



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13) at

Fall 2018

World Peace Is Coming!



Bill Watson

All of us would agree there are more Christian denominations around the world than you can "shake a stick at." As the old saying goes, "More than China's got rice." And yet, regardless of the important *fact* that Christ came preaching about the Kingdom of God—this enormously significant and distinctive event is minimized. It's just incredible the traditional Christian world simply seems to ignore this detail!

Notice: "Now after that John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel [the Good News] of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15 KJV).

Furthermore, Matthew mentions: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matthew 4:23).

The Kingdom of God was an important topic within the ministry of Jesus Christ. He even labeled it as "*the Gospel*." Unquestionably, He came to die

Why doesn't the traditional Christian community announce this Good News—the message of how world peace will finally be accomplished throughout the world? Why is this information marginalized and not emphasized as part of the Christian message?

by Bill Watson

for mankind and to sacrifice His life for His creation as a *fulfilling component* to the sacrificial law—and that too is definitely Good News; but that segment of His mission does not dismiss the *reason* for His sacrifice.

What Most Don't Recognize

The Christian world today is *myopic* when it comes to what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is. They are so enamored and obsessed over the crucifixion that the vast majority of denominations just ignore the *comprehensive richness* of the complete Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Don't misunderstand; "Christ crucified" is a crucial dimension to the Gospel. No one denies that, or would ever dare minimize that sacrificial act of selflessness, which resulted and validated the Messiahship of Jesus Christ—because that is the *foundational building block* of the Christian movement. He is the Chief Cornerstone! Paul solidifies this point when he said, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to *preach the gospel* to you that are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the *gospel of Christ*: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes [Christ crucified]; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:15–16). And in addition he says, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach *Christ crucified*, unto the

Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:22–23).

Scripturally, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is unquestionably instrumental in this program of salvation for Christians—but that's not the *whole* Gospel! Christ's mission included a variety of objectives that define a far broader, more extensive and far-reaching Gospel message that includes the very mystery of how God is actually *reproducing Himself* and for what purpose—which is a critical ingredient to this salvific process He has undertaken. Clearly, He's doing it because He's setting up a Kingdom. The Kingdom portion of the Gospel is the *very reason* for the crucifixion. It describes humanity's future destination of *what eternal life is for*—it goes beyond this physical life and points us to *where* salvation is located; but is *underscored* by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. That is indeed what makes it possible for entry into this *God Family Kingdom*.

Yet this segment, the *Gospel of the Kingdom*, has been de-emphasized throughout Christianity. There are far too many who claim Christ as their Savior who have

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Open Church Policy

The *Church of God International* is an *open* church.

We have many people attending who are *new* in the faith. Some will not always keep each of God's laws as they should, and some will not believe everything we teach. We pray that they may be strengthened through the services we render and the examples we set as they come to a closer walk with their God. **We request that you be neither judgmental nor base your standard for obedience on what you see your brother do.** Christ is our standard, not weak and sinful men. Always remember that you will be judged for what *you* do, not what others do. Your job is to pray for them, set the right example, and please the Father in all that you do. Ω

— 2018 Holy Day Calendar —

New Testament Passover

March 29, 2018 (Observed at sundown)

Feast of Unleavened Bread

March 31 - April 6, 2018

Pentecost

May 20, 2018

Feast of Trumpets

September 10, 2018

Day of Atonement

September 19, 2018

Feast of Tabernacles

September 24 - September 30, 2018

More information will be forthcoming.

Last Great Day

October 1, 2018

Holy days are observed beginning sundown the previous evening and end at sundown on the days listed. Passover is observed at sundown on the day listed.

"Welcome to the Church of God International!"

The *Church of God International* sponsors the *Armor of God* telecast, provides written material on a wide range of biblical topics, and has congregations in the United States, Canada, Jamaica, the Philippines, and Australia, with affiliates in other parts of the world. We invite you to find out more about us, our purpose and mission, our beliefs, and our customs. Send for our newly revised booklet, ***Welcome to the Church of God International!*** Simply send your request to:

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Tyler, TX 75701

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Our Great Commission

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

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Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if *you*, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800-1000 words in either .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson@cgi.org or lloydcary@gmail.com or, preferably, to *both*.

DEADLINE for the *next* issue is **November 15th 2018.**



We look forward to seeing you soon... *in print!*

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NOTICE: *The International News* welcomes submissions of articles, features, church news, pictures, or manuscripts. However, it cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited materials. Materials submitted can sent through the postal service, but electronic submissions are preferred.

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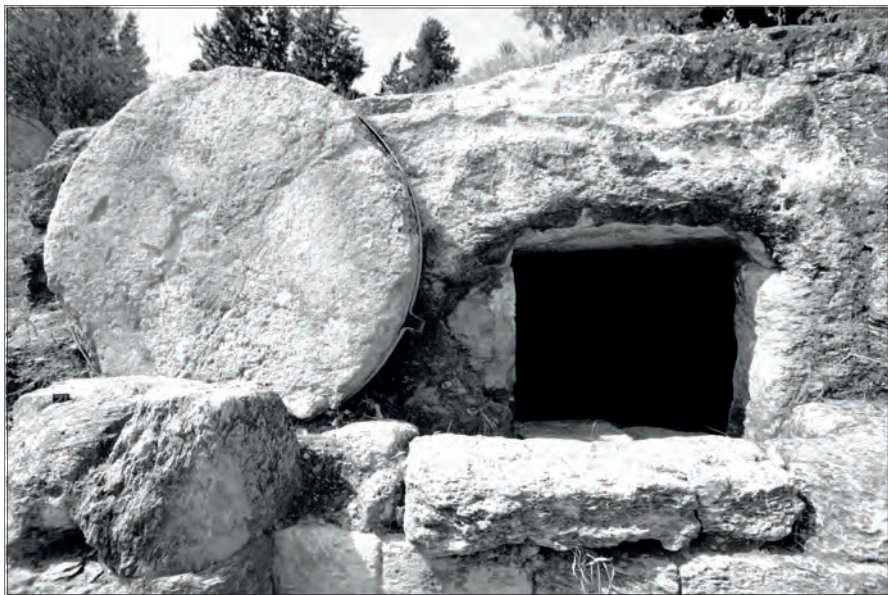
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no idea He is on a “countdown” from heaven, *expected to return to earth* and set up this Kingdom of God He came to describe, explain, and announce!

Why is it that so many have overlooked this extremely important solution for solving humanity’s overwhelming problems? How did the fact of Christ’s return to this earth actually become ignored as the underpinning answer to mankind’s troubles? What contributed to this unfortunate oversight?



The Mysterious Reason Is Solved

Notice how Paul brings us into the essences of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

But now is made manifest, and by the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen” (Romans 16:25–27).

Interestingly enough, Paul mentions in passing how the prophets “manifested” this key information about this mystery. The reason is quite plain when you realize they had a lot to say about the *coming Kingdom of God*. Whether it’s Isaiah 2:1–4, or Micah 4:1–6, and in so many more areas, they all made mention of this Kingdom from God that would be established on *earth*, not in *heaven*!

Notice what Daniel says to King Nebuchadnezzar in the course of interpreting his dream. As he gets to the end, he mentions the following: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven *set up a kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Daniel 2:44).

Some years later, Daniel is given his own dream and vision and is shown essentially the same thing, confirming what he was shown years before. Notice, “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise *out of the earth*. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever” (Daniel 7:17–18).

There is no doubt, after reading these prophecies, that you can conclude the Kingdom of God was an important component to their overall *preaching* and *warning* to the kings of their day. The prophets were inundated with dreams and visions, including direct communications and visitations from angels about this Kingdom of God. But unfortunately, in today’s alleged Christian churches, the Old Testament is reduced to just “stories” in many cases, or simply illustrative of historical events that have no real contemporary value or meaning for us today—sad, but true!

The Gospel portion of the Kingdom of God gives us the REASON for our calling. It is the *defined clarity* of God’s vision of how He intends to share eternity with a family made after His own image. It’s the *objective of His plan* He devised before the world was. Notice, “Be not you therefore ashamed of the testimony [Gospel] of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be you partaker of the afflictions of the gospel [testimony] according to the power of God; Who has save us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose [objective] and grace, which was given us [designed] in Christ Jesus *before the world began*, but is now made manifest [understood] by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light [to our understanding] through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:9–10).

What we’re being told is, this Gospel of Jesus Christ has provided us knowledge and understanding by means of His visitation, of just how immortality can be obtained and for what reason.

The prophet Zechariah makes an interesting connection with another cause for why this idea of the “Gospel of the Kingdom” has been minimized.

Notice what he says: “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zechariah 14:16–17).

Why Is This Important?

If you will read Zechariah 14:1–15, you will see that it is a description of the return of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He subsequently lands on the Mount of Olives and sets Jerusalem up as His capital city to commence His 1000-year rule of earth (Revelation 20:4).

