

Spreading the Good News of the Coming Kingdom of God

October 2007

UNSHAKEABLE

Special Feast Issue

KINGDOM



**Unjust Rulership -
On Its Way Out!**

UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM

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ABOUT THE COVER:

CHRIST'S REIGN VS. THE KINGDOMS OF MAN

Over the centuries, mankind has attempted many various forms of rulership. Inevitably, every attempt has ended in failure. As we in the United States witness the demise of the most wealthy and successful form of government the world has ever known, it makes sense to ask: How will God's government be different? What will enable it to work, and to last throughout eternity? And...how can we practice to become leaders and teachers under the government of God? This issue focuses on this theme.



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Does our personal appearance, and the way we present ourselves, matter to God?



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FROM THE PASTOR...

Welcome to the Unshakeable Kingdom!



This is a magazine dedicated to the Great Creator God. It is a magazine that intends in every article to glorify the Father and lift up His Son Jesus Christ. This magazine is unique in presenting a view of religion that you may have never considered. Today, many believe that they know Jesus Christ, yet they really know very little about Him and the message He brought to mankind as revealed in the Bible.

We will bring you the message from the Father that reveals the mystery of the age we live in and what is in store for mankind. The mystery includes the revelation of who and what God is, who and what angels and evil spirits are, who and what man is, why this present civilization is as it is, who and what Israel is, why the Church exists, and lastly, but certainly not least, what the Kingdom of God is.

Christ came with a message from God—a message little understood in this day and age. The message He brought was not only about who He was but also of the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Mark 1:14-15: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’ ” That message is tailored to a small group of faithful followers who would believe the message and take that message into their minds intellectually and into their hearts to truly live the way of

God. It is not meant for all mankind today because they have been blinded. Mankind cannot understand until God removes the veil covering their eyes so they can see and hear the real Gospel.

“But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that ‘Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.’ ” (Mark 4:10-12).

This is a magazine for those whom God is calling to His truth. “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me” (John 6:44-45).

I hope that it will be of value in our search for that truth.

Ronald W. Laughland
Pastor

Looking Into the WORLD TOMORROW



By Herbert W. Armstrong

Before the Feast of Tabernacles, we need to be reminded again why God ordained this Festival and the true significance of this year's Feast.

(Reprinted from the Good News Magazine, Sept. 1984)

Let's be sure we understand what our lives are all about! Here we are in the [beginning of the 21st 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 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 SALVATION! 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 eighth 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.

Our impact

When this Festival brings [us] into a community for eight days, the impact on that area [can be PHENOMENAL]! The entire community wonders what these people will be like. Anticipating the worst (having experienced other large [groups]), and yet hoping for the best, each area in its own particular ways girds for 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 con-

verted 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 WORK* and

glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Drinking, for example, *is a part* of this festival 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* (Continued on page 13)



Appropriate Appearance... *Does it Matter?*

By Loni B. Styer

*Does God expect us to dress in certain ways when we work? When we play?
How about when we come before Him at church services?*

We've all been in the situation where a parent or an authority figure said, "You're not leaving this house looking like *that!*"

Maybe it wasn't our clothes they were talking about...it might have been a hairstyle, a tattoo, a piercing or some other fashion that was alien to their way of thinking.

Does our appearance really matter? Does God have some-

thing to say about our appearance?

Let's look at 1 Cor. 10:31: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Yes, this is talking about the way we dress, too. We should plan our apparel to be neat, modest, and becoming. The temple God has given us should bring honor and glory to Him at all times. If your mode of dressing calls attention to your body rather

than the Christian person you are within, it becomes sin.

Clothing in general should not be worn to call undue attention to ourselves; it should be modest as well as attractive. What matters is how God thinks of us, not what others might think of us.

Our Father is a God of quality and fashion, and we should also strive to dress in quality when it allows. Christ will adorn His

bride with fine jewels and clothing when He returns. “I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth...” (Ezek 16:10-13). Our Creator has taste.

We should dress appropriately for the occasion. You would not wear a formal dress to a baseball game, or jeans to a formal meeting like church.

