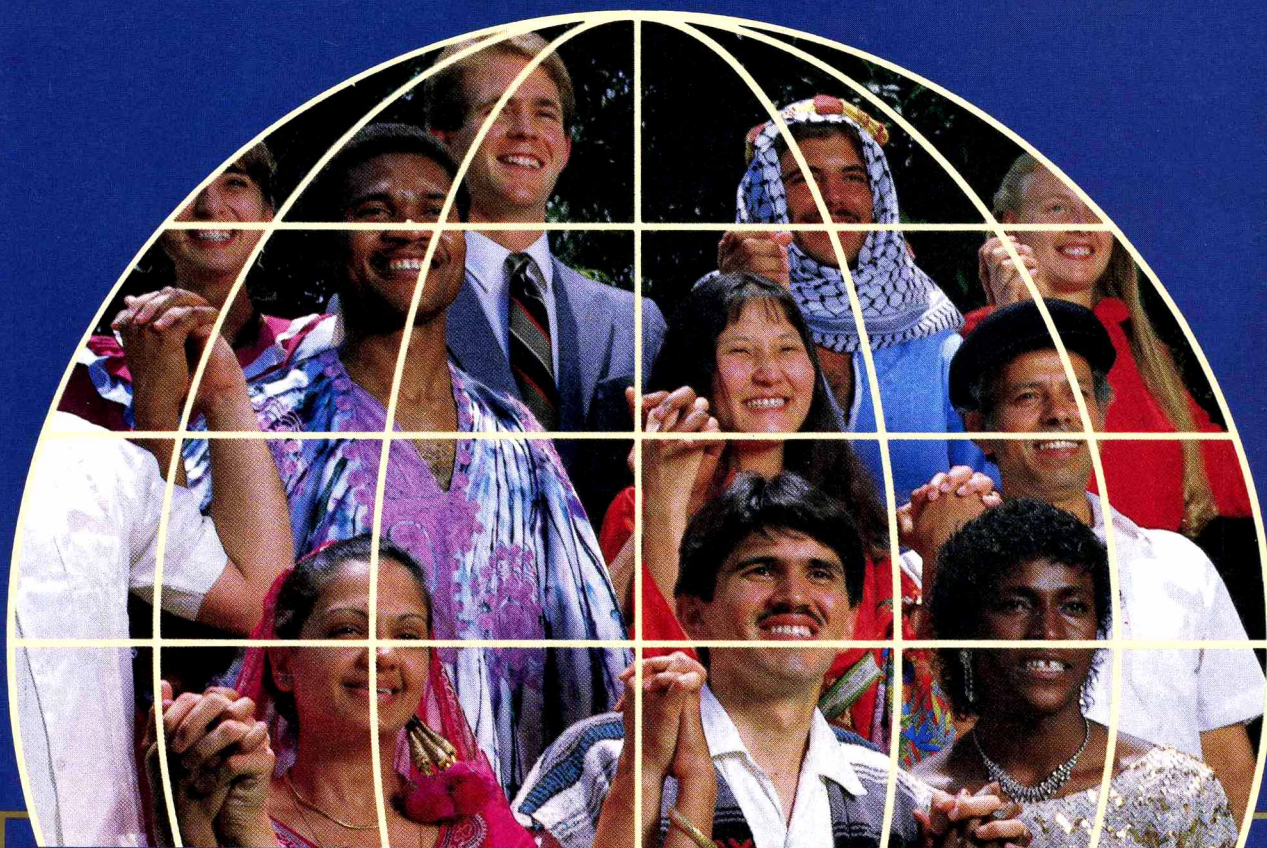


SEPTEMBER 1984

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

Feast of Tabernacles 1984



World Peace Is Coming!

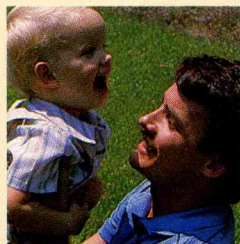
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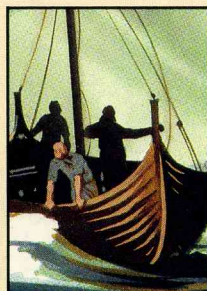
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COVER: God's Feast of Tabernacles (Oct. 11-17 this year) focuses on the unity, peace and abundance that people of all nations will enjoy when Jesus Christ returns to set up the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus' Second Coming is now imminent! Photo by Warren Watson.

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Looking Into the WORLD TOMORROW

This year's Feast of Tabernacles is very significant. You need to be reminded again why God ordained this Festival — just where we are now in the unfolding panorama of world events — the true significance of this year's Festival.

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Let's be sure we understand what our lives are all about!

Here we are in the middle of the ninth decade of the 20th century. We know we are in the very last decades of the 6,000 years of human life on this earth. And at the end of that 6,000 years Jesus Christ will come in HIS GLORY AND SUPREME POWER!

He is coming to remove Satan from deceiving mankind. He is coming to GOVERN — to RULE OVER ALL NATIONS!

And we of the Church — IF we remove all our spots and wrinkles (Ephesians 5:25-27) — are to have important positions in the worldwide GOVERNMENT TO RULE ALL NATIONS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS!

We keep the Feast of Tabernacles to get a foretaste of that wonderful WORLD TOMORROW. And it is nearer now than you think!

We need to get our bearings. We need to know what went on before — and where we are today

in the events working out God's tremendous MASTER PLAN!

First, angels inhabited this earth before man. Those angels SINNED (II Peter 2:4) under the super archangel LUCIFER (Isaiah 14:12-15), who was created by God PERFECT IN ALL HIS WAYS — until rebellion and iniquity were found in him (Ezekiel 28:15). Lucifer's name was changed to SATAN.

Then God created MAN — male and female — Adam and Eve. God instructed them fully, but they rejected God as revealer of knowledge, as their God and as RULER.

So God SHUT ALL MANKIND OFF FROM HIM AND HIS HOLY SPIRIT (Genesis 3:22-24) except those infinitesimal FEW God would specially call for SPECIAL COMMISSION OR DUTY PREPARING FOR HIS KINGDOM.

For almost 6,000 years now, NO OTHERS BUT THOSE FEW have been able to come to Jesus Christ (John 6:44), although millions have been misled by Satan to think they are Christians. God has called NO ONE JUST FOR SAL-

VATION! You were called for the special duty of standing behind Jesus Christ's apostle in preparing for THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

A special people

We, then, are a SPECIAL and PECULIAR PEOPLE (I Peter 2:9), not OF this world — thousands of people backing Jesus' apostle in going to the world.

God established a 7,000-year MASTER PLAN for accomplishing HIS PURPOSE in MAN! Yet there is DUALITY in everything God does.

God's work through humans started with the creation of the first man, ADAM (and his wife, Eve). The PHYSICAL creation of man began with Adam. But the SPIRITUAL creation of man begins with the second Adam, JESUS CHRIST. Man's ultimate spiritual creation BEGAN with Jesus Christ.

To keep His Church in mind of God's SPIRITUAL CREATION OF MAN, God appointed SEVEN ANNUAL FESTIVALS!

The FIRST of these festivals is the PASSOVER, which comes on

the eve of the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar, in the spring.

The **SECOND** festival, the Days of Unleavened Bread, lasts **SEVEN DAYS**, the first and seventh of which are annual **SABBATHS**. The Passover pictures to us the **DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST** — His **SHED BLOOD** for the remission of our sins **UPON REAL REPENTANCE**. The second festival pictures the coming out of **SIN**, as the Israelites came out of Egypt during those same seven days.

The **THIRD** festival is the "Feast of Firstfruits," called in New Testament times "Pentecost." It reminds us that the **FEW** of us in God's Church are only the **FIRST SMALL HARVEST** of God's spiritual harvest.

The **FOURTH** festival, the Feast of Trumpets, comes on the first day of the seventh month of the sacred calendar. It pictures to us the **RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST TO EARTH IN SUPREME POWER** to rule all nations.

Up to then, the **VERY FEW** called by God have had to overcome **SATAN** and **SATAN'S WORLD**. To attain salvation is **MUCH HARDER** than it will be for the overwhelming **MAJORITY** to be called during the Millennium and Great White Throne Judgment. But, if we **OVERCOME** Satan and his world, we shall **REIGN WITH JESUS CHRIST!**

The **FIFTH** festival is the most solemn day of the year, the Day of Atonement — a holy convocation. It is a day of fasting. It pictures Jesus Christ doing away with Satan, so that Satan cannot tempt those during the Millennium or the Great White Throne Judgment. It pictures **AT-ONE-MENT** with God.

Then the **SIXTH** festival is the one we are now about to celebrate — the **FEAST OF TABERNACLES**. It pictures the **GREAT MAIN HARVEST** of this 7,000 years.

The **SEVENTH** festival, the Last Great Day, follows the **SEVEN DAYS** of the Feast of Tabernacles. The first of these seven days is a high Sabbath, and the one day following the Feast of Tabernacles — the



eight day — is a high Sabbath, picturing the **GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT**.

A time of rejuvenation

The Feast of Tabernacles is intended to be a *time of inspiration*, a time of **REjuvenation!** It is the only time in the year that God makes it possible for all His children to rest from their regular duties, to worship and rejoice together, to concentrate on the deep meaning of the age in which we live and **RENEW** our *personal dedication* to the commission we have been given!

Attending this Feast of Tabernacles, **YOU** should be *refreshed* by living eight days in a manner that renews your perspective of God's coming Kingdom and **REDEDICATED** to go out another year progressively fulfilling the work we have been given to do.

This year, perhaps *more than ever before*, we need to attend! The strengthening of our resolve to fulfill the great commission of preaching the Gospel to the world is bringing *new* vigor and **NEW PERSPECTIVE** into a more dynamic and dedicated Church. We **ALL** need to feel this impact. Pray to become *more inspired* and *more dedicated* to the work that yet lies ahead.

This Feast is the time for us to hear the vital messages that relate

to the times in which we live and the deep meaning of the prophetic events that are beginning to happen. Sermons portraying the meaning of recent events and the fulfillment of prophecy in our time will be absolutely vital to hear. You cannot afford to miss a single service!

God knows His Church needs new **LIFE**, new **VIGOR** and **GREATER INSPIRATION!** This Feast of Tabernacles promises to be jam-packed with just what you need to fulfill the very purpose for which you are on earth.

Unprecedented impact

When this Festival brings some 6,000 to 10,000 people into a community for eight days, the *impact* on that area is simply **UNPRECEDENTED!** The entire community wonders what these people will be like. Anticipating the worst (having experienced other large crowds drawn by rock bands and public demonstrations), and yet hoping for the best, each area in its own particular way girds for the onslaught of our "conventioners."

For example: Our Festival Office staff members are often asked: "What kind of people are these?" "What do they believe?" "What is the Feast of Tabernacles?" "How will they treat my establishment?" "Are they heavy

drinkers?" These and dozens of other questions are running through the minds of thousands of the local residents.

You will give them the answers, *by your example*, for a full eight days!

Here is the opportunity to be a LIGHT to the world by LIVING the picture of the Millennium — the Kingdom of God in action on this



earth — as a witness to these people.

We can, by our own PERSONAL EXAMPLES during this Festival, be used by God as a *powerful witness* that may help lead others into the very truth of God and a way of escape from the terrible times ahead!

We set an example

THINK about that as it is a very real *responsibility*!

God expects us to set an example for others. That EXAMPLE is Jesus Christ living His life in you! At the Feast of Tabernacles, we should express to each community the fruits of a totally changed and converted life. That is a very important way in which each one of YOU can serve!

Jesus lived a life of cleanliness; He took care of the property of others! He undoubtedly paid His bills in full and on time. Let's be aware that our relationship with each individual with whom we come in contact at the Festival is

representative of the Church as a whole.

We have been called out of a darkened world *to be a light* — to shine before men that they may see *our GOOD WORKS* and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Drinking, for example, *is a part* of this festive week *when* done in MODERATION. However, let's not flaunt this privilege before the community by drinking to excess!

We need not hide what we do, but we do need to guard against *setting a wrong example* in the communities that are hosts of the Festival.

The apostle Paul said, "Do not let your good be spoken of as evil" (Romans 14:16). Paul continued to say, "It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak" (verse 21).

We are to be a light and an example to others. Please set a *good example* and BE MODERATE in ALL things!

Give according to blessings

Remember, also, God commands us NOT TO COME EMPTY to His Festival, but to *plan ahead*, and *be prepared* to give a generous offering, ACCORDING to the blessing He has given us.

Notice! "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost], and at the FEAST OF TABERNACLES; and *they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed*" (Deuteronomy 16:16).

God says each is to *give*, as he is able (verse 17).

Where OUR TREASURE is, that is where our HEARTS will be also! Where is YOUR heart? Hopefully IN the work Jesus Christ is doing!

So please THINK about it. Remember that "God loves a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7). PLAN to give as generous an offering as you can possibly afford, according to the blessing

God has given you. We are God's people! Let's *continue proving* it to Him!

This year we are again looking forward to one of the finest, most inspiring Feasts of Tabernacles of all!

There is no way to describe the emotional IMPACT and the DEEP THRILL that can be yours in journeying to the place God has set His name in a humble, yielded and worshipful attitude where thousands of others are assembled together, *gathering as one family* in one place for the observance of God's annual Festival!

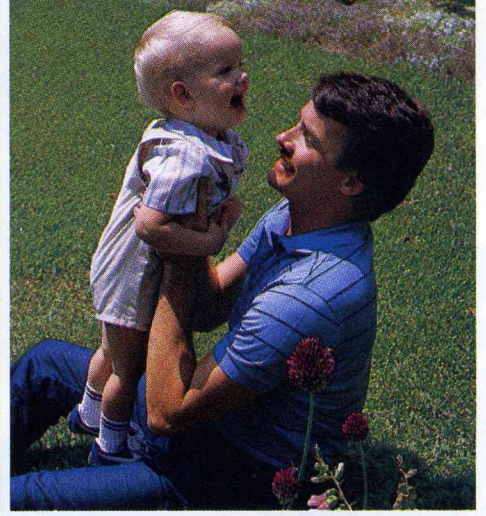
From the first sound of thousands of voices lifted in song during the opening service to the closing prayer, the Festival is always an exciting, thrilling and never-to-be-forgotten experience. There will be literally *thousands* of fellow heirs in Jesus Christ in our midst, thousands to whom every day, every event will be an experience they will cherish for the rest of their lives!

The week of the Feast

Just think of what lies ahead during the week of the Feast of Tabernacles: the wonderful opportunity of visiting and fellowshiping with thousands of others in whom is the Spirit of God; attending inspiring, uplifting, dynamic services and hearing the meaningful sermons; attending the many special activities scheduled; participating in Bible studies, family occasions, recreational activities such as boating, water-skiing, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, visiting historical sites or tourist attractions or just relaxing with one's family around the pool with a group of friends.

God has given you all this — *and more* — in His Feast of Tabernacles! However, let's keep this Feast fully understanding WHY we do so, RENEWING once again the meaning of this Festival and REDEDICATING ourselves to the work that God has called us to finish.

May God be with you and bless this Feast of Tabernacles even beyond our expectations! □



GOD'S KINGDOM

Our Hope for the Future

No other thought or pursuit is as important right now as the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

By Malcolm Tofts

Some time ago, a friend of mine died. I visited him in the hospital just a short while before he lapsed into an unconsciousness that will be broken only by the resurrection (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

His last words to me were, "I hope to be in the Kingdom soon, Mr. Tofts."

It is the hope of God's King-

dom that keeps God's people strong. Through all the storms and disappointments of this hurly-burly thing we call life, the hope of the Kingdom — the hope of membership in God's perfect, joyous, immortal, governing Family — is the anchor that keeps us firm.

A Christian's ultimate hope

Jesus Christ said: "He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give

power over the nations — 'he shall rule them with a rod of iron' " (Revelation 2:26-27). And again, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne" (Revelation 3:21, Luke 1:32-33). And, "We shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10).

John wrote: "I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4). Thus the ulti-

mate hope of a Christian is God's Kingdom!

But we humans are not the only ones looking forward to the wonderful world tomorrow. God also eagerly anticipates the Millennium. Jesus Christ said it would be God's "good pleasure" to give us the Kingdom (Luke 12:32). God is pictured as a loving father eager to give the cosmos to his sons and daughters.

Thus, incredibly, we are the undeserving heirs of a Kingdom that will last forever (James 2:5, II Peter 1:11). This is the promise that God gives to those who are members of His one small Church.

And it is — by far — the greatest opportunity that can be given to a human being. It far surpasses in importance any other facet of life. No other ambition, goal or desire is anywhere near as important as the chance to become an immortal child of God and rule in the world tomorrow!

A tremendous future

It is time now for this hope of God's everlasting Kingdom to be put before every other interest (Matthew 6:33).

And what a hope it is. Picture a world completely at peace (Micah 4:3). Imagine young people learning responsibility and outgoing concern for others as they grow into adulthood developing their talents to the full. Think of a world without famine, disease, crime, broken families or war. Think of the wonderful accomplishments such a society could achieve.

It is the picture — the vision — of all these things that enables us to weather the storms of life.

In his book *Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*, Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong gives an inspiring glimpse of the Millennium: "The living Christ is coming in all the power and glory of almighty God, as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-16) to put down the rebellion of warring nations (Revelation 17:14), and establish God's

world-ruling government over all nations (Daniel 2:44, 7:9, 18, 22-27, Isaiah 9:7)."

Jesus Christ, the King of kings, with perfect character, absolute in honesty, integrity, faithfulness, loyalty and trust — filled with outgoing concern for the governed, for their welfare and their salvation — having total knowledge, understanding, wisdom, complete love, mercy, patience, kindness, compassion, forgiveness. Jesus Christ, possessing total power, and never compromising one millionth of an inch with His perfect law, God's government on earth, compelling haughty, carnal, rebellious humans to yield in complete submission to God's government.

No one will then be deceived. The vast majority of mankind is today. All will know the truth. No more religious confusion. Humans will become teachable. People will live God's way — the way of outgoing concern for others — the way of true values — the way of peace, of happiness, of well-being, of joy.

