

The Advocate of Truth



TABLE OF CONTENTS



The Advocate of Truth is the official organ 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

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Volume LXIV

Number 5

November 24, 2014

The Advocate of Truth

USPS 542-940

PAGE

In Every Thing Give Thanks 3

We need to give thanks in joy and sorrow.

The Doctrine Of The Resurrection 4

Without the Resurrection we would have no hope.

Three Bushels 5

Let's not let any bushel cover our candlestick.

Forgiveness 6

We must forgive to be forgiven.

Sharing Treasure 7-9

We have many riches to share with others.

Clean And Unclean 9-12

This doctrine is still in force today.

New Car For The Brethren In India 13

Praise God for His provisions.

The Signs Of The Times 14-15

It's a mad world.

Questions And Answers 16-17

What was the biblical use for the word "tittle"?

The Church Around The World 18-19

This month we look at Burundi.

The Children's Pages 20-23

Sabbath School Lessons

A Story - "Give Thanks"

Games and Puzzles



In Every Thing Give Thanks

A Short Thanksgiving Thought
Bond Tennant

The Apostle Paul admonished, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thessalonians 5:18). Those who give their lives in consecration to God and the doing of His will, and have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Master, consider every day as a time for giving thanks. The child of God rejoices with gratitude and thankfulness in serving his heavenly Father daily and in every situation of life.

Every situation of life, be it joy or sorrow, is an occasion for thankfulness. This means that doing the Lord’s will costs the child of God something, knowing that in giving himself to the divine service, the greater his joy will be. Someone has said that the deepest shades of sorrow may yield the richest fruitage of peace and joy in the Lord. Sorrow and trial may generate much more thankfulness than may be true with more pleasant experiences. The following is an example. Some children of God may have a debilitating disease, but they may appreciate God’s grace in their spiritual lives more fully than others who may not have undergone such an experience. Their trial has caused them to depend upon the Lord, and this has caused them to live closer to Him. They are ever conscious of their dependence upon Him.

May we all give our heartfelt praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father for all of His blessings. “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful

unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations” (Psalm 100).

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

By Betty Whetstone

I love to count all of the blessings
It’s our Father’s great pleasure to give;
He rains down these blessings upon us,
And they’re ours, as long as we live.
Do you ever thank Him for the heavens,
Such a beautiful shade of pure blue;
Or behold the sight of a rainbow
That He gave, as a promise, to you?
He gave us the beauty of nature,
And he holds it all close to His heart;
For His love marks the fall of a sparrow,
And He grieves as its life departs.
He provides the food on my table,
And He blesses each bite that I eat;
He smiles at my prayer of Thanksgiving,
That I offer, as I kneel at His feet.
My prayers are the same, yet different,
There is so much to give Thanks for each day;
His heart fills with love for His children,
And He smiles down on us when we pray.
It’s His pleasure to give us His kingdom,
Where we will never know sorrow or pain;
And there we can thank Him forever,
As we bask in the love of His Reign.



THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

By Moises Torres

The resurrection of the dead is one of the greatest teachings found in the Bible. It is a mystery to the world, but it is a doctrinal teaching of the Church of God (see Hebrews 6:2). The Scriptures give much evidence that this teaching was believed and preached by many since ancient ages, and at this time, the Son of God came in the flesh to confirm this teaching with His preaching, miracles, and with His own death and resurrection.

John 5:28-29 declares in a very complete manner this blessed hope of the resurrection of the dead, which was announced and known by many since ancient times. Let us quote John 5:28-29:

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

LET’S NOT MARVEL AT THIS. The Lord said these words to the Pharisees, and we should direct these words to ourselves today--“Marvel not at this!”

These words were said to shut the mouths of the Pharisees when He was being persecuted for healing the sick man of Bethesda on the Sabbath. In chapter 5 of the Gospel of John, the Lord didn’t just tell them that He was the **LORD OF THE SABBATH**, but also **LORD OF LIFE AND DEATH**. Let’s remember that He said to Martha, Lazarus’ sister, “I am the resurrection and the life.” He is the author of the resurrection.

LET’S ANALYZE THESE VERSES:

WILL HEAR HIS VOICE - The voice of the Lord Jesus Christ (see I Thessalonians 4:16). Job declares that

the Lord will call, and he would answer (see Job 14:15). The Lord used this same method when He resurrected Lazarus. He called him with a loud voice, and Lazarus came out of the tomb (see John 11:41-44).

HOW MANY WILL BE RESURRECTED? These verses say that **ALL** of them who are in the sepulcher will hear His voice, no matter where they were buried. They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

A DIFFERENCE IS MADE RIGHT HERE: The just unto the resurrection of life; and the rest unto the resurrection of damnation. They will be resurrected at different times or lapses, but every single one will rise up to receive his reward, whether it be eternal life or destruction.

WHEN WILL THE RESURRECTION TAKE PLACE? This verse says at a determined hour. “For the hour is coming.” We don’t know what hour, but it is coming “at the last trump” says the Apostle Paul. “...the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (I Corinthians 15:52; see I Thessalonians 4:16).

In other words, the Lord Jesus declared the great mystery of the resurrection in these verses.

Let us remember that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.



Three Bushels

Bond Tennant

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us not to hide the Gospel light “under a bushel,” but rather to put it “on a candlestick” that it may be seen (Matthew 5:15-16). There are at least three bushels under which the light may be hidden. Let us consider them.

The fear of man is one of them. We may wish to keep the truth to ourselves for fear of what our friends and relatives may think of us. A greater faith in God and more earnest prayers for His help, plus a richer indwelling of the Spirit of love for Him and for humanity will aid us in removing this bushel.

A second bushel may be called the bushel of limitation. Because some have shown a zeal that has not been according to knowledge, some may suppose that a safeguard against misguided zeal is to have less zeal. The attitude is adopted that the proper course is to set a limit on what one can do for the Lord. This is not the way to correct an erroneous practice. Let us not put our light under the bushel of limitations. All we need to do is to proclaim the message of truth, and be sure that our activity is motivated by the Spirit of our Lord. If we do these two things, we surely can safely remove limitations and give ourselves wholly and zealously to the work of the Lord. Our light will therefore shine.

