



Indy Finds New Church Home

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana - The Indianapolis congregation finally has moved to a new church home. When it was announced that we would have to move from our old location, many were disappointed; we had been at our old place eleven years. Everyone had gotten attached to the meeting place, but now they see that God's hand must have been in the move.

The Indianapolis congregation finally has moved to a new church home. When it was announced that we would have to move from our old location, many were disappointed; we had been at our old place eleven years. Everyone had gotten attached to the meeting place, but now they see that God's hand must have been in the move.

**CGI &
GGOM
Share the
OK
Feast Site**

The Feast of Tabernacles is a joyous time of year. It is a time when many brethren in the Body of Christ are able to fellowship with friends and families they have not seen since the

The Forgotten Holy Day

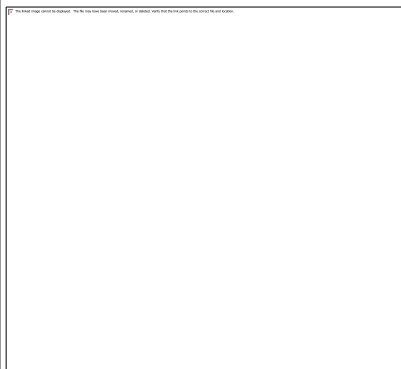
It is usually overshadowed by the other holy days, and some have minimized its importance. But what can be gleaned from the Last Day of Unleavened Bread?

by Bob Swimm

As winter finally loosens its icy grip, and the signs of life return to the landscape and flora, once again the spring holy days and all of their rich tapestry take center stage in the life of a Christian.

There is reflection on the sacrifice of our Savior, and on the Father's willingness to allow it because of His great love for us; there is self-examination of our spiritual state; and there is physical preparation for the Days of Unleavened Bread. And then we observe and act out the very plan of salvation as ordained by and through the holy days of the Bible.

The Indianapolis congregation finally has moved to a new church home. When it was announced that we would have to move from our old location, many were disappointed; we had been at our old place eleven years. Everyone had gotten attached to the meeting place, but now they see that God's hand must have been in the move.



Mr. King and Old Time Religion

ATLANTA, Georgia - Do you sometimes wonder if God has forgotten all about you? Do you feel alone and separated from the people you love? There are times in all our lives when the world appears to be a cold and cavernous place. To deny having ever

felt this way would be dishonest, for I truly believe each of us has experienced this at one time or another.

The Indianapolis congregation finally has moved to a new church home. When it was announced that we would have to move from our old location, many were disappointed; we had been at our old place eleven years. Everyone had gotten attached to the meeting place, but now they see that God's hand must have been in the move.

Agreeing With God

Do you agree with God...or do you, by your lack of faith, call Him a liar?

by Lloyd W. Cary

'Undue Suffering' An Unselfish Gift

by Dianna Thomason

previous feast, or maybe in several years.



Texarkana Invites Brethren for Pentecost

TEXARKANA,
Arkansas-We want to
invite all our CGI
brethren to Texarkana
for the Day of Pentecost.

We have made a tradition with the Shreveport congregation, as they have joined us on this holy day in past years. We always enjoy an enlightening inspired sermon by our local pastor, Ron Elkins. Along with the powerful spiritual food, our local members provide the nourishment for our bodies with a potluck meal after services. I'm never disappointed with the quality of either meal.

If anyone finds him or herself "hungering" in spirit or body during the next Pentecost, June 11, 2000, join us in Texarkana for a great event~Stephen Mitchell.

Editor's Note: For more information on Pentecost services in Texarkana, contact Ron Elkins at

Amos 3:3 asks us, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Throughout time, many people have walked with God. Enoch did it. Noah did it. Those of the hall of faith in Hebrews 11 did it. We all want to do it. But how do we do it? How can we truly walk with God unless we agree with God? To agree with God is to say the same thing God says in His Word about salvation, healing, answers to prayer, and everything He tells us. We know God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and since He cannot lie, everything He tells us must be true~so it should be easy for us to agree with it. The Bible calls believing and agreeing with God faith, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

What to Do With the Bible by Lloyd W. Cary

Read it. Believe it. Obey it. Study it. Rightly divide it. Honor it. Memorize it. Meditate on it. Love it. Hide it in your heart. Delight in it. Pray according to it. Let its precepts guide you. Grow in your knowledge of it. Let it search your heart. Walk in its light. Carry it to church. Preach it. Let it keep you from sin.



Charles Groce, Vance Stinson and Bronson James on the set at KETK in Tyler

Have you ever heard anyone say, "It just isn't fair the way I always have to suffer?" Or have you ever felt that way?

Come on, let's be truthful. I have felt that way from time to time. Boy was I wrong! I really don't know what it is like to really suffer~at least not the way Christ Jesus suffered. And mine wasn't undue suffering. His was. He suffered for the sins we commit, and you can read about it in the four Gospels as well as in the Old Testament.

The Gospels tell how He was betrayed, denied, and then mistreated by the Roman army. Can you really say you have suffered the way Jesus did?

I can't. I don't know what it is like to suffer for the sins of this world. I can't say my suffering was unfair or that it was for someone else. My suffering was for what I had done, not for what someone else had done.

But Jesus suffered undue suffering to give us the gift of eternal life, an unselfish gift. So the next time you think your suffering is unfair and unjust, read the four Gospels and remember the undue suffering Jesus went through to give us an unselfish gift called eternal life-and be thankful for Him doing so.

It's All in God's Plan

The story is told of a boy who found a cocoon of a butterfly.


(903) 793-0061 or (870)
653-6043.

In Loving Memory

**Clifford M.
Hawkins
1924-1999**

HARRISBURG, Illinois-
At age 75, Clifford
Hawkins died on
November 22, 1999. He
was born on January 8,
1924. His memorial
service took place at
Gaskins Funeral Home,
P.C., on Wednesday,
November 24, 1999, at 1
p.m. The service was
officiated by David
Fitzwater and Eddie
Nelson.


Bolden- Mitchell Wedding

pictures.. 


Just Between You and Me

by Noni McVey

Prayer is our personal
communication with
God. When one prays, he
utters verbally or
mentally his praise for
God, his thanks for
God's blessings, and also


One day the boy noticed a
small tear in the cocoon. The
boy watched for several hours
as the butterfly struggled to
force its body through that
small opening. 

The 'Rest' of the Story by Darren M. Cary

The Sabbath can be traced back to Creation. It was prominent in the Ten
Commandments and it was observed by Jesus and the apostles-and many thousands
keep it today. But are we short- changing God's Sabbath? Are we guilty of treating
it as just "a day off"? If you can wrap your mind around-or better yet, embrace-the
full spiritual implications of the Sabbath, you'll be able to revolutionize your
weekly Sabbathkeeping! 

Enduring to the End by Bob Swimm

When God opened our minds to His precious truths, we were filled with
excitement with what we had discovered.