Interestingly, this event and the re-establishment of the city is directly connected to the Feast of Tabernacles, giving us good logical reason to make the link of this seven-day Festival period to God’s Kingdom.

The point is, due to the *abandonment* of the *Holy Days* listed throughout the Bible and which Jesus Christ Himself observed, this has greatly *contributed* to the cause of this de-emphasized segment of the Gospel. If the Christian church observed the Holy Days today, the true Gospel, in all of its far reaching and comprehensive meaning, would be clearly understood. But unfortunately, not everyone has recognized the importance of this spiritual benefit in the Bible for our edification and appreciable Christian enhancement!

So, as we gather this year throughout the world, let us who observe the Feast of Tabernacles be particularly encouraged that there is a solution to this very sick, corrupt, and perverted world we find ourselves in. And let us be thankful we are merely *pilgrims* passing through in *temporary tabernacles*, but with an exciting future that will provide us opportunity to really change the world with our Lord and Savior empowered from Jerusalem. The day is coming when we will rule and reign as kings and priests in the Family Kingdom of God! The question is: *Will you be ready?* Ω



**Request our free booklet,
*What Is the Real Gospel Truth?***



What is the *real* message concerning the Gospel Jesus Christ brought and announced to mankind?

There are so *many* Christian denominations today, all claiming that they have the real “Gospel truth.”

Yet, Jesus said there is only ONE Gospel. So if they are all different, how can they all be right? (Gal. 1:6–9)

Who has the *real* Gospel—the GOOD NEWS—that Jesus Christ proclaimed?

It’s time you knew what the Gospel is REALLY all about!

Send for our free booklet,

What Is the Real Gospel Truth?

From Covenant to Covenant

This is the third installment in Mr. Palmatier's continuing blog series on the Story of the Bible for our youth.



Murray Palmatier

Welcome back! Last time, we built upon our first blog by following the story from the Garden of Eden through to the covenant God made with Noah. The history of man played out here showed our sinful nature since Adam's rejection of God back in Paradise. The idyllic home in Eden and the peaceful relationship with God, while a distant memory, was recaptured for a brief moment when Noah and his family stepped off the ark and back onto dry land.

It is here that we are now introduced to the concept of "covenant," something that will play a centerpiece, in various forms, throughout the rest of the Bible. To be sure we understand exactly what this important word means, let's go to *Strong's Concordance*. The Hebrew word for "covenant" is *bēriyth* (H1285) and means "promise, alliance or pledge," and is translated as "covenant" 264 times in the Old Testament—so it is a pretty important word!

When it was safe to get off the ark, the very first thing Noah did was to build an altar so that he and his family could worship their God and Savior. Worship at that time included the offering of clean animals. We will see later that offering animals teaches us many lessons, including the need to give from our finances as a measure of our gratitude for God's presence in our lives. These offerings also teach us that covenants matter, oftentimes because they have been made with the shedding of blood. In this case, what followed Noah's worship was a covenant from God, where He promised *unconditionally* never to bring a flood to destroy man again. The sign of His promise in this case was the *rainbow*.

As we start to learn about the importance of these promises, it is important to pause and consider that there are two types of covenants. You will see examples of both when you read the Bible. God's promise to Noah was an *unconditional* one. Noah did not need to do anything for God to keep His promise. Noah, and everyone since him, can be assured that there will never be an all-consuming flood again, because of this unconditional covenant God made. You will also see examples of *conditional* covenants. These are agreements between two parties, where each side promises with conditions that both agree to fulfill. Success or failure to comply from either side yields results that both have agreed to accept. Bottom line: You should get familiar with the concept of covenants, because they play an integral role in the story of the Bible.

After Noah received the promise of the rainbow, it did not take long for his descendants to pick right back up where their forefathers left off before their watery demise. The history of man as recounted in Scripture soon becomes the history of Shem and his descendants, eventually focusing in on a man named Abram. But before we get there, Moses recounts for us the evil that came back into the world through the descendants of Noah's son, Ham. After introducing us to Ham and his son, Canaan, the story goes further downhill in the subsequent generations of Cush and Nimrod.

While the story of Nimrod is limited to a few verses, his historical impact on the world is still felt until this day. Called "a mighty hunter," historians link him as the king of the land of Shinar, where the tower of Babel was built. This tower was their attempt to show the world that God was not important—that man could rely solely on himself for all things. Rather than look to God as provider of all things, the tower misled man to think there was nothing he couldn't do all by himself. The Shinarians became the forerunners of the Babylonians, who would become a great empire and enemy of God's people. Take some time to read about Nimrod, and you will see his fingerprints all over the various religions of today—all leading people away from the God of the Bible, whom we worship.

We now come to the major turning point in the Old Testament. What we have read so far has just been background to the history of man since he was ejected from the Garden of Eden. The plan of God that we talked about back when we began this series would not be derailed by our disobedience. Just as God found a righteous man to rebuild with after the Flood, he found another righteous man to kickstart the next phase of His plan. We now come to the story of Abram.

Before we get to Abram, we find something very interesting about Noah and Abraham that points to the majesty and perfection of God. When you read the various records of biblical genealogy, you can actually count that Noah was the tenth generation from creation, and Abram was the tenth generation from Noah and the Flood. As we read through the Bible, we see God's greatness in even these smallest of details!

I mentioned that the introduction of Abram brings with it a turning point in the story. The next phase of God's plan begins with another *unconditional covenant* that God made with Abram. God looked down and again found a righteous man that He could work with, and made a promise to him. In return for living a faithful and righteous life in the midst of an evil world, God promised that He would make Abram and his future descendants into a great nation that would live in a great land of many blessings. It is this covenant with Abram that forms the basis for the rest of the Bible. From here, the story of man narrows to focus on the story of Abram and his family. It is here that we will pick up the story next time. I hope you are beginning to see how exciting the story of the Bible is—much more intriguing than any Hollywood script. And it's true! Ω

Crowding God Out

by Lloyd W. Cary

Have you ever been "crowded out," cut off in traffic, bullied, ignored, or pushed aside in a line? Annoying, isn't it? Sometimes we feel hurt or angry. Brethren, God feels the *same way*!

Christ was literally *crowded out* when He came to earth in the flesh—"No room in the inn." (Luke 2:7). He is *still* being crowded out today. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28). God is no longer welcome today in our schoolrooms, courtrooms, or public forums. Sometimes even *WE* crowd Him out, don't we?

Turn to 1 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 [egoism], **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 we see these thing in the world today? Revelation 2:8 adds, "But **the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars,** shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Yes, as the world crowds in on us, we can forget our Lord God. We can allow the cares of this world to crowd God out, causing us to forget all His benefits (Psalm 13:2). We can easily put Him out of mind. We can live as though He were dead. "My people have *forgotten* me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). Of course, we never *deliberately* forget our Lord; we just get "too busy" and carelessly drift into it. "Take heed" (1 Corinthians 10:12). The **EFFECT** of *ALL* the above is "crowding God out." We live in a busy *pressure-mad world*.

- **Social Pressures:** Holidays, parties, children. "the old friends and our old ways." ("What will my friends/family think?")
- **Secular Pressures:** "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. *Cleanse* your hands, ye sinners; and *purify* your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8).
- **Worldly pressures:** Work, school, various obligations, offences.
- **Sensual Pressures:** TV, movies, compromise, lowering our standards, cursing, dress, tattoos, temptations, illicit sex in thought or deed.
- **Selfish Pursuits:** Using our *time* for wrong things instead of for God. Sometimes *our* needs seem more important than God. "*I, me, mine!*" *Ego* reigns supreme! He becomes *last* on our list of priorities rather than first (Matthew 6:33).

"**EGO**" can stand for either, **EDGING GOD OUT...** or **EXALTING GOD ONLY!** **ANTIDOTES:** We "make room" for Christ through PRAYER, BIBLE STUDY, and MEDITATION. Our "alone time" with God needs to be precious.

FAITH—believing what God *SAYS*—"crowds out" doubts, evil thoughts, and temptations. We can only think of *ONE* thing at a time! We seldom *find* time for God...we must *MAKE* time!

Let us make a conscious effort to "make room" for Him in *our* inn—in our minds. "But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, *and* His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Talk **ABOUT** God, talk **TO** Him and **WITH** Him, and **WALK** with Him all your days—and you will be **crowding Satan out**—and **inviting God in.**" Ω

Diamonds in the Rough

by Ken Allen



Ken Allen

Do you know individuals who on the surface seem shy, modest, ordinary in their appearance and demeanor, but behind it all they are the most loving, gracious persons you ever met? They abound in exceptional talent and good works, yet they are your typical unsung heroes. They rise to the occasion in a time of need and shine best in trial's darkest hour and seasons of severe tests. Such a person is one whom we would call a diamond in the rough.

