

CHURCH OF THE
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

March 5, 2008

Dear Brethren, Co-Workers and Friends:

It is hard to believe that next month baptized members of the Church of God will be keeping the annual Passover. Time seems to pass by so quickly, which is exactly the reason why God tells us in His Word that we should examine ourselves at this time of year, prior to Passover. God knew full well that if we did not have these annual stop signs or periods of time to reflect on His great master plan and our own development in Christian growth, we would soon forget about His whole plan of salvation for mankind—Passover being the very beginning step. If we get caught up in our jobs, work, pleasures and cares of this world, it is easy to forget what God's plan is all about.

Just as some who have left the faith find that in a very short while, they no longer recall when to keep God's Holy Days and they no longer understand biblical principals associated with those Days, we too could find ourselves in the same position, if we are not careful. God, knowing human nature, designed in His wisdom a way by which we could bring to remembrance the practices God has instituted, reflecting the Truth of His teachings.

Baptized and converted members of God's Church are admonished not to take the Passover in an unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:27). This requires a mental search to see how our standing is with God and also our fellow man. This "soul searching" must be followed by the eradication of those personal sins which are discovered during the search. Such eradication has been made possible through the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ who died for us so that we could live. Upon repentance of our sins and believing that His Sacrifice was necessary, but also sufficient to pay for the penalty for our sins—which is ETERNAL death—we will obtain forgiveness, and God will cast away our sins—never to remember them anymore. Christ, who led a sinless life, died for all of us. The weight of all sins of mankind, including our personal and individual sins, was laid upon His shoulders, to be removed from us and carried away by Him—if we allow Him to do this.

What Christ DID for us, what He IS doing for us today, and what He WILL do for us in the future, has been pictured and portrayed in astonishing ways in the Old Testament sacrifices and the ancient tabernacle under Moses. We are pleased to enclose herewith, for our American and Canadian readers, our newest booklet, titled *"The Sacrificial System and the Tabernacle in the Wilderness."* This booklet has already been sent to our readers in the UK. We would encourage all of you to study this booklet prior to Passover, and to reflect on the lessons which are explained therein.

I retired last August, but for many years prior to retirement, I was subjected to a yearly performance review by my company. All of us should give ourselves an annual spiritual performance review at this time of year to determine whether we have gone forward or backward, or whether we have been standing still since the time of the last Passover.

To help us to conduct a successful personal review and self-evaluation, we have set forth below a few areas to consider. Only we can and should answer these vital questions for ourselves. We should not even try to answer them for others:

How is our relationship with God? Do we feel closer to Him or further away, keeping in mind that sin acts as a resistance in our efforts to maintain open communication with God. It sets up a wall or obstacle in the relationship with God. It impedes our ability to have open and clear communication with our Creator. Are we being faithful in prayer, Bible study, fasting and meditation? Are we drawing closer to God, as admonished by James in James 4:8, or are the cares of this world, our jobs and entertainment taking on a wrong priority in our lives?

Are we focused on the fact that we have a collective responsibility to preach and publish the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14)? The proclamation of the Gospel message includes the beautiful Truth that God will send Jesus Christ back to this earth to establish the Kingdom of God and to rule with the saints for a thousand years, during the Millennium. Are we following God's command to faithfully and regularly tithe from ALL of our increase, and to give Holy Day offerings seven times a year on each of the seven annual Holy Days, to help meet the requirements of the task set before us? Are we loyally serving in whatever capacity God has laid before us in that goal—be it speaking, writing, volunteering our time for the many different tasks at hand, without expecting something in return, and praying for the success and economic prosperity of the Work so that we can fulfill our collective commission in a way pleasing to God?

How is our relationship with our fellow man, our spouses, our parents, our family members, our landlords and tenants, our employers and employees, our friends and our neighbors? Are they glad and pleased to have us around? Are we honest in our dealings with others and willing not to always get the best deal? Are we lights in a dark age—examples worth following? Are we working together as husbands and wives, supporting one another, encouraging one another and working as a team towards the goal of entering the Kingdom? Men, are we loving our wives (Ephesians 5:25), and wives, are you respecting your husbands (Ephesians 5:33)? Children and teens, are you obedient to your parents in the Lord (compare Ephesians 6:1)?

These are just some of the areas we should be looking at before Passover. We are sure that there are other areas which we could and should think of, pertaining to our own personal lives. Immediately following the Passover are seven Days of Unleavened Bread, which picture removing sin from our lives. "Seven" denotes perfection in the Bible. We must strive to remove sin perfectly and completely from our lives, replacing it with the righteousness of God. All of this is symbolized by our refraining to eat leaven for seven days—picturing sin in this context—and by eating instead for that time unleavened bread, picturing righteousness (compare 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). To help you prepare for the Festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread, we recommend that you review (once again) at this time our booklet, "*The Meaning of God's Spring Holy Days.*"

Let us make every effort to thoroughly examine and evaluate ourselves. Actually, we should do this constantly, throughout the year (2 Corinthians 13:5), but it is extremely important to do so at this time of year. It should and will help us to facilitate a smooth relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ our Savior, and also with our fellow man.

In Christian Love,



Rene Messier