Conflict, sickness, pain and suffering — gone. Poverty, ignorance — banished. Smiles on people's faces — faces that radiate. Formerly wild animals tame. Air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution — gone. Crystal pure water to drink; clean, crisp, pure air to breathe; rich soil where unproductive deserts, mountains and seas formerly were, producing full-flavored foods and fantastic beauty in flowers, shrubs, trees.

A world filled with happy, radiating humans guided, protected and ruled by former mortals made immortal — and all the humans realizing that they, too, may inherit everlasting life in supreme happiness and thrilling joy.

What a fabulous picture!

If you would like more information about what God's Kingdom will be like — if you want more details, straight from Scripture, about the wonderful world tomorrow — request a free copy

of Mr. Armstrong's book *Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*.

Be mindful of the Kingdom

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" is the inspiring thought in Proverbs 29:18 (Authorized Version). How true that proverb is! That's why we have to be continually pointed toward the Millennium. We must think of the Kingdom always, talk about it with others of like mind and forsake it never.

All of us should now be extremely mindful of the Millennium. We should be able to picture it inside our heads, as it were, in glowing technicolor. We should be able to hear it, so to speak, in stereophonic, nay, quadraphonic sound. It should be so real to us, given as many exact details as the Bible reveals, that we could almost, as it were, reach out and touch it.

If it is not real to you yet, have patience with yourself, but make sure you listen attentively at services at the Feast of Tabernacles and to Mr. Armstrong's radio and television broadcasts. And read Mr. Armstrong's two books *Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like* and *The Incredible Human Potential*, and his booklet *Just What Do You Mean... Kingdom of God?* This important literature will help you clarify and fine-tune your picture of the future. All are free for the asking by writing to our office nearest you. See the inside front cover for a list of our addresses.

Now, at this very late, last-minute stage of events, the soon-coming Kingdom of God should be the No. 1 thing on our minds. By comparison, nothing else is important. All else comes in a distant, poor second. Emphatically, the hope of and training for the Kingdom must now be the central focus of our existence as true Christians.

Even if, like my friend, we have to face the gates of death, our last thoughts should be of God's Kingdom, God's Kingdom — and God's Kingdom. □

Photos by Hal Finch



World Peace Is Coming!

*Animosity, bloodshed and war will soon end!
The world will finally enjoy peace — through true love.*

By Earl H. Williams

Love! Peace! The flower children of the 1960s shouted these lofty words everywhere.

They felt the hatred — witnessed the injustice — abhorred the bloodshed. They protested against the evils — they sang and even cried about something better.

But love and peace never came.

The days of the flower children are long gone, but the need for world peace remains. Incredibly, sadly, the world, as you read this, is on the very brink of destroying itself!

Yes, what the world needs now is love, but not the ineffectual love of the flower children, nor any other love of this world. We need the effectual love of God to change this world.

And God's true love *will* finally produce peace on earth — and soon. Read on and discover how peace, through love, will spread all over this world.

The cause of hatred

Hatred destroys peace. But what causes people to hate one another? When did animosity first rear its ugly head? Let's go back to the beginning and see.

In the Garden of Eden grew two trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9). These two

important trees represented two ways of life.

The tree of life represented the way of giving, the way of God's love, the way that will permeate the wonderful world tomorrow. And what is God's love? "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

Jesus Christ tells us that God's love has two main aspects. Listen as Jesus paints the beautiful picture: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Jesus made it vividly clear that what Adam could have gained from the tree of life covered two important areas, just as God's law is divided into two branches. The first four commandments of the Ten Commandments teach us how to love God. The last six show us how to love our fellowman — how to produce peace through love.

The life of God's tree of love is the water or sap that flows through its branches. Jesus Christ compared the Holy Spirit to flowing water (John 7:38-39). The Holy Spirit flows through the tree of life producing fruit. And what are the fruits of that

tree? Are they animosity, bitterness and hatred? No! "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Galatians 5:22).

But unfortunately, Adam, and all of humanity with him, rejected the tree of love and the fruit of peace. Adam chose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the *get* tree, the tree of enmity — the tree that produced the terrible world today.

Satan's tree also has two main aspects — enmity toward God and enmity toward fellowman.

Satan's spirit is the sap of his tree. The rotten fruits of this tree fall out all over this world: hatred, dissension, wrath and bloodshed (Galatians 5:19-21).

When he ate the fruit of the wrong tree, Adam's mind became saturated with the adversary's attitude of competition and strife. After all, you are what you eat! The human mind absorbs Satan's carnal attitude toward God and neighbor, and humanity has known nothing but hatred and death ever since. As Romans 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Why can't man find peace? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (verse 7). Man's very nature hates God's tree of love — the tree that leads to peace through love. When will

Photo by Warren Watson

there be peace? When the prince of enmity is dethroned and the Prince of peace is enthroned. When man stops eating of the tree of enmity and starts eating of the tree of love. Then peace shall reign! And that is exactly what will happen — in the immediate future.

A new era

Yes, the Prince of peace shall come! The angels shall shout: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15).

Then Jesus Christ will remove Satan from his throne as god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). Satan will be bound, unable to broadcast his spirit of enmity (Revelation 20:1-3). Satan's tree of enmity will wither and die — its fruit will disappear.

Then Jesus Christ will set His hand to bring peace to this world. He will force the nations to "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4). They will learn the way of peace and, believe it or not, *you* can help teach them.

Then will be "the times of restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21). Jesus Christ will open the way to the tree of life — the way of peace — to everyone (Revelation 22:2, 14). God's Spirit of love will be poured out all over this earth (Joel 2:28). Love and peace will be everywhere, because the love of God will be poured out in the hearts of people by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

The world will be ready to learn and live the way of peace. Nations will be ready to eat of the tree of life.

The way to peace

Love and *peace* will no longer be empty words. Almighty God will fill them with substance — with action. For peace will never come by words alone, but by every act of love. God will teach people how to love one another

through His law. In the Kingdom of God, world leaders will be eager to heed. They will say: "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2).

And you can be there with Jesus Christ teaching the nations (Isaiah 30:20-21)! God is giving you an opportunity now to learn and live the way to peace. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with you! You must live it before you can teach it.

So where do you begin? The way to peace is through God's law of love. In the world tomorrow you will teach people how to love their neighbors through obeying God's law.

The first law that brings peace between people through love is the Fifth Commandment, which tells us to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12). Today parents and children are further apart than ever before, and we are further from world peace than ever before.

Parents raise dictators and warmongers. Children grow up dishonoring and disobeying all authority, even God's. The result is crime and international terrorism. Children become the leaders who plunge the world into war.

In the world tomorrow, you will teach parents how to teach their children. Children will honor and obey their parents. These children will grow up to be peace-loving leaders. And you must be practicing that way of peace in your own family, and through teaching your own children, now.

Now notice the Sixth Commandment: "You shall not murder" (verse 13). It doesn't take much imagination to see how this law of love will bring peace. Without murder, war is virtually impossible. But more than that,

you will teach people to love to the degree of self-sacrifice. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends," said Jesus (John 15:13).

The Seventh Commandment reads, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Again God emphasizes the family as the way to peace. Adultery has shattered the peace of numerous marriages, ending in violence and divorce.

In the world tomorrow, husbands and wives will remain faithful to one another. They will love each other so much that adultery will be unthinkable. Families will reap the peace of this law. Are you practicing this law in your own life now?

"You shall not steal," reads the Eighth Commandment (verse 15). How many times has peace been stolen by the breaking of this law? One nation tries to steal (get) the possessions of another, and war ensues. Once you help teach people to give rather than get, stealing will be eradicated. Once stealing is eradicated, peace will be given to the world.

Notice the Ninth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (verse 16). Imagine a world where people kept their word — a world free of accusations and propaganda. Well, that's the kind of peaceful world you will help create through teaching and enforcing this law.

"You shall not covet . . . anything that is your neighbor's," says the Tenth Commandment (verse 17). This is the law to end all wars. James asked, "Where do wars and fights come from among you?" The answer? "Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" (James 4:1). The desire to get is at the root of all sin.

You will teach the nations to enjoy what God has given them and not lust after what God has given their neighbors. They will learn to praise God for His bountiful blessings — to rejoice with their neighbors rather than covet. The whole world will rejoice in

thanksgiving to God. God's law of love will form the foundation of world peace, which will be perfected through oneness. God's love goes beyond being "your brother's keeper." God wants you and all humanity to say, "I *am* my brother." Once we reach that pinnacle of love, world peace will be perfected.

Peace perfected

Jesus Christ explained the I-am-my-brother concept of love when He said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). You must love your brother as if you were loving yourself.

The apostle Paul further explained the principle of peace through oneness when he wrote, of Jesus: "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us . . . that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (Ephesians 2:14, 16).

Jesus Christ makes us one in Himself. He frees us from the way of competition and strife. He gives us the opportunity to love our brother as ourselves. We must crucify selfish concerns and motivations and let Jesus Christ live His life in us (Galatians 2:20). Then we must give to our fellowman as one in Christ (Galatians 3:26-29).

But what makes us brothers — one family? In the human family the life force of the blood makes us one. In God's Family there is something thicker than blood. What is this tie that binds?

Notice I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13).

We share the kindred Spirit of God flowing through our minds and character. Through this same Spirit of love and oneness, the nations of the world will find peace. There will be one Lord and one religion. "All the ends of the

world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You" (Psalm 22:27). God will even give the nations one language (Zephaniah 3:9). God's Holy Spirit will bind the nations together in universal love and peace. All the nations will be one world under God — indivisible.

One world under God

Love is not just what you say, it's what you do. Words of love must be backed up with acts of love (I John 3:18). In the world tomorrow you will teach the nations to become one with their brothers. Here are three action verbs beginning with the letter *A* that will bring about world unity and peace.

The first *A* is *accept*. For people to live in oneness and peace they must accept one another. Many people refuse to accept others because they are different. Love requires complete acceptance of others.

We accept our brother through God: "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (I John 4:20-21). It's easy to accept your brother when you realize how much you have in common. We are all made in the image of God. We all have the same potential: to become part of the God Family. We all have hopes and dreams, sorrows and despair.

Of course, even though we have many things in common, we still have differences. This brings us to the second *A* of peace: *admire*. God created variety — different cultures, personalities and talents in people. This is good. As the French say, "Vive la différence."

In the present world Satan uses these differences to cause hatred and prejudice. If someone is not like us, we assume they are inferior. We then avoid them. But God's way is to admire the differences in the human family. The

differences are an expression of God Himself. God has many marvelous attributes and talents. As a God of love, He spread them among all the nations.

Paul instructed, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3). In the world tomorrow each nation will admire the God-given talents of the others. No nation will look down on others. This admiration will lead to respect, and respect to peace.

The third *A* of peace is *administer*. *Administer* means "to minister or serve." Service is the proof of love and the capstone of peace. Once people accept and admire one another, then they can serve one another in peace.

Serving takes your mind off yourself and makes you think about the welfare of others. When you give, happiness and peace prevail. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Imagine all the nations of the world helping and serving one another — what a wonderful world it will be! Yes, oneness through the three *As* of love will perfect peace among the nations. Practice these three characteristics today. Soon now, you will teach them to the entire world.

Tree of life open

Almost 6,000 years ago Adam rejected the tree of life — God's peace tree. In a few years from now, humanity will be given another opportunity to partake of this tree. This time people will accept God's way. This time you, with Jesus Christ, will be there to help show the way.

Man will learn to love his fellowman through God's law. Men will not be mere blood brothers, but spirit brothers — one forever. They will *accept* one another, *admire* one another and *administer* or serve with one another.

World peace will come through love. Let us live the way of peace now, and when Jesus Christ returns let us spread it all over the world! □

In a World of Division **A Feast of Unity**

*The Feast of Tabernacles focuses on unity
among true Christians and pictures
the peace of the wonderful world tomorrow.*

By K. Neil Earle

This is a tragically divided world!

Communism opposes capitalism. Democratic and totalitarian systems compete. Labor struggles with management; teens irritate parents; students confront teachers; left-wing and right-wing ideologies clash. The litany of divisiveness blares at us from every corner.

Everywhere, it seems, extremism and polarization are the rule, antagonism and accusation almost

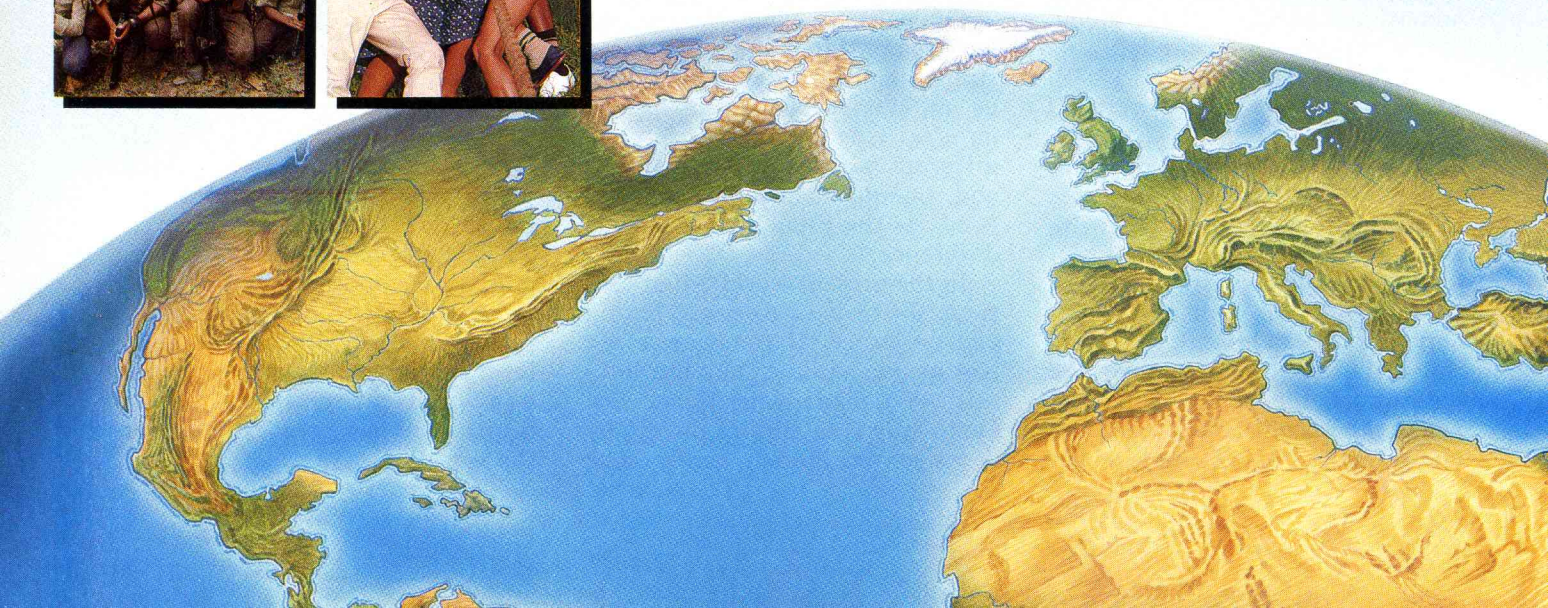
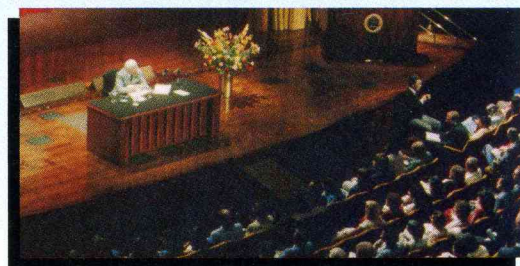
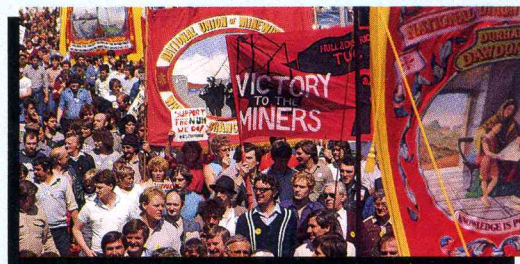
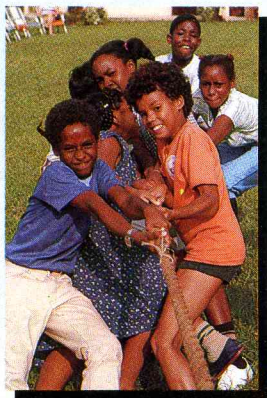
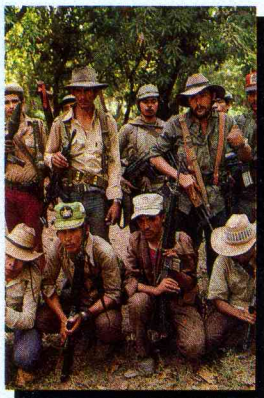
the norm. Where are the "people of good will" in the world today?

We are seeing the fulfillment of a chilling prophecy, one the apostle Paul penned more than 1,900 years ago: "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud . . . unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal" (II Timothy 3:2-3).

Jeremiah lamented this same social unraveling, the fractured human relationships prophesied to afflict the affluent nations in particular at the end time: "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place . . . that I might leave my people, and go from them! For they are all adulterers . . . treacherous men . . . do not trust any brother; for every brother will

utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers. . . . Their tongue is an arrow shot out; it speaks deceit" (Jeremiah 9:2, 4, 8).

What does all this have to do with the Worldwide Church of



God and the coming Feast of Tabernacles?

Everything — literally everything!

The coming utopia

Anciently, God Almighty revealed a deeply meaningful series of festivals to His people Israel — seven annual Holy Days that are far more than a disjointed series of meaningless banquets. God's Holy Days are a brilliant, steadily unfolding illumination of God's own plan for the ages, a plan hidden from the wise of this world, but revealed with stark clarity to ordinary people just like us (Matthew 11:25).

A major part of God's majestic plan involves the forcible institution of an orderly and harmonious 1,000-year period on this earth (Revelation 20:6). A thousand years of compulsory peace!

Jesus Christ announced it during His earthly ministry. He foretold a time when the nations of this earth will be shepherded for 1,000 years by the Prince of peace and His handpicked staff (Matthew 25:31-32).