Like naturally occurring diamonds, they appear quite ordinary, even rough on the outside, but their beauty and worth comes from the extreme pressure under which they are formed and the harsh process of cutting and polishing that are used to reveal their inner beauty and value.

Every one of us is a potential diamond in the rough. Embedded within each person are diamond-like qualities waiting to be mined and to bring joy to our Maker, others, and ourselves. Are we willing to endure the pressure, the cutting and the polishing of the Master Jeweler to bring out the diamond in us? Most people are not. There is an amazing similarity between the formation of diamonds and the development of godly character. A diamond is just carbon (essentially the same thing as charcoal) in a very concentrated form. Yet, when mined, cut, and polished, it becomes the most precious gemstone in the world. Diamonds are formed way below the earth's surface, when carbon is subjected to extremely high temperature (over 400°C) and exceptionally high pressure. As we try to imagine conditions under which diamonds are formed, it brings to mind the fiery trials which children of God must undergo to develop true godly character. First Peter 1:6–7 describes the beautiful outcome of being tested by God's fire:

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The conditions of pressure and temperature way below the earth's crust must be ideal for carbon to form into diamond. Anything less than this, we end up with graphite (a soft black mineral) instead of the extremely hard clear crystal we know as diamond. That's why we have to be willing to endure the pain of trials and godly discipline if we want God's character to be perfected in us. James puts it this way:

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:2–4).

A diamond is the hardest known mineral. It's so hard that it can only be scratched by another diamond. It's the unique molecular structure of the carbon atoms that makes diamond so very hard. As we allow Christ to live in us, we will have His diamond-hard strength to withstand the pressures of life and not be easily scratched or wounded by the words or deeds of others.

Shaping Diamonds

Before diamonds become beautiful jewels, they must be cut and polished. The cutting may be done by hand or machine, using steel or diamond blades, or lasers. The cut diamond is then polished by a rotating wheel coated with an abrasive diamond powder. God's purpose is to refine and perfect us. He will use whatever means necessary to bring us to the point of being "a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

A Diamond's Worth and Beauty

Like well cut and polished diamonds, the more we come under the sharp edge of God's Word and allow it to pierce us and shape us, the more valuable we will be for His kingdom. Someone once said that God cannot use us until He has first wounded us. This wild human nature and spirit must be broken in order for God to effectively use us. His desire is that our lives be transparent and flawless. We must be sincere and true (1 Corinthians 5:8). In the words of the apostle Paul, we must not have "spot or wrinkle or any such thing," but rather "be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

Like flawless diamonds, we must reflect and disperse light, because we are the light of the world to disperse the darkness of this evil age

(Matthew 5:14–16). God's diamonds will be judged, not by the color or roughness of their exterior, but by the content and quality of their interior, in a word, by their character. This character is developed, not inherited. It cannot be bought, it must be earned. It cannot be achieved if we circumvent God's divine process. It is this process that will shape and refine us from being diamonds in the rough to become sparkling jewels. A verse from the old hymn *How Firm a Foundation* puts it very beautifully:

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply.

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

The world's biggest and most prized diamonds adorn the Royal Scepter and Imperial State Crown of the British Monarchy. These precious gems are worth an incredibly vast sum. But even these cannot be compared to those who will shine like diamonds in the Heavenly Father's realm on that day when He makes up His jewels (Malachi 3:17). Ω



A diamond is a solid form of carbon with a diamond cubic crystal structure. At room temperature and pressure it is metastable and graphite is the stable form, but diamond almost never converts to graphite. Diamond is renowned for its superlative physical qualities, most of which originate from the strong covalent bonding between its atoms. In particular, it has the highest hardness and thermal conductivity of any bulk material. Those properties determine the major industrial applications of diamond in cutting and polishing tools and the scientific applications in diamond knives and diamond anvil cells.

From Wikipedia

What in the World is God Doing?

God's Seasonal Plan Reveals All!

Don't you find it *strange* that for all mankind's fascination with the spiritual realm, he seems to *deliberately overlook* the rich typology seen in God's annual Sabbaths given to ancient Israel? Ironically, the mind of God *is* revealed in them. You owe it to yourself and your loved ones to find out!

Be sure to send for our free literature, *God's Seasonal Plan* and *The Fall Festivals*. If you are new to God's holydays, you'll be enlightened and amazed! If you are familiar with them, you will be given even deeper understanding.

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THE JAMAICAN WORK CONTINUES TO MOVE AHEAD

Recently I had the wonderful opportunity to return to the gorgeous Island of Jamaica. As a matter of fact, I'm writing this article while still there, as the trip was scheduled for the first two weeks in August.

Clearly, coming to Jamaica in August is a time for those of us who like "hot" weather—I happen to be one of them! The temperatures were just perfect for those who enjoy tropical breezes coming off the warm waters of the Atlantic Gulf, accompanied by 80 to 90 degree temperatures and sunny skies. The ocean water was comfortably warm and easy getting used to for your enjoyment—and many did just that.

This was a trip I was looking forward to for a couple of reasons. First, as many of us know with the passing of Pastor Ian Boyne back in December of 2017, some adjustments had to be made due to circumstances we faced because of his absence. At that time, in January of this year, I had the privilege of spending about five weeks working with the congregations, along with Pastor George Ramocan. Together, we learned about the needs of the congregation and what arrangements were required to accommodate the new situation caused by Pastor Boyne's sudden passing. So, I was anxious to get back and reconnect with everyone, especially those in the Kingston congregation, where Pastor Boyne's pastorate was, to see just how things were progressing with the plans we hoped would be accomplished.



Maroon Town Congregational Building

Secondly, to take the opportunity to visit the Ocho Rios and Maroon Town locations for the first time in their home parishes and get to experience their local areas as they do every Sabbath. This was a long time coming, especially since the Maroon Town congregation became a chartered church back in September of 2010 and had never received an official visit from the Ministerial Council to present a formal welcome into our fellowship.

On the Sabbath of August 4th, I was picked up by Brother Pasmore and driven from Montego Bay, or "Mobay" as the locals would call it, and taken to Ocho Rios for Sabbath services. We had a wonderful service that was packed with music and presentations, special music, and the main message that I provided. Afterward, a well supplied potluck was planned with a variety of Jamaican culinary delights. All the dishes were indigenous of Jamaican culture and provided opportunity to enjoy the famous flavors and fragrant aromas of the island's cooking traditions.

Afterward, we had a *lively interactive* Bible Study session that I had the honor of moderating. It went on for a good hour or so, using a format of asking questions and then opening it up for all to participate in answering. It was quite educational for all, and based on the amount of involvement, appeared to be enjoyed by everyone. It was a lot of fun!

I returned back to Montego Bay by about 9:00 PM. It turned out to be about a 12-hour day. But it seemed to go so quickly!

The next day, Sunday, August 5th, Brother Noel Burgess and Winston Samuels picked me up at about 10:00 AM, and we drove up into the mountains where the Maroon Town congregation meets. It was quite the drive through downtown Montego Bay and then on up into the mountains where Maroon Town's building is located. Brother Burgess is quite the driver, as he maneuvered around the bends of a very winding two-lane road,

where at times barely two cars could pass each other. It was rather exciting as he cornered the turns like an Indy 500 racecar driver—beeping his horn around the bends.

But we arrived safely about an hour or so later, and spent the afternoon with each other in their building, meeting with their Congregational Board Members. This gave me opportunity to formally present them with a Charter Certificate.

Interestingly enough, the Maroon Town congregation was formerly a Church of God 7th Day group that came in contact with Pastor Boyne some years ago, and through that association led to their embracing the doctrines that compelled them to apply for a formal affiliation with the Church of God International. About two years ago, the Maroon Town congregation lost their beloved Pastor Coley to cancer. Since then, they have been without a resident pastor. However, they are now getting regular visits from the Kingston and Spanish Town CGI congregations that have enhanced their edification and provides a connection to ministerial services via CGI pastor Pedro Hall of Spanish Town, in combination, of course, with their local speakers.



The Maroon Town Board Members

We spent the afternoon sitting in their building, circling the chairs, and having an open discussion about many topics. It was a wonderful opportunity to have a healthy conversation about the work in Jamaica, ideas they had, and the organization of the Church of God International. It also gave me opportunity to explain many key areas CGI provides and teaches in the ways of servant leadership and the Ministerial Apprentice Program (MAP).

Additionally, the Maroon Town Board explained some of the potential for growth in the area that has generated a small group in Maypen, which is close in proximity to Maroon Town. They have been studying together with the help of Deacon Richards, and will be visited soon by speakers from the Kingston congregation. All of this was very encouraging to see "in action," since this type of "inter-activity" was a planned goal to be accomplished, back in January when I last visited.