A third bushel may be called the bushel of misinterpretation. This bushel will hide the light if we permit it to do so. Let us consider the following example: The parable of the net cast into the sea describes the work of fishing, and later that of sorting the fish (see Matthew 13:47-48). Jesus had also said, “...I will make

you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). I have heard the suggestion made that the work of fishing for men was quite popular throughout the age, and even during the earlier part of the Gospel age, but now we are in the sorting time. Therefore no further fishing should be done.

However, we must remember that just as it is the Gospel message that catches the fish, it is the same message that sorts them. God decides who is acceptable to Him. His decision is based upon the way in which an individual responds to the truth when it is heard. In order for the Gospel to be heard, it must be proclaimed. It is still the will of God for His people to continue sending forth His message. Any interpretation of His Word which holds us back from the proclamation of the truth is in error. Such interpretation serves no other purpose than that of being a bushel to hide the light of the Gospel.



FORGIVENESS

By Morgan Buechner

Forgiveness is a very special key of the Bible. Matthew 6:14-15 NIV says, *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* You can never succeed in life or enter into the Kingdom without forgiveness. You can lose friends or never make it into salvation. Matthew 5:23-24 NIV should be one of your priorities to follow which is once again forgiving. It says, *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”* If you do not have Christ, forgiving will be a struggle. If you have Christ, you will be able to forgive when you commit your heart and soul to it. Another priority is to let Jesus be our role model. Luke 23:33-34 NIV says, *“When they came to a place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”* When you forgive, there is a weight lifted off your shoulders and you can finally do what you want to do without thinking back of what happened or to hold a grudge. Some people say that God doesn’t want to forgive them of what they have done but if you want Him to forgive you and you really mean it, He will help you. *“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.”* Psalm 103:8-12. Forgiveness is a true gift that does not come easily, and to get it is with prayer and humility, and you will be able to forgive.

Esteem Beyond Appearance

A man of honour noticed a strange lady
Whose sight was voluptuous,
tantalizing and full of awestruck beauty.
His beady eyes followed her as she gracefully
walked down the road,
And immediately he lusted at her
for she was a woman to behold.

He then saw another,
But her clothes were rags, and to him her looks were
nothing but ugly and bitter.
She smiled and greeted him as she passed by,
But he scowled and scorned thinking
this woman is not my style.

He approached the strange woman,
“Lady I’ve never seen you before,
But you’ve got my attention and so much more.
Can I be with you?
And can I make you proclaim I do?”

The woman intensively watched him
from his shoe to his face,
Then turned her head and said “What a disgrace!”
She lifted her head high and continued her way,
Thinking why a begger like him
should have anything to say.

The embarrassed man turned to speak to the shabby
but courteous woman,
“I realize I need you now, more than ever,
until time is done.”
She responded, “I don’t need you, I thought you
wanted a woman of only beauty and shape?
Why seekest me?
I’m a woman clothed with virtue
and a Christ-like advocate.

Sister Isis Richards
Grenada West Indies



Sharing Treasure

By David DeLong

"Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah. And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the king's hand. And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good. And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak" (I Kings 22:6-14).

What a wonderful commitment that Micaiah had for speaking only the Word of God. This is what makes up a true testimony for the Lord. As witnesses for Him we too must speak nothing more, and nothing less, than what the Lord wants us to speak. Micaiah had the courage and integrity to stand against the popular position of the false prophets of his time. Let us do the same. Many today are teaching the false, but popular, message of the traditions of men. Some do it out of ignorance; some do it out of the fear of man; some do it out of a desire to gain wealth and prestige. But let us say, as did Micaiah, "what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak."

In verse 15 we find Micaiah coming to the king of Israel. "So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Micaiah's answer to the king is a bit puzzling. Maybe he was mocking the king, or maybe he was somewhat scared by being in his presence. In any event he next tells the king what will really happen.

"And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the LORD? And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he

would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Where-with? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee" (verses 16-23).

Even though Micaiah was put into prison for his testimony against the king of Israel, he was faithful in delivering The Lord's message to the king. Ahab, the king of Israel, was killed in the ensuing battle at Ramoth-gilead and was taken to Samaria where he was buried (see verses 24-38). He had listened to the false prophets speak lies to him and he paid the ultimate price for doing so. What a message this is for us today, that we have nothing to do with the false traditions of man! Popularity is almost always accompanied with worldly compromise.

Micaiah shared the precious treasure of the Word of God to those in his presence.. Though many may not realize it, the Word of the Lord, spoken as encouragement or as a warning, is always intended to be a blessing. The Lord strengthens the righteous and gives exhortation to the wicked to repent. Let us now examine the treasures which the Lord expects us to have a part in sharing with others.

We know, of course, that treasure is something dear or precious to us. To the Hebrews treasure was anything collected together, provisions, stores, etc. An example was such things as wheat, barley, oil, and honey. We find in Jeremiah 41:8 a situation where Ishmael the son of Nethaniah spared some men from death when they bribed him. "But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren."

The greatest of all treasures is the Lord Himself. "The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled

Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure" (Isaiah 33:5-6). Knowing Christ and having salvation is also a tremendous treasure. The Apostle Paul testified of this in his epistle to the Ephesians. In reference to the Gentiles receiving Christ he wrote: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: " (Ephesians 3:7-8).

God's Word, one of the most wonderful of treasures, must be searched out as one would search for mineral treasures. We find in Proverbs 2:1-5: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God."

The Lord also has treasures that He values greatly. One of these treasures is His people. What He told the children of Israel is true for His people today. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:" (Exodus 19:5). He delights in blessing His people as we find in Deuteronomy 28:12: "The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow."

Jesus teaches us to lay up spiritual treasures in heaven. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

By laying up spiritual treasures in heaven we thus have a storehouse to share with others. If we are not regularly laying up such treasures, we will have nothing to give out

of an empty life. Jesus told his disciples: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:7-8). These disciples shared the wonderful treasures of the coming kingdom of heaven as well as relying on God's strength for the healing of others. Their lives were filled with the love and power of the Lord and they could then share this with the needy.

A disciple of the Lord must learn to share the Lord's treasure with wisdom. For instance, Jesus warned: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). And in Proverbs 26:4 we find: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him." Surely there is "...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes 3:7).