Numerous scriptures shout out this startling truth.

During the Millennium all police power and law enforcement will be concentrated in the wise,

firm hands of Jesus Christ and His executive assistants (Matthew 24:30-31) — government of the people, for the people, *by* the God Family (Revelation 21:7).

Just think of it — a world where the Ten Commandments and God's other laws are enforced — a world where shoplifting, rape, assault, murder and conspiracy are outlawed!

Isaiah foretold it: "And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:20-21).

A tightly monitored world? Yes.

A world where authority and law are pervasive? Of course.

But not the Orwellian Big-Brother world of 1984, either. Not when the government is headed by One who paid the full price in service to God and man — the price of His own blood (Luke 22:20)!

The right attitude

Jesus Christ proved His utter sincerity, His determination to serve humanity and yet not compromise with His Father's laws. How? By submitting to the toughest part of God's master plan — a preordained appointment for a bloody death on the stake.

Hebrews 12:2 tells us to look to "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Even as a human being, Jesus added infinite depth to the word *compassion*. His ministry was

characterized by an unashamed openness and feeling for human problems.

A government with this motivation — a royal Family of selfless servants, literal brethren of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:11) — will guarantee perfect justice and fairness for all — utopia!

This is no pipe dream. The glorious Millennium is soon to dawn (James 5:8). The signs of the collapse of the old order are all about us (Matthew 24:3-8).

So how should we prepare for the Festival picturing this soon-coming world tomorrow? What might Jesus Christ want to see from us at this 1984 Feast of Tabernacles, a season completing 50 years of service to the great commission (verse 14)?

The number 50

Quite often, the number 50 is used in Scripture to relate to unity, cohesiveness.

The tabernacle Moses constructed in the wilderness was covered with beautiful, high-quality curtains woven in two uneven lengths of material. They were joined with 50 hooks or clasps (Exodus 26:6, 11). The 50 attachments made the two uneven portions of linen into one curtain, one tabernacle. Fifty loops of blue were used as couplings for these hooks. Notice Exodus 36:12-13: "Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain . . . and he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, *that it might be one tabernacle.*"

Leviticus 25 mentions the 50-year Jubilee cycle in ancient Israel. After seven sabbatical years "you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants" (verse 10).

What happened in the 50th year?

"It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family."

What a beautiful law! Families reunited. Men and women returning to their original inheri-



Illustration by Kim Passey; photos: Alan Keler, Sigma; Good News; Stuart Franklin, Sigma; Larry Omasta, J.P. Laffon, Sigma; Craig Clark, Alan Keler, Sigma; Hal Finch

tance. Social balance and justice renewed.

Understand now why the Bible says of the first century Church of God that "when the Day of Pentecost had fully come [Pentecost was the 50th day after the spring wave-sheaf ceremony — see Leviticus 23:15-16], they were all with *one* accord in *one* place" (Acts 2:1).

Acting as one

After 50 years of service to the great commission, there is still much to be done. The big push is still ahead.

So how can this Feast of Tabernacles help unify God's Church even more as the climax approaches?

In many ways. Common activities are unifying. More than 100,000 of us will meet simultaneously "with one accord" at more than 80 sites worldwide. This is an inspiring mass demonstration of oneness. As one splendidly coordinated unit, God's people from age 1 to 101, from China to Chile, Brno to British Columbia, will rejoice before their Creator exactly as God commands (Deuteronomy 16:14).

How does this affect Jesus Christ, Head of God's Church?

"You are My friends," Jesus promises, "if you do whatever I command you. . . . until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 15:14, 16:24).

Faith in Jesus Christ's invisible leadership makes the Feast possible. God's Church shows real faith at the Feast, shows that, collectively, we know the lines of authority in God's work run directly to heaven itself.

There's more going on than meets the eye at the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus Himself walks among us at our scattered assemblies (Matthew 18:20). That is inspiring — and unifying (John 17:21).

This Feast we as one body could ask to more deeply understand the No. 1 project on God's mind right now: the crying need to send the anointed King of

kings back to this earth — the stark, urgent necessity to rescue a suffering humanity, to save mankind from the sickening tragedies pommeling this planet!

The Bible's pivotal verses are Acts 3:19-21: "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

And what is going to be restored to this earth at Jesus' return? God's government!

The big picture

Surely we can see the need for God's government more this year than in 1983.

Yet before that Kingdom comes the Gospel warning must be preached (Matthew 24:14). That is God's schedule: Warn people first, and then they will know enough to repent, to turn to God by the millions at Jesus' return (Isaiah 2:2-3).

You and I are called to support the preaching of that Gospel, to back this crusade for sanity (Ezekiel 18:30-32). This is God's first priority now (Matthew 6:33).

We observe this Feast as a token, as a surety that a better world is coming. The good news is that it won't be long now! What a hope — what a purpose — what a vision!

That goal should pull us together more than ever before in 1984. The world needs the Kingdom even more than it did in 1983. Do we understand that?

A group effort

Common goals cement unity, and unity is the lubricant, the spiritual balm that helps all the diverse arms and agencies of God's Church function harmoniously (Psalm 133:1-2). After all, how many of us could even master the legal technicalities to get *The Plain Truth* magazine, for example, into a Third-World

nation? God's Church today is a big operation. It needs organization, specialized technical expertise: "There are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. . . . For in fact the body is not one member but many" (I Corinthians 12:6, 14).

Spiritual preparation is the real key to unity (Ephesians 4:24-25). Remember our brethren in difficult circumstances — in Haiti and East Germany, in Burma and Belfast. This makes us more appreciative, more unified in spirit (verse 4). It helps drive home how God is using a group effort to finish the job.

Most members encounter God's government more intensively at the Feast of Tabernacles than at any other time of the year. Think of the Feast coordinators, the visiting speakers, ushers, deacons, sound and stage crews — the maze of activities necessary for an orderly, profitable Feast. Then resolve to be a goodwill ambassador, an ambassador of unity (II Corinthians 5:20).

Pray for other Feast sites. Try to come out of yourself a little more this year. Be warm, service-oriented, concerned for the strangers or new people who will walk among us (Exodus 22:21). Attend the Feast films — these are unifying productions.

Fine-tune your children now. Resolve to attend services on time. Pay more attention to the sermons this year. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem (Romans 13:11-12).

We are a "little flock" (Luke 12:32), but together at this Festival we comprise the biggest annual conclave on the face of the earth. We are God's own people embarked on the quest of the ages, serving a sure vision of the only future worth striving for — the incredible opportunity to help multiple billions of human beings find peace and productivity in the Family of God (Matthew 25:34).

Let's focus on that goal more closely than ever at the 1984 Feast of Tabernacles, a festival of unity! □

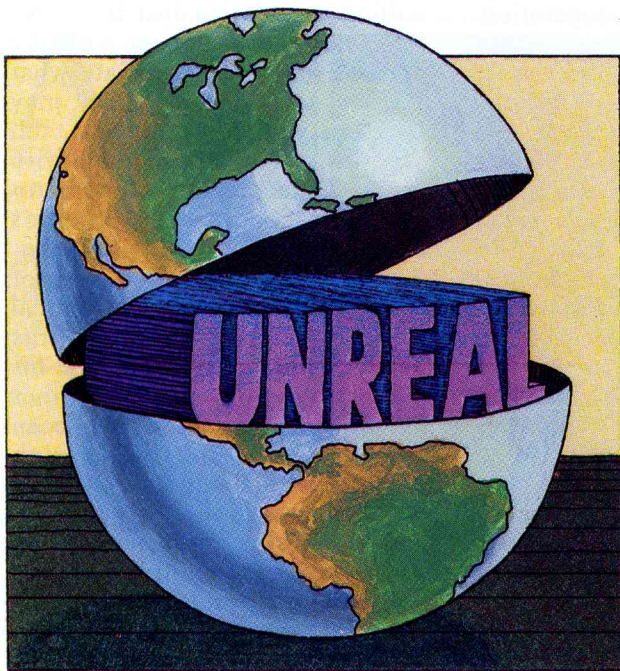
'Unreal!'

Have you noticed how what starts as slang can completely alter the meaning of a word?

Take the word *unreal*, for instance.

Today, people often say *unreal* when they mean *fantastic*, *astounding* or *much better than expected*. The party my teenage

daughters went to last night was "unreal." The new shopping area that opened near us has some "unreal" stores in it. The new ice cream made from 100 percent natural ingredients and guaranteed free of all artificial flavoring tastes — er, "unreal."



that they were courteous, disciplined, polite, honest and friendly. They didn't get drunk or leave their rooms filthy, and their children didn't run rampant in the lobby, making life miserable for the other guests.

The manager meant *unreal* as a compliment, and I thanked him. But *unreal* isn't always meant as a compliment.

Many people today think that to live by the laws of God as written in the Bible is "unreal." To live life honestly in today's world, without trying to take unfair advantage of others, is impractical. They regard it as old-fashioned to take time out of a crowded schedule to pray, and downright ridiculous to set aside money out of a tight budget to tithe.

True Christianity according to

God's laws might look good on paper, but when it comes to living in the real world, it just can't be done. To be successful in that real world, you have to be willing to meet it on its own terms. "Out there" people and circumstances won't let you live a Christian life.

The real world has become just like the apostle Paul said it would when he wrote: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of

money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (II Timothy 3:1-4).

Most people wish it could be different. They agree that if everyone would start living the way of giving, sharing and helping, life would be much better — fantastic — unreal. But you have to be practical, don't you? That way just doesn't work in today's real world, does it?

Perhaps it is time we ask ourselves which is the real world, and which way of life is unreal.

Is it really "real"?

Let's forget for the moment the peculiar way we use the word *unreal* today and remind ourselves of its real meaning.

My dictionary defines *real* as "genuine, true and authentic." So *unreal* must mean the opposite: "untrue, not authentic, forged, counterfeited, fraudulent." With those definitions, ask yourself: Is the world we live in today real or unreal? Look how this world began.

Satan, whom the Bible describes as the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), put into action an elaborate lie shortly after the creation of the first humans. He seduced Adam and Eve by persuading them to disobey their real Creator and decide for themselves how they should live. Satan, in effect, kidnapped Adam and Eve.

God then banished Adam and Eve from Eden, the garden He

had planted to serve as an example of how life should really be lived. He also cut them off from His Holy Spirit, which would have given them knowledge of the real purpose of life.

For nearly 6,000 years, Satan has led mankind farther and farther down the wrong path. He has deceived the whole world (Revelation 12:9) with a false way of life. Today, in spite of the incredible progress in physical areas, the human race has no idea why it exists or what its real purpose is.

Instead, humans pursue artificial goals, false hopes and dreams that lead nowhere. Billions live out their lives as atheists, or steeped in the empty nonsense of paganism. Even the "Jesus" that so many millions worship is a counterfeit, and the gospel message that is so passionately preached is actually a perversion of the real message Jesus brought.

Poor people. They want peace. People don't want to live in an armed camp, their future threatened with nuclear war. Nations would surely prefer to "beat their swords into plowshares." But they have to face "reality." They believe that the real world doesn't work like that.

But is it a real world?

It is not. This bewildered, selfish, ugly society that we live in today is not real at all. It is a forgery, a lie — a travesty of what life ought to be like. It is a society devised by a fraud who masquerades as God. There is nothing real about it.

This world is a forgery. It is nonetheless a clever forgery, and most people cannot tell a forgery, unless they can compare it side by side with the real thing. Which brings me to the point.

Exposing the real thing

Many members of the Worldwide Church of God are now preparing to attend the Church's annual convention — the Feast of Tabernacles. For eight days, they go to one of more than 80 locations around the world to enjoy the companionship of people of

like minds, and to be further instructed in living their lives God's way.

Because they obey God's money laws, they are financially prepared. Because they have the Spirit of God, they are able to be at peace with themselves and with others.

People who live in the areas where the Feast is kept are always impressed with the example the Church sets. That is as it should be. A real Christian should be a light to the world (Matthew 5:14). When you bring several thousand lights together, it makes quite a glow. A city set on a hill cannot be hid (same verse) — you see it a long way off.

At the Feast sites, God's Church shows that human beings *can* live together in cooperation. They *can* be honest, generous and kind. Unselfishness *does* work. Giving *does* make people happy.

It is as if, for a moment, the light of reality shines on Satan's shabby forgeries, exposing them for what they are. People see a different way of life, and although they may not understand it, they like the results.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the largest convention of its kind in the world today, and it is hard to ignore it. It is a type of the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ, when people will finally learn the real purposes of God and experience life as it was meant to be.

The Feast of Tabernacles is not *unreal*. It is actually a foretaste of *reality*.

Not just at the Feast

But the responsibility to be a light does not begin and end with the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a year-round responsibility for all Christians.

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them," wrote the apostle Paul (Ephesians 5:8, 11). In other words, expose the forgery for what it is.

That's easy to say and hard to

do. This unreal world sometimes seems all too real. It's fairly easy at the Feast to do things right, because everyone is going in the same direction. The pressure is on to smile, be friendly, show compassion and courtesy, not to lose your temper or use bad language. Someone who did any of those things at the Feast would be exposed immediately as a fraud.

But away from the Feast, it is different.

That group pressure to do right is no longer there. In the unreal world that Satan has designed, the current is against you, and there is nothing unreal about that current. It has a strong pull, always threatening to carry you away, pull you under and extinguish your light. You must be willing to swim against it.

Those who are going with the current may not appreciate what you are trying to do. They may laugh at you, persecute you, tell you that you are out of touch with reality. The pressure to compromise, to again accept Satan's counterfeit way of life, is strong.

Satan, the deceptive god of this world, commands fanatical loyalty from those he has deceived. So convincing are his lies that there have been times when God's servants have been killed by "good, God-fearing people" who thought they were doing God a favor.

The apostle Peter wrote that real Christians should have "your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation [when God calls them]" (I Peter 2:12).

There is, therefore, a heavy responsibility on those whom God has called out of the *unreal* world to maintain their standards, not only when they are together at the Feast, but at all times.

Jesus Christ lived a life that exposed the hypocrisy and corruption of the unreal world around Him for what it was. He told His true disciples to follow that example. □

Have You Learned to Number Your Days?

If not, here is why you should!

By Clayton D. Steep

A snowball in the sun. A shooting star. A firecracker that expends itself in a momentary flourish of noisy brightness and then fizzles out.

Such are comparisons some have drawn to describe the briefness of this earthly life.

Though those analogies did not come from the Bible, they are nevertheless graphic ways to express the inescapable truth that our mortal lives are temporary. The Bible does, however, contain many descriptive terms of its own to say the same thing:

Our days are "swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job 7:6), "swifter than a runner...they pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey" (Job 9:25-26).

We are like "a breath that passes away" (Psalm 78:39), a

fading flower, a fleeing shadow (Job 14:2). Yes, our lifetime is but a short pilgrimage (I Chronicles 29:15). Then we become like "water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (II Samuel 14:14). The



Scriptures contain these and many other such comparisons because God does not want us to forget the fact that we are mortal. Once each year God commands His people to observe for seven days the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-36) — otherwise known as the Feast of Temporary Dwellings — for the very purpose of portraying that this life is temporary.

This short pilgrimage

If there is one thought people just naturally do not want to entertain, it is that they are physical, flesh-and-blood beings who grow older each day. Each day is one day less they have on earth. Most people carry on as though

there is no limit to the amount of time they have, as though the "day of reckoning" will never come.

On the other hand, there are some who have contemplated the subject at least enough that they

Photo by Nathan Faulkner and Sam Collins

spend enormous amounts of time and money in a desperate effort to preserve and prolong this life through rejuvenation treatments, fad diets, super-vitamin concoctions, hormones and the like. But alas, at best such measures only postpone, without avoiding, the inevitable.

God our Creator, the One who lives forever, who alone has eternal life to give, wants us to think about this subject often. Even every day. Why? So that we never forget how much we depend upon Him.

The more independent and self-reliant a person is, the greater his talents, the better his health and living standard, the less likely he is to be concerned about his relationship with God. When things are going right, human nature feels, who needs God?

David recognized this truth. As a warrior he had vanquished many foes, including the giant Goliath. He had plenty of reason to feel physically self-confident. This was no doubt why he asked God to help him realize how mortal he was.

"Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days," David prayed, "that I may know how frail I am" (Psalm 39:4).

Frail? David? Yes, in reality. As we all are. "Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths" — a handbreadth is no longer than several inches, the distance from one edge of your hand to the other — "and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state [when he is feeling the most fit, when he is intellectually at his highest point, when he has talents, looks, fame, fortune, influence, personality, power — everything going for him] is but vapor" (verse 5).

You have only to lift the lid from a pot of boiling water to see how long vapor lasts. A cloud of steam billows up in feverish motion. You see it. You hear it. You feel it. You smell it. And suddenly, it's gone.

How like this very short human pilgrimage! "For what is your

life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14).

What should we be doing?

There is no more appropriate time to consider this subject than during the Feast of Tabernacles — the Feast of Temporary Dwellings — when we actually portray the temporary nature of physical life.

During the days of the Feast our pattern of life is temporarily different from what it is the rest of the year. It is a nonpermanent change because we are showing that this life is transitory.

If we are to live again after this life, we must receive eternal life as a special gift from God. Today few people realize this. They believe we are already immortal, having immortal souls. But that is not the case at all.

In the Millennium, however, everybody worldwide will understand that we are mortal — temporary — and that we need God's gift. That is one of the truths we signify by observing the Feast of Temporary Dwellings.

What is this life all about? We know for sure it has a beginning and an end. We are on a pilgrimage between the two points. What for? What is supposed to happen during this pilgrimage? What should we be doing — what should we be accomplishing with the precious brief space of time allotted to us?

Notice the answer as God had it preserved in His Bible for all ages to see. Why have the churches of the world mostly ignored it? "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," Solomon recorded, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

You would do well to read that again. Since this mortal life fast slips away, the wise — yes, the sensible, logical — way to use our time is to prepare for the next life, to get into the right relationship with God so He sees fit to give us eternal life.