After a full day of discussions and an indigenous lunch with fruit provided by some of the very trees from the surrounding properties, we returned to Montego Bay at about 5:00 PM. It seemed much was accomplished from the discussions and a clearer understanding of the "international work" of CGI as a whole, and specifically in Jamaica, was achieved.

On Wednesday, August 8th, Paul Thomas, from the Ocho Rios congregation, picked me up and we drove over the mountains to the south side of the island. We had a very pleasant time, spending the day with each other and driving the few hours it took to get me to the city of Kingston. Much thanks goes to Mr. Thomas for arranging the itinerary for the first leg of the visit.

The following day, I had a meeting with Pastor Pedro Hall of Spanish Town. Pastor Hall is presently the only ordained CGI minister on the island since the passing of Pastor Boyne. We had a very nice discussion over lunch, talking about how things were going. He shared with me how the Spanish Town group is currently building a new and larger facility to accommodate their growth.



Ocho Rios Congregation

In addition, he mentioned how a few Church of God 7th Day groups are beginning to accept the holy days and finding it comfortable fellowshiping with the CGI. It appears for the second year in a row they will be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles with us, primarily at the Portland site, where Pastor Hall will be coordinating. Ocho Rios is CGI’s second Jamaican site for the Feast, where Pastor George Ramocan will be coordinating this year.

Pastor Hall mentioned how all the congregations are now “mixing it up.” Speakers are traveling to different locations, working off a schedule that enables all the CGI congregations and fellowship study groups to have the benefit of multiple speakers visit them at different times. This has generated a greater sense of community that has begun to bring all the groups closer together. Everyone is now getting to know each other a little better, especially since more of the brethren are also visiting their friends in these other CGI congregations. It has also served to open the doors for CGI speakers to visit the Church of God 7th Day groups as they become more familiar with our ministry, congregations, and doctrines.



During my time on this side of the island, I also had opportunity to meet with the Kingston Church Board. We had a very good meeting, reconnecting with each other and sharing conversation on how things have been going since my last visit. There is a real sense of energy and openness that seems to be recognizable by not only the leadership, but the brethren too!

All throughout my stay and interaction with the brethren, whether on the north or south side of the island, everyone seems to be very satisfied with how the work is being conducted and attention provided by those gifted to help in the leadership roles where needed. Pastor Boyne would be very pleased to see the foundation that Christ inspired him to build with the help of so many, now begin to blossom and bring forth additional fruit around the island! The potential to grow the Jamaican work is very good—it’s ripe for evangelizing!

On the Sabbath of August 11th, services were conducted in Kingston and attended by over 200 people. I was given the opportunity to bring the main message to everyone. It was a real delight to have the privilege to speak to such an enthusiastic group who dearly love their Savior and His way of life as captured by the understanding we have of God’s Truth. My topic was about how God works with us within the “conversion” process. In the course of the presentation, five major points were covered for consideration about the challenges of life we go through. It was explained that it’s important to know God has our best interests at heart, and so, at times this is what contributes to why we go through the things we do in the particular ways



we’re challenged. I tried to encourage everyone to realize it’s for our overall development to become the kings and priests He intends us to be. This was at the heart of the message.

Afterward, we had a lot of fellowship and refreshments. Many stayed to talk and just share time with each other, since so many are scattered across the area. It really is noticeable these folks truly like being together. I was able to make my way around and “meet and greet” as many as I could, reconnecting with so many I’ve come to know over the years of serving in the area. I returned to my hotel at about 8:00 PM. It was a good day!

As my trip came to a close, we had one more planned event. This is the regular Monday night Kingston Bible Study. I was asked if we could talk about how to observe the Sabbath. So, I prepared a Bible study around that subject and arrived about 7:00 PM on Monday, August 13th.

It, too, was partly a lecture, but with an interactive session included, much like Ocho Rios—and very lively also. It seemed to be enjoyed by the 50 or so who were in attendance. It was a lot of fun, and there was a variety of questions ranging from the more serious and personal testimonies and advice given to each other on how to enjoy the Sabbath, as well as some funny and hilarious moments due to some topics that were brought up. It was hard to believe the two hours passed as quickly as it did. Everyone apparently had a great time!

The Jamaican work has an enormous amount of potential to grow. There is a lot of evangelistic activity being planned, along with additional individuals to be considered for the Ministerial Apprentice Program (MAP). Pray that God will continue to bring forth men and women suited for service and leadership, as the need is great, and as often is—the laborers are few. But, with God all things are possible. And undoubtedly, considering the hearts and enthusiasm of the brethren there on this island paradise, God will bless our efforts, because with God all things are possible; and if He is for us, who can be against us?

I can’t wait to return for my next visit!

Ω

Submitted by Bill Watson

Simultaneous Translation



The Ottawa congregation has embarked on an exciting new project. Ottawa, as Canada’s capital, is a bilingual city. However, some visitors and prospective members only speak French.

In an effort to ensure the Gospel of the Kingdom goes out to all those God may be calling, Ottawa has invested in new equipment that enables the simultaneous translation of English messages into French.

The picture above shows Margaret Townson in action! In addition to French translation, there is a second channel that amplifies the message for the hard of hearing. Special thanks to Eric Dormer (recently baptized) who sourced, recommended, and implemented the system!

Ω

Church News

Update from CGI UK



We were very pleased to have Adrian Davis, co-pastor of the Burlington and Ottawa congregations in Canada, and his wife Jennifer, with us on Sabbath, June 16. We were truly enlightened and encouraged by his sermon titled, *For God So Loved the World*. Below is a picture of our congregation and guests.

We also conducted our weekly Bible Study with a new congregation we have formed in Pakistan through our online live stream program. The group, which is now 12 weeks old, was formerly attached to the Catholic church. On hearing our sermons online, they became aware of God's Sabbath and holy days, and to learn what sin is. We supplied them with Bibles in their own language, and we support them monthly in having a place of worship. They have 20-plus regular members, but on the day of Pentecost, there were over 100 people in attendance! They are zealous for the Word, and every Sabbath they gather together from distant places for our weekly Bible Study. They have requested to be identified as the *Church of God International* in Pakistan.

We are hoping to bring the pastor, Zeesham Jan, here to London for baptism, and then for him to go back to baptize the brethren there requesting baptism.

We need help, and appeal to anyone who is moved to support our work through freewill offerings to do so via our website at cgiuk.org. We also crave your prayers for the work being done here. Ω

~Submitted by George Ramocan



CGI Canada is also gearing for the launch of a new medium as we explore other means to fulfill the Church's commission. As promised in the five-year plan, CGI will have a presence in **Internet radio broadcasting**. We are presently answering questions our readers and viewers have sent in.

The potential to reach people globally is immense, and we are looking forward to this added outreach. Ω

~Submitted by Horane Smith
National Evangelism Coordinator

The CGI Radio Network Now Up and Running



Elder Ken Allen, surrounded by fellow elders at the launching of the CGI Radio Network on the First Day of Unleavened Bread last March

Welcome to the Church of God International!

The *Church of God International* reaches out to a worldwide audience, advancing the Good News of God's coming Kingdom and heralding salvation by Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We invite you to send for our free booklet, *Welcome to the Church of God International*. You can also watch a live presentation by Bronson James online at:

<http://cgi.org/armor-of-god-welcome-to-the-church-of-god-international/?rq=welcome%20to>

Welcome to the Church of God International



We also invite you to view our special *Armor of God* presentation by Adrian Davis at: <http://cgi.org/armor-of-god-1/2018/5/26/resisting-postmodernism-adrian-davis?rq=resisting%20postmodernism>.

From our updated website at:
<http://www.cgicanada.org/bibleqa/>



Introduction.mp3

Over the years, we have received literally thousands of questions on various biblical topics from our readers and viewers. We have observed that new readers and viewers, once they have had time to compare our beliefs with the teachings of their own Bibles, often ask the same questions—or variations of the same questions—that many before them have asked. It is our hope that these booklets will help new students of the Bible find answers to their questions more quickly. You will notice that the questions are organized under (sometimes overlapping) categories. We hope you find this collection helpful to you as you continue your study of God's Word.

The
**Q&A
Book**
Questions & Answers



Now you can
listen to both
Volumes One
and Two

The
**Q&A
Book**
Questions & Answers
Volume 2



Trigger Words

What does it take to “set you off?”



Lloyd W. Cary

Mark Twain said the difference between the right word and the almost right word is “the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.” Twain had a remarkable knack for making his point. He knew the power and impact of words.

We all know what a *trigger* is. It can be a noun, or a verb. It was also the name of Roy Roger’s horse. It can be the lever pressed by the finger to discharge a firearm. In psychology, a trigger is something that sets off a set of memory tapes or *flashbacks*

that transports the person back to an event of original trauma as in *Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome*. Trigger words are often used in *advertising* where they attempt to *associate* something (a word or mental picture) in your mind that *reminds* you of the product they are trying to sell.

