

CHURCH OF THE  
G 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

December 12, 2005

Dear brethren and friends,

It is only a matter of a few weeks since we were keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day, as instructed by God. Throughout the world, faithful believers congregated to celebrate the Feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23:2, 34-43). The master plan of God as revealed through His Holy Days is of the utmost importance to those few who have been called at this time. They help us to clearly see the meticulous planning of our great God. We must never underestimate the marvelous calling that those who have been placed into God's Church at this time have been given. We should pray fervently, and continuously, that we never take for granted the wonderful truth, hidden from the world, but revealed to the called-out ones.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the time when Christ sets up the Kingdom of God on earth and rules and reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords for a thousand years. The Last Great Day pictures the time when all those who had not had their opportunity for salvation, will indeed be given their first opportunity. It is wonderful knowledge that is just not understood by the world. It is also knowledge that was once understood by some who have forsaken the truth and gone back into the world.

Having celebrated the autumn Feast Days a few weeks ago, "Christmas" now looms just over the horizon. The contrast couldn't be more marked. The world will be celebrating the supposed birth of Christ on December 25<sup>th</sup> when any honest student of the Bible should be able to come to the understanding that Christ was NOT born in December, but in the early autumn. The *exact* day of Christ's birth has been hidden from mankind--if God had wanted us to know His Son's date of birth, and that we should celebrate it, He would obviously have given us that information. But He hasn't. We can only know the *approximate* time of the year when Christ was born (Please see the Question and Answer in Update 162 on September 24<sup>th</sup> 2004, which is posted on the Web. If you have no access to the Web, please ask for a hard copy).

What does celebrating a birthday, on the wrong day, have to do with true Christianity? Well, in truth, nothing whatsoever! This world's "Christianity" has devised its own days, just as the true Sabbath (the time from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) has been *changed* to Sunday, but without any Biblical authority whatsoever to make such a change. God commands us to keep the Sabbath holy--not Sunday (Exodus 20:8-11). Christ said that He was Lord of the Sabbath--not Sunday (Mark 2:27-28). And God's clearly revealed annual Holy Days are *substituted* by uncoordinated days that have their roots in paganism--a haphazard collection of traditional man-made days--with no recognition whatever of God's plan for mankind. (Please read or re-read our free booklet, "God's *Commanded Holy Days*.")

The "Christmas season" is a time of the year that *true* Christians don't greatly care for. They are bombarded with advertising about the Christmas period, and their children (or grandchildren) are subject to the usual functions at school from which they have to be removed--it is a time of the year like no other. And it is all based on numerous lies. The Bible talks about meat in due season (Matthew 24:45). While we can apply this to *keeping* God's Holy Days, the same principle of looking at why we should *avoid* the rampant paganism that is so obvious at this time of year, fits into the same category.

There are a number of issues connected with this season. There is much lying, particularly to younger children (including the deceitful concept that Santa Claus or the little Christ Child bring presents, etc., etc.). Rampant hypocrisy and a spirit of compromise are prevalent--so much so that we do have to be very careful that the season itself doesn't cause *us* to compromise our Christian calling in any way.

In the past, too often, Church members (many of those subsequently *left* the Church) have compromised because of family, business or other pressures. Of course, it can be difficult if a member has these pressures--BUT we need to ask ourselves what is most important. Is it obedience to God and His way, without compromise--or giving in to "keep the peace" within the family or with relatives, because of pressure? It goes without saying that we have to use a great deal of wisdom in this area, and seeking the appropriate counsel may be very necessary. But based on observations over the years, we have seen too many cases of compromise by those who really should have known better. We all have to look at this matter carefully. We can all be put into a difficult position, but

how do we react? We should try to ask ourselves at all times, "What would Jesus Christ do?" The answer to this question is so very important for good decision-making. And conscientiously following through with the obvious answers is vital. To the world, compromise is just the way to go—at Christmas time, or at any other time. So many probably do it without thinking or considering their conduct, but that is not the way true Christians should ever approach things. Compromise with Christmas festivities, celebrations and all the other inappropriate things that are indulged in at this time of the year must simply be not an option for us.

The *spirit* of this time of the year can also be a danger. It is a time of excess. Many children seem to expect and get everything they want, which cannot be good for them. As they grow up in such an environment, many come to *expect* to GET everything, which is not the way it should be. Adults also indulge themselves in many ways. The Christmas season is an excuse for bawdy, riotous office parties—with an excess of food, drink and wanton behavior. Advertisers tell us that there are only so many shopping days to Christmas and encourage as much spending as possible. The commercialized and advertised incentives to buy Christmas presents already start in November, at the latest. It's a "prosperous" time for big commercial companies and store owners, but that is not true for the consumers. Both the UK and USA have trillions of pounds or dollars of *personal* debt, but the end of the year sees a frenzy of spending—in many cases, consumers spend money which they don't have, but which they borrow to satisfy the *expectations and greed* of their family members and friends. Some shops don't seem to be able to take the money quick enough. And, when the Work of God simply doesn't have enough income to engage in all the really IMPORTANT activities it would dearly love to do, money is spent at a massive rate during a time of the year that has its roots in *paganism*—while most people today never even give a thought to the *supposed* religious side of the event.

Do we get into the "Christmas" spirit? Do we get involved with excess, just like the rest of society? If we have done it in the past, we should review our behavior. We may—albeit unintentionally—be imbibing the spirit of Christmas, without realizing it. On the other hand, if we don't become part of the frenzy and celebrations at this time of the year, we will stand out in today's society. That is the price we have to pay for obedience to God and His way. 1 Peter 4:3-5 are telling verses: "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

Society thought it strange that true Christians didn't get involved in their ways, some 2,000 years ago. Today is no different. They think we are odd and that we deprive our children or grandchildren of the family fun of Christmas, by not being a part of the way that they think is normal. Notwithstanding that faulty reasoning, we must not imbibe the "Christmas" spirit! We always need to be focused on the right way to live.

Paul tells us in Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do *not be conformed to this world*, but be *transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Conformity with the world at any time is not acceptable to the great God. There surely is no greater time when this can happen to us, if we're not careful, than at this time of the year. We are to be a walking, talking commercial for God's way of life and, by avoiding Christmas and its spin-offs, we can be just that! Please read or re-read our free booklet on the subject, titled: "**Don't Keep Christmas!**"

The festivals of God are wonderful days full of meaning and importance. Rejecting the ways of this world is that which is expected of us if we are to be true to our calling. We have to be very careful to make sure that we live up to the expectation that God has of us. To help us, God gave us His wonderful Feast days to look forward to, and to meditate about what they picture. Keeping our eyes on the goal of the Kingdom of God and all that it will entail, will help us to avoid and resist the "Christmas" spirit which is so heavily embraced by the world at this time of year (compare Ephesians 2:1-3).

With brotherly love,



Brian Gale

P.S. Rather than being involved with "Christmas" celebrations, we should concentrate on our real purpose in life, as well as our true destiny. To help you in this regard, you should be receiving soon, before the end of the year, a hard copy of our new booklet, "*Are You Predestined to Be Saved?*"