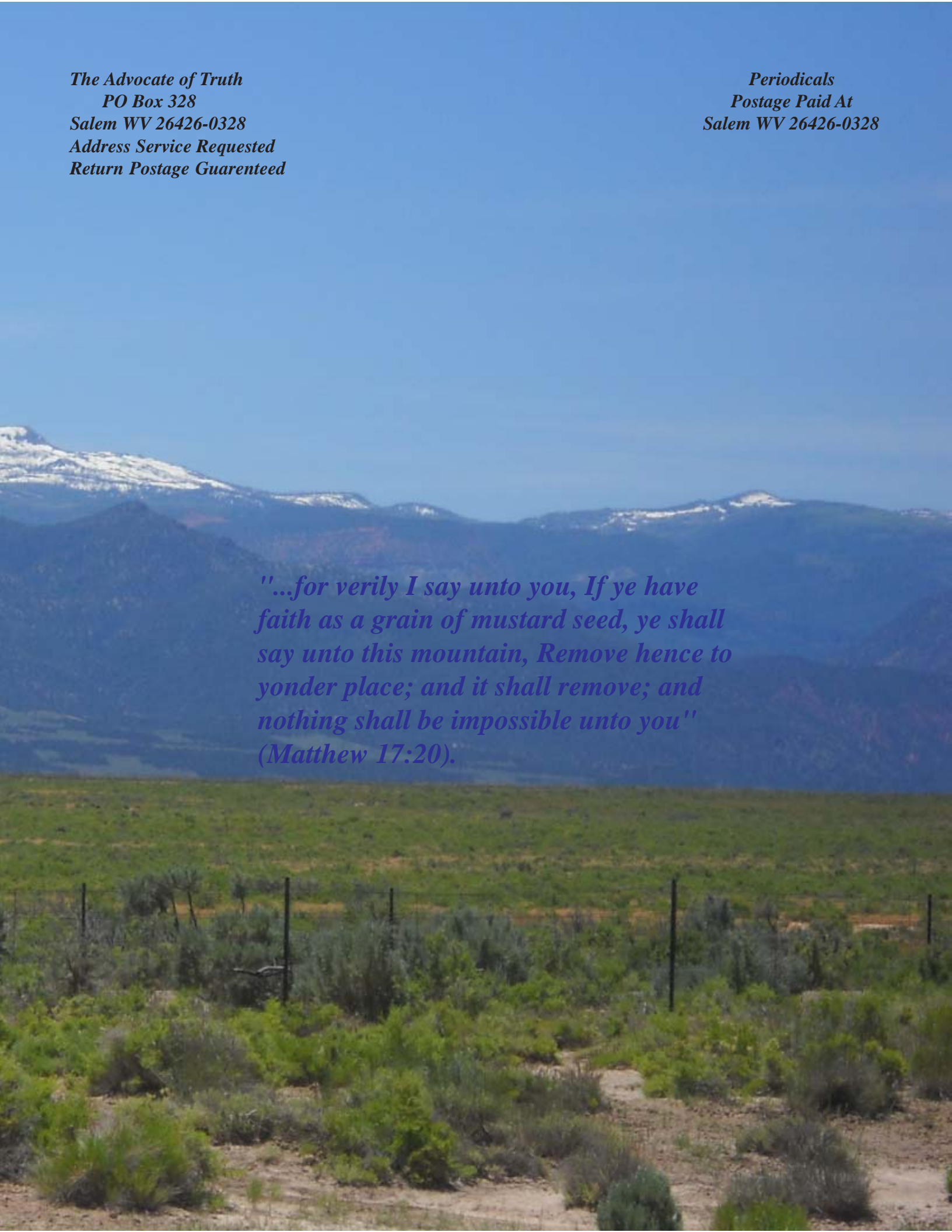
FOLLOW THE DOTS

Start at number one and draw a line to number two. Continue until you reach the end of the numbers to find the name of Noah's sons.



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*"...for verily I say unto you, If ye have
faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall
say unto this mountain, Remove hence to
yonder place; and it shall remove; and
nothing shall be impossible unto you"
(Matthew 17:20).*