In the 70s when the church was going off track, more and more women began wearing pants to church and not really caring how they presented themselves before their Creator. With a lukewarm attitude, our hearts cannot be right before God.

When we go to church, a place where we worship in the very presence of God Himself, we should try to wear our best. If that happens to be jeans, then nobody should judge you for that. But in general, the appropriate clothing would be dresses for the ladies (not mini-skirts — remember to not call undue attention to yourself), and suits or dress pants and a nice shirt for the guys.

When we go swimming, the appropriate clothing to wear is a bathing suit. There are modest and clean-cut bathing suits on the

market that will not call undue attention to your body. This doesn't mean you have to find a total body coverup suit. Be modest and balanced in all things. If the suit doesn't cover appropriately, more than likely you're drawing undue attention to yourself.

One might think that surely the Bible doesn't mention what hair styles are appropriate. But let's look at 1 Cor. 11:14: “Does not



even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.”

Here we see that Jesus Christ does not approve of men having long hair and therefore did not have long hair Himself while He was here on this earth. And ladies are to wear their hair in a way that it is a glory to them. Under Mr. Armstrong's leadership, we were taught that a lady should have her hair covering her neck and in a lady-like fashion

so there is no mistaking her for a man.

Ladies are to dress and act like ladies and men like men. God made us the way He intended us to be, and we should give Him honor and glory in this way. Be thankful that you are who you are, knowing that God has a wonderful plan for you.

Okay, we've looked at clothing and hair. Does the Bible say anything about body piercing and tattoos? Now let's look at 1 Cor. 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; *therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*” Being balanced and modest is the key here. Someone with tattoos and piercings all over his body is obviously drawing undue attention to himself. This does not reflect an attitude of glorifying God.

Our bodies are the temple of God. The way we dress and the way we take care of ourselves show an attitude. If we are truly trying to please God from the heart, we would want to please Him in every thing. Before you buy or put on that next outfit, before you are tempted to get another body piercing or a tattoo, before you streak your hair with all the colors of the rainbow or cut it in a sort of strange way, just ask yourself, “Am I bringing honor and glory to my Creator?” Remember, your body really belongs to God. Are you taking care of it appropriately? □



Why Did The Whole House of Israel Become Slaves?

By Ronald W. Laughland

Many have taken the sin of Sabbath-breaking as a light thing in the eyes of God. God gave the Ten Commandments, not as suggestions, but as inviolate directions on how a true Christian should live.

In the books of Kings and Chronicles, we see recorded the history of ancient Israel. The dual sins of Jeroboam are listed many times — Sabbath-breaking and idolatry. Sin is sin, and whatever

is sin for Israel is sin for the Gentiles as well. God hates sin! He will punish those who choose to commit sin for their own good!

What happened to Israel when they stopped keeping the Sabbath as God had commanded them thereby committing a sin in the eyes of God? He allowed King Shalmaneser and Sargon of Assyria to invade, conquer and take them away into captivity. Later, the Kingdom of Judah was also in-

vaded, conquered and its inhabitants taken away as slaves to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. From there they would eventually migrate northwestward, and in time, they were scattered around the world.

Both the House of Israel and the House of Judah were taken from their lands as national punishment because they broke the Sabbath command. If one violates the Sabbath continually, and it appears that

he is not going to repent from the wrongdoing, then God takes action to wake up any who would disobey His commandment!

God is merciful, and He gives a person time to realize his sin and time to repent from sinning. However, when it appears that unless one is “shaken to their knees” and will not repent, God allows the penalty of what is done to make one realize the error of his ways, so that he will repent and change and do it His way.

A Christian should try with all his heart to never violate the Sabbath! If one did violate the Sabbath, he should immediately get on his knees and ask God to forgive him and to help him to do his best to keep the Sabbath day Holy for the rest of his lifetime here on earth. But one might wonder if it makes any difference to us today that the House of Israel and the House of Judah violated the Sabbath and were severely punished for it.

One should recall that God “is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). What applied back then still applies to us today. God does not change!