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov was a Russian physiologist known primarily for his work in classical behavior conditioning. He discovered that ringing a bell generated the desired response in dogs that were conditioned to associate the sound of a bell with food.

The *media* uses many trigger words to condition and win people over to their way of thinking, either positively or negatively. Politicians are masters of manipulating the masses to their way of thinking politically. The novelist, George Orwell, author of the best selling book, *1984*, used the term of “newspeak.” Today we call this “political correctness.” Political correctness (commonly abbreviated to PC or P.C.), under the guise of being “non-offensive,” is being used to change the way we act, think, and speak, thus changing our culture, history, and lifestyle.

The Devil’s Tools

Scripture says Satan has deceived *the whole world* (Revelation 12:9).

One of the devil’s favorite tools in his toolbox is labeled “vocabulary.” He deceives by WORDS—“trigger words”! *He used words to deceive Eve by triggering her curiosity: “Yea, hath God said...?” He knows what we respond to! The world is deceived, and it, in turn, deceives US as well! The only truly reliable source of knowledge is God’s Word, the Holy Bible.*

Which brings up the question: How about *you, Dear Reader*? What comes to our minds when we hear certain words or phrases? We all know the “trigger words” or tone of voice to set off a family argument or raise the hackles of our mates. Don’t we? Are there certain “trigger slurs” that set you off, instantly changing your mood or behavior? Some terms may intently anger you; others may bring back pleasant or unpleasant memories. It is important that we recognize how others may manipulate us with their words.

The hidden message behind most societal manipulation is, “Just trust us! *We* have the answers! Would we *lie* to you?” Many people are brainwashed, frightened, and confused. They don’t know *who* or what to believe! We are living in an age of doubt! People would rather believe in the *media* than in the *Bible*; they would rather believe in blind chance and evolution than in creation and revelation. (Send for our free booklet, *Evolution—Fact or Fiction?*)

As Christians, we must be discerning. Not *all* trigger words are bad. CHRIST often used *parables* as “trigger devices” to teach and point out spiritual truths.

He used *trigger words* to warn us of the *CONSEQUENCES* of living the wrong way: He warned of wars, rumors of wars, of nations rising and falling; of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes; of persecutions, deceptions, and false doctrines; of Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. For some of us old timers, these images bring trigger up the pictures drawn by Basil Wolverton.



However, Christ did *not* warn of these things to *terrify* us, but to *urge* us to choose God’s way of life instead of Satan’s ways. He pointed out *cause and effect*! In Deuteronomy 30:15–19, God warns, “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, THAT BOTH THOU AND THY SEED MAY LIVE.”



He adds, “*Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*” (Ezekiel 18:31)? And look what God is going to *do* to turn negative trigger words into positive *blessings*!

In the *Millennium* there will be mandatory obedience and heavenly bliss! No more wars! Universal *peace*! No more sickness, crime, and suffering! He will restore all things! The environment, the ecology, will be like the Garden of Eden. A virtual *Utopia*! Even the animals will be tame (Isaiah 11:6)! And, most of all, Christ’s Church will be glorified with Him in the resurrection! If you have not already done so, please request our free booklet, *The Second Coming... and Beyond*. You will undoubtedly be astounded at what the Bible *really* says!

In brief: *Be selective in what you see and hear*. Let God’s trigger words echo in your mind! In Philippians 4:8–9 we find what we call “God’s Positive Thinking Course.” Remember: “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” (Proverbs 25:11).

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; any virtue, or any praise, *think on these things!*”

So keep your guns loaded... and watch out for those “trigger words”!

The God of peace be with you.

Ω



Be sure to see our *Infuse* presentation by Mike James on your computer at:

<http://cgi.org/news-and-events/2014/7/7/ufos?rq=ufo%27s>

UFOs Exist—But What ARE They?

Are UFOs real?—and if so, what *are* they? Does the Bible speak of UFOs? Was God an ancient astronaut? Are we being visited by non-earthlings, and if so, who are they and what do they want? Who will ultimately rule space? You can know! And the answers will astound you!

Send for our free booklet.

Exciting Developments in Australia!

Over this year's Pentecost weekend, I had the privilege to return and visit the wonderful country of Australia. It was so enjoyable once again, to reconnect with friends I met during the Feast of 2013. Though we have kept in touch on occasion, it's just not the same as being there with them. It was really nice to have the opportunity once more to actually spend time with our brethren in the "Land Down Under."

The weather was just perfect. Their summer was ending, and though the temperatures were still "summer-like," it actually was considered their autumn. But it was pleasant and made for enjoying the Queensland area very nice, especially since I had a bit of driving to do. Since having some different locations and visits to attend, which necessitated some highway driving—it was nice to be surrounded by the clear and sunny skies and warm temperatures for the road trips I took to the variety of locations I visited.

I spent some time with our Ipswich brethren, pastored by Mr. Herb Haupt, over in the Boonah area, and had a wonderfully pleasant Sabbath with them. Upon my arrival, they made me feel like one of the family. We started out with a bit of fellowship and sharing some refreshments before services. I had the opportunity to give the main message and share with them many of the developments that the *Church of God International* is presently involved with, especially our upgraded Internet presence.

Afterward, we ate and shared conversation on what has been going on in their area. Pastor Haupt described the CGI Feast site, now being conducted in Redcliffe, just north of Brisbane. (More information is available on our website). It was a well spent afternoon, meeting some new members, reconnecting with friends I met back in 2013, and generating new memories with those in attendance!

On Pentecost Sunday, I traveled to the Slack Creek congregation, where we had planned a special event that was most encouraging—the addition of a second ordained CGI minister in Australia—that's right, a second CGI minister! This was a major reason for traveling to Australia since the Ministerial Council approved Mr. Bob Schofield for ordination into the ministry of Jesus Christ.

During services we made an effort to carve out time before the main message to conduct this very special ceremony of ordaining him into the ministry, his wife Sonya standing by his side as he was ordained. It was very special, to say the least; especially when you consider this accomplishment was the result of approximately four years of working through the curriculum of the *Ministerial Apprentice Program* (MAP). Uniquely enough, it is a testament to our modern technologies that enable us to mentor individuals like Bob, halfway around the world via Skype. Clearly, it was the consummation of the magnificence of God calling a man into His ministry.

A well supplied potluck followed the service, providing opportunity for everyone to "meet and greet" each other, while making new friends along the way. The food was excellent, and there was plenty of it!

So, presently we have two congregations and two ordained ministers in Australia who are now working alongside their ministerial brothers within the CGI to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This "working international team" continues to grow, and hopefully strengthens our voice in the areas we can reach.

Let us all remember the words of the apostle Paul when he said, "...but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule [boundary] abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you..." (2 Corinthians 10:15–16).

Let us continue to grow in faith and combine our efforts to effect the positive growth of God's people by being unified in our work together! For it is our *ministerial mission* to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" as we forge ahead to spread the Gospel worldwide! And so it is a wonderful addition and benefit to have Bob and Sonya Schofield as part of the ministerial team of Jesus Christ, within the *Church of God International*, half way around the world, in the "Land Down Under!"

Submitted by Bill Watson



The Slack Creek CGI Congregation in Australia



The ordination of Bob Schofield (with his wife Sonya)



Bob Schofield receiving CGI credentials from Bill Watson



Herb Haupt, Minister of the Ipswich Congregation

G'day Bill,
Hope your break with Margie in Hawaii was great and you both got some well deserved rest and are again rejuvenated. It was so lovely to see you again. I can't believe how time flies by.
We are all grateful for the effort you have put in to trying to sort the concerns we have had here. We are a very tight knit group here and truly have a wonderful friendly relationship with one another.
Pentecost went great and Sonja's family said they really enjoyed the day and the sermon you gave. Bob's ordination was very special and such a blessing. We hope as a group it will help us to grow in many ways. We are very thankful for your effort in travelling over to Australia to conduct the ordination and spending quality time with the brethren here.
Till next time...may God bless you and keep you and your family safe and well. Di :) Ω
Submitted by Diane Prather-Tuskes



Beautiful Sydney, Australia

Q For weeks now I have been studying psalm 119. Can you please explain Ordinances, Precepts, and Ordinances King David mentioned in psalm 119: 161-168? What are precepts, and ordinances? I need a little help understanding these. I am not sure. I am also trying to memorize this psalm. I am on verses 1-4. Sincerely, E.R.

A Dear E.R, Thank you for writing. We admire your intent to memorize the entire Psalm 119! You have chosen a noble place to begin your study of God's law. Psalm 119 is the greatest chapter in the Bible about the Word of God. There has been much confusion over "Which Old Testament laws we should keep," and "What are the differences between ordinances, precepts," etc.