If you were like me, you couldn't wait to share them with family, friends, and
coworkers. We couldn't understand why they couldn't "see" what we had. Often
this got us into trouble. But nonetheless we charged out of the starter's block with
the blinding speed of a sprinter. Sprinters run as fast and hard as they can for a
short distance. But the Christian "race" cannot be run as a sprinter would; our
"race" is a marathon. It takes a different kind of runner to compete in a marathon.
Speed is secondary. Endurance is the key. 


The Pleasures of Sin

**Ahhh, the pleasures of sin. Settle
down, relax, and let's talk about
them**

by Lloyd W. Cary

We read in Hebrews 11:24,5: "By faith
Moses, when he was come to years,
refused to be called the son of
Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to
suffer affliction with the people of
God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin
for a season." We see in God's Word

The First 'Outreach Weekend'

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky-The first-
ever CGI/Armor of God Outreach
Weekend was held on the weekend of
Nov. 20-21, and hosted by the
Louisville congregation. 

his petition to God for himself and for others. Prayers are an offering to God; they are described as incense stored in golden bowls before God's throne (Revelation 5:8).

Atlanta Presses Toward the Mark

ATLANTA, Georgia- With our spirits still renewed with the energy from the Feast of Tabernacles, 1999, Atlanta is ready to move onward. Much has been happening within our congregation and many of us feel ready to get down to the business of leaving the past behind and getting on with the work our Father has assigned.

Three Baptisms in Manila

that there are often temporary "pleasures" in sin; otherwise, few would do it. But if it "hurt" to sin~if it was immediately painful; if we could feel the effects of sin instantaneously; if it bruised or lacerated or burned every time we sinned, we would be very careful not to sin.

Teen Lock-In, 1999

"It provides for the young people of our church an opportunity to share with their peers at a round-table discussion their struggles "

TYLER, Texas-My wife Cindy and I came to Tyler to assist Mr. and Mrs. Ken Register, Nancy DeJarnette, and Mr. Darren Cary with the activities and supervision of the teens at this year's teen lock-in. Together with the teens from the Midwest, Tyler, and Louisiana, we experienced something I, personally, had misplaced along life's road. It's a little thing called fun!

Sabbath School Is Back!

New Program in Session in Atlanta

ATLANTA, Georgia-Sabbath school is now back in session here in Atlanta. December 4 was the start-up of the new program with eleven children in attendance. Their first session was spent planning the course for the class and getting to know one another and their teachers a little better. pictures...

Morehead Winter Social

MOREHEAD, Kentucky-A winter social indeed! This year's annual get-together at Morehead (January 29,30) was severely challenged by "Old Man Winter." The threat of snow, sleet, and freezing rain dissuaded many who had anticipated coming from making the trip. But those of us who came on Friday evening arrived under sunny skies, endured a nuisance drizzle on Sabbath, and drove safely home Sunday under cloudy skies and dry and cleared roads. Our faith had been rewarded.

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#) || [The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

We are constantly developing this web site and would appreciate any [comments](#) you might have.

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..



[Home](#) | [Armor of God](#) | [TV](#) | [Radio](#) | [Literature](#) | [Bible Lecture Series](#) | [SKY](#) | [March 2000](#)

Agreeing With God

Do you agree with God...or do you, by your lack of faith, call Him a liar?

by Lloyd W. Cary

Amos 3:3 asks us, "Can two walk together, except they be *agreed*?"

Throughout time, many people have walked with God. Enoch did it. Noah did it. Those of the hall of faith in Hebrews 11 did it. We *all* want to do it. But *how* do we do it? How can we truly walk with God unless we agree with God? To *agree* with God is to *say the same thing God says* in His Word about salvation, healing, answers to prayer, and everything He tells us. We know God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), and since He cannot lie, everything He tells us *must* be true-so it should be easy for us to agree with it. The Bible calls believing and agreeing with God *faith*, and "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

We must agree with God that we *are* who He *says* we are and we must *disagree* with the devil who tries to tell us we are "second-rate Christians," "no good," "failures," and "spiritual weaklings." We must agree with God and *disagree* with the devil in order to walk with God. Jesus did this by boldly declaring, "It is written." We must do the same.

We must mix God's Word with faith-believing what God *says* is *true*.

We must agree with God that we *have* what He *says* we have: His name, His nature, His power, His authority, and His love. To disagree is to call God a liar.

Some have a problem confessing or acknowledging that they *have* a thing before they can *see* or *feel* it-even if God *says* we have it. This is called *unbelief* or

lack of faith. We should have the faith to thank God even before we see and feel His answers. Yet some are afraid they may be lying if they exercise such faith. Some may even fear that to make such a faith-commitment may weaken their faith should their prayers not be answered, and so, to "play it safe," they do not exercise Bible-believing faith. We need to realize that, since God cannot lie, we also cannot lie whenever we say what God says. Isn't that logical? We need to mirror God's Word back to Him. He sees Himself in His Word. He said it. You are asking Him to do it. We are simply speaking His Word back to Him.

We Are Who

God Says We Are

We are the children of God: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

We are new creatures: "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We are "delivered from the power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13).

"We are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

We are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17).

We are "blessed...with all spiritual blessings..." (Ephesians 1:3).

Do you believe these things? Do you agree with God who cannot lie? Then praise Him (Psalm 34:1)!

We Have What

God Says We Have

We have forgiveness: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (1 John 2:12).

We have joy: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

We have liberty: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

We have life: "He that hath the Son hath life; He that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

We have light: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

We have love: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 5:5).

We have peace: "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

We have power: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

We have provision: "My God shall supply all your need" (Philippians 4:19).

We have purpose: "For me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21).

We have salvation: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

Do you believe these things? Do you agree with God who cannot lie? Then praise Him (Psalm 113:3)!

We Can *Do* and *Have* What

God Says We Can Do and Have

We can "do all things through Christ" (Philippians 4:13).

Through the love of God we can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

We can *share* with the world what we have in Christ: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19,20). God would not tell us to do anything we cannot do.

We can have whatever we ask within God's will: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7:7).

"That *whatever* ye shall ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you" (John 15:16).

"And *whatsoever* ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall *ask* any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we *ask* any thing according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John 5:14).

(There are many more scriptures echoing these promises.)

Affirm these words aloud: "I *am* who God *says* I am! I *have* what God *says* I have! I can *do* what God *says* I can do!"

Do you believe these things?

Do you agree with God who cannot lie?

Then praise Him!!!

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

info@cgi.org

Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..



Enduring to the End

by Bob Swimm

When God opened our minds to His precious truths, we were filled with excitement with what we had discovered.

If you were like me, you couldn't wait to share them with family, friends, and coworkers. We couldn't understand why they couldn't "see" what we had. Often this got us into trouble. But nonetheless we charged out of the starter's block with the

blinding speed of a sprinter. Sprinters run as fast and hard as they can for a short distance. But the Christian "race" cannot be run as a sprinter would; our "race" is a marathon. It takes a different kind of runner to compete in a marathon. Speed is secondary. Endurance is the key.