How logical. And yet how many people hold this as their

major goal in life? Let us get the perspective! We know we are not *justified* or *saved* by our works. But we definitely *are* going to be *rewarded* in the next life according to our works in this life. Of that the Bible leaves no doubt (Matthew 16:27, Revelation 14:13).

What kind of reward?

Now, in your mind's eye, picture yourself at the moment when the rewards are being distributed, when the hours spent in Bible study, prayer, fulfilling Jesus' commission, doing good to others, make a very real difference.

As you stand there before Jesus Christ, you receive whatever reward you have qualified for. Imagine, if you can, your feelings at that point. Will you at that time realize that your reward could have been greater — maybe a lot greater? For what that you now devote so much of your time, effort, money and other resources might you at that moment feel like kicking yourself? What is it that captures so much of your attention now that will then seem so pitifully unimportant?

There'll be no reward for hours passed watching television while God's Word sits unopened on the desk. No reward for material pursuits and projects — even proper and right ones! — that crowd out spiritual growth. No reward for neglect of opportunities to help others. No reward for doing God's work with a slack hand.

And possibly, even, no reward at all, as sobering as that particular thought is!

Not that our driving motivation ought to be to get as large a reward as possible for ourselves. Rather, the greater the reward we receive, the greater will be our opportunity to serve and contribute to the increase of God's great government.

True wisdom

The prayer of Moses, as recorded in Psalm 90, is especially fitting for consideration at this season, since it begins Book IV of the Psalms, which has to do with
(Continued on page 33)

FEARING GOD

A Lesson of the Feast

The Feast of Tabernacles portrays a time soon when all humanity will properly reverence and fear the only true God. True Christians are learning to do so now.

By Jerold W. Aust

“Well, I hear what you’re saying, but in my opinion we Christians are all alike. God wouldn’t discriminate toward one particular Christian group, would He? I think not,” he said.

I was talking to a man who, though he meant well, was totally ignorant of the plain truth of God.

“The God I like is the one who allows all Christians to follow him in whatever way they choose,” he continued.

My first inclination was to shout a loud warning to him, hoping to wake him up. I felt like grabbing him and shaking him, if that would have helped. But I realized that neither course of action would work.

I could not give him spiritual understanding. That is God’s responsibility (John 6:44). As true Christians it is not our job to convert others. We can’t, anyway. Only God can open a person’s mind.

But I did politely disagree with my friend and waited for him to ask a reason of the hope that lies within me (I Peter 3:15). He didn’t. I held my peace.

What about it? Can you wor-

ship, revere, venerate and adore God *according to your opinion*? Absolutely not! Don’t think for one moment you can — unless, of course, you desire to follow the

God as He has carefully designed, it is the Festival of Tabernacles.

You may be keeping the Feast as God directs for the first time this year, or perhaps you have



god of this world, which we all have in the past.

But how does one learn to properly fear God?

If there is any activity God commands of true Christians that secures this lesson of honoring

kept the Feast for many years. But do you know why?

Humanity fears Satan

Think for a moment. Didn’t you, like most professing Christians, once believe the satanic lie

Photo by
Charles E. Buschmann

that if you didn't "get saved" (whatever that meant), you would end up somewhere in this earth's bowels, engulfed in flames, suffering excruciating pain but never being consumed?

Really! The Bible teaches no such doctrine. If you want to know the truth, write for our free reprint article "Is There a Hell?"

Satan the devil, through people claiming to be the ministers of God, has foisted upon the world many diabolical deceptions, including this one about hell (Revelation 12:9).

But here is the truth: These same people have a stern judgment from God coming — death in an unquenchable lake of fire, if they knowingly and willingly deceive others and refuse to repent. Read Jeremiah 23 and see exactly what God says. God does not take this lightly.

Back to humanity's fear. It is not fear of God. It is unfounded fear of Satan the devil's deceptions! And Satan's ministers, palming themselves off as ministers of righteousness, have perpetuated his lies (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

It is God's great purpose to free people from this wrong fear: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He [Jesus] Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

God is fully aware of Satan's insidious lies to keep humanity in his clutches. Paul told true Christians, "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption [or sonship]" (Romans 8:15). And Jesus Christ said that we are to be treated as sons who know what the Father has in store for us (John 15:15, I John 3:1).

Meanwhile, thousands of professing Christians labor under the bondage of satanic fear of the future. But how does God want

His true people to react? Fear is good if one exercises it for the right reason. Deuteronomy 14:22-23 commands us as God's people to learn to fear God always, and especially during the Feast of Tabernacles. Why? Simply put, so we as weak, physical humans will not forget who is in control of all things, why God is and how this will save us.

Jesus feared God

Jesus knew who, why and how, and that's why He, while in the flesh, learned to fear God (Hebrews 5:7). Godly fear taught Jesus obedience — perfect, steady, unflinching, unswerving, constant obedience to the only true God who could save Him from the wiles of Satan.

God is in charge, period (Psalm 24:1). He is eternal, immortal, omnipotent and holy. God upholds or sustains all things through the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus knew this, not only through faith in God based on God's Word, but because Jesus had been God and was commissioned to create and sustain the earth and the universe (verses 1-2).

Yet Jesus, as God before He became Jesus the man, had never experienced the inherent weakness of human flesh (Philippians 2:5-8). He willingly gave of himself to experience what we experience, resist the temptations of the flesh and learn perfect obedience to His Father through His human sufferings (Hebrews 2:14-18).

Had Jesus not feared God Almighty, which is to say revered Him or deferred to Him, He could not have been sufficiently convicted in perfectly obeying Him. Thankfully, **Jesus did fear and reverence His Father**, obeyed His laws and became our Savior because of it.

We must learn proper fear

We must learn what Christ learned in the flesh (Hebrews 5:8-9). Which brings us to the life-giving, sustaining words found in Deuteronomy 14:22-23, and to the necessity of our obeying them this 1984 Feast of Tab-

ernacles: "You shall truly tithe all the increase . . . year by year. And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide . . . that you may learn to fear [to revere, to defer with tenderness of feeling] the Lord your God always" (Deuteronomy 14:22-23).

If the fear of God were not in our minds, we wouldn't even keep a tithe to attend this Feast. We wouldn't be able to come and learn to fear God even more deeply. This glorious seven-day Feast can help save your life!

Sermons to reverence

For all who have feared God enough to save their tithe to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, God provides an extra spiritual feast through His inspired messages. And that's the point of this written message for you.

We need constant reminders from God to help us stand in awe of His greatness, so we may acknowledge the need to obey Him! You don't honor what or whom you don't respect.

Satan wants us to honor and obey him, and in a sense he has time in his favor. For most of each year we are left to ourselves, except for weekly Sabbaths and annual single-day festivals. But God annually provides a seven-day festival, the joyous Feast of Tabernacles, when we can be fed daily through His ministry glad tidings of good things (Romans 10:14-17). Every single message is carefully designed to specifically teach us to learn to fear God always. Without this prod and encouragement, we would spiritually die off the vine (John 15:5).

Not only do we learn to fear our great God, but we portray a time coming soon now when, at Jesus Christ's return, all people everywhere on earth will do the same — or cease to exist (Zechariah 14:16-19)!

Enjoy this Feast of Tabernacles from the right perspective by learning to fear the Lord your God always. It's the way to eternal life. □

The Feast of Tabernacles Is a Family Affair

For God's people around the world, the Feast of Tabernacles is the happiest time of the entire year! In large part that's because God ordained the Feast to be family oriented. It is a special, week-long opportunity for the entire family to be together in celebration of the coming wonderful world tomorrow.

Both parents and youths of God's Church look forward to the Feast with great anticipation all year long.

For the children, the Feast is full of activities and new things to see. For the adults, it's a wonderful change of pace and an opportunity to be spiritually rejuvenated and rededicated, and to rejoice with our *spiritual* Family — our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, with whom we are going to spend eternity.

Let's review several basic scriptures about the Feast to see why God emphasizes family unity and rejoicing together at this annual commanded assembly.

1. What is the divinely set theme for the Feast of Tabernacles? Deuteronomy 16:13-15. (Notice the words *surely rejoice* in verse 15. The Revised Standard Version renders this "be altogether joyful.") Does God intend for everyone — regardless of age, social strata or economic level — to rejoice during the Feast? Verse 14.

God tells us that the Feast of Tabernacles is to be a happy, wonderful time. For the congregation of ancient Israel — God's physical, Old Testament Church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) — it was a time of rejoicing because the abundant winter's store of food was harvested just before the Feast. But the Feast has far greater significance for God's spiritual Church today.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures — is a foretaste of — the prosperity, happiness, joy and universal peace that will come about in the Millennium under the righteous rule of Jesus Christ. Obedience to God's laws and revealed way of life will make the world tomorrow a supremely happy place.

2. Does God intend for the husband to take his wife and children with him to *rejoice together* at the Feast? Deuteronomy 12:5, 7, 12,

16:14. Are they to live in temporary dwellings at the place designated by God for the observance of this Feast? Leviticus 23:42.

3. Did Jesus Christ, as a young child, keep *God's* (not *man's* — Leviticus 23:1-2) annual festivals with His human family? Luke 2:41-42. Did He continue to keep these days as an adult? John 7:1-2, 10-11, 14.

Jesus Christ observed all of God's annual festivals from early childhood. Joseph, His human guardian, and Mary, His mother, obediently kept all the annual festivals together with Jesus and Jesus' younger brothers and sisters. Jesus rejoiced with His human family at the Feast of Tabernacles, just as He, the Lord God of the Old Testament, had commanded ancient Israel to rejoice.

4. But will it sometimes be impossible to take all of our family members to the Feast of Tabernacles with us? Matthew 10:36.

Of course it is not always possible for all of God's people to be with their physical families at the Feast, especially if some family members have not yet been called by God and therefore do not want to observe God's festivals. But God expects His people to attend this week-long feast with their immediate families, if at all possible, so they may rejoice together.

5. Are only families to rejoice at the Feast of Tabernacles? What about those who, for one reason or another, are alone at the Feast? Deuteronomy 16:14.

The Feast is not a time to go off away from others and have a private vacation. God commands all of His people to *come together* to be taught, to fellowship and to rejoice, whether or not they are married and have children. Even if we don't have physical relatives with us, we can still experience the joy and abundance of this festival with other members of God's Church.

For those with physical families, the Feast of Tabernacles is a wonderful time to show Christian love by fellowshiping with the widows, orphans and others who are alone at the Feast.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a time of real fun for young and old alike. It is an occasion for families to be together for more than a week, in addition to travel time to and from the Feast. It

is a time of concentrated teaching by God's ministers.

The Feast is also a time for fellowship with brethren from different parts of the country and even other nations. Christians at the Feast demonstrate now, by the way they live together in harmony, what this entire world could be like if everyone followed God's laws — and what the world *will* be like after Jesus Christ returns!

Clearly, keeping the Feast is a great opportunity our heavenly Father gives us, in which many of us can strengthen relationships with our physical families and where we can all develop family ties with many of our spiritual brethren. Not only does the Feast picture the Millennium, it is also a foretaste of being in the universe-ruling Kingdom of God — of sharing eternity together as glorified members of the Family of God.

6. Does God plainly show that it is His purpose to increase His divine Family by bringing many spiritual children into it? II Corinthians 6:18, Hebrews 2:9-10, Revelation 21:7.

7. Is Jesus Christ actually the firstborn of *many* children of God? Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:18.

Jesus Christ is God's firstborn Son and our Elder Brother because we, too, if we are true Christians, can be born into the Family of God at the resurrection. Notice further.

8. Are Christians already called the children of God the Father? I John 3:1-2. But even though considered God's children, are they now only "heirs" — ones who shall, in the future, become inheritors? Galatians 4:6-7, Romans 8:14-17. Why are they only heirs today? I Peter 1:3-4.

Those who have been called by God (John 6:44) to be a part of His spiritual Family are now only *begotten* children — begotten by God's Spirit, but not yet *born* of God's Spirit (John 3:1-8). It is when they are born of God at the resurrection that they become inheritors of God's Kingdom — divine, eternal members of the Family of God.

9. How does one become "begotten" of God? Acts 2:38. Does the receipt of God's Holy Spirit then make him or her a true Christian? Romans 8:9-10.

When God gives you the precious gift of His Holy Spirit, you become a begotten son or daughter of God — His very own child, actually begotten of Him by His Spirit entering your mind, joining with the "spirit of the man" (I Corinthians 2:9-12).

God then becomes your heavenly Father (Matthew 6:9). Not figuratively, just because He created all mankind, but in reality. Just as a human father gives his physical characteristics to his children when they are begotten, God

gives His spiritual characteristics to His Spirit-begotten children (II Peter 1:4). And just as a human father's children are humans, God's begotten children will one day be Gods!

When begotten by God's Holy Spirit, we enter a family relationship with our Father in heaven and our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19, Hebrews 2:11-12).

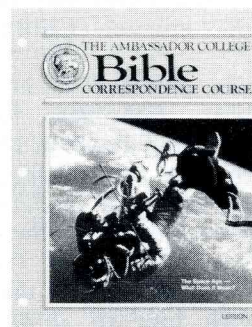
But just as an unborn physical child must grow large enough to be born of its human mother, so the begotten Christian must grow spiritually — in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and in the fruits of God's Spirit (II Peter 3:18, Galatians 5:22-23). With God's help, he is to overcome sin and develop spiritual character before he can be born into the heavenly Father's spiritual Family at Jesus Christ's return.

10. While we are in the spiritually begotten state, who does the Bible show is our spiritual mother? Galatians 4:26. How does she feed, nurture, guide and protect the Spirit-begotten children of God the Father? Ephesians 4:11-13, I Peter 5:1-3.

God's Church is the "mother of us all." As a human mother carries her unborn child where it is protected and nourished, God's Church, through God's called and chosen ministry, instructs, teaches, counsels, advises and protects from spiritual harm its members before their spiritual birth. At the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as at God's other annual festivals and weekly Sabbaths, begotten children of God meet together to receive spiritual nourishment from their spiritual mother.

Soon God's children will gather at dozens of Feast sites around the world to be fed spiritual food. And an essential part of that spiritual nourishment comes from concentrated Christian fellowship with our physical families and our one great spiritual Family.

So let's all rejoice at the Feast of Tabernacles — especially with God our Father, Christ our Elder Brother and with our Spirit-begotten brothers and sisters, many of whom we will have the pleasure of meeting for the first time! □



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What YOU Can Learn From ECCLESIASTES

The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes contains a message vital to the Feast of Tabernacles and your salvation.

By George M. Kackos

Wealthy. Wise. Well thought of. These positive words describe ancient Israel's King Solomon. Yet Solomon wasn't satisfied with life; he was filled with depression and despair.

Why? And what does it have to do with the Feast of Tabernacles? And how does it apply to your life?

Let's understand. God gave the Feast of Tabernacles to Israel as a seven-day festival to be held every autumn, celebrating the fall agricultural harvest in the Northern Hemisphere. Temporary dwellings (a *tabernacle* is a temporary dwelling) were constructed to remind the Israelites of their journeys in the wilderness before they entered the promised land (Leviticus 23:1-2, 34, 39-43).

Contrary to what many believe today, this Festival is still to be kept!

Jesus showed that the law that includes the annual festivals remains in effect for us (Matthew 5:17-18). Both He and the early New Testament Church kept the festivals (John 5:1, 7:2, Acts 2:1, 18:21). In the Millennium, all nations will keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16).

For more information on God's true festivals and what each pic-

tures, write for our free booklet *Pagan Holidays — or God's Holy Days — Which?*

The symbolic meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles goes far beyond what most people realize. Celebrating the physical harvest as it occurred in the area of Israel pictured the Millennium — the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth (Revelation 20:6) — when we will "harvest" the billions of humanity who will enter God's Family!

The Millennium will be a time of global prosperity, peace and obedience to God's laws. Staying in temporary dwellings portrays our own pilgrimage in the present evil world, and the fact that all during the Millennium will understand that they are pilgrims in their physical lives (Isaiah 11:9, 25:6-9, 1 Peter 2:11).

Solomon had it all, except —

With this in mind, let's consider the life of Solomon. He inherited the throne of Israel from his father, David. Sometime after his coronation, Solomon went to offer sacrifices at Gibeon, where God appeared to him in a dream and asked him what he desired.

Solomon's answer: "An understanding heart to judge Your people" (1 Kings 3:9). This reply pleased God, who fulfilled his request and also gave him riches and honor (verses 10-13). Through

the years, Solomon acquired and enjoyed wisdom, land, ships, fine buildings, gardens, mines, skilled craftsmen, animals, money, a strong government, fame and secure borders.

Solomon seemingly had it all — riches, wisdom, power and fame. But something was missing — something that caused Solomon to hate life.

What Solomon wrote

This brings us to Ecclesiastes, the book Solomon wrote. The theme of Ecclesiastes is vanity. Solomon wrote: "'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher; 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity'" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). The word *vanity* means "worthless, empty, fruitless, transient."

What caused Solomon to look at life this way?

Despite his accomplishments, Solomon could see that life is filled with sorrow (Ecclesiastes 2:22-23). And, ironically, as he learned more about the world around him, he grew even more sorrowful (Ecclesiastes 1:18). He saw rampant injustice (Ecclesiastes 4:1) — problems that defy solution (Ecclesiastes 1:15) — desires that remain unfulfilled (Ecclesiastes 1:8) — terrible tragedies (Ecclesiastes 6:2) — bitter envy and strife all around (Ecclesiastes 4:4).

Beyond these debacles, Solo-

mon saw death, which so deeply disturbed him that he came to hate life: "Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

Sad, isn't it? Here was a man who possessed and enjoyed all the things that so many people are striving for, and yet he said it was all worthless.

Before you conclude that Solomon was completely wrong, consider this: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (I Corinthians 15:19). These words, written by the apostle Paul, are so true! Hope that ends in the grave is insufficient. It leaves you wanting more, craving more.

This is the position Solomon found himself in — facing death and desiring more, wondering that there wasn't something else, asking, "Is this all there is?"

But there wasn't any more. Solomon's understanding and wisdom were limited to this present life. Unlike David, his father, his eyes were apparently blinded at the time to the resurrection.