Here, in summary, are some things we need to keep in mind:

1) First, we need to realize the words of the Word of God are *inspired* and *preserved* for eternity (Psalm 12:6-7; 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:17-18.) This is a *basic key*, and overrides all the opinions of all scholars and teachers of "higher learning," "translator's errors," "speculation," and "personal opinions." Either God's proclamation is *true*, or it is not. Either He inspired and preserved His words or He did not. This is the inspired starting place for understanding the Scriptures. The Bible is God's Book. We can rely upon Him to keep His promises. "... let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4). See our free booklet, *How to Study Your Bible*.

2) The Scriptures *nowhere* RESTRICT "God's law" to the Ten Commandments, though we all would agree that the Decalogue is preeminent. The Ten Commandments *sum up* the basic moral categories that are foundational to the *rest* of the law.

3) The words "law," "testimony," "statutes," "word," "ordinances," and "precepts" are often used interchangeably and SYNERGISTICALLY and are used repeatedly throughout the Psalm to exalt God's Word.

4) Virtually all the ordinances, judgments, and statutes hang, or branch off from, one or more of the Ten Commandments in some way, shape, or form, just as a tree has a trunk, branches, and leaves. All the components are important and support one another.

5) The general scope and design of this Psalm is to magnify God's divine law in all its many facets and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21). Psalm 119 is an Alphabetical Psalm—the longest, and most perfect in its kind, in the collection of Psalms.

6) The "law of Moses" *is* the law of God. It is only called the "law of Moses" because Moses was the instrument God used in revealing His law. (cf. Matthew 22:40).

7) It is true that the law contains both universal and nationalistic features—that is, some items are for all peoples at all times, while others pertain only to particular circumstances within limited cultural boundaries. But it is a mistake to assume that all the laws outside the Ten Commandments have been abolished or have no application for our time. The key lies in understanding the purpose of any given law. Once we understand a law's purpose, we can easily discern whether and how that law applies to us.

For example, we have long understood the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 to be health laws. God knows which meats are fit for human consumption and which are not, as He is the One who *made* the animals. If He reveals that certain animals were not made to be used as food, then we should simply avoid using those animals as food sources. The clean-unclean laws are obviously not in the same category as the laws of the Decalogue, but I think most would agree that if indeed they are inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) and represent health standards God has *revealed*, then we should obey them. Send for our article, *Have the O.T. Dietary Laws Been Abolished?*

In summary, *commandments* (an order), *judgments* (God's judicial decisions on issues), *law* (the Torah), *precept* (an order in writing), *statute* (an ordinance of the legislature), *testimonies* (sound advice from the proven experience of another), *truth*, *thy way* or ways, *thy word* or written words, are the APPLICABLE TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. All these terms are sprinkled throughout the Scriptures, but especially in Psalm 119.

I hope this helps answer your questions. For much more related information, feel free to send for our special publication, *Paul and the Law—Understanding the Hard Sayings* [PTL]. This will explain some of Paul's "hard sayings" more thoroughly than is possible to be gone into in a mere letter. Also ask for, *Understanding the Commandments* [UTN], *Have the O.T. Dietary Laws Been Abolished?* [DLA], and *Was Moses the Lawgiver?* [MTL]. In addition, request our CD, *Is the Law Only For the Jews?* [C915]. All our items are *free* of charge as per Matthew 10:8 and Acts 10:35. Ω



Questions from our readers...

Q Good afternoon. I had requested that my boss allow me to be exempted from fall festival as I am well aware of the children that will show up in Halloween costumes and the giving out of candy. I agreed to do extra duties but she stated that is a fall festival.... But this seems to close to paganism to me. What should I do? Thank you. C.C.

A Dear C, Thank you for writing. It is good to hear from you. You are correct. Halloween *is* paganism! I see your dilemma. Your boss does not seem to know the difference between *man's* pagan festivals, some of which may fall in the autumn, and *God's* Holy Days, which occur three seasons in the year (see Leviticus 23:2-43).

Halloween, no matter how commercialized, has almost completely pagan origins. As innocent as it may seem to some, it is not something to be taken lightly. Scripture does not use the word "Halloween," but it does give us some principles on which we can make a decision. In Old Testament Israel, witchcraft was a crime punishable by death (see Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27 in your own Bible).

The question arises, should a Christian celebrate Halloween? No, absolutely not! Halloween is an *adaptation* of an ancient, *pagan* festival. The pagan Greeks and Romans celebrated a fall *harvest* festival in honor of their goddess "Pomona," which featured apples and nuts. Since the Druids believed "Saman," or "Samhain," or "Shaman," the "lord of the dead" (Satan), consigned the departed souls of people to the bodies of animals as punishment for wickedness, it was natural for them, in their darkened, pagan superstitions, to imagine it necessary to attempt to placate Saman with offerings, and to attempt to frighten away wicked spirits with "jack o' lanterns."

Halloween features symbols of witchcraft, demonism, and *death*. What does it teach little children? The common practice of "trick or treating" is nothing more than children *playing the part of Saman and his demons*, approaching homes, demanding an "offering" of candies and the like in return for refraining from vandalizing the house!

Today, people embellish their houses and yards with "ghost decoys," jack o' lanterns, witches, black cats, and plastic ghosts in blissful ignorance. Do modern space-age Americans, Canadians, Britons, and many other nations actually *believe* they are frightening away evil spirits by pieces of white plastic hung in trees, or orange leaf bags with hideous faces, "jack o' lanterns," placed on their lawns? Of course not. They are "innocently" mimicking pagans, entering into the "spirit" of Halloween. Such customs are presented to the young as "fun" so they will seem harmless.

Perhaps you have not realized Halloween is the *most important annual festival to Satanists*. Satanic cultists even today have been known to kidnap children and sacrifice them to Satan, the so-called god of the underworld. For a complete understanding, write for our free brochure about *Hallowe'en*, and the booklet about *Satanism*. You will be *astounded* at the rank paganism associated with this fall harvest festival! We also invite you to visit our various presentations online at:

- <http://cgi.org/armor-of-god-web-chat/2016/10/13/halloween-is-it-christian?rq=halloween>
- <http://cgi.org/armor-of-god-halloween-harmless-fun/?rq=halloween>
- <http://cgi.org/new-blog-1/2015/10/19/dave-rusinko-halloween?rq=halloween>
- <http://cgi.org/armor-of-god-1/2015/10/29/is-halloween-christian-bronson-james?rq=halloween>

These should answer *all* your Halloween questions. Further, one should ask themselves, Would Jesus *approve* of parents and teachers LYING to their children about demons, spooks, ghosts, and pagan, heathen customs? "Thus saith the LORD, Learn *not* the way of the heathen" (Jeremiah 10:2). See also: Deuteronomy 12:30-31 and Leviticus 20:23.

Be sure to request our free booklet which will make all God's Festivals crystal clear: *God's Seasonal Plan* [GSP]. You can also see it online at <http://cgi.org/search?q=plan>.

We also invite you to visit our updated website at www.cgi.org. We have literally thousands of sermons, *Armor of God* presentations, booklets, and much more. Feel free to download our many in-depth booklets and brochures on a variety of subjects. Ω

In Christ's service,

C.G.I. Personal Correspondence Department, LWC

A reader writes, “I have some questions about some passages that are often used to refute some of our beliefs, specifically the Sabbath Day and a few other implications.... I was hoping you could help me understand these passages so that I am more equipped to converse with those who feel these scriptures mean something they do not.” *W.B.*

Q Acts 20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

People try to use this as “evidence” that people were keeping Sunday as the Sabbath, but I do not read it that way at all. In fact, I understand it as a point of reference in the linear story that was being told. Funny that just a little before this passage, Unleavened Bread is mentioned, presumably kept in Philippi from the way I read it.

A If the “first day of the week” is designated because it was the usual time for meeting, then are we to assume that the usual time for meeting was also at night, since the text shows this was a nighttime meeting (and one that continued all night)? The “first day of the week” is designated, not because it was the usual time of meeting, but because that happened to be the day before Paul’s departure. (The designation “first day of the week” is a part of Luke’s chronology of events—i.e., *when* particular events took place relative to each other. Notice the time designations—“after seven days,” “in five days,” etc.—in verse 6.) The disciples had just observed the Sabbath, and now, as the first day of the week begins (at sunset), they come together to enjoy a meal and continue their fellowship with their special visitor, knowing that he would be leaving the following morning. Paul’s talk went on so long because he knew he probably would not see these people again. The expression “came together to break bread” means they came together to enjoy a meal. At some point after midnight, Paul “broke bread” and ate again, and then conversed with the group until daybreak (v. 11). If “breaking bread” refers to the Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper, then the account would suggest that Paul took the Eucharist a second time that same night. Obviously, he simply had something to eat, which is the normative meaning of “break bread.”

Q 1 Corinthians 16:2: “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

Again, I know this does not change the Sabbath, but what is the collection for the saints? What this is referring to?