Many have come into God's church scorching the trail as a Kentucky Derby champion. They couldn't maintain that breakneck pace, and they broke down and fell by the wayside, while the steady, plodding Clydesdale stayed the course, enduring to the end of the race.

When we commit our lives to Jesus Christ and go into that watery grave of baptism, we have to be willing to endure unto the end. Jesus was very concerned that anyone contemplating this life-saving covenant count the cost before entering into this awesome obligation (see Luke 14:27½). Earlier Jesus warned, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

We have to endure to the end. While we tend to think this means until His feet stand on the Mount of Olives, we cannot afford to do that. Thousands of our fellow firstfruits have already met their end-many of them had no idea the very day of their "end." In our local congregation in Fort Thomas, Kentucky, alone, that has been just the case.

One of our worship leaders, shortly after services, died watching TV with his wife; our fellowship hostess passed away preparing for bed after coming home from her daughter's; another of our brethren died waiting in his car while his wife shopped (only a few days after his retirement); and my mother had roast beef thawing on the stove on her last morning. That's why enduring to the end must be a daily, ongoing process-our top priority. We cannot know when that end is.

The Bible is rife with heroes who have endured to the end. Abraham patiently endured; Moses endured, fearing not Pharaoh; and Jesus Himself willingly endured the agonizing death of the cross. (See Hebrews 6:13½; 11:24½; 12:1½)

We must never forget that our eternal reward is contingent upon our enduring to the end. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12). The rewards mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 are dependent on overcoming, or enduring.

Our endurance is the proof of our discipleship. Jesus said, "If you continue [endure] in my word, then you are my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

In Mark 4, we have the parable of the sower of the seed, which teaches a powerful lesson on enduring to the end. In verses 3½ Jesus tells of seed falling by the wayside and being devoured by birds; seed falling on stony ground where they couldn't take root; seed that fell among thorns and was choked out as they grew; and

seed that fell on good ground and bore much fruit.

Jesus then gets a little testy with His disciples for not understanding the parable, but goes on to explain in verses 14-16.

The seed is the gospel. The seed by the wayside is heard and understood, but Satan swoops in like the birds of prey and devours it. The word *devour* is quite apt, as it is the same word Peter uses in describing Satan as a roaring lion seeking whom he may *devour* (1 Peter 5:8). The evil one will use any person, any device, whether subtle or obvious, to devour, distort, and twist the precious Word of God and His church. Satan uses people to sew discord and discourage little ones in the faith, and he is often successful in devouring seed, causing the newly called not to endure to the end.

The seed on stony ground are like those we talked about earlier. They begin with the speed of a sleek stallion, but lack the endurance of a plodder. As a minister in God's church, I have encountered many who wanted to be baptized "yesterday," but only stayed a short while. Many were merely impressed by a talented speaker who said some things they agreed with; some recognized doctrines that were in sync with theirs; others were simply interested only in being "someone" within the organization. Their foundation was on something other than the Rock which is Christ, and His Word, the Holy Bible. So when a doctrine came under review, when a human leader stumbled or erred, when their "talents" weren't adequately recognized and rewarded, they stopped enduring.

The seed which grew up did well for a while and then was choked out by thorns. Jesus said they are deceived by the world's riches and they become unfruitful. The world offers a dizzying array of toys and goodies. And it seems as if the evil and the untoward get all the breaks, get away with all their indiscretions, never are held accountable. Satan works very deftly to spotlight all this. "If I wasn't tithing, I could have that big Lincoln, Caddy, or SUV." "If I work a little overtime on Saturday, that pleasure boat would be within reach." Whatever it is that appeals to us. And what about our time? Surfing the Net, computer games, movies, and TV are a lot more enticing than prayer and Bible study. "Can't miss the big game. They're only having a videotape this week, and watching baseball is resting and relaxing on the Sabbath." Satan will throw down obstacle after obstacle in our paths until Sabbath services, prayer, and study slip to fourth, fifth, tenth on our priority schedule. If we recognize anything here, it's time to go out and weed the garden, pull out the thorns and thistles that are choking the plant before it's too late.

Then there's the seed that fell on good ground. Seed firmly rooted in the truth of God, nurtured by the living water of the Word, growing and bearing much good fruit. That's where we all want to be, rooted solidly, safe from the birds of prey, free of thorns, building righteous character, growing in grace and knowledge, instant and enduring in prayer and study.

Let us always remember the admonishing words of Jesus in Matthew 20:16:
"for many are called but few chosen." And those that are chosen are they that endure
unto the end.

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God](#)
[Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

info@cgi.org

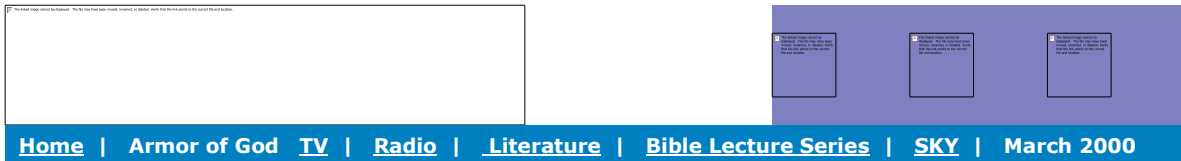
Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..



Indy Finds New Church Home

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana-The Indianapolis congregation finally has moved to a new church home. When it was announced that we would have to move from our old location, many were disappointed; we had been at our old place eleven years. Everyone had gotten attached to the meeting place, but now they see that God's hand must have been in the move.

When the new location was announced over a month ago, many went by the new place to give it a "once over" look. They liked the location, its shelter house for picnics, and the baseball diamond at the rear of the property.

Then it came time to move, and on February 5, twenty-two people gathered at the building for Sabbath services. All of them, upon entering and looking about, fully endorsed the new meeting place, and, as all the facilities are so handy, they all loved it. The men particularly liked it because there will be no more setting up and taking down tables for potlucks; they are all in place in a separate part of the building for dinners and such. And the ladies like it because the kitchen is so handy to use, and there is hot water. All agreed that the main meeting place, the "sanctuary," was comfortable, with padded pews. The sound system left a little to be desired, but that

can be overcome.