Why? Solomon became a victim of sin, which limits spiritual understanding (I Kings 11:4, Ephesians 4:17-19).

As Christians, we have hope — awesome hope: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

Solomon finally realized, in old age, the value of building a right relationship with God, even though he failed to do so during the rest of his life. At the end of Ecclesiastes he wrote: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

How deeply Solomon came to

understand God's judgment is uncertain. From some of his comments, it could appear that he only saw God's purpose in light of physical blessings and cursings. As Christians, we understand that God's judgment involves our fate for all eternity (Matthew 25:31-46).

The Feast and this life

What does all this have to do with the Feast of Tabernacles? And what does it have to do with you? Plenty.

The Feast pictures the time when God will establish His Kingdom, when the members of His immortal, ruling Family will rule over humans who will also have the opportunity to become literal, born children of God.

Those preparing for birth into God's Family must see the vanity, the futility, of living in the flesh, striving only for material success. Each must become in the flesh a pilgrim, a temporary sojourner whose ultimate purpose is to be born into God's Family.

This does not mean that all physical pleasures and pursuits are wrong — not at all. But we must see them for what they are and rightly use them.

Those entering God's Kingdom must build the right relationship with God. Such a relationship requires fearing God — standing in awe of Him, responding to His authority. As Psalm 111:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments."

Learn these lessons

So you can see several parallels between the messages of the Feast of Tabernacles and the book of Ecclesiastes — coming out of vanity, rejoicing and fearing God. All are essential for your salvation.

Reject the vanity, the shallowness, the emptiness, the temporary and transient values of this world. Completely come out of the world and its evil way of life (Revelation 18:4). Forsake materialism (Matthew 6:31-34). Don't strive for personal glory — tem-

porary acclaim and adulation from other people (Philippians 2:3, Galatians 5:26). Put your eyes on God's Kingdom (Colossians 3:1-2).

During the Feast you'll hear inspiring messages that will help you do this. You will also be separating yourself from the world by fellowshiping with spiritually minded brethren.

Learn to rejoice and enjoy fine meals and exciting activities with your family and friends, using your second tithe.

Rejoice in living God's way of life and knowing His wonderful plan of salvation: "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart! . . . And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation" (Psalm 32:11, 35:9).

The rewards for deeply respecting and revering God are many. You will avoid the wrong way of life (Proverbs 16:6). Your wisdom will increase (Proverbs 15:33). Your blessings will abound (Psalm 145:19). Your destructive fears will be replaced by godly confidence (Psalm 118:6, Proverbs 14:26). Most importantly, God will give you eternal life as a glorified member of His own Family (Psalm 16:11)!

Don't be deceived by the wealth and fame of those around you. It is only temporary. Soon it will pass away. David wrote: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. . . . For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:7, 9).

Think about that — someday you can inherit the earth. Someday you can enjoy life as God enjoys life.

As you await that glorious day, now soon to come, learn the vital lessons taught by the Feast of Tabernacles and the book of Ecclesiastes. By doing so, you will be learning how to become a member of God's Family! □

SOLOMON'S SPLENDOR

A Type of God's Kingdom

Israel's Golden Age provides a glimpse at the peace and prosperity of Jesus Christ's millennial rule.

By Ricky L. Sherrod

The rags-to-riches story — everybody loves one.

That is what happened about 3,000 years ago to an entire nation, when Israel ascended to supremacy in the Near East.

Only five centuries earlier this small nation was enslaved in Egypt. But by the time of King Solomon — the wisest, richest and most honored monarch ever — Israel's dominion stretched from Egypt on the west to the Euphrates River on the east (II Chronicles 9:26), from Hamath on the north to Ezion Geber at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba on the south (II Chronicles 8:4, I Kings 9:26).

The once mighty kingdoms of the Egyptians and Hittites were in eclipse, and Babylon was yet to fully exercise the military, political and economic muscle that would establish it as the first world-ruling empire four centuries later. The time was ripe for Israel's rise and Golden Age.

For a fleeting and glorious moment Israel, perhaps the most unlikely choice from among the many peoples of the Near East, was the unquestionable master of

the Fertile Crescent. But why Israel? Why under the rulership of Solomon?

As we approach the Feast of Tabernacles, a look at Solomon's Israel can be instructive. Solomon's rule points, in type, to the time when Jesus Christ will return to earth and establish the Kingdom of God, showing us the kind of conditions we can look forward to during the world tomorrow. Let's take a look and see.

A time of peace

Solomon's rule was an oasis of peace in Israel's long history of wars with enemies throughout the Near East.

From the time of its arrival in the promised land, the nation of Israel encountered opposition. Because they obeyed God imperfectly (and sometimes not at all), God allowed the Israelites to be attacked often, and frequently even to serve as vassals to hostile neighbors.

Not until the reign of King David, Solomon's father, did Israel finally destroy or sub-

due most of the pagan peoples who lived about them. David prepared the way for his son by eliminating Israel's foes or putting under tribute the non-Israelites who remained in the area.

Because David was a man after God's own heart, God empowered him to overcome Israel's adversaries. By the end of David's rule, God had granted David "rest from all his enemies all around" (II Samuel 7:1, 9, 11).

When Solomon ascended to the throne, "he had peace on every side all around him" (I Kings 4:24) and "rest on every side"



(I Kings 5:4). By careful design, God at the appropriate time gave "rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised" (I Kings 8:56).

God names things for a purpose. God's servant David named his son *Shelomoh* or *Solomon*, a Hebrew word meaning "peaceful" or "peaceable," derived from the Hebrew *shalom* meaning "peace."

In His plan of salvation for humankind, God designated a time when peace would once and for all prevail, and He used a ruler whose name meant "peaceable" to govern Israel three millennia ago.

Solomon's reign is a picture or a physical type, albeit on a minor scale, of the world peace that will accompany Jesus Christ's millennial rule.

Coming — peace worldwide

Today, much as David prepared the way for Solomon's peaceful reign by conquering the enemies surrounding Israel, Jesus is preparing the way for His Second Coming and the establishment of world peace by choosing, developing and working with His spiritual nation, the Church of God. God is developing Christian warriors (Philippians 2:25) able to overcome Satan, Satan's society and their own carnal natures.

One of the most important lessons is learning to live the way of peace.

Appropriately enough, the Church is learning to live by the

only laws that can bring peace among human beings (John 14:27). Today there is peace in God's Church, and God is its source (Romans 5:1).

The peace to accompany Jesus' millennial rule is a central portion of the Gospel message that the Church of God preaches to the world in this end time (Ephesians 2:17).

When Jesus Christ returns, He will have an experienced, capable staff of administrators (Revelation 1:6, 5:10) who have learned to apply the principles of peaceful living and who are qualified to assist Him in carrying God's government throughout the world (Revelation 20:4).

As representatives of God's headquarters government in Jerusalem, the "city of peace" ("salem" coming from the Hebrew *shalom*), the spirit-born members of the God Family will help teach the nations how to live peacefully with each other (Isaiah 2:3).

As the knowledge of God's peaceful way gradually permeates the globe (Isaiah 11:9), these nations will finally "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

And, as Solomon's name meant "peaceable," so one of Jesus Christ's titles during the Millennium will be "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). He will direct human affairs to enforce the peace that has eluded humanity

for so long. Freedom from the distractions and dislocations brought by war made Solomon's rule not only peaceful but prosperous. Under his direction, Israel built a flourishing and lucrative empire.

Israel's great prosperity

The magnitude of the king's daily provisions alone gives some sense of the enormous production that Israel enjoyed during those days (I Kings 4:22-23). The Jewish historian Josephus writes of "a wonderful increase when they [Israel] betook themselves to husbandry and the cultivation of their grounds" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, VIII, ii, 3).

That Israel "dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree" shows that the benefits of abundance extended beyond the royal court and the aristocratic classes to the common people (I Kings 4:25).

The author of I Kings depicts Israel during these days "as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing" (verse 20).

Solomon prospered commercially as well. His kingdom existed at an auspicious time and in a favorable location.

The domestication of the camel by the 11th century B.C. spurred caravan trade, which passed directly through Solomon's territories. Israel gained rich revenue from the merchants seeking passage across Palestine (I Kings 10:15, II Chronicles 9:14). Solo-



mon exerted a controlling influence on the transportation industry of his day by serving as the middleman in sales of Egyptian chariots and horses to peoples living in Asia Minor (I Kings 10:28-29).

Archaeologists have found evidence of smelters, furnaces, crucibles and refineries in the south at Ezion Geber, where they suspect Solomon developed a copper mining and refining industry. Solomon even initiated maritime trade that, according to biblical authorities, took Israelite ships far and wide and that brought back gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks (verse 22).

Indeed, the agricultural and commercial successes of the kingdom brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity. Solomon "made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland" (verse 27).

Josephus writes of Solomon's select corps of horsemen, chosen from the most athletic and able-bodied young men in the nation. These men, riding perhaps the finest and best-groomed mounts in the Near East, wore expensive garments of purple from Tyre

and had "dust of gold every day sprinkled on their hair, so that their heads, sparkled with the reflection of the sunbeams from the gold" (*Ibid.*, vii, 3).

Prosperity in the Millennium

The wealth and abundance of Solomon's kingdom were but a type of something far greater to come. As God's government becomes universal, the world will enjoy riches that are scarcely imaginable, even in today's wealthy nations.

Notice these promises: During the Millennium, "the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed" (Amos 9:13-14). Proper weather conditions (Isaiah 30:23-24, Ezekiel 34:26, Joel 2:23) and irrigation of desert regions (Isaiah 35:6-7) will boost production of grains, fruits and livestock (Isaiah 35:1-2, Ezekiel 36:11, Joel 2:19) for those who are willing to submit to God (Malachi 3:10-11).

It is interesting that Micah 4:4, speaking of God's Kingdom, uses the same words used in I Kings 4:25, which refers to Solomon's rule. People will have their own resources and be able to provide for their own needs in the world

tomorrow. As in the days of Solomon, Israel's population will increase; people will be truly happy, settled in a beautiful and productive land and living in attractive homes (compare Ezekiel 36:9-11 with I Kings 4:20). The cities of tomorrow, like those built under Solomon centuries ago (compare I Kings 9:15-19, 24, to Isaiah 58:12), will thrive and prosper.

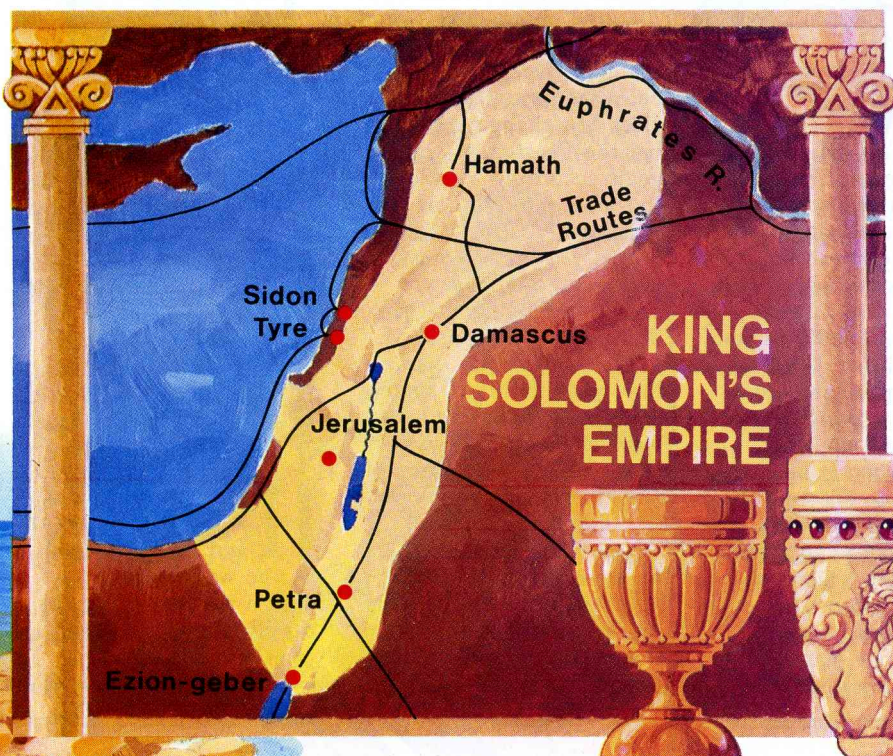
But during the Millennium, peace and prosperity will not be limited to the Middle East. The entire world will be restored! Crime, urban sprawl and decay, poverty, unhappiness and despair will disappear.

Joel wrote an encouraging description of the future, proclaiming that "the mountains shall drip with new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; a fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord" (Joel 3:18).

It is this bright and glorious future toward which true Christians look. It is this wonderful world tomorrow that is depicted by God's Feast of Tabernacles. As we read the Bible account of Solomon's rule, we gain a glimpse into the future and the true peace and prosperity that will renew this sick, sorrowful world.

For more information about Jesus Christ's millennial reign, write for our free book *Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*. Just send your request to our address nearest you. See inside front cover for our addresses. □

Illustrations by Ken Tunell



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IDEAS YOU CAN USE

FAMILY GOALS FOR THE FEAST

How many times have you observed the Feast of Tabernacles? Twenty, 10, five? How many times will you observe the Feast in the future? It's hard to say, isn't it? We don't really know whether it will be five or six times or 10 times or more — or less — do we?

What if you only had one more Feast of Tabernacles in this life? What would you do differently than at past Feasts?

This year can and should be different because, being physical, our time is running out. For example, we only have our children at home with us for about 18 to 20 years at best. Are we using those 20 or 10 or five Feasts with our families to build strong relationships and a deep love and enthusiasm for God's laws and festivals that they will keep forever and pass on to their children?

It's not too late to make strong, sound plans for the 1984 Feast of Tabernacles. Remember, those who fail to plan are planning to fail.

When planning goals for the Feast — whether activities to build relationships between mates, parents and children, other

family members or brethren, or to honor God in service or offerings — the first thing you should do is *write down your goals*. Get them on paper where you can see them.

Next, ask yourself, real-

member, although you may have a list of goals for yourself, your planning should take your whole family into account.

Now, *when are you going to do it?* Make yourself a Festival planning

calendar. Make sure your plans include scheduled Festival activities, such as the films and dances.

This year, build family relationships, take a widow out, include some of your children's



istically, *Can I do all these things during this Feast?* Is there something in your plans that needs to be scheduled next Feast or during this coming year or even next week? Don't frustrate yourself and your family with overly optimistic, unattainable goals.

Get your family involved. Find out what your mate and your children want to accomplish during this Feast. Are there objections to a few of your plans? Don't dwell on the objections, but don't overlook them. Some of your plans may have to be revised. Re-

calendar. Keep it flexible, because schedules of services can change even during the Feast. List your goals according to priority. Let your family know that keeping God's Festival properly is what's most important, and that you are concerned about their desires and interests, too.

Planning in this way allows your family to understand why everything they want to do isn't always possible, and why parents have to sometimes say no to children's wishes.

Ask yourself what can be done before the Feast, on the way to the Feast or on the way back from the Feast. Some family activities might be scheduled

friends in a family activity. Really do it! Start your list of goals today. Your time is running out.

— By Sheila Graham □

EAT AND REJOICE!

Have you ever dined at a nice restaurant and been repulsed by the way another patron ate his food or by the ill-mannered way someone drank?

Society today generally

has lost many of the manners that were once considered only common decency. Too many parents do little to teach their children the proper attitude toward dining.

But think a moment: It is easy to observe others' improper manners in dining, but what could others say of your example? More important, what does God think of it? We shall see shortly that God cannot help but take into account your eating and drinking at this Feast of Tabernacles.

As Christians we are called to represent God on earth as Jesus Christ's ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:20). We are to be lights to this darkened world (Matthew 5:14-16).

We are called to be as salt — a carefully prepared seasoning in people's lives in an otherwise foul-tasting society (verse 13). The often fiery trials of our lives as true Christians help salt us with divine character, which preserves us for eternity while preserving human life through the Great Tribulation (Mark 9:49-50, Proverbs 16:17, Matthew 24:21-22).

You, then, as a humble, teachable light, and salted to God's good taste, are to represent God and Jesus Christ before this world and before your own brethren. And herein lies the shocker — something you may not have thought of before.

You know God commands you to save your second tithe so you can go to where He has placed His name through His Church government and eat there before the Lord your God. And you are to rejoice before Him — both you and your household (Deuteronomy 14:22-26).

The word *eat* in

these verses means "to dine." *Rejoice* means "to cheer or brighten up." But the unusual point relates to the word *before*, which indicates turning your face to God so as to honor and be honored by Him. Like shewbread!

The word *shewbread* means "bread of the presence." In the Old Testament it consisted of 12 unleavened loaves of bread (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, III, vi, 6) laid in two rows and displayed on a table in the holy place before God continually (*The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Shewbread," page 876).

The shewbread was offered before God and changed every Sabbath. These loaves signified the constant communion between God and His people in those things that His bounty provided, and which His people enjoyed in His presence and used in His service.

Do we grasp the awesome, symbolic meaning in all this? To go to the Feast lusting after all the food and drink we can heap on our persons, without understanding, will only bring frustrations and a curse on us. We are instead to represent holy, unleavened shewbread in rejoicing communion with

God and our brethren, enjoying what God has provided to be used in His holy presence.

That's quite different from abusing the blessings God gives us at the Feast, don't you agree?

We need to go forward with this vision and dine and rejoice as God's shewbread, honoring Him and being honored by Him. This becomes part of our worship of the great God.

No other festival more accurately represents God's future bounty on mankind, or His bounty on His Church today. This year, eat and rejoice before God with better understanding!