Let us look at why the Kingdom of Judah—the Jews—was conquered and taken into Babylonian captivity.

The Prophet Nehemiah explains why they had been punished and taken into captivity seventy years before. “In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, and I testified against them in the

day wherein they sold victuals... Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, ‘what evil thing is this that you do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not our fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath’” (Nehemiah 13:15, 17-18, AKJV).

Now, that is plain language and easy to understand!

Seventy years after that captivity, Jeremiah explains that many of the House of Judah returned to

*What applied back then
still applies to us today.
God does not change!*

Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple and to restore worship there “For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place” (Jeremiah 29:10). Judah was punished for breaking the Sabbath continually as a way of life! They were God’s chosen people; therefore, it was important that they be punished for their sins to set an example for the rest of the world. If God had not punished them for their continued disobedience, it would have set an extremely bad precedent for the rest of mankind.

Working on the Sabbath is profaning the Day that God had made Holy. Doing business and all manner of work and/or seeking your own pleasure on the Sabbath is a sin that is punishable by eternal death “For the wages of sin is

death...” (Rom. 6:23). The people of the Kingdom of Judah had been warned, and they were without excuse! Jeremiah the Prophet warned them: “Thus saith the LORD; take heed to yourselves and bear no burden on the Sabbath day...neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers...But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day and not bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in the gates thereof and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and it shall not be quenched” (Jeremiah 17: 21-22, 27).

The Kingdom of Judah did not heed God’s warning voiced through Jeremiah and so, “...in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzardan, captain of the guard...”—today, we would call him general of the army, or field marshal—“...which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem and burned the House of the LORD, and the king’s house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire” (Jeremiah 52:12-13).

Always take God’s warnings seriously because the punishment is swift and sure! What happened to Judah and Israel were warnings and examples for our people today, because the people of our modern day House of Israel are following closely the same pattern of disobedience that ancient Israel and Judah did! Our punishment is coming—and it is not far off!

Now, let us look at the kingdom

of Israel. The ten tribes of Israel were taken into captivity 117 years prior to the captivity of the kingdom of Judah. In the days of Moses, God gave the people a choice. It was long before they were divided into two nations. We can read about them in Leviticus 26: “Ye shall make no idols nor graven images...to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD” (verses 1-2).

In verses 3-13, God made promises of wealth, national peace, and national rule which would have led to world dominance, if they had obeyed. They would receive those promises if they obeyed, or they would be punished if they rebelled. Notice that God only mentioned two commandments, those against idolatry and Sabbath-breaking. They would receive all the promises “*IF* ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them” (verse 3).

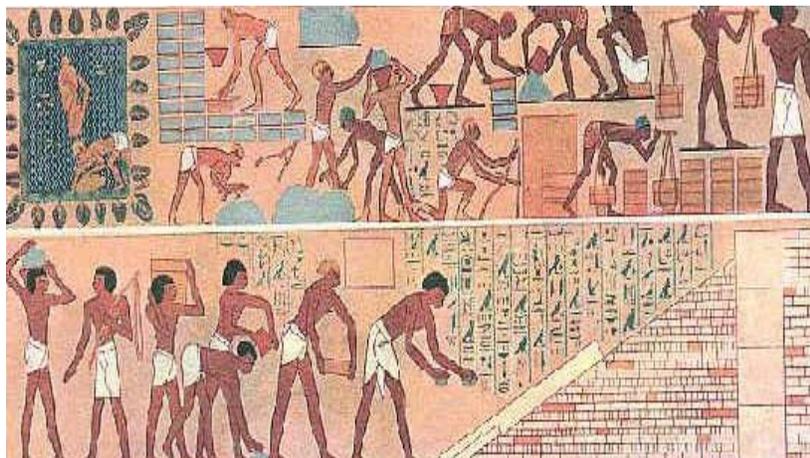
But God warned them what would happen “...if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments” (verse 14). God warned them that, if they refused to obey those commandments, they would suffer sickness and disease and be invaded, conquered and driven from their land as slaves. They would lose all prosperity for a period of 2,520 years (verses 14-33).