All in all, we are happy that God has led us to another place to keep His Sabbath holy, and we do invite anyone who would happen to be in the area to come by for services. It is located on the west side. The address is 1725 South Raceway Road. The time of meeting is 1 p.m. Y'all come by sometime, you hear? -*Frank Denman.*

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

info@cgi.org

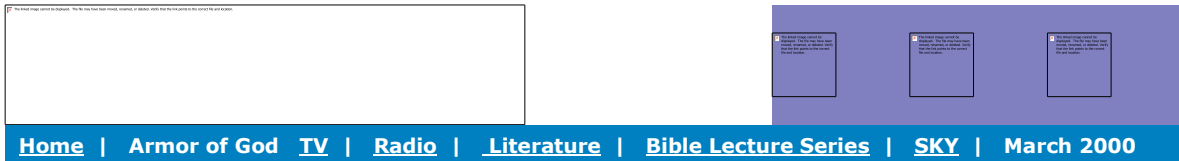
Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

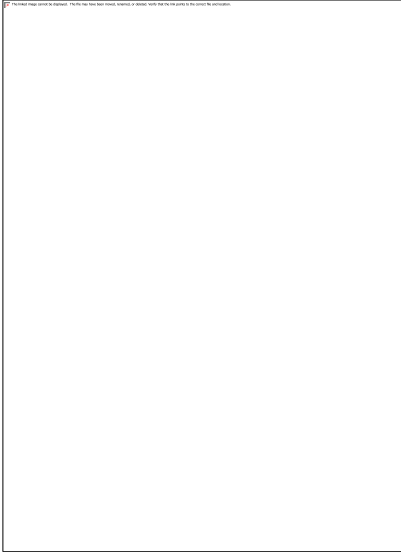
All rights reserved..



Teen Lock-In, 1999

"It provides for the young people of our church an opportunity to share with their peers at a round-table discussion their struggles "

TYLER, Texas-My wife Cindy and I came to Tyler to assist Mr. and Mrs. Ken Register, Nancy DeJarnette, and Mr. Darren Cary with the activities and supervision of the teens at this year's teen lock-in. Together with the teens from the Midwest, Tyler, and Louisiana, we experienced something I, personally, had misplaced along life's road. It's a little thing called fun!



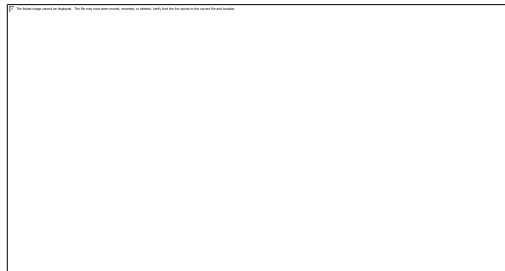
Chaperone Darren Cary (left) and Daniel DeJarnette (right) add new meaning to "in your face" basketball.

There were basketball games, floor hockey games, and a game called Pac-Man that will test the stamina of all who play it. There were card games, bingo games, a game or two of chess, a trip to the cinema, and evening videos. And last but not least, our dog Jack. From Friday evening, December 24, to Monday morning, December 27, I received the wonderful gift of reexperiencing life through the eyes of a teenager.

From "wake-up" in the mornings to "lights out" at night, there was a continuous string of activities. We were blessed on the Sabbath with an inspiring sermon by Mr. Register on the glory of Creation, followed by an absolutely delicious potluck meal provided by Tyler members of the Church of God International.

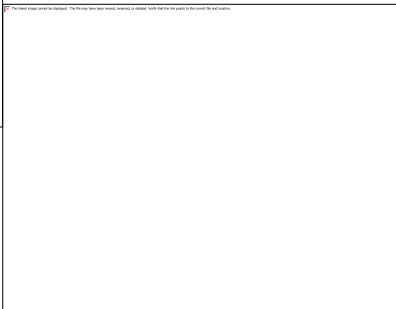
Floor hockey in action.

The teen lock-in, for those like me who have never heard of it before, is a weekend escape provided by the CGI for the youth of the church to offer to them a truly spiritual alternative to the constant bombardment of this misguided and confused world in which we all live. It is a service that needs to continue each and every year. It gives to all who attend realization through interaction that we do not struggle alone. It provides for the young people of our church an opportunity to share with their peers at a round-table discussion their struggles against such things as Christmas, bigotry, and the fact that it isn't safe to be a teenager at school anymore. They voiced their fears and frustrations and then went about the real work of having fun-*David Paul Beckerdite.*



**puzzle.
Lock-in attendant
up.**

Nancy DeJarnette



**sits with Ken
Register
as she shows off a
completed
550-piece jigsaw

Aaron Salter hams it**

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God](#)
[Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

info@cgi.org

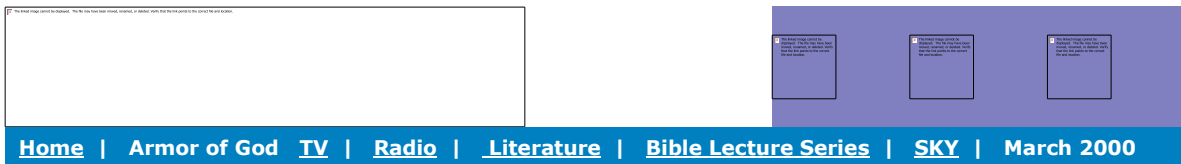
Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..



Mr. King and Old Time Religion

ATLANTA, Georgia-Do you sometimes wonder if God has forgotten all about you? Do you feel alone and separated from the people you love? There are times in all our lives when the world appears to be a cold and cavernous place. To deny having ever felt this way would be dishonest, for I truly believe each of us has experienced this at one time or another.

What do you do when this happens to you? Where do you begin in your search for the steps on the ladder tall enough to lift you out of the darkness?

Roger King, CGI elder from North Carolina, flew down to be with us in December. Due to being "fogged-out" and unable to fly into the Atlanta airport for a prior visit, this one was eagerly anticipated. Each time Mr. King comes to Atlanta, his sermon topic will meet a specific need of at least one member, but usually several, of our congregation. In our time of fellowship following each service, many of us never cease to be amazed at how Mr. King addresses issues that have yet to be made known-that is, until we remember just Who it is that provides his inspiration.

On this particular visit, Mr. King's sermon was entitled "Old Time Religion." At first it was unclear just what was meant by this title, but he soon enlightened us. Maybe the first thoughts many of us had would be the "old fashioned" way our

parents and grandparents worshiped. Depending upon where you were raised and in what religion you may have been brought up in, it could have been the all-day services intertwined with singing and dinner on the grounds. The kind of worship where people were not hesitant in sharing their joy by jumping up and down and shouting or praying aloud whenever the spirit moved them. A small group of folks bursting into song would prompt others to pull out a harmonica from a pocket or a guitar from the back of the car. But, as Mr. King soon made clear to us, the "Old Time Religion" he was referring to was that of our forefathers, our scriptural forefathers to be precise.

Prayer was the main focus of this sermon. Using many scriptural references, Mr. King showed us how certain people in the pages of our Bibles turned to God in prayer, asking Him to provide all their needs. Prayer was as natural as talking with a friend or relative. Prayer was not a matter of "if," but rather of "when." Having the faith to seek God, asking for guidance or strength to bear our burdens, or even to give everything over into His care-this is the childlike behavior expected of us. God knows of our heartaches and worries before we even voice them. But, this is the desire of God's heart: knowing His children will come to Him. It is this humble act of praying, of getting down on our knees and voicing our joys and our sorrows, that God wants from us. Mr. King also pointed out that many prayers of praise and thanksgiving were spoken even before a reply to the prayer was given. It was with confidence in the knowledge that God does not forget His own that these prayers of praise and thanks were said in advance of any response God may have given. This should encourage us all to be more diligent in making time in our busy lives to spend with our Father-and not just do all the talking, but to wait and to listen for His reply. In giving God the credit and in thanking Him in advance, we can then prepare our hearts and minds to receive His answer.