— By Jerold W. Aust □

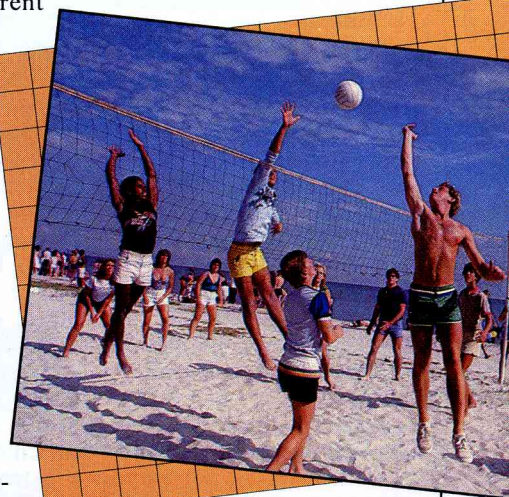
ABOUT ETIQUETTE

Simply defined, etiquette is outgoing concern for those with whom we come in contact — good manners that put people at ease and smooth over problems. It is essential to practice etiquette at the Feast.

Eating meals at restaurants is something to look forward to. When dining with others it is not appropriate to haggle over who will pay the bill. If others want to treat you, graciously allow them to.

Allow enough time so you and your family can enjoy meals. You'll have more patience with the servers if you aren't pressed for time. If limited time is a problem between services on Holy Days, consider a picnic lunch in a nearby park, or have a group in

to your hotel room. Avoid having to gulp down a meal before racing to services. We should



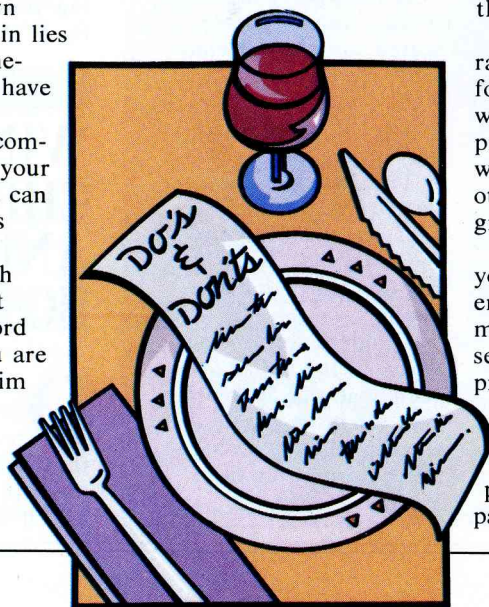
practice good table manners whenever and wherever we eat. However, since many of us will be able to enjoy better-quality restaurants during the Feast than we are normally accustomed to, we may need to brush up on the finer points of table etiquette. Take a look through an etiquette book to refresh your memory on which utensil should be used when, and how to properly eat the foods you order.

But etiquette is not merely knowing whether to use a fork or spoon for a fruit appetizer in a four-star restaurant; it applies to everything we do.

Most of us will travel around Feast time, and for safety and peace of mind we need to carefully observe traffic laws and follow parking attendants' instructions.

Observe rules set by the airlines for air travel. Being on time for flights and staying within baggage limits make the trip more pleasant.

Let your light shine in your hotel or guest house. A clean and orderly room will not go unnoticed, just as an unkempt one will not. Children can stretch



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your welcome pretty thin if they aren't first instructed on how to act, and then supervised. Well-behaved children will be appreciated.

It's easy to expect everything to go perfectly at the Feast. We sometimes forget that sales-clerks, busboys and the hotel staff are people, too, and that they may have had a hard day. They will appreciate being treated with respect and given a

smile. Acknowledge good service with a verbal compliment and tip if appropriate (see box). Be patient with mistakes and misunderstandings.

You will probably want to spend most of the time at the Feast with your family. However, there are places where young children should not be taken, and would not enjoy being taken. Find a baby-sitter or don't attend the occasion if bringing your chil-

dren will inconvenience them or other guests. Misunderstandings can be avoided if, when invited to dinner, you ask whether your children are also invited.

When meeting people, introduce yourself clearly, and listen for the other person's name. One of the nicest compliments you can pay someone is to remember his or her name after your first meeting. When introducing people, it is generally accepted to first introduce the younger to the elder, and to introduce a man to a woman to show respect.

When going to an inter-

national site, we have a responsibility to acquaint ourselves, if only briefly, with the culture of that country. A little knowledge of eating customs, the standard of living and the temperament typical of the country will help us better understand differences we find in the people and life-style. Be prepared to find things different than at home; this is what makes a foreign country appealing. It can help to talk to someone from that country, or someone who has been there and enjoyed it, before you visit. However, beware of preconceived ideas of what the people will be like.

It never hurts to know a few words in the languages you will encounter. "Hello," "please" and "thank you" can take you

TIPS ON TIPPING

Like it or not, tipping is an international custom that should be observed.

Let's face it, giving money to an unenthusiastic airline porter after a hurried rush through the airport doesn't come naturally! Tipping shouldn't become a judgment, however, but an act of appreciation for help rendered.

Find out about the tipping standards at the site you plan to attend. Be aware of whom and whom not to tip. This is especially important when traveling internationally, because of the varying economies and customs.

In America, 15 percent of the total cost is the standard tip for the average meal out. If the evening turns out to be, without question, exceptional, you may want to give a full 20 percent.

On the other hand, what if the meal arrives at your table late, and not only late but stone cold? Does this mean your waiter or waitress deserves no tip at all? No. In all but the most extreme cases, the standard, average tip should be left. How

can you know it was the server's fault?

Check this list for situations where you may or may not be expected to tip. It is based on U.S. standards and may be adjusted accordingly.

Travel

One dollar to an *airline porter* for two or three bags.

Fifteen percent is standard for *taxi service*. If the driver is extraordinarily helpful, 20 percent.

Train riders:

Fifty cents a bag to a *porter*.

Fifteen percent to the *dining-car waiter*.

One dollar a person to the *sleeping-car attendant*.

Hotels and motels

Give one dollar to the *doorman* for removing bags from a car and an additional 50 cents if he calls a cab.

The *bellman* receives one dollar a bag for taking care of luggage.

If you are in *valet parking*, each time your car is brought up, one dollar.

Figure 15 percent of the bill for *room service*.

Don't forget the *maid*;

before checkout, tip one dollar a room a day.



Restaurants

If your party orders drinks before you are seated, tip the *bartender* 10 to 15 percent.

As you leave:

Tip the *captain* five percent.

Tip the *wine steward* two to five dollars.

If you would like to tip the *maitre d'*, that's fine, but don't feel that you have to.

Standard tip for *coat check* is one dollar for each coat and 50 cents a coat for more than one. If there is already a charge, add on a quarter tip. —

By E. Wendling □

a long way toward showing yourself friendly. —

By S. Borax □

WINE, CHEESE- AND HOSPITALITY

During the year, we can think of various reasons that keep us from inviting people home to share some food with us. Of course there's

always the old, "I can't afford it." What will be our excuse when we're at the Feast?

Can the "I can't afford it" ploy still be valid at the Feast, when we can show hospitality in comparatively inexpensive ways, such as having some wine-and-cheese get-togethers?

"Wine and cheese?" you ask. But that wouldn't be "adequate" — after all, it is the Feast, and the minimum you feel you should offer anybody invited to your temporary "booth" is at least one T-bone steak (which "you can't afford," of course).

Hospitality rarely needs to be something enacted on a grand scale. If you think back on your own experiences, you'll no doubt recall that some of the finest times spent with old friends or making new ones revolved around some campfire soup, backyard barbecues or an ice cream on the way home from school.

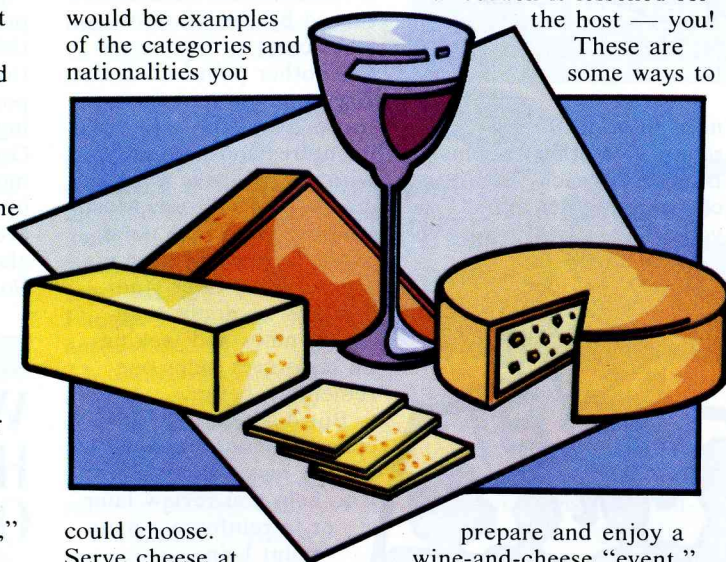
It's the action of sharing some food with somebody that is the basis of true hospitality, not the extent or complexity of the food involved. So, given the comparative economy (compared to a T-bone, that is!) of wine and cheese and the minimal preparation required, these two adequately fill the bill.

You can enhance even a simple wine-and-cheese get-together by implementing some of the following points from various etiquette experts:

Serve different types of cheese from different countries — it will help your guests' palates last longer as well as broaden everyone's experience. Separate the cheeses into groups of different strengths — the strong Belgian Limburger, the milder English Cheddar or

Cheshire and the mild Dutch Edam or Gouda would be examples of the categories and nationalities you

share, and then the financial burden is lessened for the host — you! These are some ways to



could choose. Serve cheese at room temperature for the best results.

The cheese might dry out if it is all cut up into slices. Have a few slices cut, though, so everybody will not be worrying how big a slice to hack off.

Have different knives for the different strengths of cheeses — the strong flavors could carry over to the milder ones if bits of your Limburger stick on your one knife and get mixed in with the Edam.

Make sure that the cheeses will be ready to eat when served. Some dry out or "go off" quicker than others. Ask about this and other points when you buy cheeses.

Don't serve crackers or bread that will overwhelm or conflict with the flavors of the cheeses — keep them plain and basic.

White wine is best with the mild cheeses, red with the stronger ones. Beer also can be served with cheeses like Limburger. For people who would not be drinking alcohol, carbonated, sparkling or mineral water or apple juice would be suitable.

Why not have a potluck wine-and-cheese get-together? Have each guest bring along a taste discovery of his or her own to

prepare and enjoy a wine-and-cheese "event." Now it's up to you. Make it a project to have more occasions of hospitality at the Feast this year.

With the success of a wine-and-cheese open house at the Feast, we can be primed to play host to similar times back home throughout the year. —

By Peter Moore □



GAIN THE MOST FROM THE MESSAGES

The most important part of the Feast of Tabernacles is the spiritual food provided by God's ministers each of the eight days. The social life, side trips, fine dining and recreation are all short-term benefits. But spiritual food provides inspiration and strength for years to come — even for all eternity.

To get the most out of each message, you need to be both physically and mentally prepared.

I am writing this as a minister who has been preaching at the Feast for

25 years. Any of God's ministers will tell you a Feast sermon is something special. The sermons at the Feast are the most powerful and inspirational most of the ministers give. The larger crowds and the special occasion provide strong motivation.

Of course, each minister knows that one sermon is not going to change the course of human events. But maybe just one life will be helped or changed. All that effort will be well worth it.

But in order for any sermon to be effective it must be heard. If words fall on deaf ears, empty minds or simply waft into the air, nothing is gained. And that's where you come in.

I don't know how often I have heard the words: "That was a wonderful sermon Mr. So-and-So gave. I wish my husband (wife, friend) had been here today. But one of the children was sick and he (she) had to stay home." It has even been humorous sometimes — a minister planned a sermon on a given topic only to find the ones he most meant it for were not present the day he gave it.

So make a concentrated effort to attend every single service. You might miss the one sermon that would have been just what you needed.

Next, give your undivided attention to the sermon. Being a good listener is important. You've no doubt heard powerful sermons when the whole audience seemed at one with the minister — when he paused for a few seconds, you could hear a pin drop.

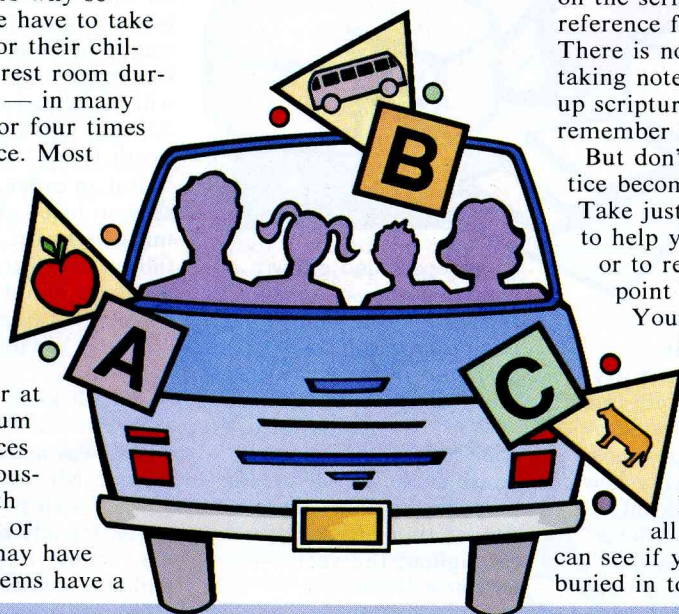
But there are other times when the din from babies crying, children shuffling and people moving about make it seem impossible to concentrate on the sermon.

The approximately two

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hours set aside for services and preaching should be completely devoted to listening. Let me speak frankly. I have been puzzled for years why so many people have to take themselves or their children to the rest room during services — in many cases three or four times in one service. Most families ought to be able to take care of those needs in the motels before departure, or at the auditorium before services begin. Obviously, those with small babies or those who may have health problems have a

need to be in the rest rooms or mothers' rooms. But if you teach your children and discipline yourselves, it will help you



and the dozens seated around you not to be disturbed by the constant treks out.

Another point! Over the years many members have found it helpful to look up scriptures and read along with the minister as he quotes God's Word. Most members also take notes on the sermon to have a reference for later study. There is no doubt that taking notes and looking up scriptures helps one remember better.

But don't let this practice become a burden. Take just enough notes to help you review later, or to reinforce a main point being made.

Your responsive look is much more pleasant to view while preaching than the top of your head, which is all the minister can see if your head is buried in too much read-

ing or excessive notetaking. As you make final preparations for the Feast this year, give a little thought to the most important reason you are going — to be inspired by God's ministers and learn more of His plan. Listen intently and respond to every sermon. You'll be glad you did. — *By Ronald D. Kelly* □

WHY HOLY DAY OFFERINGS?

Churches obtain financial support from many different sources, among them government taxes, pledges, weekly collections and public solicitations.

God's true Church, however, does not use these means, but looks rather to God for its needs.

But how does God supply the needs of the Church? He instructs, commands, inspires and influences humans to provide what His Church requires through tithes and offerings.

Most of these people are Church members. Members supply about 80 percent of the Church's financial support. The remainder comes from people who have voluntarily become co-workers and from others who, without solicitation, send in occasional donations.

In general, funds are contributed in two ways: One way is contributions given through the mail, through bank transfers or to local ministers, depending on the country and local circumstances. The second way is through Holy Day offerings.

What are Holy Day offerings? Nearly every

A TIME TO PLAY

During the Festival season, families spend a lot of time at such activities as traveling in the car and sitting in the hotel room waiting to go somewhere for dinner. Is this time wasted? Even though it's time spent together, it could probably be used in a better, more efficient way.

One way for the family to enjoy this time together is to play games. Every family seems to have its own favorites, but here are a couple you might not have tried before:

The alphabet object game is popular among children especially. The object of the game is to find objects outside the car that begin with each of the letters of the alphabet. For instance, Johnny

might say, "I see an automobile for *a*." After he has chosen an automobile, no other member of the family can use the same object. Then he might say, "I see a building for *b*." The first person to get to the end of the alphabet wins. You might want to delete letters such as *q*, *x* or *z*.

Another game using the alphabet is the alphabet memory game. This can be challenging for Mom and Dad and older children. The person starting the game says, "I'm taking an apple (for *a*) to the Feast." Then the second person must repeat what the first person said and add something for the letter *b*, such as, "I'm taking an apple and a banana to the Feast." Then the third person must repeat what

the first two said and add something for the letter *c*. As you can see, by the time you get to the last letter, it is quite a long list of things to memorize.

A variation is to use only biblical words or names for the letters. For example, "At the Feast I'll see Adam, Barak and Caiaphas." This helps one become more familiar with Bible terms.

There are many more games that you and your family might like to try during spare time at the Feast. Memory games, auto bingo, 20 questions and Bible quizzes are always popular. Check out a book at the library and learn some new games.

Make the Feast a family Feast and make the most of family time! — *By A. Youngblood* □

member of God's Church knows by heart the principal scriptures on this subject, because these verses are referred to on just about every Holy Day:

"Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the Lord empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you" (Deuteronomy 16:16-17, New International Version).

A similar command is given in verse 10 concerning the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.

This instruction from God relates to "three times a year." There are seven feasts in the year. Did God intend that four of them have no such command?

No. The command refers to the three seasons or periods of the year when these special gifts are to be presented.

Two of God's feasts, the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, are grouped together in the spring. God's third festival, Pentecost, occurs in early summer. The final four festivals — the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day — are observed in the fall.

(It should be noted that the seasons in which the Holy Days fall are based on the seasons in Palestine. The Holy Days occur in different seasons in the Southern Hemisphere.)

So the term *three times* in Deuteronomy 16:16-17 refers to these three seasons and includes all the feasts. As a matter of convenience for the giver and for those who receive and process the

gifts, God's Church has traditionally collected these offerings on the seven high days, or Holy Days.

The next point we should note is that this command is directed to men. Notice similar passages found in Exodus 23:14-17 and Exodus 34:22-23. Sometimes, because of pregnancy or small children, women might not be able to travel the distance required to attend some of the festivals.

Normally, of course, the whole family is expected to attend, as well as the widows and fatherless (Deuteronomy 16:14). There is no prohibition against women also presenting a gift, even if widowed, as we could conclude from a similar situation in Mark 12:42.

The place that these gifts are to be presented is the place that God chooses.

It is the responsibility of the Church leadership, guided by God, to determine the Festival sites where the Church gathers together.