God had made a special covenant with them involving the Sabbath (see Exodus 31:12-17) that

was binding for all eternity. It was by obedience to the Sabbath command that the True God would be identified and made known to them, and it identified them as God’s obedient people. It was not to identify them as Israelites, or as a nationality other than Gentile. It was to identify them as God’s people.

When the kingdom of Israel divided into two nations, the ten tribes of the House of Israel made Jeroboam their king. The first thing he did was to introduce idolatry and Sabbath-breaking...the very two commandments that God had stated when telling them of the promises He would give if they would obey Him and the punishment they would receive if they disobeyed.

They did not heed the warning God gave them, and consequently, they were invaded by King



Shalmaneser of Assyria. The kingdom of Israel was defeated and taken into captivity as slaves. God gave the Prophet Ezekiel a message that was directed to the House of Israel (not to the House of Judah). Remember, Ezekiel was among the Jewish captives, and not with the House of Israel. Ezekiel could not get to the House of Is-

rael to give them the message. But God had him preserve the message in writing for them.

God gave Ezekiel that message more than a hundred years after Israel had gone into captivity to Assyria. By that time Babylon had already defeated Assyria. The House of Israel had migrated northwesterly into Western Europe, France, Belgium, Holland, the Scandinavian countries and the British Isles—where most of them still are to this day. The tribe of Manasseh, much later, migrated to the United States. The tribe of Manasseh filtered into America from various other countries among which they were scattered. God said they would be sifted through the nations.

The House of Judah, over a century later, left the land on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea and began to migrate northwesterly also. They would eventually settle in the land that is Germany today and from there, in time, they scattered among various nations of the world and are known as the Jewish people today. At the time when God commissioned Ezekiel to

take His message to the House of Israel, the House of Israel was in northwestern Europe and Ezekiel was on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea in captivity. *He could not go!*

So, obviously, the message was to be given at a later time. God had Ezekiel preserve the message in a book, and today, that message is

being thundered to the modern day descendants of the House of Israel through the true Church of God at the very precise time in which God intended it to be given to them! Ezekiel did not take the message to the House of Israel at the time of his captivity. Instead, he gave it to the elders of the House of Judah, who, by that time, had become known as Israel! They are still called Israel today, even though they are only one tribe of the House of Israel.

The message that God gave to Ezekiel is a prophecy! It was a message for the end-time descendants of the House of Israel. A message meant for our time, this age, and to our people.

You are reading that message right now! It is a warning! I pray that God will help you to heed it! I pray that God will help you to put away the false commandments, doctrines, teachings and traditions of men that are contrary to those of God! They lead only to death! Obey God and live!

God speaks first to the ancient House of Israel in Ezekiel 20: “wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes, and shewed My judgments, which if a man do he shall even live in them.

Moreover, also, I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they may know that I am the LORD that sanctify them” (verses 10-12).

Notice that it is the exact word-

ing of the Sabbath Covenant that was binding forever in Exodus 31:12-17.

Now, continue: “But the House of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness: they walked not in My statutes, and they despised My judgments...and My Sabbaths they greatly polluted...” (verse 13).

A generation later, God pleaded with their children! “But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the LORD your God; walk in My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God” (verses 18-20).

Now, notice this important fact. The emphasis in God’s message is on obedience to His statutes, judg-



ments and Sabbaths, as opposed to man’s different statutes, judgments and “supposed” Sabbaths. That same emphasis is to our people today. Our people are committing the same terrible sins that our ances-

tors of the house of Israel did!

Will we escape the punishments that God warned us will come from disobedience? If one thinks so, then one had better guess again! Remember, God does not change! Obedience to His statutes, judgments and Sabbaths are commanded forever! That includes our time now! “Notwithstanding the children of Israel rebelled against me... They polluted My Sabbaths” (verse 21).

Generations later, what did God do about their rebellion? “I lifted up Mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, and polluted My Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers idols” (verses 23-24).