A Paul is here referring to an offering from the Gentile converts for the Jewish Christians in Judea. He had apparently mentioned it in an earlier communication, and in this letter he is encouraging each person to set aside and store up his contribution (apparently in his own house or storage area, not in a common meeting place) on a weekly basis so that everything would be in order and ready to go by the time Paul got there. If the Gentile Christians were treating Sunday as a holy day, it seems odd that Paul would have instructed them to put aside and store up goods on that day.

Q Colossians 2:14–17: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: ¹⁵ And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. ¹⁶ 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: ¹⁷ Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

I was hoping you could provide some insight on the meaning of this passage. People use this to say that you can eat and drink whatever you want without judgment, you can worship any day as the Sabbath, and the old adage “It’s nailed to the cross,” I presume, stems from this.

A The expression “handwriting of ordinances” is better translated “certificate of debt.” This “certificate” is a record of our sins, which includes a list of all the commands we failed to obey. This record of sins, not the law itself, is what was “against us” and “contrary to us” and is what was nailed to the cross.



The questions keep rolling in. Here’s more.

The NASB translates verse 14: “having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

The EXB also captures the intent of this verse: “He canceled [wiped out; erased] the record [certificate] of debt, which listed all the rules we failed to follow [with its decrees that were against us; the record of sins revealed through the OT law; Ephesians 2:15]. He took it away [set it aside; destroyed it] and nailed it to the cross.”

But the certificate of debt was not the only thing that was against and contrary to us. So were the “principalities and powers” (verse 15)—Satan and his minions. By removing the record of sins, the accuser of the brethren has no more grounds for his accusations. In this way, He “spoiled” (disarmed) the adversarial powers. The latter part of the verse—“he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it [‘it’ being ‘his cross’]”—draws from the imagery of a Roman military leader astride his white horse leading a host of bound captives before the cheering crowds of Rome. This was a part of celebrating Roman victory in battle. Paul uses this imagery to describe Jesus’ victory over the enemy of God’s people.

In verse 16, the expression “meat and drink” translates literally to “eating and drinking.” The Colossian Christians were instructed to let no one judge them in their eating and drinking. The people who would judge them—and had probably already been judging them—practiced asceticism, a form of “spirituality” that advocated all sorts of rules of abstinence—“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” etc. (verse 21). Apparently, the ascetics were judging the Colossian believers for enjoying an abundance of food and drink when they came together on Sabbaths and holy days. It is evident, then, that Paul is telling the believers that they were not to let the ascetics judge them for the fact that they were enjoying eating and drinking and celebrating on Sabbaths and festivals. If they followed the regulations of the ascetics, they would begin seeing the Sabbath and festivals as an end in themselves rather than appreciate them as a “shadow of [good] things to come”—a shadow cast by Jesus Christ Himself (“the body is of Christ”), the true Source of one’s right relationship with God.

We should be able to see how verses 16 and 17 relate to the previous two verses. Our relationship with God is founded and depends on the redemptive work of Christ, who removes our record of sins, disarms the adversarial powers, and empowers us to live godly lives, not on following the rigorous regulations of asceticism. Therefore, our fellowship and our Sabbath and festival celebrations should reflect the liberation Christ has provided.

Q Romans 14:5–6: “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶ He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” Again used to reject the true Sabbath. I understand it a general thanksgiving to God for our days and food, etc.

A First, notice that this passage is not about an appointed “day” for community worship. This is about some kind of *individual* devotional practice. Notice: “*One man* esteemeth one day... *another* esteemeth every day,” etc. This pertains to individuals within the believing community, not the community itself. If believers in a given area are to worship and fellowship *together*, they must of necessity have an appointed time to do this. So the “day” Paul refers to here is a day set aside for *personal* devotion, NOT for *community* worship. It is very probable that Paul has in mind the well-known Jewish practice of fasting on certain days throughout the year. (This understanding is supported by the “he that eateth” and “he that eateth not” portion of the text.) Some Jews observed all these extra-biblical fast days, and it appears that some of the converted Jews in Rome were still following the fasting custom. That’s not a problem, as fast days are simply days for personal devotion to God. It only becomes a problem when the person following the custom begins judging his brother for not following it. In this light, remember that one of Paul’s purposes for writing the epistle to the Romans was to address the cultural clash between Jews and Gentiles within the church. It appears that the observance versus non-observance of customary Jewish fast days proved to be a point at which the contention between the two groups manifested itself. Ω

C.G.I. Personal Correspondence Department, V.S

Resolving Disputes in the Body of Christ



Murray Palmatier

With technological advancements being developed at breakneck speed, our ability to be connected has never been better. Numerous social media platforms keep us in a state of perpetual contact. While we could debate the positives and negatives of such progress, it has without doubt changed how the Church can fulfill its mission. Our capacity to communicate is incredible.

Why then is society so fragmented? Political, social, educational, and media circles are dominated by extremists. As such, no one seems to be able to have rational discussions anymore, let alone agree, or even agree to disagree! We must always be wary of societal practices creeping into the Body of Christ. Irish playwright, George Bernard Shaw, made the provocative statement many decades ago that “the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion it has taken place.” Do we, in the Body, really communicate as well as we think we do? The answer lies in how well we handle disagreements.

The Council of Jerusalem met to resolve the issue of Gentiles being granted access by God to repentance, baptism, the Holy Spirit and His Church. How they resolved this dispute is worthy of our attention—it is that *fascinating*! We find the story in Acts 15, but you’ll need your concordance, too!

The story begins with Luke acknowledging that there was “no small dissension and dispute” (v. 2) between leaders who believed you must be circumcised, and other leaders, like Paul and Barnabas, who were convinced God had moved them beyond this. Without doubt, this was a *huge* issue in the Church—much bigger than most disputes we come across today at church. The conversion of all Gentiles was at stake. But disputes do happen, even amongst the founders and pillars of the New Testament Church. When they do happen, how do we resolve them?

First, they “came together to consider the matter” (v. 6). This was the important first step. “Consider” is the Greek word *eido* (G1492), and it means to fully appreciate, perceive, or comprehend; to bridge the gap from physical “seeing” to mental and spiritual “comprehension.” Oftentimes we think we know what the problem is, when the issue is much deeper. Only deep, thorough, and open discussions bring us to the point where we figure that the real problem is something deeper or different than the initial cursory dispute. So, before we resolve anything, we need to agree on what needs resolving.

Second, we are told there was “much disputing” (v. 7). Do *not* read over this. “Disputing” is the Greek word *suzétésis* (G4803), and it means “mutual questioning” (*not* arguing). This calls to mind the adage, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” As they worked towards resolution, they took time to question each other—not talk at or over each other, but to *question* each other. If true resolution, led by the Holy Spirit, is the goal, then we need to see the issue from the other party’s point of view. We do this by asking questions and listening to answers; and both sides did this in Jerusalem.

These first two steps are crucial to godly resolution of disputes. Before we can resolve the real issues, we must first understand them, and then understand how the other party is seeing them.

Peter then provides evidence and testimony (v. 7–11) about why his mind has been changed on the issue. He related his experience as he watched God working in the lives of certain Gentiles, and how it was no different from his own conversion. Then, Paul and Barnabas (v. 12) followed up with their own testimony of “miracles and wonders” they’d witnessed in their service. Remember that Peter and Paul did not always see eye to eye, but they set aside their own egos and let truth be told. Finally, James went to the Hebrew Scriptures (v. 16–17), quoting from the prophet Amos, to support his viewpoint.

Without minimizing God’s expectations (v. 19–20), we see that God’s law was still applied as they came to a final decision. They then came to an agreement on a course of action and completely communicated this to all who needed to know. In this case, it was the entire Church. They put their decision in writing, leaving no doubt to anyone who would read the decision that all the leaders were in agreement. They distributed copies to the entire Church and then sent men who were at the meeting out to discuss the decision, support the brethren, and answer questions about it, not hiding behind their written decision.

Scripture, testimony, evidence, and complete transparency being shared by multiple speakers; listening to one another and being led by the Holy Spirit, with the goal of resolution—not *their* resolution, but *God’s*

resolution!—was employed to come to agreement. What a fabulous example of how to properly communicate when facing any kind of disagreement.

Don’t fall victim to the illusion that *quantity* of communication equals *quality* of communication! Let’s continue to work together on becoming the Christ-like servants God needs us to be by following time-tested principles He has left for us in Scripture. Ω

**Watch Sabbath Service
Live On Your Computer!**

You are invited to attend church services in
Tyler, Texas via the Internet.
We invite you to tune in Saturdays:

**Tyler, TX, 11:00, Central Time
at www.cgi.org**

**Visit our new streaming page
cgi.churchonline.org for chat, online Bible,
notes and more new features.**

Coming Soon! Sermon Transcripts on line!