This sermon by Mr. King serves to make the point that God wants to hear from us. He needs to know that we are listening. When praying is difficult, that's when our Bible becomes a source of comfort. These scriptures found within its pages form rungs on the ladder that will lift us out of the dark and bring us back into His Light. His promises are the rays of hope that assure us we are stepping in the right direction, moving onward and upward, out of the dark cave that we sometimes find ourselves in whenever we forget to pray. We are only alone if we choose to be.

To Mr. King, thank you from all of us here in the Atlanta congregation. You are appreciated for all the effort required to be with us and in the preparation of such timely messages that so many of us need to hear. As to the sermon discussed in this article, thank you for reminding us that the "Old Time Religion" is still "good enough for me"-*Wanda Rogers*.

info@cgi.org

Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..



[Home](#) | [Armor of God](#) | [TV](#) | [Radio](#) | [Literature](#) | [Bible Lecture Series](#) | [SKY](#) | [March 2000](#)

The Pleasures of Sin

**Ahhh, the pleasures of sin. Settle down, relax,
and let's talk about them**

by Lloyd W. Cary

We read in Hebrews 11:24,5: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." We see in God's Word that there are often temporary "pleasures" in sin; otherwise, few would do it. But if it "hurt" to sin-if it was immediately painful; if we could feel the effects of sin instantaneously; if it bruised or lacerated or burned every time we sinned, we would be very careful not to sin.

Your Bible defines sin as the breaking or transgressing of God's law (1 John 3:4). Further, the wages of sin is death for all eternity (Romans 6:23).

Being finite, man's problem is spiritual and infinite. We often do not recognize that there are vacillations in the time between various acts and their penalties. Let's talk about the three stages of penalty.

Immediate penalty: as in touching a hot stove. When I was a child, I accidentally backed into a red-hot coal-burning stove and burned my elbow severely. I knew immediately that that was not the thing to do! If all sins were punished with

immediate severity, we would quickly learn that sin does not pay.

Intermediate penalty: as in leaping off a tall building. Conceivably, we could leap off a tall building or high cliff and fantasize about how much "fun" it would be on the way down. However, we usually have foresight enough to see that a severe penalty is waiting to "spank" us at the bottom of our journey.

Far-reaching penalty: as in injurious attitudes, bad health habits, or in breaking God's laws. How many of us can see far enough ahead to see the penalties that lie in store for us when the time between action and reaction-between the sin and its penalty-is protracted?

Ecclesiastes 8:11 tells us, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." The "lag time" between sin and its penalty is often very seductive, allowing us to deceive ourselves that we are getting away with something. Although we can see the cause and effect when we touch a hot stove, or the folly of jumping off a high edifice, how many of us can see far enough ahead to realize the penalties we will incur if, for example, we maintain injurious attitudes in our relationship with God or our fellow man? Proverbs 23:7 tells us that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. Evil thoughts engender evil deeds. Continuing, how many foresee the disastrous effects of smoking, overeating, or overdrinking? And how many comprehend the wages of directly violating any of God's other commandments, such as committing adultery, stealing, or Sabbathbreaking? Do we really see sin as God sees sin, or do we try to rationalize our way around it?

Seen from a "God's eye" view, the pleasures of sin are but momentary and end in misery and death.

God said in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Let us choose life over the pleasures of sin.

Self-Examination

Let us examine ourselves, not just once a year at Passover time, but every day, through the eyeglasses of God's Word. Let us see sin as God sees sin. Let us turn to God with all our heart, mind, and strength (Luke 10:27).

Now let us skip back to the time Israel was captive in Egypt. Egypt was a type of sin. Israel was a type of the church-and ultimately of us as individuals. Pharaoh was a type of Satan and his demons.

When God brought Jacob and his house into Egypt long before the time of Moses, did He know they would multiply and become slaves in Egypt for 400 years?

Positively yes! We read in Genesis 15:13, "And He said unto Abram, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.'" Then *why* did God do it? I think that is a fair question. When we see what God had in mind and how He delivered Israel from Egypt, we see a pattern of how God delivers His people from sin.

God freed Israel by invoking ten great plagues upon Egypt-one upon each of their major "gods" (see side bar).

Why did God deliver Israel this way? First Corinthians 10:11 tells us, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." God was showing Israel, their captors, and His people today who and what God is-who and what is the ultimate authority!

Do you think God could have just "tweaked" Pharaoh's mind? Absolutely, just as He stirred up, roused, and inspired many throughout history. Instead, He chose to reveal Himself and His mighty power through mighty miracles.

When we are called into God's truth we must come to the same crossroad: we must decide who and what is our ultimate authority. Is it our past notions or ideas? Our old friends, family, or the opinions of others? Is it our politics or philosophy? Or is it our own emotions, feelings, wants, or desires? Whatever comes between you and the true God is nothing less than a form of idolatry-and it must go!

All apostasy begins with questioning what God said, and raising up a second authority equal to or superior to it. When two authorities conflict, the deciding authority then becomes a third authority-a judge-between the other two. We must constantly beware that we are not put into the compromising position of putting our own views, wants, and habits ahead of the Bible, thus "judging" God's Word.

If you find yourself becoming confused or uncertain about a doctrine or issue, perhaps there is some conflicting, alternate "authority" plaguing your mind. Have you been viewing the Word of God through the eyes of men, or are you viewing the ideas of men through the eyes of God and His Word? Let no man deceive you: compromise leads to sin.

Consider the example of Adam and Eve. The very first thing Satan did was to question what God said: "Yea, hath God said ?" (Genesis 3:1). He next raised up a second alternative with promises and logical-sounding arguments. Eve, listening to the tempter, weighed the arguments and decided to "experiment." She became, in effect, the third or final authority. She "judged" God's Word and found it wanting. Regrettably, Eve made the wrong choice.

If God has called you, He has opened your mind and shown you the false gods-the idols, and the wrong behavioral patterns-in your life, just as surely as He has

shown and called Israel out the idolatry and paganism of Egypt.

God is showing us our faults, our sins, our idols today-not by horrendous plagues-but by and through His Spirit and His holy days. Consider the Days of Unleavened Bread. God chose leaven as an agent to remind us of our sins because

1. Like sin, leaven is usually *invisible* (we often have trouble seeing our own sins unless we really look for them).

2. Like sin, leaven is all around us, *everywhere* (often where you least expect it).

3. Like sin, leaven *puffs up* (makes us proud, complacent, and indifferent).

We need to diligently search out the leaven of sin in our lives and cast it out as though our lives depended upon it-because it does.

"If Baal be god, serve him...but if God is God, serve Him" (1 Kings 18:21)! When God calls us out, it is a miraculous intervention in our lives (John 6:44). When we are called, we, like Israel, have three choices:

1. We can return to Egypt and the pleasures of sin. (We can give up, return to our old ways of life.)

2. We can "camp out" in the wilderness of sin. (We can wander through life murmuring, compromising, and deceiving ourselves that we are "in tight" with God, not realizing that we are spiritually wretched, poor, blind, and naked- Revelation 3:17).