They rebelled, disobeyed God, polluted His Sabbaths, and so they were invaded, conquered and taken captive as slaves because they rejected God as their true God! They were certainly “dispersed through the countries” too, as they migrated to their present day locations. Now, read the rest of this amazing prophecy. A prophecy that is for us, in our time now! In speaking to our people today, God

says: “as I live, saith the LORD God, surely with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm, with fury poured out, will I rule over you” (verse 33).

God was speaking of the seven

last plagues when He said, “with fury poured out.” (Compare with Revelation 16:1.) That will happen at the very time of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Also, notice that He said, “I will rule over you.” Christ will rule over us at His second coming.

This, then, *is* a prophecy for our time. I wonder if anyone has ever noticed that every prophecy that shows where the end-time descendants of the House of Israel (our people) will be at the second coming of Jesus Christ and the coming great exodus back to the Holy Land, all portray them as being in captivity and slaves when Christ returns—a time just ahead of us now.

Continuing in Ezekiel 20: “And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye were scattered...with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people “ (the coming exodus of Jeremiah 23:7-8), and there will I plead with you face to face, like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the LORD God...and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me...and YE SHALL KNOW THAT I am the LORD” (verses 34-38).

What was His pleading to ancient Israel and Judah? “Hallow My Sabbaths, that you may know that I am the LORD your God” (verse 20). And how does one suppose that we will know that He is the Lord? By His Sabbath sign!

Read verses 42-44 in the Bible.

In those verses God says that our people, when they are no longer rebellious (and therefore, will be teachable), will be keeping His Sabbaths, and they shall remember the ways in which they were



defiled, and shall loathe themselves for their Sabbath-breaking.

Remember, this is Christ speaking here! Christ will be on this earth at the time after His second coming. He is the One who is going to plead with our people face-to-face. It is time to awake to the tremendous importance and seriousness of this!

We have been warned that in the last days “*many* would come, saying that Jesus is the Christ, and thereby deceiving many.”

Notice that it would be people teaching that Jesus is the Christ. It is only the Christian religions that teach that Jesus is the Christ. Therefore, the “many that shall come” are people who are claiming to be Christians. They are easy to identify because their doctrines and practices cannot be proven in God’s Word, and they *do not keep the Sabbath!*

I think one will find that those people are the vast majority of those “claiming” to be Christians in today’s world! These people have so hardened their hearts

against the Word of God that the real truth cannot get through to them. When a true servant of God tries to show them the truth, they (often violently) call God’s servants a host of un-Christian names

and boldly claim that they are the true Christians while God’s true servants are the false ones! It is a tactic well-known and used by Satan to keep people from learning the real truth and from knowing who God’s servants truly are.

These people who claim to be Christians teach doctrines that they have “made up” from God’s Word by twisting the words around and claiming that those scriptures are saying something that they obviously do not. They hold fast to the traditions, practices, doctrines and the “sabbaths” of men. They will not keep the true Sabbath, and that is one sure way one can plainly identify who the false “Christians” are! They have deceived themselves into believing that they are “Christians.” However, their doctrines are not in the Bible, and their holidays come right out of paganism!

God warns us to “come out from among them” or we would suffer with them when He punishes them for their rebellious and contemptuous ways. One cannot rely on them for spiritual guidance! They cannot give the proper and right guidance that will help one to grow toward perfection and lead to Eternal life. Now that you know that, what will you do with the mind-opening truth you have just been given? □

Questions and Answers

Q God has a ‘7,000-year plan for earth’. Would you please explain what He means by this?

A Up until now God has allowed approximately 6,000 years for humanity to write the painful lessons of “doing its own thing”—going its own way without the revealed knowledge of its Creator.

A study of biblical chronology indicates that Adam and Eve (our first parents) were created about 4,000 years before Christ (Gen. 5, 10; I Chron. 1-9; Matt. 1; Luke 3). And almost another 2,000 years have elapsed since the time of Christ’s birth—totaling nearly 6,000 years of human civilization to date.

And the Bible tells us that shortly after the appearance of Christ on this earth again, a peaceful, utopian, 1,000-year reign begins on this planet (Rev. 20:1-10; Isa. 11).