One must also keep in mind that it is the Lord's treasure that we are sharing, not our own. In other words, if we are giving our opinion on a topic, it may be our treasure we are sharing but not the Lord's. Having the wisdom to know what to share and when to share it is a matter of trusting the Lord's wisdom in such cases. Colossians 2:2-3 informs us: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

When sharing the treasure of God's Word with

someone we may have a tendency, at times, to share too much at once. Even Jesus said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:12-13). The Lord never forced His treasures on anyone. He healed those who came to Him, fed the multitudes that followed Him, and preached to and taught the people who were interested in His message. In other words, their hearts were ready. Let us do our part in sharing the treasure of God's Word, but let us not take the Holy Spirit's place in guiding someone into all truth.

Perhaps the best way to share the Lord's spiritual treasures is to display those treasures for all to see. Proverbs 3:3-4 is an interesting text. It reads: "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Mercy and truth are complements of each other. Truth without mercy condemns a person. Mercy without truth does not lead a person to repentance. If we are binding these about our neck they will be on display in our lives for all the world to see. Written upon the table of our heart, they will be a part of our lives so that we will not be hypocrites. Second Corinthians 4:7 reads: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." God will then be glorified.

Clean and Unclean

By David DeLong



Many in today's world are confused about the law of the clean and unclean as presented in the Bible. Since the subject is first introduced in the Old Testament, they assume that it is under the Mosaic law and that Christ abolished it when He died on the cross. Nothing could be

farther from the truth. We begin our study of this important topic in the Book of Genesis. When Noah was about to bring animals into the ark before the Flood, the Lord told him to take both clean and unclean animals into the ark with him and his family. We read about this situation in

Genesis 7:1-3;7-9. "And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth...And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah."

After Noah, his family, and the animals came out of the ark after the Flood, Noah offered some clean animals as a sacrifice to the Lord. "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Genesis 8:20). Some may believe that the clean animals were only for sacrifice since no mention of them is made here of eating them. But, we must remember that no record is given of people eating animal flesh until Genesis, chapter 9.

Let us now examine verse 3 of chapter 9, where the Lord gives Noah permission to eat meat. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." This passage, upon a casual reading, seems to say that Noah could eat any animal that he chose ("Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you"). But the Lord put a definite restriction upon those animals: "even as the green herb have I given you all things". Let's go back to the passage in Genesis where the Lord gave to Adam and Eve the instructions about eating the green herb.

The passage is found in Genesis 1:29-30. "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." Notice that mankind was not given every green herb to eat. He was given the "herb bearing seed" which includes grains and vegetables, and

"the fruit of a tree yielding seed" which includes the various fruits that we enjoy. However, the animals could eat of "every green herb". This includes the grasses of the field and the leaves on trees as well as the fruits and vegetables that people eat.

So, the passage in Genesis 9:3 about "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you" is also meant in a limited context. Clean and unclean animals had already been differentiated to Noah, therefore he knew which clean animals were given both for sacrifice and for food. Mankind could eat of the clean varieties, but the carnivorous animals could eat of every variety, clean and unclean.

We find a number of places in the Bible where a word such as "every" or "all" is intended only in a limited context. One such passage is in Mark 16:15. Here we read Jesus's command: "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Obviously, the Lord means by the phrase "every creature" to be only human beings. How foolish it would be of us to preach the gospel to every cow or dog that we encountered. But some misled people, taking the phrase "every creature" to mean humans and animals, may do just that.

Another example is found in Exodus 21:5-6. Verses 1-6 are referring to a servant either being released after a number of years of service, or else staying with his master. "And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." The phrase "he shall serve him for ever", we understand plainly, means only for the rest of the servant's life, not for eternity. So too, we must understand that "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you" is only intended, for humans, within the limited context of clean meats.

We use the Old Testament texts of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, in reference to the law of the clean and unclean, to show us the complete listings of what are clean and unclean meats. No other passages in Scripture give us such a complete listing. We are instructed in what kinds of beasts, fishes, fowls, and even insects that are allowed to be eaten and what kinds are not allowed to be eaten. The Lord records in Leviticus 11:46-47: "This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature

that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten." A direct reference to this is found in II Corinthians 6:16-18. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Many people believe that Jesus was cleansing unclean meats in passages such as Matthew 15:1-20. But when the contexts of such passages are studied, no such permission to eat unclean meats is given by the Lord. Verses 1-2 sets the stage for this confrontation between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. "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." This was the issue at hand--ceremonial washing of hands before eating bread. Pork, or any other unclean meats, were not even on the minds of those who asked Jesus this question.

Jesus then answered the question in verses 10-11. "And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." Here Jesus is confirming the fact that eating without washing one's hands does not defile a person. What does defile a person is what comes out of his or her mouth (from the heart). Peter then asked the Lord to explain this situation.

Jesus answered him directly and to the point in verses 17-20. "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." The topic began with the question about eating without washing one's hands. Jesus ended the topic by saying that eating with

unwashen hands does not defile a man. End of question. Nothing can be taken out of this passage concerning the cleansing of unclean meats.

Acts chapter 10 is used by many people to try to prove that the Lord cleansed unclean meats. This text shows the conversion of a Gentile, Cornelius. Several of his servants were to meet up with Peter who would then tell Cornelius what to do. We pick up the story in verses 9-15. "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

In Peter's trance he saw "all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth", which would include some unclean animals and some clean animals. Even at this point in his life Peter had "never eaten any thing that is common or unclean". This further proves that Jesus had not cleansed unclean meats when speaking to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15. If Jesus had cleansed unclean meats, then Peter would certainly have eaten of them by now.

There were two ways that the Jews considered meats to be unclean. One was from the forbidden lists in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The second way was when a clean animal was in close association with an unclean one. This was called being "common". The word for "common" in Acts 10 is "koinos" or some derivation of this Greek word. It can mean to be ceremonially profane. In either case Peter had never eaten anything that was common or unclean.