3. We can move with haste to the Promised Land. (We can change, grow, and overcome, putting away our sins and drawing close to God through meditation, Bible study, and prayer.)

Let us examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5), put sin out of our lives, get behind the work that Jesus Christ has called us to do (Matthew 28:19,20), and move ahead to the Promised Land!

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)



The 'Rest' of the Story

The Sabbath can be traced back to Creation. It was prominent in the Ten Commandments and it was observed by Jesus and the apostles-and many thousands keep it today. But are we short- changing God's Sabbath? Are we guilty of treating it as just "a day off"? If you can wrap your mind around-or better yet, embrace-the full spiritual implications of the Sabbath, you'll be able to revolutionize your weekly Sabbathkeeping!

by Darren M. Cary

You're tired after working a full week. The boss has been riding your back, you lost some important clients, and you had to work late four evenings in a row.

But since you keep not just the Nine but the *Ten* Commandments, you are blessed to have "a day off." Late Friday afternoon, the strained muscles in your neck and the tense look on your face begin to loosen up and relax, for you know that God said there are six days in which to do all your work, but you are to rest on the seventh day, the Sabbath.

What a commandment! What a blessing to have a regularly "approved" day off of work each week!

But answer this: Does the Sabbath's value rest only in the fact that it's "a day off"? Is that the limit of the Sabbath's meaning and purpose? Are we, above all others, God's *true* children merely because we know which day not to work?

Let's get a grip on the Sabbath's primary value so we as God's people can more fully rejoice on His Sabbath day! To begin our short study, let's go to the beginning.

Creation and the Sabbath

God prepared the earth during Creation Week for one purpose: so it would be suitable for the habitation of His ultimate creation, man. On day one of Creation, God said, "'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good" (Genesis 1:3,4). On day two, God made the sky (verse 8). On the third day, He made land, seas, plants, and trees, and "God saw that it was good" (verse 12). The next day He made the lights in the sky to govern the day and the night. "And God saw that it was good" (verse 18). On the fifth day God created the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. "And God saw that it was good" (verse 21).

Now on the sixth day, after creating the rest of the animals, "God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (verse 27). After creating His masterpiece-man-God looked at all He had created, and it wasn't just "good"; "it was *very* good" (verse 31).

The Creation narrative is written in such a way that separates man from the animals. The days of Creation found their climax in the creation of man. Man is set apart; he's on a higher level. God made man in His own image. While man is not exactly like God, he has been given many of God's attributes. Man was given dominion over the earth, and he was created with the ability to think, decide, create, solve problems, and express a wide range of emotions. The mind of man is markedly of greater brilliance than that of any of the animals. The reason for all this is that God made us to be His own children, to fellowship with Him and with fellow man as members of God's family.

After His "magnum opus," the creation of man, God rested from all of His labor. "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done" (2:3).

Don't miss the significance. After placing man on this specially prepared earth-man being the pinnacle of Creation Week-God rested. He rested not because His divine energies were sapped, not because He was exhausted from an exceptionally hard week's work, but because He had finally created the first of His children.

Simply put, with the advent of man, God's work of Creation was over-and so He entered into rest, waiting with open arms to be joined in this rest by His children.

The Fall of Man

But our first parents, Adam and Eve, ignored the invitation-that is, they did not comply with the loving direction of their Father. The story of their "fall" in the Garden of Eden is told in the second and third chapters of Genesis.

The Creator told Adam and Eve that they could eat the fruit of all the trees in the Garden-almost. There were two noteworthy trees in the middle of the Garden: one

was the tree of life, and the other was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The latter was the only tree in the Garden that God strictly forbade to be used for food. The penalty for disobedience was death.

But the crafty, cunning serpent (representative of a higher embodiment of evil-see Romans 16:20 and Revelation 12:9) led Eve astray from the clear parameters drawn and issued by God. She disobeyed and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and she in turn caused Adam to commit this same sin of disobedience. Now, unlike before when man was innocent and when God described His creation as "very good," there was sin in the world. This sin separated man from full fellowship with God (cf. Isaiah 59:1), and thus man was violently removed from the "rest" God intended to share with him-thanks, in part, to the serpent's diabolical influence.

In the end, however, the serpent will not stand the victor. "You will crawl on your belly," God told the serpent, "and you will eat dust all the days of your life" (verse 14). God was not talking about the snake's diet or how it will carry itself bodily; He was describing the certainty of his utter defeat (cf. Psalm 72:9; Isaiah 49:23; 65:25; Micah 7:17). The serpent won the battle but will lose the war.

In His grace, God provided a means to rescue man and restore him to full rest and fellowship with his Creator. He poetically described the means when He told the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; *he will crush your head*, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

We understand that her "offspring," ultimately, was Jesus Christ, who figuratively "stomped on the devil" through His earthly life's work-notably His death and bodily resurrection.

This truth is well stated in Hebrews 2:14,15: "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might *destroy* him who holds the power of death-that is, *the devil*-and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."

Israel and the Sabbath

Because of sin, which came into the world at the beginning, "death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses" (Romans 5:14). Through Abraham, and later through Moses, God was working out His plan for man's redemption-to bring him back into His rest and fellowship.

In the time of Moses, God thundered out the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai to the children of Israel, who had until recently been slaves in Egypt. Prominent in these great commandments was the Fourth:

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates" (Exodus 20:8; 1½).

The physical aspect of the Sabbath is not easy to misunderstand. It is simply: don't work. The Israelites were told to "remember" the Sabbath because they had previously been given instructions pertaining to the Sabbath as it related to gathering their food, or "manna" (chapter 16).

But within the Fourth Commandment a reason-a meaning-is given:

"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (verse 11; see also 31:17).

This commandment pointed back to the Creation described in the first two chapters of Genesis. As we saw earlier, this "Creation" involved God specially preparing the earth for man, who, unlike any of the other creatures, was created after God's own "image" and "likeness." Man was uniquely created to enjoy a perfect familial relationship with God-pure and untainted by sin. But unfortunately Adam and Eve disobeyed God, separating themselves from God. Their iniquity prevented them from having the proper relationship that their holy God so desired to have with them.

By the time Moses repeated the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, in preparation for the people's entrance into the land of promise, the Sabbath commandment had picked up a national meaning as well. The basic premise, though, was the same. He said, "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. *Therefore* the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day" (verse 15). The Israelites were in bondage while in Egypt, but God delivered them and was bringing them rest.

But after the people of Israel came out from under Egyptian bondage, and after they saw many miraculous signs and wonders from God, they repeatedly proved themselves rebellious and unbelieving. Their sinful hearts so angered God that, even though He said, "I have forgiven them" (Numbers 14:20), He avowed that "not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers" (verse 23).

