

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

September 7, 2006

Dear Brethren and Friends,

During this month of September, we will begin to observe the third season of God's Holy Days in this year (Compare Exodus 23:14-17; 34:22-24). For those who love God, this will be a time of great importance and joy; however, for our relatives and friends in the world, the true meaning of what we do is hidden and will, at best, seem a little unusual!

Jesus Christ revealed the greater meaning of Passover when He instituted the practices of foot washing, of breaking bread and of drinking wine—all of which the Church of God is commanded to observe. Regarding this, Paul states: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Again, on the Day of Pentecost, the wonderful master plan of God grew clearer as God sent the gift of His Holy Spirit to those who had obeyed Jesus and had faithfully remained in Jerusalem. Likewise, others became obedient to the faith—also receiving the Spirit of God, and so it has continued until our time for those who yield to God and seek to walk in His Way (Compare Acts 5:32).

Consider that at the time of Pentecost mentioned in Acts, the number of those who were together "...was about a hundred and twenty" (Acts 1:15). What happened to the many thousands who personally saw and heard Jesus preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God? Several statements in God's Word recount how people rejected Jesus and what He taught. However, note—in particular—this testimony by one of Christ's apostles: "But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him" (John 12:37).

For those who did believe in Jesus, the door of understanding opened before them. They became brethren of Jesus Christ and fellow members of the Church of God with the unparalleled destiny to become born-again children of God! For all who have died and who have remained faithful in their lifetimes, the certainty of their resurrection to eternal life in the Family of God awaits.

Many nominal Christians who do not keep the Holy Days of God are confused about man's destiny. They believe strange doctrines rooted in paganism, and although they profess to know God, they are living their lives without Him (Compare Matthew 15:7-9 and Ephesians 2:11-12).

In the long history of the nation of Israel, the Holy Days often fell by the wayside. This took a particularly unfortunate turn when God placed Jeroboam over the ten tribes of Israel. In order to keep the loyalty of these tribes, Jeroboam tragically chose to reject the revealed Feast Days of God: "So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense" (1 Kings 12:33).

The course of rebellion chosen by Jeroboam exacted a frightful consequence: "And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth" (1 Kings 13:34).

In a later period, Hezekiah, king of Judah, wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh encouraging them to join in keeping the Passover. In it he said: "...Children of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria" (2 Chronicles 30:6).

Here is how most of these remnant members of the decimated House of Israel responded: "So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them" (2 Chronicles 30:10).

Yet, this effort on Hezekiah's part to re-establish national observance of God's Holy Days did bear some fruit: "Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD" (2 Chronicles 30:11-12).

In prophetic terms surrounding the coming time period, called the "day of the LORD," God powerfully rejects the observance of self-appointed holidays such as Halloween, Christmas or Easter—which were invented by men: "I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies... Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments" (Amos 5:21 and 23). You might want to review our booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas," to see how this false observance arose out of totally pagan religious practices.

Jesus very specifically taught what His disciples should be watching for that would signal His return. We know that these events will arise and culminate in one generation: “So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (Matthew 24:33-34).

In our time, God’s Holy Days have once again been observed by God’s Church according to God’s instructions. Tens of thousands of people from nations all over the earth came to understand and to observe the holy convocations of God.

In this generation, a great falling away from this revelation has also occurred! Now the people who were called by God are not unified and far too many follow what has been devised in the hearts of men. Some have changed even the times of observance. Now, there are people who attend Feast Days for social and traditional reasons, alone. Others might be motivated by feelings of obligation and guilt—but they do not act out of love for God and for His perfect law!

We find God’s view in all of this in statements about the weekly Sabbath—the first day of God’s commanded holy time: “If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Brethren, there are inestimable promises of blessings from God in observing the weekly and annual Holy Days. In them, God reveals His plan for mankind. In them, we gain the broad historic perspective of when God will establish His Kingdom through the promised return of our Savior and King, Jesus Christ!

In them, we are told to rejoice: “And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates” (Deuteronomy 16:14).

We live in terrible times of violence! The world, in which we live, for its part, faces a hopeless future of devastation and war that threatens the planet-wide extinction of life!

We, however, do have hope—boundless, brimful and running over! Why? Because we know that God, for whom it is impossible to lie (Compare Titus 1:2), has promised to save mankind. In particular, He has promised to intervene on our behalf—we who are among His elect (Compare Matthew 24:22).

Through God’s revelation in His Holy Days, we now picture a future time of God’s intervention in this world’s affairs and a time leading to peace and abundance for all.

Already, we are participating—in type—in the kingdom that God will soon establish! It is vital that we do this! Read in Malachi 3, verses 16-18, what God has in store for those who are faithful to Him at this time!

Once again, not unlike the remnant left to Israel but now encompassing all nations of the earth, the call to keep the Feasts of God will go forth: “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

Enter this time, this third season in the year, with “a singleness of heart” to obey God. Determine to keep these Feast Days with a renewed spirit of rejoicing. Review, beforehand, the sections in your Bible regarding the upcoming Feast Days: Trumpets, Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacle and the Last Great Day. Our booklet, “God’s Commanded Holy Days,” will help you do this.

This year, make that extra effort to help your spiritual brethren, in whatever way possible, to also rejoice in God’s Feast Days! In addition, let your light shine brightly to those who do not understand the tremendous truth of this time—the ones whose minds the god of this age has blinded (Compare 2 Corinthians 4:4)!

Above all, let the love of God bear fruit in your life!

In Christ’s Service,



David J. Harris