The last point in this passage relates to the size of the gift or offering. After God blesses us, He

watches to see how much we believe He has blessed us, by observing the kind of appreciation we show in



the size of our offering. We all must consider the physical and spiritual law that we reap what we sow (II Corinthians 9:6). Another important aspect about giving is the proper attitude of the giver (verse 7).

It seems members of God's Church take a wide range of approaches in how they view Holy Day offerings. Apparently, a few have little concern and are ill-prepared for these scheduled gifts. Or, instead of really giving an *extra* offering, they give what would be part of their *regular* tithes and offerings. As a result, the regular tithes and offerings seem to be lower for months in which Holy Days fall. This should not be. Holy Day offerings should be above and beyond normal tithes and offerings.

Some members really are concerned and prepare throughout the year for these offerings. Some even set aside an amount

from each paycheck from which to provide Holy Day offerings.

It has been obvious in recent years that God's people are taking this responsibility more seriously, as the per-person amounts have been increasing considerably, far above the increases in wages and income.

This brief review should remind us all of the need and purpose for Holy Day offerings, and of our responsibility as we approach these occasions. In conclusion, here is the Bible perspective we ought to keep in mind as we prepare for the Holy Day offerings during this coming Festival season:

"Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:6-9). — By L. Leroy Neff □

HAVE A HAPPY, HEALTHY FEAST!

All of us look forward to the Feast of Tabernacles with great anticipation for the many physical and spiritual blessings God allows us to enjoy. The Feast is a wonderful foretaste of the



Festival '84

Kingdom of God. However, it's hard to enjoy those physical and spiritual blessings if we spend most of the Feast in a state of utter exhaustion or walking around feeling like the Goodyear blimp as we go from restaurant to restaurant.

Here are a few simple measures you can apply to ensure that you have a healthier Feast this year:

First, don't go to the Feast with the idea of

looks more like a burdened-down pack mule than a carefree tourist.

Third, don't forget to get some exercise during the Feast. A nice contemplative walk or jog is a good way to meditate on what you've learned in services. Do as much of your sight-seeing as possible on foot, and be sure to take some good walking shoes along.

Fourth, watch your

clothing, get some exercise and eat a moderate, balanced diet — in other words, use common sense — we can all have a happier, healthier Feast this year. — *By Dan C. Taylor* □

RELIEVING "POST-FEAST LETDOWN"

The highlight of the year? Most members of God's Church would certainly say that it is the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast is an event for which they begin to plan many months in advance. And then, in eight short but marvelous days, it's all over for another year.

It should not surprise anyone that the Feast comes to a close. We know it is just a temporary sampling of greater things to come. And yet, how often "post-Feast letdown" makes itself felt to one degree or another!

A certain amount of sadness is understandable. We all wish we didn't have to scatter out into the world for another year. We long for God's Kingdom to be permanently established. But we shouldn't let letdown hinder our growth and effectiveness.

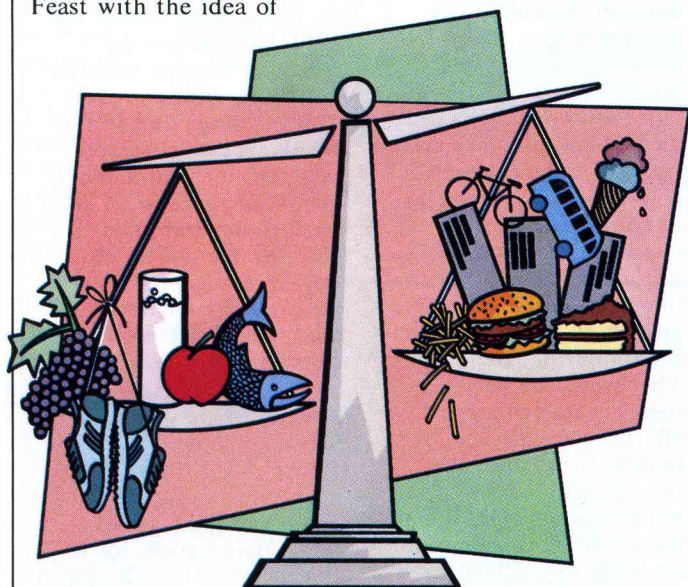
Actually, whether or not letdown becomes a problem depends to a large extent on a person's attitude and conduct during the Feast itself. Those who tend to overemphasize the physical aspect or who look on the Feast

mostly as a vacation are leaving themselves wide open for letdown. This can especially be a factor where children are involved.

One suggestion for lessening the problem may be to not raise one's living standard during the Feast so out of proportion that there is a near culture shock when returning to the normal routine. After all, while we are to rejoice in abundance, the object of the Feast really isn't to squander second tithe by any means possible just to get rid of it, and all on ourselves. We also need to remember the needy and the surplus second-tithe fund.

Another essential for relieving post-Feast letdown is to get enough rest during the Feast. We shouldn't allow the Feast to become a hectic, burn-the-candle-at-both-ends marathon that leaves us spiritually depleted, physically exhausted and in need of a rest.

Ideally, the Feast of Tabernacles should be a restful time of spiritual and physical rejuvenation, leaving one eager to get back to the business at hand and to finish it so God's Kingdom can come. With care and effort on our part, we can keep it that way. — *By Clayton D. Steep* □



"doing" Europe or the American West. Orient your sight-seeing toward quality, not quantity. This entails some planning on your part. Do a little research on your Feast site and surrounding area. Find out what you would really like to see and do, realistically, in the time you have.

Second, while you're checking on the local points of interest, find out what kind of weather you can expect at your Feast site. Pack the kind of clothing that will be appropriate. And learn to travel light. We've all seen the weary traveler who

diet. It's nice to be able to sample the various exotic cuisines we may happen upon, but try to eat a good, wholesome diet. Be sure to drink plenty of good, clean water as well. Also, be careful where you eat and what you eat. Many a Feastgoer has been felled by some most-unfriendly local bug or virus.

The Eternal wants us to rejoice before Him. In III John 2, the apostle John was inspired to write, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health." If we realistically plan our sight-seeing, take appropriate

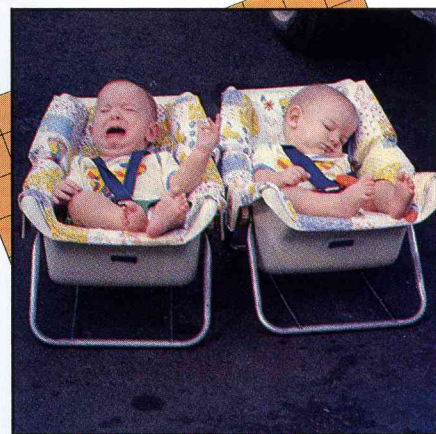


Photo by Robert Zimmerman

Number Your Days

(Continued from page 16)

the Millennium, and therefore, by extension, the Feast of Tabernacles (see the article "Psalms and Salvation: The Message Most Overlook" in the April *Good News*).

Moses opens this Psalm by lauding the timelessness of the Eternal — He who is God "from everlasting to everlasting" (verses 1-2). By contrast he then directs attention to the brief mortality of sinful, natural man — man lacking the right relationship with God (verses 3-9).

"The days of our lives," verse 10 continues, "are seventy years [in general]; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years [some, because of heredity and other factors, live longer than 70 years], yet their boast [what we have to show for them] is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

Again we see that apart from God and doing His will, human life, no matter how long it lasts, is only a fleeting phenomenon. A flash in the pan. It's here and it's gone. And there is nothing to show for it. Unless . . .

Unless a person is wise enough to realize the importance of each day and unless he uses the time he is allowed to perfect his relationship with the eternal God.

In the latter part of Psalm 90, Moses describes some of the blessings of life once we establish a growing contact with God. It is filled with rejoicing and gladness (verse 14). (What a great way to commence the Millennium — and the Feast!) What is more, the work of one's hands — all that is worthwhile that one labors at, builds and accomplishes in life — has meaning to it. Death will not void it or render it futile. It is established (verse 17).

But what is essential to make the difference? Moses tells in verse 12 — it is awareness of our present condition of mortality, our temporary estate: "So teach us [this is something we must learn; it doesn't come naturally]

to number our days," Moses prayed to God, "that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

That's it! In order to be wise, we must learn to number our days, to frequently take stock of where we are in life.

Have we been sidetracked, or are we going in the right direction? Are we bogged down or are we making good speed? Are all the activities we are engaged in really worthwhile in the perspective of eternity? Are there ways we can simplify how we live so we can avoid being slowed down and overwhelmed by a multitude of time-consuming diversions and needless complications that yield nothing of lasting value?

Are we as pilgrims headed, unencumbered, traveling light, by the shortest, most direct route possible, to the land promised to us? We know how long we have already traveled on this pilgrimage. But we don't know for sure how long we still have to go. We don't know that we'll get to the 70- or 80-year plateau Moses referred to.

All the more reason to get the maximum use out of today! Seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness today, as Jesus taught (Matthew 6:33-34).

Set the right priority

Each of our life spans can be compared to an hourglass. Not an ordinary one that allows you to see the sand in the top as well as the bottom half. The top half in this hourglass is opaque. You can't see inside. In the bottom half, you can see the sand that has already gone through. And, if you look closely, you can see the trickle of sand actually flowing through the narrow middle part.

But you don't know whether there remains in the top half a lot of sand, or whether, before your very eyes, are falling the last precious grains.

Just to impress the lesson, find a quiet place where you can spend one or two undisturbed minutes. Take with you a clock that makes an audible ticktock. In the silence that is broken only by the seconds ticking away, think: That is my

life I'm listening to, my opportunity to get into harmony with God's will, to qualify for salvation, to determine what I will do for all eternity.

For many reading this, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God" (I Peter 4:17).

If you are an average person and you were informed that you could receive an unlimited amount of money — billions of dollars — the exact amount depending on how well you learned, let us say, Spanish in two months' time, you would embark on the most intense crash-learning program of your life.

You would study from early morning to late evening. You would listen to tapes of the spoken language even while taking care of daily, mundane duties. You would carry with you notes on cards to review during free moments. Your goal would constantly be on your mind. Worthless television programs would hold little interest. No other activities would be allowed to interfere. For the duration of your allotted time you would eat, sleep and breathe Spanish.

And all for mammon!

Isn't learning about God of far greater importance? Should we not give it greater effort? Of course we should!

Make every effort to drink in now of God's Word and His Spirit. They are free, unlimited and become in those who seek them out "a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). That is wisdom.

If we are wise, if we number our days properly, we don't have to worry about the shortness of this life. We don't have to be anxious that our physical dwellings are temporary, that they become older and more decrepit with each passing day. God is our permanent dwelling (Psalm 90:1). He is our safe, unshakable habitation (Psalm 91).

We have this assurance. For this, let us rejoice at the Feast of Tabernacles! □

Increase Your Faith!

We as Christians can lack strong, godly faith because we question the why and how of what God does.

By Sidney M. Hegvold

Will there be any faith in this last generation before Jesus Christ returns?

Christ Himself questioned whether there would be! Notice: "Nevertheless," Jesus asked, "when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

What a sobering question! God clearly states that His people — the just — must live by faith (Romans 1:17), and that without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). But dynamic, living faith is a rare commodity in this world.

How, then, can one have faith?

The truth is that the kind of faith God desires us to have cannot just be "worked up": "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8, Authorized Version).

God must *give us* the kind of faith that really works — the kind of faith required for salvation. And certainly we must want to have this faith. Who wouldn't want to have the faith required to receive God's wonderful blessings of protection, peace of mind or healing, for example?

Now, exactly how does God



John knew full well that Christ had the power to free him from prison. But he may have wondered why Christ didn't do so.

give us this faith? Romans 10:17, Revised Standard Version, tells us how we receive true, godly faith: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."

How we receive faith

First, we must believe what God says — trust Him! "For

what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Romans 4:3).

This is a major problem for all of us in this materialistic generation, so steeped in evolution. It can be extremely difficult to really believe God.

All true Christians have an earnest desire to live by faith, but there has been such an explosion of materialistic knowledge on every imaginable subject — medicine, psychology, sociology, biology, astronomy, history, geology — that we can find ourselves spontaneously asking *why* and *how* to almost every statement or promise God makes in the Bible.

And these are faith-killing questions.

Think about it: Why does God let good people suffer and die while evil people often live well and prosper? How could the earth, including Mt. Everest and the Grand Canyon, have been completely covered with water during the Flood in the days of Noah, not even 5,000 years ago — where did all that water come from and where did it go? Where did a fish large enough to swallow Jonah come from, and how did Jonah breathe for three days and three nights while he was in the whale's belly?

And so the questions go. Should we just blindly accept

and believe, then? Absolutely not! Faith cannot be expressed that way. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:20, AV). Faith has to be demonstrated by action — faith must be active, dynamic, living.

The key is the statement made in Romans 10:17. Faith can come only through the preaching of Jesus Christ. Faith is spiritual and has nothing to do with the physical or material.

Not our ways or reasons

Let's examine some examples of the eroding effect that human reasonings can have on faith.

God knows that we at this time simply could not understand why some things are allowed to happen, so He doesn't always tell us why. But we still must learn to believe and trust Him. He also knows we could not understand how some things are accomplished by His Holy Spirit. Those are spiritual matters and we are yet physical.

So wondering to excess about why God allowed something or exactly how God did something can cause us to lose faith.

John the Baptist's imprisonment and his reaction to it is a good example of having to trust and believe without understanding why. Even John the Baptist became confused and upset. His reactions during this severe trial, as they relate to Christ, are quite similar to attitudes and reactions of many of us undergoing trials today.

John knew who Christ was — John twice called Him "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36). Yet, while in prison, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (Luke 7:19).

John knew full well who Christ was, and that Christ had the power to free him from prison. Was John perhaps wondering why Christ had not done so?

Did you catch it? John's basic question — a faith-killing question — may well have been *why*.

Christ pointed out to John's

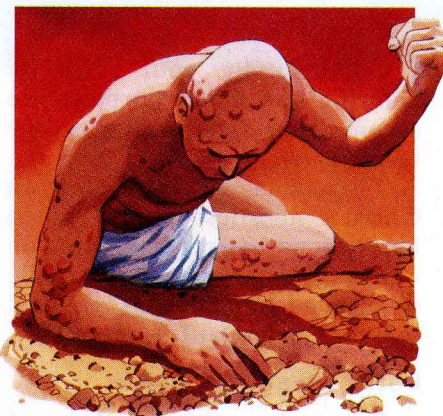
disciples the works He had been doing — works of which He knew John was well aware. Then He concluded with this statement to John's disciples: "And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me" (verse 23).

Jesus was telling John — and all of us — that God's people may not always understand everything at a certain time, but that we shouldn't reject God and Christ — we shouldn't lose faith — because of it.

John not only remained in prison, but he was beheaded. Why did Christ allow John to die? He could have prevented it, but He did not. The answer is beyond human reasoning.

A problem that can undermine godly faith is the suffering of trials. Take the example of Job.

Job, like John, was sorely



**The suffering of trials
can undermine faith.**

**Job, afflicted and
tried, wondered why.**

**The answers aren't
the answers many want.**

afflicted and tried, and he, too, wondered why. It was young Elihu who gave Job some answers. These answers were available to John, as they are available to us today. The problem is, they aren't the answers many want.

Elihu told Job: "Take heed, do not turn to iniquity, for you have chosen this rather than affliction. Behold, God is exalted by His

power; who teaches like Him?" (Job 36:21-22).

Indeed, who else but God can teach through affliction? And sometimes the lessons are of necessity severe, even though humans seldom learn them.

"For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man, He keeps back his soul from the Pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

"Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, and with strong pain in many of his bones, so that his life abhors bread, and his soul succulent food. His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones stick out which once were not seen. Yes, his soul draws near the Pit, and his life to the executioners" (Job 33:14-22).

God uses all these methods as He works with humanity to bring us to His own state of perfection, to literal sonship in His Family.

"Behold, God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man, to bring back his soul from the Pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life" (verses 29-30).

God allows all these trials so that we "may be enlightened with the light of life" — eternal life.

Too often we lose sight of that awesome goal, but God never does! Losing sight of the goal causes us to lose faith.

We live in an evil world

Undergoing severe trials and losing sight of our goal can erode our faith.

Remember, too, that we live in an evil world and often have to suffer with this world's society.

Jesus, speaking to God the Father, said, "I do not pray that You should take them [Christ's followers] out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15). Psalm 34:19 tells us, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." So

Illustrations by Ken Tunell

when some tragedy strikes, don't blame God. Many of our problems occur because we are living in a very evil society.

It often seems that people, if they think of God at all, blame Him for every calamity and tragedy of life. Seldom do they thank Him or praise Him for all the good things He does.

Reasoning humanly, those who write insurance policies often refer to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and tornadoes as "acts of God." Such is humanity's view of God.

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

Faith is often undermined by our wondering, Why, God, did you allow this to happen to me? John the Baptist probably went to his execution wondering why. But John must have heeded Christ's instruction not to be offended (Luke 7:23), because Christ said of him, "Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (verse 28).

Faith doesn't depend on knowing

Jesus, saddened when He heard of John's execution, wanted to go off by Himself, but a multitude followed Him out into the desert.

Jesus there displayed God's power by turning five loaves of bread and two fish into enough food for 5,000 men plus women and children. After everyone was fed, 12 baskets of crumbs were collected (Matthew 14:13-21).

Christ's disciples were certainly impressed with Christ's miracle-working power, but they, too, had even more to learn regarding real faith.

Consider: A major pitfall in exercising faith is demanding to know *how* faith works. Faith is spiritual, but the results of faith in our lives are often quite physi-

cal and material. For example, the miracle of healing (James 5:13-15), the preservation of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) and the feeding of the 5,000 are physical consequences of faith. But how such miracles are accomplished is spiritual and inexplicable in physical terms.

How God accomplishes His purposes becomes so important to some people that, when they find they can't understand, they simply stop believing God or the biblical account.

For example, the theory of evolution is humanity's attempt to explain how physical things are the way they are in purely physical terms humans can understand. Since people think they have found out how life and the physical world "evolved," they no longer have to deal with the question of God and their responsibility to Him.

Conditioning your faith on knowing how God's purposes are accomplished can destroy your faith.