Listen to how the insightful Psalmist described God's judgment against these rebellious people:

"For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest'" (Psalm 95:10,11).

While that generation was not permitted to enter the promised land, the next generation did enter it. Moses did not enter, however, because in his anger he showed disrespect to God's holiness in the sight of the Israelites (Numbers 20:12); so Joshua the son of Nun was commissioned to be Moses' successor, to lead the children of Israel into the land (Numbers 27:18½). Joshua would finally lead the people into the land of "rest"-their home sweet home-out from under the tyranny of foreign powers.

The Remaining "Sabbath-Rest"

Let's turn our attention now to the book of Hebrews. In the clearest way, chapters 3 and 4 bring out the fullness of the Sabbath's meaning for us. The context of the entire book, of course, is the superiority of Christ. He is greater than the angels, greater than Moses, greater than the Levitical priesthood, greater than the old system of animal sacrifices. The book of Hebrews, then, which includes discussions on various "Jewish" practices from a profoundly Christian perspective, should force us to see the Fourth Commandment in a brand-new light-one that enhances and brings greater meaning to our worship.

Chapter 3 of Hebrews says to "fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess" (verse 1). But even after you "fix your thoughts on Jesus," says the writer, you must guard your heart from going astray; you must guard against turning to unbelief. "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God" (verse 12).

Ancient Israel is aptly used to illustrate this kind of unbelief (3:7½). In verses 7½, the writer quotes from Psalm 95, which describes the sinfulness of those in Moses' time whose hearts went astray in the wilderness. As we've read, it concludes with, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest'" (verse 11).

The writer then reiterates and reinforces why the children of Israel were forbidden entrance into the "rest," or promised land. They "*rebelled*" (verse 16); they "*sinned*" (verse 17); they "*disobeyed*" (verse 18). "So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their *unbelief*" (verse 19). We should learn from their wrong example. We should avoid rebellion, sin, disobedience, and unbelief, because if we do, we read that we can enter a "rest" that is much more valuable than any land inheritance.

Now let's read chapter 4, uninterrupted, verses 1 through 11:

"Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. *Now we who have believed enter that rest*, just as God has said, 'So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."'"

"And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: 'And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.' And again in the passage above he says, 'They shall never enter my rest.'

"It *still remains* that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.' For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There *remains*, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters *God's rest* also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to *enter* that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience."

If you followed along with the context, this passage should be crystal clear!

God rested on the seventh day of Creation. This rest-God's rest-is the one "we who have believed" enter into. It is called "his rest" (verse 1), "that rest" (verses 3,6,11), and "God's rest" (verse 10), and God calls it "my rest" (verses 3,5). And only those who refuse to follow Israel's "example of disobedience" may enter; all others "will fall" (verse 11).

When the writer says we can enter "rest," he's not saying that Christians literally enter the land of Canaan promised to Abraham. We enter a *superior* rest. The promised-land rest only typified the ultimate redemptive rest we can have in God. Israel, because of her "disobedience," was eventually taken captive and scattered from the land anyway, so it wasn't a true, permanent rest after all.

The ultimate "rest," however, contrasted with the promised-land rest, is full spiritual communion with God. The Israelites could have entered this kind of rest eventually had they been obedient and pursued it by faith (4:2; cf. Romans 9:32), but they did not. That's why the writer of Hebrews says, "For if Joshua had given them rest [*true* rest], God would not have spoken later about another day" (Hebrews 4:8). They received a kind of temporary "rest," but not the "real deal" which the promised-land rest typified.

Most significant is this: While it was Joshua who led the Israelites into *their* rest, it is Jesus Christ who leads spiritual Israelites into "God's rest"! In other words, compliant with the theme of the book of Hebrews, *the Sabbath points to Jesus Christ our Savior!*

Don't let anyone hoodwink you into believing the Sabbath is archaic, useless, or in any way void of Christian relevance. Looking back, from this side of the cross, we have twenty-twenty vision. We can see the full richness of meaning that has been

intrinsic to the Sabbath all along-going all the way back to day seven!

Many Sundaykeepers will object to modern-day Sabbathkeeping by saying, "But Jesus is our Sabbath, so since we have the Reality we don't need to keep the old law."

And to be honest, they're right about Jesus being our "Sabbath." Of course, He's not the seventh day of the week-and the Fourth Commandment was *definitely* speaking of days of the week-but still it is just as plain that He is our "Sabbath" in the same sense that He is "our Passover lamb" (1 Corinthians 5:7) or our "high priest" (Hebrews 3:1).

But does this mean the Sabbath command is now abrogated, abolished, or designated as a "Jewish custom"? Don't be hasty to jump to conclusions.

The apostles continued going to the synagogues long after the ascension of Christ. "*Every Sabbath*," while the apostle Paul was in Corinth, "he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and *Greeks*" (Acts 18:4).

After Paul's sermon to Jews and gentiles in Psidian Antioch, he and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue when the gentiles "invited them to speak further about these things on the *next Sabbath*" (13:42). So "the *next Sabbath* almost the whole city [including many gentiles] gathered to hear the word of the Lord" (verse 44). If it was Paul's eager ambition to demolish Sabbathkeeping in his time, he certainly did not help his cause here. He continued to speak to Jews and gentiles on the Sabbath day.

But there is an often-ignored aspect of the Sabbath which should be considered by our Sundaykeeping friends: *The Sabbath's "rest" will not be fulfilled completely until the Second Coming!*

This is most important to note! It's true that certain things such as the Sabbath "are a shadow of the things that were to come," and that "the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Colossians 2:17; see also Hebrews 10:1). *But since we are still looking forward to the Second Coming, which will be the consummation of our rest in Him, the Sabbath's meaning has yet to be exhausted!*

Rest and fellowship with God cannot be fully had while we are mortal flesh, subject to aches, pains, weaknesses, sin, and death. But the time is coming when we will see the returning Lord Jesus Christ, "who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21).

When we are freed from the burden of our earthly bodies, then we will truly be free. The apostle Paul writes that we, "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the *redemption* of our bodies.

For in this hope we are saved..." (Romans 8:23,24).

If our rest in Christ is fully completed now, then Paul would not have written (in context of the future resurrection), "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (1 Corinthians 15:19), or, "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be *made alive* [from the dead]" (verse 22; cf. Romans 5:18).

So now that we know all of this, what should you be doing *now*?

You and the Sabbath

If you are not entering it already, you need to enter into God's rest. You have the knowledge and understanding it takes to enter, but you need to repent of your sins while you still have this window of opportunity. That's what it means when the writer of Hebrews says that God has "set a certain day, calling it Today," and quotes the Psalmist saying, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). Right now is your window of opportunity-your "Today"-and it is up to you to soften your heart, to believe, to obey God and His commandments through faith in Jesus Christ. That opportunity "still stands" for *you*! Learn from the mistakes of Israel, for their sins and consequences "occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did....These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Corinthians 10:6,11).