The Jews also considered a Gentile person to be common or unclean. They wanted no association with the Gentiles. So the Lord used a graphic image of various animals to show Peter that believing Gentiles were now cleansed by Him. Notice how the Lord answered Peter in verse 15: "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou

common." Again, there is no intention of the Lord to cleanse unclean meats. Peter did not get this interpretation from his trance. The message that Peter got from this lesson of the Lord is found in verse 28. "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Still another passage is used by many to try to prove the cleansing of unclean meats. This passage is found in Romans 14. Verses 1-3 informs us: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." Again, a casual reading of this text might lead one to come to the conclusion that the person who "believeth that he may eat all things" is eating pork and other unclean meats. But, remember our discussion of "Every moving thing that liveth" in Genesis 9:3? The phrase "eat all things" in Romans 14:2 must also be taken in a limited context.

That limited context, as we have already studied, is the eating only of clean meats. This subject of Romans 14 may be about eating clean meats that have been offered to idols (see for instance I Corinthians 8:1-9 where the Apostle Paul compares strong and weak disciples).

Let us return to our study in Romans 14. The next verse that we will consider is verse 14. Paul wrote: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." The word "unclean" in this verse actually is the word "koinos" which is translated as "common" in Acts 10. Therefore, it would appear to be referring to meat that is considered ceremonially unclean and not morally unclean (please refer to the comments on Acts 10 of this article).

Paul concluded this discussion with verses 20-23. "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of

faith is sin."

An objection is often made in a passage of Colossians 2 that the Lord, through Paul's epistle, has made everything clean. The verses used are 16-17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The point in question is that of "meat, or in drink". However, we must recognize that meat, drink, holyday, new moon, and sabbath days in this passage are, "a shadow of things to come". The law relating to "shadows" is referring to the Levitical law as we can see from Hebrews 8 and 10.

In Hebrews 8:4-5 we find: "For if he (Jesus) were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Likewise, we learn concerning the law of shadows in Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

Therefore, the law relating to shadows in Colossians 2:16 is referring to the Mosaic, or Levitical, law. The meats in this verse are not referring to the law of clean and unclean which was already in effect even in Noah's day. Rather, it is referring to the law of shadows or the Mosaic law. Notice how meats and drinks are written about, concerning the tabernacle service, in Hebrews 9:9-10: "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation."

What then could meats and drinks, as pertaining to the Mosaic law, be referring to? One plausible explanation is that of meat and drink offerings (see Leviticus 23:18). Likewise, the "sabbath days" in Colossians 2:16 are referring only to the law of shadows, or Levitical law, and would be the yearly, feast day, sabbaths and not the weekly Sabbaths (see Leviticus 23:39).

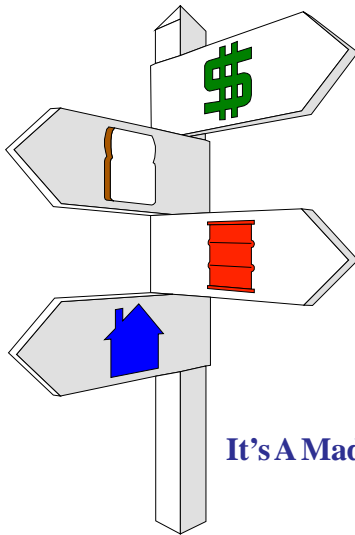


We praise God for the new car that was provided for ministry to the brethren in India.



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.



It's A Mad World

I was viewing CNN, and the news anchor made the comment, "The World has gone mad." This is quite true! At the time of this writing, there are many hot spots and "wars and rumors of wars" around the world. There are three major conflicts which are critical to the United States: 1. Iraq: A group of Sunnis, one of the two divisions of Islam, has formed what they call the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Those, of the other division of Islam who oppose the Sunnis, are called Shiites. There is a great war going on in Iraq. ISIS is also the name used for the Sunni fighters. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria was formed when the Sunni forces captured several cities in Iraq and territory in Syria, a country which has had civil war for over three years. The ISIS forces are said to be a splinter group of al-Quida which is a terror group. However, they are much more fierce than al-Quida. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria enforces strict Islamic fundamentalism, just as when Islam was spread by the sword in the days of its infancy. The people must convert to Islam or die. Many Shiites took up arms to defeat the ISIS troops.

There are many aspects to this war between ISIS and the Shiites who control the government in Iraq. One aim of the ISIS troops was to encircle and take Bagdad. Some believe that the government, which has a Shiite prime minister, did not have an inclusive government which included both Sunnis and Shiites. It was suggested by some that the prime minister resign which he refused to do, and he called out troops to surround government houses and bridges.

The American response was very confusing. The Obama administration did send advisors to help defeat

ISIS. The ISIS forces persecuted the Christians, and the Christians fled to a mountain area where they suffered from lack of water, food, and necessities. Then President Obama ordered air strikes to stop the speed of the ISIS forces, there were necessities being sent to the Christians on the mountain top by airplane.

Observation

I believe that this is enough for now about this one event of "wars and rumors of wars." Events pertaining to this episode may continue a long time. Any effort to bring Iraq into a decent and orderly country is an exercise in futility.

2. Israel and Hamas: A sign of the times which is happening during this time is the war in the Middle East between Israel and the controlling Palestinian faction in the Gaza Strip called Hamas. This event is of biblical concern. For a long time, Hamas fired rockets into Israel. Israel said that it had the right to defend itself, so they went to war with Hamas.

The Palestinians were also building tunnels to use in travel between Gaza and Israel for the purpose of killing Israeli soldiers. Destroying the tunnels was a big concern of the Israeli forces. Besides the rocket and drone attacks on Gaza, Israel sent ground forces which did much damage.

In Gaza, many innocent people were killed. Israel was censured by the United Nations because it said that Israel was not careful in preventing the killing of innocent people. The United Nations also censured Hamas for firing rockets into Israel.

Ten cease-fires have been called, in which case all have been broken except the one that is on now which is to last three days. Egypt has stepped in to help broker a solution.

Observation

Peace will never come in this age between Israel and Hamas or any other faction of the Palestinians. We can only surmise the leveling off of anger after other conflicts and wars, but there can be no doubt of the continued hatred between Israel and the Palestinians.

Because of Israel's involvement in this war, they say anti-Semitism has increased in the world, especially in France where many who follow Islam abide. This may be God working out His plan in gathering His people back to Israel because Israel would be the safest place to be for them.

3. The situation in eastern Ukraine: The trouble in the Ukraine is that Russia wants to make the eastern part their territory. Some local people joined the Russian troops sent to the eastern part's borders. There pursued great fighting.