This was a major lesson Christ's apostles learned when Peter found himself in a situation where the *how* of a great miracle so plagued him and his physical senses that his faith vanished.

Peter's walk on water

Remember the incident of Peter walking on the water? It is recorded in Matthew 14:22-31. "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away" (verse 22). This was just after the miracle of feeding the multitude, and it was still early in the evening (verse 23).

A storm came up and so tossed the boat about that the apostles could make little headway (verse 24). Notice that, as fierce as the storm was, the disciples gave no indication of panic as long as they were in the relative security of the boat.

When they had spent most of the night fighting the heavy seas, Jesus appeared to them in the fourth watch (verse 25). Natural-

ly they were troubled at the sight of Jesus walking on the water — that is, until Jesus talked to them: "But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid'" (verse 27). The apostles were frightened at the unnatural sight of Jesus actually walking on the surface of the water. That was contrary to any experience any of them had had. However, when Jesus spoke to them, they were reassured and comforted. Why?

The unnatural situation of Jesus walking on the surface of the water was still there before their eyes. But they were given a physical assurance that *did* fit in with their past experience — the familiar voice of Jesus. Although they could not understand how He managed to walk on the water, they were comforted by His familiar voice.

They were also quite aware that Jesus did perform some great miracles. The disciples were growing in faith — they were beginning to believe the things Jesus said.

Peter was so confident that he thought he could walk on the water, too, if Christ were to bid him to do so: "And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water'" (verse 28). Peter knew that the feat was possible only if Christ commanded him to do so.

That is an important point in growing in faith: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15).

Peter asked if it were Christ's will, and on that assurance he had the confidence to step out onto the water. "So He said, 'Come.' And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus" (Matthew 14:29).

Peter actually walked on the water! But now something totally alien to any experience Peter had ever had happened, and Peter's



faith departed. What was it? "But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!'" (verse 30).

Had Peter not been aware of the wind before? He certainly had! He and the other apostles had spent the whole night being tossed about by the waves, but they had been in the relative security of the boat. So what had happened that terrified Peter so much? It was really more a matter of what didn't happen than what did.

Peter was totally unprepared for *how* he was held up by faith.

Where was faith supposed to react on Peter's body to give him that reassuring sensation of physical support? On the soles of his feet, where he felt support when he walked on solid surfaces? It wasn't there — no feeling of support at all. Was there a feeling of support under his arms, as one would feel support if held up by a harness? No. Was there a feeling of support through his hair, as if he were being held up by the hair? No. Peter could nowhere

feel the sensation of physical support. Faith was supporting him. Faith is spiritual — feeling is physical.

Peter's mind, from long experience in the physical environment, knew of no reason why he could be there on the surface of the water. Peter was unprepared for how faith would hold him up on the water. He reacted to his physical senses — and began to sink.

The lesson? One has to grow in and exercise faith.

Peter's faith in the person of Christ was still firm, though. "And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'" (verse 31). In the firm grip of Christ's hand, Peter made it back into the boat.

There was simply no way that Jesus could have explained to Peter, in terms Peter could have understood, how faith would support him. Peter just had to experience it and grow in faith.

You, too, must grow in faith

You, too, can have faith! You must have faith, for without faith

you cannot please God. You can't qualify for God's Kingdom without faith.

So, like John the Baptist and Peter, you have to learn to believe God — and without question — through the dynamic faith God will give you as a true Christian.

To develop this faith in God, you must know God, and you can know God through Bible study and prayer. And because you express this faith, God promises to prosper you, heal you, protect you and, yes, even try you at times, for your own good.

When you are sure you have done your part, and you know from God's Word what God's will is, "do not turn to iniquity" (Job 36:21) because God does not answer in the way you expect. Trust Him! Believe Him! Continue doing your part patiently and never lose faith.

After all, God reminds us: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts' " (Isaiah 55:8-9). □

PROVE ALL THINGS

Eternal Judgment

One of the most astounding truths revealed in the Bible is that God is not trying to save all the world now!

And yet, conversely, another one of the most encouraging and positive Bible truths is that all mankind shall have a chance for salvation.

How can both these teachings be true? If God is not trying to save the world now, how can all humanity have a chance for salvation? The answer to the seeming dilemma is in the Bible doctrine of eternal judgment.

What about all the billions of people who lived from Adam till now, who never knew of the name of Jesus Christ, the only name under heaven by which people can be saved (Acts 4:12)? Are they lost forever — doomed to die with no hope for eternal life? What about the idolaters and heathen throughout history?

And what about even much-loved members of your own family — now deceased without knowing Jesus Christ, perhaps, or alive but not now religiously minded? What about them?

You need to know and be able to explain how you know what good things are in store for all these people.

The basic doctrine

The judgment period for a person is the time of his calling, until death or change into a spirit-composed member of God's Family. It is during this time that a person's life is continually being judged against the biblical standard of righteousness.

For different groups of people,

this judgment will occur at different times — either now (as in the case of God's Church), during the Millennium or after the Millennium in the Great White Throne Judgment.

The usual teachings of this world

The teachings of the churches of this world are far afield from the clear revelation of the Bible. Most churches do not even understand that all people are not being called to salvation now, let alone understand the connection between the time of one's calling and his period of judgment.

The churches usually view the judgment merely as the time of passing of a sentence upon a person. Many people probably picture a courtroom, complete with a fatherly but somewhat stern God in a black robe behind a large desk, faced by fearful, once-living sinners waiting to see if they will go "up" or "down."

But such a picture is in no way that presented by the Bible!

The Bible teaching

The astounding, central truth essential to understanding this topic is that God is *not* trying to save all the world now. Satan is

said to be deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9). If the whole world is deceived, how can it be in the process of being saved?

Yes, from the days of Adam and his eviction from the Garden of Eden, through the days when Moses told the children of Israel that "the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear" (Deuteronomy 29:2-4), it has been obvious that God is not now saving the whole world.

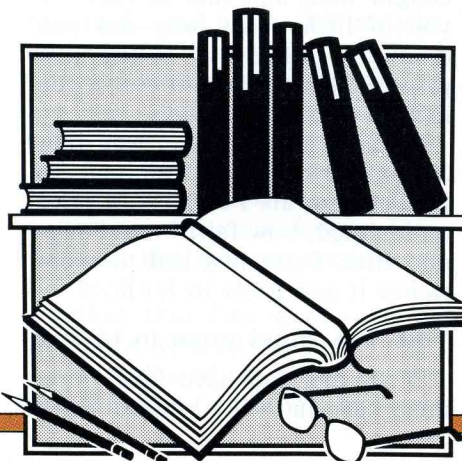
Paul said, "God hath concluded them all [humanity] in unbelief, that he might [eventually, but not now] have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32, Authorized Version).

No wonder Satan is called the "god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4, AV) and God's way is called the way only "few" now take (Matthew 7:14). No wonder Paul called the vast majority of humanity "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11-12).

But why? Why has God chosen not to save all people? The answer, simply, is that for God to fulfill His master plan of building righteous, holy character in humans and then to put those humans into His powerful, universe-ruling Family, He must first allow humans to learn that they need God. People will learn that crime against God's law doesn't pay — that life without God leads to war, misery, unhappiness and destruction.

Therefore most, but not all, of humanity are being left to themselves now.

But, even so, some are being called by God now to preach His



message as a witness to the world (not to proselyte or convert the world — Matthew 24:14) and to learn God's way, so they may teach the masses when God finally does call the rest of the human race and open their minds (Revelation 5:10).

Two key scriptures in this regard are II Corinthians 6:2 and I Peter 4:17.

The first of these is misleading in some translations, which read that God has succored us in "the" day of salvation and that now is "the" day of salvation. But this verse, both in the original Greek and in the Old Testament verse from which it is quoted, does not contain the definite article, but reads that now is "a day of salvation." Obviously, if now is *a* day of salvation, then there must be other times when God has dealt or will deal with people.

The other verse, I Peter 4:17, makes the point that now is only *a* time of salvation more clear, showing *for whom* now is the time for salvation: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God."

Notice that a judgment is now on the house of God — the Church of God — but not upon others. And clearly this judgment is not a mere sentencing, but a process of evaluation made by God as He watches over our growth through a period of time.

Of course, ultimately, judgment includes God's final decision about our spiritual state, and even the reward if we qualify or the sentence to death if we don't, but to call eternal judgment merely the single moment of decision for God is mistaken.

But if now is not the only time when God will call humanity — that is, subject mankind to spiritual judgment for their works, while they know God's law — then when are the other times?

The first period of judgment, when most will be deceived and only a few will be called, is now (I

Peter 4:17). This era ends with the return of Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom, and the resurrection to eternal life of all who were called and qualified from Adam's time till then.

As Revelation 20:5 says, "This is the first resurrection." It is the time of redemption of the few "called" (Romans 8:28) who form the "firstfruits" (not the whole spiritual harvest — James 1:18, Revelation 14:4) of God's master plan.

The second time of judgment is during the Millennium, the 1,000 years immediately after Jesus' return to set up His Kingdom. One clear theme running throughout the Bible is that during the Millennium all then alive will know the truth of God (Isaiah 11:9, Jeremiah 31:34, Joel 2:32).

This millennial period of judgment differs from the world now in that all people then alive will have a chance for salvation.

But, still, those who lived and died from Adam till Jesus Christ's return and the first resurrection will not yet have had a chance. Their chance will come, however.

It is spoken of in Revelation 20:11, which describes the Great White Throne Judgment. This is the time of the second resurrection, when the dead from all time, small and great, will be raised to another physical existence, except this time with a difference. This time the "books" (the Bible) are opened to their understanding (verse 12), and they live out a full life span with the chance to know God and the truth of salvation.

This is the time when all the humans who have not had a chance will be given one. This is the time of judgment for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, as Jesus revealed (Matthew 11:22, 10:15).

It is spoken of in plain terms by the prophet Ezekiel: "Behold, O

My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up . . . I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live" (Ezekiel 37:12, 14).

Now God's merciful, fair plan will be complete. All will have had a chance for salvation, a period of living during which the truth of God will be open to their minds, and they will be judged according to it — their judgment period.

For the Church that period is now. In the Millennium all those then alive will have their chance. Finally, during the Great White Throne Judgment all the former dead who didn't have a chance before will get their opportunity. No one will get a "second chance," but all will get one full opportunity for salvation.

Key verses

Here are some main scriptures relating to eternal judgment:

Mark 4:11-12 and John 6:44 show that God is not trying to save all the world now. II Corinthians 6:2 explains that now is not the only day of salvation. I Peter 4:17 shows that judgment is a process of time while one is under review by God, and that judgment is now on the Church.

Revelation 20:1-12 describes the various resurrections that delineate the various judgment periods. Isaiah 11:9 and Jeremiah 31:34 say that all people will know God in the Millennium, and Ezekiel 37:12-14 illustrates how the former dead will be raised and given the truth of God during the Great White Throne Judgment.

Of all the doctrines of the Bible, none show God's boundless fairness any more than the truth about judgment. All people everywhere will receive an equal chance at salvation, and at a time in which their own chance of success will be great indeed.

Truly, our loving God is not a respecter of persons, but fair to all humanity! □

LETTERS

May Good News

All the *Good News* magazines are excellent. Each issue is getting continually better. They have in their contents much-needed words for us to continue to grow to qualify for God's Kingdom. We appreciate the effort that goes into each and every issue.

The May, 1984, issue has three particularly excellent articles: Herbert W. Armstrong's "Why Did God Raise Up the Nation Israel — and Deny Them Spiritual Salvation?", Earl H. Williams' "Now Under Way — The Seeding of God's Kingdom" and Philip P. Stevens' "True Friendship — Laying Down Your Life." There are more great ones, too. They were all very good. Once I started reading, I found it very difficult to put it down.

Thank you for feeding your flock. We value each and every issue.

Colleen Belanger
Sutton, Vt.

It seems every issue of *The Good News* is better than the previous, but I think the May issue was especially good. My special thanks to Mr. Armstrong for his article on "Why Did God Raise Up the Nation Israel — and Deny Them Spiritual Salvation?" for the research he did and the inspiration he received to show us how this all fits into God's master plan. It was truly exciting to read.

Mrs. C.M. Hill
Kalamazoo, Mich.

I just wanted to drop a line to tell you how much my husband and I enjoyed your article on "Why Did God Raise Up the Nation Israel — and Deny Them Spiritual Salvation?"

As a Mexican-American, the race issue was one that I never really completely understood, but this article really made me understand.

Thank you for being God's apostle and enduring. Our prayers are with you daily. Remember we are striving to hold your arms up so we can win this battle.

Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Barkley
San Antonio, Tex.

I have just discovered a new truth! As I was reading John A. Halford's article in *The Good News*, I realized for the first time I am not considering the "end of the world" anymore! It has become the "beginning of God's Kingdom" I am looking forward to.

I don't know exactly when this happened, but I feel very refreshed and

elated about it. It is something I had to sit right down and tell you about.

Thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for helping us to understand God's truth and His plan for us as we do today. I pray for your health, well-being and safety every day. I am behind you and God's work completely.

LaVerna Sawyer
Fresno, Calif.

Mr. Armstrong, I hope and pray as I write this finds you well and happy. I have been listening to you on the radio and watching you on television for quite some time. I just can't imagine not being able to hear you. I pray as long as I live I'll be hearing you, because you are such a great and wonderful man of God. God bless you that you may keep right on teaching His Gospel.

I was just reading, in *The Good News*, "How Well Do You Know God?" by Francis J. Bergin, and I would like to say I have never had anything help me so much. I have prayed for years but never really knew God; now I feel much more comfortable about it. Before when I prayed it was like a fantasy, not really believing. Now I feel as though God is so close and what a difference it makes. I can't thank you enough for this. I hope it helped everyone as much as it has me. Keep up the good work. God bless you.

I want to say I really enjoy *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. I have been saving mine so I can read them over and over. They have helped me so many times. I thank God for all of you.

Harriet Williamson
Marion, Ohio

"Narrow is the Way"

I just had to write immediately after reading "Narrow is the Way" by Ranier S. Salomaa in the March *Good News*. This article is a marvelous compilation of scripture and analogy to aid us in our upstream battle. Thank you very much, Mr. Salomaa, for sharing this tremendous lesson from nature with us.

Vicki Flickinger
Burton, Kan.

Old Testament laws

It is surely evident from reading the publications of God's work that God is inspiring His writers by His Holy Spirit.

I am truly thankful to be a recipient of such revelations. I'm trying to live in accordance with all these good things — it is indeed a wonderful way of life!

I think the article written by Herman L. Hoeh explaining the difference between Moses' sacrificial laws and God's Ten Commandments [October-November, 1983] leaves no doubt in anyone's mind what is the truth.

Mrs. M.J. Griffin
Brandon, S.D.

General comments

I have been a very satisfied subscriber of *The Plain Truth* for about three and one-half years and have been enjoying *The Good News* almost a year. I have never been so interested in anything as I am in your magazines and literature.

I have subscribed to many magazines, including *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *Newsweek*, but never have I looked forward with such anticipation to receiving a magazine as I do yours. Both of them are filled not only with exciting news of the present conditions of the world, but also of the remarkable world tomorrow! They are a great help in my day-to-day efforts to serve God.

The best thing I like about these magazines is not the free subscription — I would gladly pay much for them — but it is the way you use the Holy Bible in your explanations of the issues. You tie it all together so well. You have a great staff of writers. By the way, your magazines are the only ones I subscribe to now, so keep them coming.

Jeffrey R. Turley
Okinawa, Japan

Thanks to all the writers of the *Good News* articles. They are getting meatier and meatier. They really inspired me. I reread them over and over.

I never liked history in school, but the way you bring it out, I can understand it much better.

Myrtle Super
Tateville, Ky.

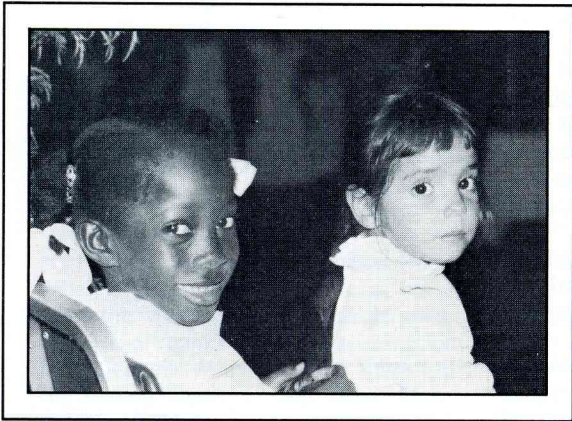
All of the articles in *The Good News* and *The Plain Truth* just get better and better — and after more than 30 years of reading them, too! Each subject is addressed with a different perspective and greater knowledge and understanding. What a great blessing to have these available to us from our loving Father. Thanks to all of you for your effort.

Lola Maskule
Seattle, Wash.

Notes

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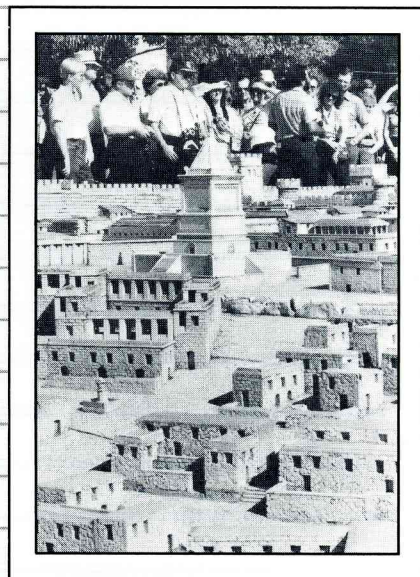












Activity Schedule

F E A S T O F T A B E R N A C L E S 1 9 8 4

Wednesday, October 10

Thursday, October 11 (Holy Day)

Friday, October 12

Sabbath, October 13

Sunday, October 14

Monday, October 15

Tuesday, October 16

Wednesday, October 17

Thursday, October 18 (Last Great Day)

Note-section photos: Sheila Graham, Good News, Nathan Faulkner, Chris Carrick, Graeme B. Henderson,
Kevin H. Blackburn, Sheila Graham, Mario Seigle, Good News, Ron Grove

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