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for chat, online Bible, notes
and more new features.

Report from Kenya

Dear CGI,

Loving Christian greetings in our dear Redeemer’s name. It is my pleasure to report to you about my service trip to Rwanda. In fact, it was on 12th on the last Thursday when I went to their visit.

For sure it was a very long journey, which really took 19 hours to that place where I was received by brother Jean Rubumba, who then took me to the room to where I was supposed to be. There we had a short discussion with him to which highlighted me concerning the tough situations in Rwanda. In a period of less than two months, a total of 6315 churches have been closed across the country, according to numbers IGHE collected all provinces and the City of Kigali. <http://en.igihe.com/news/now-6000-churches-closed.html>

They are not allowed to teach or preach, especially small or upcoming churches especially them they used to meet a few brethren for their discussions.

I actually had a rough time of how to conduct our baptism, but the good Lord paved the way and we successfully had it done, we baptized five brethren. It happened that we were given robes each one of us for the event, and I gave them the baptismal certificates thereafter. Ω

In Christ service,

Zablon

In loving memory...

WATERLOO, Iowa—CGI elder Robert J. “Bob” Alcorn, 70, died in his sleep during the early hours of Friday, June 22, 2018.

Funeral services were held June 26 at Kearns Funeral Service-Kimball Chapel in Waterloo, Iowa, with Brent Kern officiating. Interment followed in the Garden of Memories Cemetery, with military rites conducted by the Waterloo AMVETS Post 19, Evansdale AMVETS Post 21, and Iowa National Guard Honors Detail.

Bob was a member of the Worldwide Church of God until 1978, when he attended CGI’s first Feast of Tabernacles in Jekyll Island. He was a faithful, long-time church host.

In 2001, Bob was ordained a minister to serve the Waterloo congregation, and was sent to Australia, Western Canada, and elsewhere to selflessly serve the brethren at the Feast.

The day before Bob died, his wife Pansy was able to spend time at his bedside. She held his hand, said good-bye, kissed him, and said “I love you.”

In addition to Pansy, Bob leaves behind his son Allen (Angie) Alcorn,



Bob Alcorn
1948 – 2018

daughter Shari (Darren) Cary, and two grandsons, Dylan and Jesse Alcorn.

Bob’s funeral was attended by friends, family, and coworkers. All remembered him fondly as a simple, humble, kindhearted, and hard-working man.

During the eulogy of his father, Allen Alcorn recalled, “My dad was so in-tune that this life is temporary. He had his eye on something bigger. He thought, ‘I can help people here; I’m not worried about myself. There’s a better life ahead.’ He was always focused on the Kingdom.” Ω

Submitted by Shari and Darren Cary



Paul David Williams, 77, a member of the Tyler, TX congregation of the Church of God International, died at approximately 2:50 PM on Monday, August 13, 2018. He was a resident of Park Place Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Tyler, and was under hospice care.

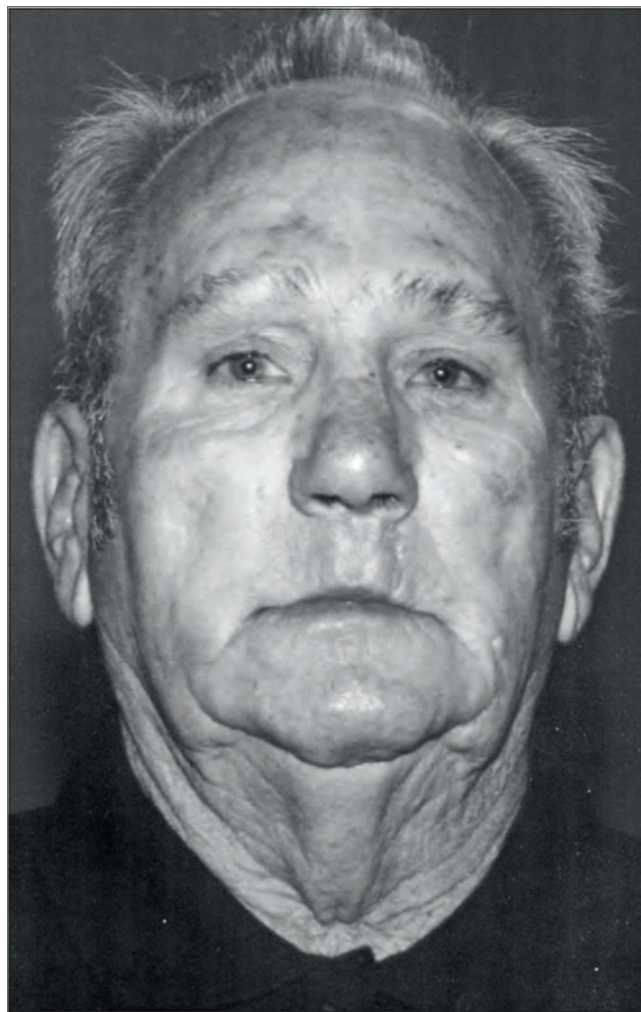
Paul was born on February 15, 1941.

He died within a few months of learning that he had inoperable liver cancer. His ashes were buried in Rockdale Cemetery (near Sulphur Springs, TX), where his wife was buried in 2005.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Barbara Joyce Williams; and a daughter, Tamara Lynn.

Paul was the father of two daughters, Marcia Jo and Tamara Lynn, born in 1959 and 1960 respectively; and one son, Jamie, born in 1982.

He worked for Indiana Gas Co. for several years and later worked as a medication aide in a nursing home and a hospital in Lafayette, IN. The latter years of his life were spent in East Texas.



Paul David Williams
(1941 – 2018)

Paul loved God’s Word. He enjoyed reading the Scriptures and never hesitated to ask for help in understanding difficult passages. He posted John 3:13 (“No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven”) on the front door of his apartment—a gentle way of telling his friends that the Bible doesn’t always say what they think it says.

Like the men and women of the “faith chapter” (Hebrews 11), Paul died in faith, holding the conviction that he and his wife would see each other again when the Lord comes to gather His saints.

“And the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). Ω

Submitted by Vance Stinson

Food For Thought For the New Christian

by Lloyd W. Cary

Is it difficult to be saved? What did Abraham, the father of the faithful, do? Do *you* have the faith to be saved? What does your Bible say?

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:1–3 KJV).

Abraham **believed** God (Romans 3:6; James 12:3).

Abraham **obeyed** God (Genesis 26:5; Hebrews 11:8).

“Abraham **believed** God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the **Friend** of God” (James 2:23).

God tested Abraham by asking him if he was willing to sacrifice his own son. Abraham **obeyed** (Genesis 22:10–12).

“And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Genesis 22:12). Abraham **ACTED** on what he knew to be true.

Faith is simply believing what God SAYS is true (Luke 18:8; Acts 27:25; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6;13; James 2:20) and **ACTING** on it. *Burn this into your memory!*

I have heard others confess, “I just find it hard to have faith in God. I can’t see Him, hear Him, nor feel Him. How do I know He even exists?”—not realizing the implications of their words. (Send for our free booklet, *God Does Exist! Here’s the Proof.*) We exercise faith every day. These skeptics are the same people who often accept the daily weather forecast, believe the newspapers, the media, and even their favorite politicians. They trust their lives

to a pilot they have never seen whenever they board a plane. They rely on their car’s brakes. They trust their chairs will support their weight. They trust history books, medical journals, and elevators. Yet elevators can let us down. God can’t. History books can be wrong. Planes can crash. Chairs collapse. How much more, then, should we trust the sure and true promises of Almighty God? He will never let us down...if we *trust* Him.

Cynics often argue, “You can’t trust the Bible—it’s full of mistakes.” It is. The first mistake was when man rejected God, and the Scriptures show men and women making the same tragic mistake again and again. It’s also full of what seems to be contradictions. For example, the Scriptures tell us “with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37); there is nothing Almighty God can’t do. Yet we are also told that it is “impossible for God to lie” (Hebrews 6:18). So there *is* something God cannot do! Isn’t that an obvious “mistake” in the Bible? No, it is not.

Lying, deception, bearing false witness, Sabbath breaking, etc., is so appalling to God, so distasteful to Him, so against His holy character, that the Scriptures use the word “impossible” to substantiate the claim. He *cannot*, could not, and would not lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). That means that in a world where we are continually let down, we can totally rely on, trust in, and count on His promises. They are sure, certain, indisputable, true, trustworthy, reliable, faithful, unfailing, dependable, steadfast, and an anchor for the soul. In other words, you can truly believe them, and because of that, you can throw yourself blindfolded and without reserve, into His mighty hands. He will never, ever let you down. Do you believe that? Then you have faith in God! All you have to do is ACT upon it. Request our free booklet, *How to Be a Real Christian* [REL], and our CD, *Faith Unto Salvation* [C048].

You’ll be glad you did!



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