A passenger plane was shot down by a rocket over the disputed territory held by the rebels. All of the passengers were killed. It was difficult to get to the scene because of the fighting in the area. One convoy did get to the crash sight and recovered twenty bodies which were shipped back to the Dutch Netherlands from which most of the passengers came. Later the area was unsafe again. As of this writing, the fighting goes on, and the area is unsafe again for searching for any more bodies. Bodily remains remain unclaimed in the field.

The United Kingdom and the United States have placed sanctions against Russia for its action backed by its president. The fear is that Russia may try to enforce sanctions against them.

Observation

Many think that the cold war with Russia and its allies was ended. But really this is not true. Russia is still using its diabolical actions in order to further its agenda.

Other Hot Spots

1. In Afghanistan there was an attack by a person wearing an Afghanistan Army uniform which killed an American Army General. The death of the high ranking general was only the second high ranking general killed since Vietnam.
2. North Korea said that it can nuke the White House.

The Economy

I saw in the newspaper that the higher paying jobs such as manufacturing have disappeared. What is on the rise are the lower paying jobs such as in the service industry. It is back in style for executives to get raises. The newspaper said that inequality is here to stay.

More On Immigration

Last month we commented on immigration. Let us continue to think upon it this month. It was stated that many children without parents from Central American countries are crossing the border in Mexico to come to America. They are overwhelming the system here in America. Three Central American countries are Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. The following is a portion of an article entitled *Desperate Honduran youths see U.S. as last resort* which appeared in the **Houston Chronicle:**

LALIBERTAD, Honduras – Jose Luis Ramos Castillo stood at the edge of his destitute farming village earlier this month, determined to set out on a desperate journey he scarcely comprehended to a country he barely understood. He had no money in his pockets and a broken suitcase at his side. Dozens of others like him had already left for the United States under similar circumstances, so the 16-year-old with a wispy mustache and a thick mat of dark hair, believed there was little time to waste.

At the last minute, his traveling companion backed out, and Ramos, reluctant to travel alone, returned home. His family had been unaware of his plans, though not entirely surprised when they found out later.

“I’d like to be in United States,” Ramos shrugged, trying to muster an explanation. “I’m still leaving.”

Since October, the U.S. border has witnessed a dramatic influx of more than 52,000 unaccompanied immigrant youths, the majority of them Central Americans pouring into the Rio Grande Valley.

The exodus can be explained in part by widespread poverty, a desire to reunify with family long since departed and oppressive violence. The confluence of these factors is especially acute in Honduras, which is the second poorest country in the region and the deadliest in the world, with about 90 murders per 100,000 people in a nation of 8 million.

In some communities, the sheer volume of young people immigrating in recent months has become its own driving force, pushing a wave of minors in pursuit of peers and a vague notion of the American Dream.

Comment

Let us pray for the children and young people who do try to immigrate to the United States, especially for those in the Central American countries. Also let us pray for the several Church of God members who live in Honduras that they may continue to endure the hardness which surrounds them.



Questions and Answers

QUESTION: What was the biblical use of the word "tittle" to which Jesus referred in Matthew 5:18 when He said, "...one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." ?

ANSWER: The tittle was the small strokes that were made on Hebrew consonants so as to distinguish certain letters.

QUESTION: Why do you think the term "Holy Ghost" is used in the *King James Version* of the Bible instead of "Holy Spirit"?

ANSWER: Many have been led to believe that the Holy Spirit is a person, the third person of a trinity, but a study of the Scriptures does not bear this out. It seems that the main problem is that the Greek word *pneuma* is rendered by the English word "ghost." This makes the Holy Spirit to be a Holy Ghost as it can be rendered either spirit or ghost.

In nearly all translations of the Scriptures other than the *King James Version*, the word "Ghost" has been changed to "Spirit." Quite likely the *King James Version* was translated at a time when superstition was rife. The word "Ghost" had more respect and reverence than it has today. At that time, ghosts were very real in the minds of many people. They were always associated

with the thought of personality. The translators may have believed in a "personal" Holy Spirit and conceived the idea of calling it a Holy Ghost.

QUESTION: From reading the Bible, I am mulling over the fact that the Bible presents two Gods: the vengeful, warring God of the Old Testament and the compassionate and loving heavenly Father of the New Testament, who was introduced by Christ. Please comment on my thought.

ANSWER: Yours is a thought which is based upon a serious misunderstanding of the Bible. The God of the Old Testament is just as merciful as the God of the New Testament. Obviously, they are one and the same. The prophets of the Old Testament made it very clear that God takes no pleasure in meting out judgment upon sinners. In the Psalms, we find many that are filled with praise to God for His mercy, kindness, grace and love. In every one of the 26 verses in Psalm 136, it records of God that "his mercy endureth forever." Consider also the following verses in Psalms:

"But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation" (Psalm 13:5).

"All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Psalm 25:10).

"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Psalm 103:8).

QUESTION: I have a friend who was badly hurt in an accident about a year ago, from which he never fully recovered. However, he is always cheerful and tells me that God is very good to him. How can he say such a thing? If that happened to me, I would be angry at God.

ANSWER: Perhaps your friend has asked the same question you have, and it is safe to say that his path has not been easy. However, in the midst of it he experiences the truth that God is with us even in life's hardest circumstances and situations.

The reason your friend feels this way is because his faith is stronger than his circumstances. Many people fall apart when life seems to turn against them. The reason is because their faith was weak to begin with. They are like the man in Jesus' parable who built his house on sand. When the storms of life come, they are washed away because they have no solid foundation of faith in Christ. Please read Matthew 7:24-27. ("For we walk by faith, not by sight") (II Corinthians 5:7).

QUESTION: Will you please give six reasons why the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is important?

ANSWER: Yes, we will. The following are the six reasons:

1. It is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament.
2. It is the foundation for the child of God's faith. If Christ did not die, his or her faith is in vain (I Corinthians 15:17).
3. It is necessary for conversion (Romans 10:9-10).
4. It was central to the preaching of the early church (Acts 2:24, 29-32; 4:33; 17:18; I Corinthians 15:15).
5. It demonstrates God's present power on our behalf (Ephesians 1:18-20).
6. The child of God's resurrection is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus (II Corinthians 14:14; I Thessalonians 4:14).

