

CHURCH OF THE
G O D
E T E R N A L

"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." – Matthew 24:14

April 11, 2005

Dear Brethren in Christ,

As we approach the upcoming Holy Day season, we are bombarded daily with catastrophic events which seem to be unending. We have observed one disaster after another, as it seems nature is on a rampage. There are continuous reports of events in the form of earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, as well as weather events ranging from tropical storms, tornadoes and hurricanes. And now we are observing serious threats from beneath the earth's surface, with rumblings deep under the crust of the earth, threatening serious damage as volcanoes become more active. And on top of these events are serious problems in the form of drought and crop failure, massive starvation in parts of the world and disease epidemics.

Adding to these catastrophic events, the bombardments continue with conflict between individuals and nations. On the national and international levels we see terrorist threats, wars, and rumors of wars; nations unable to get along with one another. And added to these awesome problems are difficulties at home, beginning with anger in families and between friends. The streets are unsafe in many areas and we see added to that, road rage and even the lack of safety in our homes. We look to the time when all these calamities and wrong attitudes will cease!

Paul spoke of these times in his second letter to Timothy, wherein he stated in chapter 3, verse 1: "...in the latter days perilous times will come." Certainly we are living in those times, today. Paul continues: "For men will be lovers of themselves..." Surely we are able to see the truth in that statement as we observe the actions of mankind in the world today. As Paul continues to write to Timothy, he outlines in these verses the characteristics which would be prevalent in the people of the world during these times: "...lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God..." (2 Timothy 3:1-5). He admonishes us not to be party to this approach to life!

By the time you receive this letter, it will be just days before Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread begin. No doubt, we are all contemplating the upcoming Holy Days and are beginning to prepare for this joyous season. We will be diligently de-leavening our homes and personal property such that we meet the requirements of God's command relative to the physical aspects of these days.

But what about our spiritual lives? Where do each of us stand in this regard?

In 2 Timothy 3:5, Paul states that people during these times will have a "form of godliness" in their lives, but they will be "denying its power." Do you see clear evidence of this today? And could this attitude be affecting you in your relationship with God?

Paul continues in verse 7 of this chapter by saying that these people will be "...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." It seems today that many people even in the churches of God are not stable in the faith! They are continually jumping from one place to another. This is certainly different than it was back thirty, forty, fifty years ago when many were being called to God's Truth. It did not seem possible in those days that we would ever see the things going on in

the Church that exist today, though we were warned often that this would occur. Today we find God's people scattered and many without hope! What must we do?

Brethren, we are thankful to our God that He has revealed to us that He will straighten this whole mess out in His time. Jesus Christ will come and restore the Government of God on this earth and peace and happiness will be established in that process. There is hope for the world and all who are in it. But in the meantime, we have been called to make the changes that are within our power, with the help of God's Spirit in us.

Paul, as he continues to instruct Timothy, said in verse 10: "But you have carefully followed my doctrine (the doctrine Paul had received directly from Jesus Christ), manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions ... what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me."

Of course, that is the key for us, brethren. If we remain faithful to God, no matter how difficult, how perilous times become, the Lord will deliver us out of them all. But we must remain strong in the faith and doctrine of our Lord, Jesus Christ! In the meantime, relative to the upcoming Passover season, we must be certain our spiritual lives are in proper order! We must be certain we are right, to the best of our ability, with our God and our brethren in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 5:7 Paul admonishes us to "...purge out the old leaven, that we may be a new lump..." In Colossians 3:2 Paul tells us to "Set your minds on things above, not on things on this earth." And in verse 9 of chapter 3, Paul advises us to "...put off the old man..." Specifically and in detail we are told to put off the deeds of this way of life which the world is living and, in verse 10, he tells us to "...put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him..." (and us).

Yes, brethren, we are entering Passover season, which is a time of renewal when we must be most cognizant of our own faults, a time when we must have a right attitude of repentance toward God and our fellow man in these things, and it is a time when we are to renew our commitment to live our lives as Jesus lived His life in the flesh.

We are told in 1 Corinthians 11:27, in relation to the Passover: "...whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." This we do not want to do, brethren. So, we are told in verse 28, "But let a man examine himself..." Yes, this is a time of self-examination, with meditation, fervent prayer and fasting. We are to examine ourselves to be certain we are of a right mind and attitude in relation to God and man, and "...so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (Verse 29).

This is God's Passover season. Let us prepare our homes and our property as outlined in God's Word, and let us be certain we are right with our God and with our fellow man.

In Christian love;


J. Edwin Pope

P.S. We are pleased to enclose with this letter a copy of our new booklet, "Should You Fight in War?"