

CHURCH OF THE  
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*"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." – Mathew 24:14*

September 4, 2001

Dear Brethren,

God's festival season is almost upon us, though it seems we just completed the observance of the Feast of Pentecost. Time seems to move so rapidly, yet we are definitely looking forward to the upcoming feast days with great anticipation and excitement.

God tells us we are to keep His feast days in their seasons. God has a definite timetable He is working on, brethren. We must stay in tune with that timetable. We are about to enter the fall festival season, which has tremendous significance for the people of God, as well as for the whole world. Yet, most in the world are totally unaware of the awesome events that will soon overtake this society we are living in.

The four festivals that we will be observing within the next five weeks picture the return of Christ to this earth; the placing of the legitimate blame for the sins of this world squarely on the head of Satan the devil, where they belong; the establishment of the Government of God on this earth under Jesus Christ to rule the earth in righteousness for 1,000 years; and the time of the second resurrection and the opportunity for all of mankind who never heard the real truths of God, to come to an understanding, and to decide for themselves if they will have a part in God's ultimate plan for all of mankind for all eternity.

These are awesome times we live in, brethren. Holy men have written of these things over the past 6,000 years as they were inspired by Almighty God, to show His great purpose to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The time is now just before us when all of these things are about to be fulfilled.

Two weeks from today we will observe the Feast of Trumpets and just nine days later, the Day of Atonement. Four evenings later we begin the eight-day festival, which includes the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. Why do we do this from year to year? God gives us the answer in Leviticus 23, where He outlines His feasts. Notice in verse four where He says, "These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times."

These festivals have been ordained by Almighty God to be kept in their seasons, forever. They were kept by the Prophets and by Holy Men in the days covered by the Old Testament writings and even before. They were kept by Jesus Christ and the Apostles during the time of the New Testament Church. God will require His people to keep them during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment period and beyond. God requires that we observe these days, today.

It is God's desire that we not forget, that when He brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, they dwelt in booths (temporary dwellings) (Lev. 23: 39-43). It is, in fact a time of rejoicing for God's people. It is a time for us to stop and reflect on God's great plan and what He has in store for those who love His Ways (Deut. 16: 13-15) (Lev. 23: 40).

In the account written in the book of Nehemiah, we see that when the Jews came out from under the captivity of the Babylonians, "...Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation of men and women and all could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month" {Feast of Trumpets} (Nehemiah 8: 2). "And they found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month" {Feast of Tabernacles} (Verse 14).

Notice now, (Verses 17-18). “So the whole congregation of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner.” These people were rejoicing because they were able to understand what God desired of them and they were obedient in this command.

We are told by the prophet Isaiah that, in that day “... the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing” (Isaiah 35: 1-2). “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing. With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness. And sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35: 10).

This festival season pictures a time of joy, brethren. And happiness will be the order of the day. It is God’s desire that we observe the meaning of these festival days by rejoicing together at the various places He has chosen to place His name. In that regard, we need to be certain we are each willing to invest what it takes to have joy in our lives and to give joy to others.

God tells us (Deut 16: 15) that when we obey His command to keep this sacred feast as He has prescribed, “...the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.”

Of course, we are not to appear before our God at His festival empty-handed (Deut 16: 16). He requires an offering based on the blessing He has given us. He requires, also, that we come before Him to eat, and to enjoy the tithe we have saved for this purpose, as we are to appear before Him to learn to fear Him, always (Deut 14: 22-27). And finally, we are to come to hear and to learn to keep the Law of God (Deut 31: 11-13).

So, brethren, this is a time God has provided for His people to really come to know one another and to come to learn more of Him. We will have this opportunity to be together, to set a right example for one another, to learn to hold fast the truths we have been given and to make these days a real blessing for all of God’s people.

Let us attend this festival season together, brethren. Let us rejoice in the fact that God is a merciful God, easy to be entreated, willing to forgive our sins if we have a repentant attitude. And let us be thankful for God’s Spirit dwelling within us, which allows us to have a mind receptive to God and all His Ways. It is through that Spirit that God will raise us up in that day and we will be changed, and will be like the Father and the Son.

Yes, we have much to be thankful for, brethren. But the real happiness and joy and prosperity pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles will come upon this earth when the righteous rule of Jesus Christ under the Father is established. When that happens, the entire universe will shout for joy!

In Christian love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edwin Pope". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Edwin Pope