QUESTION: Why is Jesus coming? I have heard many people give their thought on the subject, but I want the real reason that is found in the Bible.

ANSWER: The reasons men give for the coming of Christ is not our concern. We want to know what the

Bible says!

If man goes to his reward at the time of death, then the second coming is a useless event, and has no importance relative to our salvation. That the Lord will come to this earth again, only an atheist would dare deny. Three fourths of the New Testament is written concerning this great event. It is the blessed hope of the church (Titus 2:11-13). It will inaugurate the age of restitution, for Jesus must remain in heaven until the "...times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

How important is it? Every prophecy regarding redemption of man and the earth awaits His coming, which will bring times of restitution from the presence of the Lord. Man's redemption depends upon the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is in heaven now as the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return (Luke 19:12). At His first coming, Jesus sowed the good seed. This seed is in the growing season while the Husbandman awaits the harvest. He will return and gather the good seed into His barn, and will burn the tares with fire. It is then that the righteous shall shine in the Kingdom of their Father.

QUESTION: Why should we observe the 7th Day Sabbath?

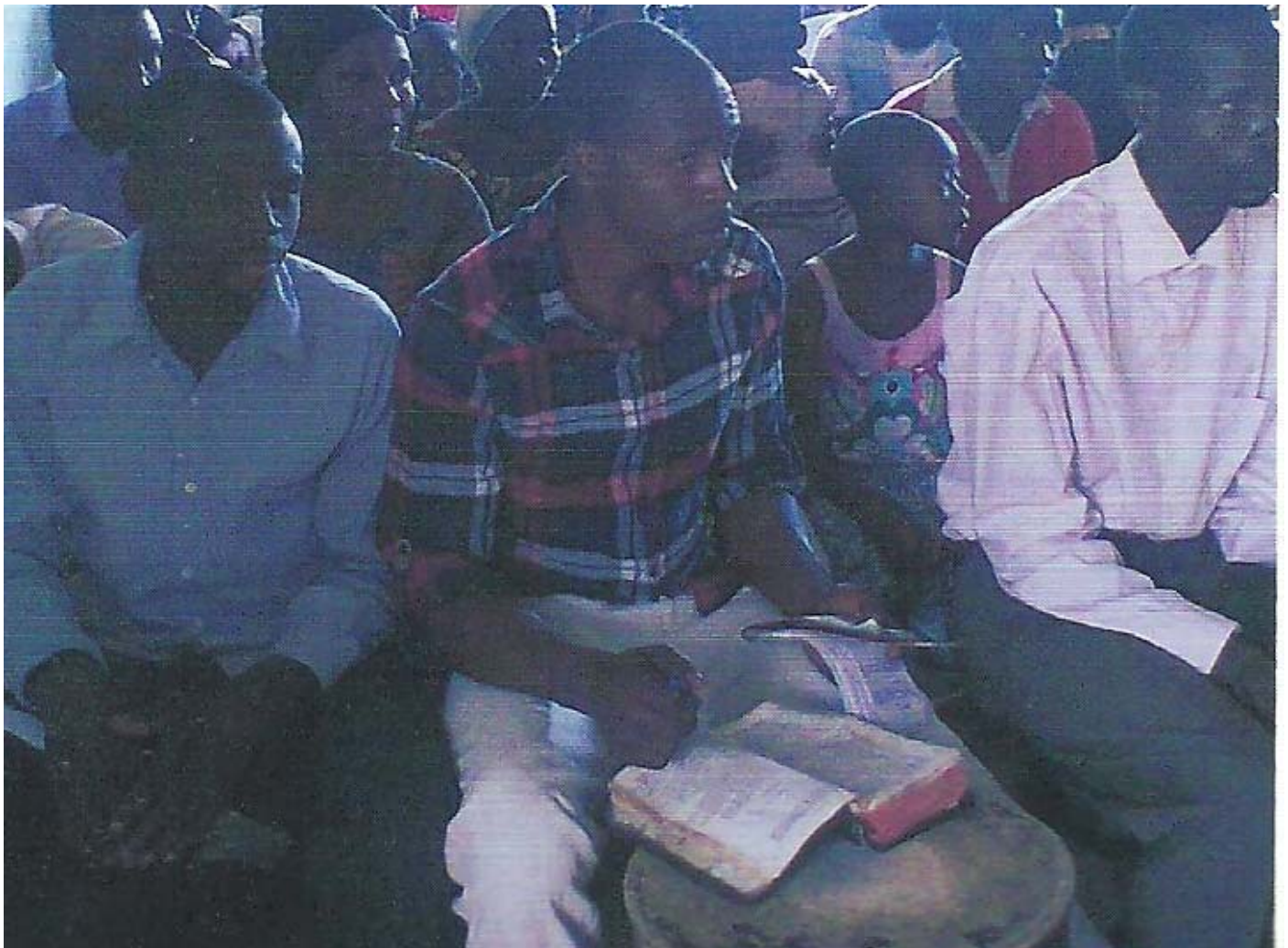
ANSWER: The following are only six reasons for observing the 7th Day Sabbath:

1. Because we are graciously saved by Jesus Christ, we desire to obey His commandments and follow His example. See John 14:15, 21; Luke 4:16; 6:46.
2. Because it is not of Jewish origin. It is from the very creation. It is a God given day of rest for all mankind. See Genesis 2:2; Mark 2:27; Isaiah 56:1-7; 58:13, 14.
3. Because being one of the Ten Commandments (the fourth) it is an integral part of God's unchangeable Moral Law. See Mark 5:17; I John 2:3, 4; I Corinthians 37:19.
4. Because Christ used every opportunity to show how the Sabbath should be kept in the spirit of love. See Luke 6:1-11.
5. Because Christ's disciples and the apostles kept it. See Luke 23:54-56; Acts 13:43-44; 17:2.
6. Because there is no trace in the Bible of any transfer of the sanctity of the Sabbath on any other day.



Burundi

A church service of our brethren in Burundi.





A time to worship and praise the Lord.



Baptism and fellowship with the brethren.



More baptisms and joy in the Lord.

LESSON I

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN (PART I)

Scripture Reading: Daniel 6:1-15.

Golden Text: Daniel 6:11.

“Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.”

NOTE: We have been studying about Daniel, and in our last lesson, we learned how he helped interpret the strange handwriting that appeared on the wall. He became an important leader under the new king, Darius. We will now find out more about the life of Daniel.

1. What were Daniel's duties while working for King Darius? Daniel 6:1-3.
2. Who wanted to find fault with Daniel, and could they find anything he did wrong? Daniel 6:4.
3. What did the Presidents and Princes decide to find against Daniel? Daniel 6:5.
4. What did the Presidents and Princes suggest that King Darius do? Daniel 6:6-8.
5. Did King Darius agree to sign this new decree? Daniel 6:9.
6. What did Daniel do when he heard of the new law? Daniel 6:10.
7. What did the Presidents and Princes do when they saw Daniel praying? Daniel 6:11-13.
8. When the king heard what Daniel had done,

what did he feel? Daniel 6:14-15.

LESSON II

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN (PART II)

Scripture Reading: Daniel 6:16-28.

Golden Text: Daniel 6:19.

“Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.”

NOTE: In our last lesson we studied about how the leaders under King Darius were envious of Daniel and wanted to find fault with him. These leaders persuaded King Darius to sign a decree that stated if anyone bowed down to a God instead of the king, they would be put in the den of lions. Daniel continued to pray to God, and we will now study to find out what happens to Daniel.

1. When Daniel is thrown into the lion's den, what does the king say to him? Daniel 6:16.
2. What does he do to the entrance of the den? Daniel 6:17.
3. Explain what the king does all that night and the next morning? Daniel 6:18-20.
4. How did God protect Daniel from the hungry lions? Daniel 6:21-22.
5. What did the king order to be done with Daniel, and was Daniel harmed in anyway? Daniel 6:23.
6. What did King Darius do with Daniel's accusers? Daniel 6:24.

7. What did King Darius proclaim through the land? Daniel 6:25-27.

8. Did Daniel prosper after this time? Daniel 6:28.

LESSON III

JOB (PART I)

Scripture Reading: Job 1.

Golden Text: Job 1:22.

“In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

NOTE: We will learn about a man named Job and his relationship with God. We can learn much from his example.

1. For what is Job noted? James 5:11.
2. What did the Lord say about the goodness of Job? Job 1:8.
3. Why did Satan believe that Job feared God? Job 1:9-11.
4. Through out all of his trials, did Job turn against God? Job 1:22.
5. What was Job’s bodily affliction? Job 2:7.
6. Who were Job’s three friends? Job 2:11.
7. Had Job feared that some awful thing would befall him? Job 3:25-26.

LESSON IV

JOB (PART II)

Scripture Reading: Job 42.

Golden Text: Job 19:25.

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned about Job, who was very faithful to God. Satan believed that if Job was made to suffer, he wouldn’t praise God. So the Lord let Satan have power over Job to test Job’s faith. We will now finish the story to see if Job turns from God.

1. What did Job say about trusting the Lord? Job 13:15-16.
2. What was Job’s great question on eternal life? Job 14:14.
3. Did he believe in Jesus as his Saviour and believe that in the end he would see God? Job 19:25-26.
4. What does the Bible say about Job’s last days? Job 42:12.
5. How many children did Job have at last? Job 42:13.
6. What were his daughter’s names? Job 42:14.
7. How long did Job live after his great experience? Job 42:16.

NOTE: This story of Job shows us that we can endure much and still praise the Lord. He will give us many blessings and the chance for eternal life if we are always true to Him.

GIVE THANKS



Lila Jo buried her hands in the folds of the soft, white blanket and held it close to her face. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! each step seemed to say. The faster she walked, the more the icy air bit her cheeks until they were chapped as red as apples.

Still she hurried down the muddy road stumbling over the bumps and ruts. "Hey! J.T...!" she called when she saw her brother sitting on the front steps. Then she waved the blanket for him to see. "Look what Mrs. Perkins sent for baby-sister!"

"What do I care?" J.T. grumbled.

Pa looked out the front door to see what was happening. "Come in out of the cold and sit by the fire," he said to J.T.

"That new baby cries all the time," J.T. complained. "I came out here to think."

"I do not care if she cries," said Lila Jo. "I am so thankful for a baby sister."

"That is the right attitude," said Pa. "Give thanks for everything!"

Lila Jo gave Pa a hug. Then she dashed into the house to give the blanket to Ma.

"This is going to be some Thanksgiving," whined J.T. "Mother will not be able to cook Thanksgiving dinner.

That baby is crying all the time. At least the baby could have been a boy!"

Suddenly, J.T. stood up. "Look at that!" he sighed as he watched two figures tramping across the field. Richard Wright is going hunting with his father. He has a new hunting outfit and not telling how many guns of his very own. I do not have anything! Why should I give thanks?"

Pa put his arm around J.T.'s shoulders to show him that he understood. "We do not have some things we would like to have," Pa admitted. "But God does care for us. We can give Him thanks for that. He is with us because we have always tried to follow Him."

J.T. pulled away from Pa and pressed his forehead against the post. "I just do not feel like it, Pa!" he whispered. "I just do not feel like giving thanks."

"I tell you what!" said Pa. "Just this once, for your Ma's sake and for Lila Jo's sake, let us give thanks anyway. Let us make this a happy Thanksgiving for them. We will pop popcorn and play the guitar and sing."

"Well, all right," said J.T. bravely. "I will try to give thanks if it will make Ma and Lila Jo feel better."

J.T. felt better himself once he got started. Soon the corn was poppity-poppity-popping in the iron skillet in the fireplace. Pa tuned up his guitar while Lila Jo baked some apples until they were shiny red.

At first they did not even hear the knocking above the poppity-popping. Then the knocking got louder. J.T. ran to see who was at the door.

"Hey, Pa!" called J.T., "It is Mr. Wright."

"Please help me," Mr. Wright pleaded. "My son Richard has had a bad fall. His leg may be broken, and I was afraid to move him."

"Come on, J.T.," Pa said calmly. "We will take a quilt and bring him back on that."

Lila Jo watched at the window until Mr. Wright, Pa, and J.T. returned, carrying their helpless bundle in the quilt. She hurried to open the door for them. Then everyone helped to lower Richard carefully in the soft chair by the fireplace. Lila Jo scurried around to find a stool where Richard could prop his hurt foot.