Jesus Himself invites you to enter His "Sabbath-rest." Just before He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath day to pick some heads of grain, and before He healed a man on that same day, Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, *and I will give you rest*. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28,29). Submit yourself to Jesus, who "is Lord of the Sabbath" (12:8).

Start by praying to God through Jesus Christ. Thank Him for the knowledge of His truth, and for giving you an open invitation to enter His rest while it is still called "Today." Thank Him for the weekly Sabbath which beautifully typifies the plan He has set in motion from the creation of the world. Obey God. Keep His commandments-all of them. Love Him with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself (22:37½).

Next, if you can, why not find a church near you to worship with this Sabbath? Scripture admonishes, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). Since the Sabbath pictures fellowship with God, it is only logical that we should also fellowship with others in whom the Spirit of God lives and dwells. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (verse 24).

If you would like to know where a Church of God International congregation is meeting near you, call, write, or e-mail us today and we'll be happy to direct you.

If you're already regularly attending church each Sabbath, don't let it become a sleepy, boring, predictable routine. Be prepared ahead of time and come with the right attitude and mind-set. It is good-especially on the Sabbath-to heed this exhortation: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (12:2,3).

Conclusion

The Sabbath, then, is not just "a day off" from work. This holy day points both to the salvation we can have in Jesus Christ now and to the ultimate salvation we will receive in Him at His Second Coming. Realizing this will help us make the transition from seeing Sabbathkeeping as simply an old "Jewish" law, or as a law that's severely limited in meaning, to experiencing the full Christological and redemptive significance that its observance pictures.

But whether you enter God's fellowship, and whether you fellowship with His children, is up to you-now that you know the "rest" of the story.

All Scripture quotations were taken from the New International Version.

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

info@cgi.org

Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..



[Home](#) | [Armor of God](#) | [TV](#) | [Radio](#) | [Literature](#) | [Bible Lecture Series](#) | [SKY](#) | March 2000

The Forgotten Holy Day

It is usually overshadowed by the other holy days, and some have minimized its importance. But what can be gleaned from the Last Day of Unleavened Bread?

by Bob Swimm

As winter finally loosens its icy grip, and the signs of life return to the landscape and flora, once again the spring holy days and all of their rich tapestry take center stage in the life of a Christian.

There is reflection on the sacrifice of our Savior, and on the Father's willingness to allow it because of His great love for us; there is self-examination of our spiritual state; and there is physical preparation for the Days of Unleavened Bread. And then we observe and act out the very plan of salvation as ordained by and through the holy days of the Bible.

First we partake of the Lord's Supper, or New Testament Passover, established by Jesus on the night He was to be betrayed by Judas. We humbly wash one another's feet, following the example set by the Master Himself (John 13:13½), and then comes the renewal of our covenant: eating the bread of life as Jesus explained in John 6, and drinking the blood of Christ, represented by the wine, for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:26½; Luke 22:19,20).

The following evening, just as the ancient Israelites came out of the slavery of Pharaoh and Egypt, we come out of the slavery of Satan and sin with a high hand, celebrating a "night to be much observed unto the Lord" (Exodus 12:42). For seven days we put leavened bread and other products out of our homes and eat unleavened bread, for, during this brief period, leaven represents sin and unleavened bread represents Jesus Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 8:1½ note that this was written thirty or so years after Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, and that the New Testament church was still observing these feast days).

Then comes the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Precious little is said about this holy day, other than it is one of the feasts of the Lord, and that on it there shall be a solemn assembly, and that no servile work is to be done on this day (see Exodus 13:6; Leviticus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:8). Some have minimized the importance of this day, but there is much to be gleaned from the Last Day of Unleavened Bread.

At the start of the spring holy days, we embark on a journey as surely as they did on that initial Passover. We are enjoined on a mission.

On the old "Mission Impossible" television series, each episode began with

Dan Briggs receiving a tape, some photos and instructions about what needed to be done, and how to accomplish the mission.

Imagine our "mission" going something like this:

Good morning child of God,

The person you're looking at is Satan the devil. Years ago he sought to pursue the children of Israel, recapture them, and either kill them or return them to Egypt. Now he's trying to destroy God's church, return His children to sin, and ultimately destroy them. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to identify Satan for what he is, get leaven (sin) out of your life, put the unleavened bread (Jesus Christ) into your life, and drown Satan in the Red Sea as surely as was Pharaoh.

When you need help, seek this Person, Jesus, and He'll help you. If you or any of your fellow saints are snared or entrapped, the Lord will come to your aid.

This Message, the Holy Bible, will never destruct. Good luck!

Or maybe something like that.

The seven-day journey that led the children of Israel to the Red Sea on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread not only parallels our seven-day festival "mission," but is a microcosm of our Christian walk.

When the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He did not take them through the land of the Philistines because He feared that if they saw the war, they would become afraid and want to go back to the slavery of Egypt (Exodus 13:17). He was concerned about them, and for good reason. After a short while God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh set out after the Israelites to bring them back. Despite all the miracles God had performed-leading them as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night-in less than a week their faith failed, they turned on Moses, and they wanted to return to Egypt and serve Pharaoh (Exodus 14:11; 1/2).

The Christian comes up out of the waters of baptism (and from the renewal of baptism at the New Testament Passover) clean and pure, out of sin with a high hand. But our "Pharaoh," Satan, comes after us with a much more savage fury to take us back to sin. And it's so easy if we don't follow through with our "mission."

We have to remember that God's words to the Israelites are to us, too: "...I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians [cf. Satan and his minions], and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm..." (6:6). We must remember that He is our cloud by day and pillar of fire by night also.

As we heard in our "tape," we need to go to Jesus when we're snared or

entrapped. In Luke 4:18, Jesus said He was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance (from the slavery of sin), and to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

There's an old hymn, "Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave It There." One of the lines says, "If you'll trust Him and never doubt He will surely help you out, take your burdens to the Lord and leave it there." This is a paraphrase of Matthew 11:28: "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The Israelites were trapped at the Red Sea and they were afraid; oftentimes we stand at our "Red Sea" and are afraid.

This Last Day of Unleavened Bread teaches us that we are as helpless as they were-just as trapped-of and by ourselves. God used the occasion of this holy day to give them physical salvation and get honor against Pharaoh. And He uses this day to give us spiritual salvation and get honor against Satan. The mission we embarked upon leads to the Red Sea. We can grumble, give up, and return to Egypt (sin) as they wanted to do; or we can heed the words of Moses: "Fear you not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord....The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:13,14).

This "forgotten" holy day offers us this choice. If we choose wisely, we will march triumphantly, following our Moses-Jesus Christ our Passover-through the Red Sea and into the Kingdom of God!

[Television and Radio Log](#) || [Armor of God Literature](#) || [Statement of Beliefs](#) || [Bible Lecture Series](#)
[The Feast of Tabernacles](#) || [Local Congregations](#) || [SKY](#)

info@cgi.org

Copyright 1994 - 2000 by

The Church of God, International

P.O. Box 2525, Tyler, Texas 75710

903-825-2525

All rights reserved..