These two general spans of time (approximately 6,000 years of man’s rule; approximately 1,000 years of God’s rule) add up to a period of about 7,000 years.

Further, the 7,000-year concept comes from an *analogy* between the perfect weekly cycle (seven days) and the apparent 6,000 years allotted to mankind prior to the millennium.

We must realize that even though the saints will live and reign with Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4), there is still an undetermined period of time allowed after the millennium during which Satan will be let loose and the Great White Throne of judgment will take place (Rev. 20:11-12). This span of time is *in addition* to the 1,000-year period.

The main biblical indication of a 7000-year plan is the evidence pro-

vided by the millennium as a type of God’s rest or Sabbath (compare Revelation 20 and Hebrews 4). If the millennium represents a “Sabbath,” then it would be logically preceded by six similar 1,000-year “days.”

II Peter 3:8 provides a basis for setting the length of each millennial day: “...One day is with the Lord as [Greek: *hos*] a thousand years, and a thousand years as [*hos*] one day.” But we need to realize that even if we understand this as a literal statement regarding a 7,000-year plan, it is not giving us a precise, measured duration.

Why not? Because *hos* before numerals denotes “nearly”, “about”, “approximately”. Compare its usage in Mark 5:13, “*about* two thousand”; Mark 8:9, “*about* four thousand”; John 6:19, “*about* five and twenty or thirty”; John 21:8, “*as it were* two hundred cubits”; Acts 13:18, 20; “*about* the time of forty years...about the space of four hundred and fifty years.”

The biblical meaning behind man’s 6,000-year period of human history, marked by costly trial and error plus ignorance and rejection of God’s revealed Word, is carefully explained in our booklet titled *Why Were You Born?*

Q Everyone at one time or another has heard that God gives warning before He send punishment—that those who heed the warning will be spared the cataclysm. On the other hand, nearly all the apostles died by violent means. How are the violent deaths of so many repentant explained in light of this?

A The scripture you are probably basing your first statement on is Amos 3:7: “Surely the Lord

God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.”

Bible prophecies are sometimes general overall warnings to a nation as a whole.

God also gives a general overall warning to Christians. He states through the apostle Paul that “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (II Tim. 3:12). The apostles themselves were practically promised martyrdom from the outset (see John 21:18-19; 16: 1-2; 15:18-21). So in this sense they were warned, but were not delivered from violence at the hand of unbelievers.

It is important to realize that there is a difference between suffering for righteousness sake (I Pet. 1:6-7); 3:14; 4:12-16) and suffering for one’s personal or national sins. God in His wisdom did allow the apostles to go through various trials and even martyrdom for the gospel’s sake. This was in spite of the fact that they were repentant, righteous servants of His. In contrast, the entire wicked city of Nineveh received a reprieve from destruction when God saw how enthusiastically they repented. Although these people were probably not leading deeply spiritual lives even after their repentance, God gave them mercy.

Reviewing the lives of all of God’s servants as recorded in the Bible, it is obvious that one’s spiritual state does not necessarily have that much to do with the physical course of one’s life.

One of the writers of the Psalms observed that wicked men are often blessed while righteous men suffer. But he realized that in the end God will see to it that all these seeming injustices are equalized (Psalm 73). □

(Continued from page 4)

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 (v.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 our 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.

The week of the Feast

Just think of what lies ahead during the week of the Feast of Taber-

nacles: The wonderful opportunity of visiting and fellowshipping 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! □

The booklets listed below contain more information on related subjects that have been covered in this issue, and are offered FREE by the Sabbath-keeping churches of God. Please check the ones you desire and mail to the address below:

- “**God’s Holy Days**” - How God’s Holy days reveal His plan of salvation.
- “**Kingdom of God!...What Does That Mean to You?**” - Is it the Church? Is it something “set up in the hearts of men?” Is it the British Empire? Is it “the good within you?” Is it “the millennium”?
- “**Why Were You BORN?**” - Do you really know why you were born? Do you realize God has a purpose being worked out?

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