"We will take good care of Richard while you go get the doctor," Pa told Mr. Wright.

As soon as Mr. Wright had gone, Lila Jo brought some popcorn for everyone to enjoy. Pa began to strum

on his guitar, and they all began to sing songs of praises to God.

"I feel like giving thanks!" Pa said. "God is always with us, caring for us."

"I want to give thanks for a new baby sister!" said Lila Jo. "And for popcorn and apples and guitar music."

"I would like to give thanks, too," said Richard "I am thankful that I got hurt tonight."

"You are?" asked J.T. in surprise.

"Sure!" said Richard. "If I had not gotten hurt, I never would have come here. This is the happiest place I have ever been."

When Mr. Wright returned with the doctor, they were both surprised to find Richard laughing and singing with the others.

"I have had a wonderful time," Richard told his father.

"May I stay here tonight?"

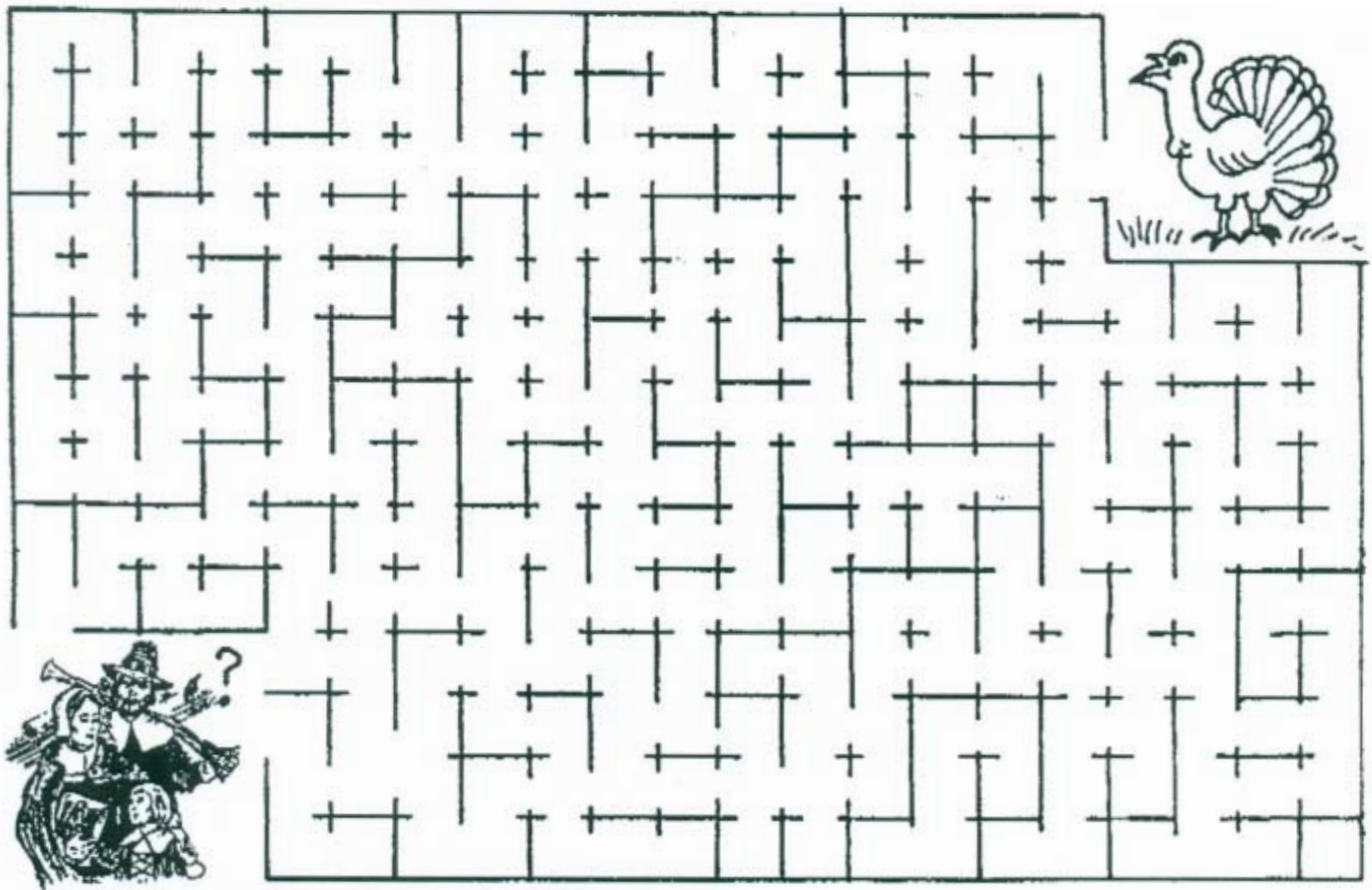
"There is no reason why he should not," the doctor said as he checked Richard's leg and foot. "He has simply sprained his ankle; I will bandage it up."

Mr. Wright thought for a minute. "I have an idea," he announced. "You may spend the night here. Our cook is going to prepare Thanksgiving dinner. Mother and I will drive here tomorrow and bring a turkey dinner for everyone."

"This will be the best Thanksgiving ever!" Lila Jo cheered.

J.T. looked across the room and smiled at Pa. A big grin covered Pa's face because he knew what J.T. was thinking. J.T. had learned to give thanks!

MAZE: Help the Pilgrims find the turket for Thanksgiving dinner.



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I've Made It

As I approached the beach
My heart was beating excessively,
I was anxious, nervous,
But I knew this day was a necessity
To wash away the sins of my past,
And giving God my heart at last.

There I entered the watery grave
With all vigor and silent praise,
Thanking God for this day
And the rest of the future days.
Though I was shivering in the water's coldness,
I overcame and was buried with all boldness.

I must confess, my fleshly death was indeed refreshing,
I felt renewed, sinless, and it was a blessing.
For the trivial burdens I once carried were no more,
For the blood of Jesus Christ paid in full for sure.

So now I stand here to declare,
That my Christian life begins from here.
Fearing Him through trials and tribulations,
Gaining eternal life, my anticipated destination.

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Baptism Day: February 3, 2013

