

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*

September 19, 2008

Dear Brethren, Co-workers and Friends,

It is hard to believe that in less than two weeks we are going to celebrate the beginning of the Fall Holy Day season, commencing with the Feast of Trumpets on September 30.

When we look at world conditions, it becomes more and more evident that man does not know how to rule himself, and things are worsening in every aspect of our society. The financial markets are close to a melt down with more large financial institutions—including some which have been around for over a century—seeking bailouts by the Federal government. Some are going under financially or are seeking bankruptcy protection. Drug use in the western world is increasing, and the U.S., which should be setting a positive example for the rest of the world, is the biggest drug user, or more appropriately, drug abuser.

We live under the threat of another major terrorist attack against the western and democratic nations. Teen pregnancy in the U.S. is at an all-time high, with some 740,000 teen pregnancies in the last year alone. Half of all marriages end in divorce, with the emotional consequences being felt by the innocent children for decades, well into their adulthood. There are wars going on with no sign of peace on the horizon. We experience ethnic cleansing and starvation in third world countries. The problems of mankind are becoming insurmountable. While Russia is flexing its muscles and threatening its neighboring countries, there is also unrest in the Middle East, with no man-made solution in sight.

The Fall Holy Days are a reminder, stop signs, as it were, for God to let us know that there is a solution to man's worldwide problems; yet it will not be achieved by man but only by a merciful God: HE will send His Son Jesus Christ back to this earth to end the madness, confusion and deception of the god of this world—Satan the devil who deceives the whole world (Revelation 12: 9). At this time of turmoil and uncertainty in so many aspects of our society, we can be assured there is a solution coming. However, there will never be world peace and individual tranquility through the crucible of human war.

Let us therefore briefly review the Fall Holy Days and their meaning for us and mankind:

As mentioned, on September 30, we celebrate the Feast of Trumpets. As is the case with all of God's weekly and annual Holy Days, they begin at sunset of the previous day. The Feast of Trumpets is therefore celebrated from sunset of September 29 to sunset of September 30. It pictures the glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to this earth in power and majesty. He will crush the armies of this world—many of which will assemble in the land of Israel to oppose Him. He will set up the Kingdom of God and rule at Jerusalem with the resurrected and immortal saints who have been changed from physical to spiritual at His triumphant return. You can read about that in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17. We will be resurrected or changed to spirit because flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50-55).

Revelation 5:10 reveals that we, as God's true and faithful servants, shall be kings; that is, we will have rulership and responsibilities under Christ. And we will be priests; that is, we will have the responsibility to teach people on the earth about God's laws, and we will have the power to enforce those laws for the benefit of mankind.

The next festival which follows shortly after the Feast of Trumpets is the Day of Atonement, to be celebrated on October 9, 2008. It pictures the removal of Satan the devil for 1000 years (Revelation 20:2). Satan will deceive the nations no more. As the current god and ruler of this earth, he is largely responsible for the world's problems. His influence is incredibly strong since he is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). He works in the sons of disobedience. He negatively influences mankind with the spirit of pride (the cause of his fall), rebellion and hostility to God's laws, since his twisted mind is filled with hatred against God's Way. But the good news is that Satan will be bound for 1000 years during the Millennium, unable to negatively influence mankind during that period of time.

Following the Day of Atonement is the Feast of Tabernacles, which is a seven day festival to be celebrated this year from October 14 to October 20. The seven day period denotes completion. It is a time of rejoicing before God and of praise for His great plan.

It pictures the Millennium when we will truly live in peace and harmony with one another and when man will not LEARN war anymore (Isaiah 2:4). Today, man learns to hate and to fight in war which is an extension of hate and greed. But in the Millennium, man will learn peace and as a consequence, he will turn his "swords into plowshares" or instruments of good, and not of destruction. Isaiah 2:2-3 shows how mankind will be taught the ways of God's laws—the way of love which is outgoing concern for our neighbor.

But man will also learn to love God. While love toward neighbor is summarized in the last six of God's Ten Commandments, the way of love towards God is outlined in the first four of the Ten Commandments. True love for God includes keeping the true weekly Sabbath. Love is manifested, proved, demonstrated and shown by keeping the commandments. Love towards God is also manifested by keeping all of God's annual Holy Days. On the other hand, the pagan Satan-based practices of this current world, such as the observance of Sunday, Christmas, Easter and Halloween, will be a thing of the past and soon forgotten by those who will be willing to obey and serve God in the manner He demands.

The Millennium will be a time of peace, when God's Spirit will be available to mankind and given to man upon repentance and acceptance of Christ as their Savior.

The final Holy Day is the Last Great Day, which immediately follows the Feast of Tabernacles. It will be celebrated this year on October 21.

That day pictures the final phase—the culmination of the plan of our great God. It foreshadows a time when ALL of mankind, who had died without ever having been given the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, will have an opportunity to enter the God Family. Since flesh and blood cannot enter the Kingdom or Family of God, they will be resurrected physically and are seemingly given one hundred years either to accept or reject God's ways and laws (Isaiah 65:20). God is a God of great mercy who doesn't want anyone to perish, but He still follows a plan and timetable. The opportunity to become a child of God is not open-ended, and for those in that Second Resurrection (Revelation 20:11-12), it will apparently last for one

hundred years. If people don't "get it" in one hundred years, they just will not "get it" in one thousand years, either. The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment is a time of judgment when all will be judged according to their works. After the 100 years of judgment, some will receive everlasting life, but others will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15), together with those who had, before and during the Millennium, committed the unpardonable sin against the power of the Holy Spirit. The lake of fire is not an ever-burning fire but a fire that burns up the incorrigible wicked who refused to submit to God and totally rejected Him and His Government.

The Last Great Day also points at the time when the Family of God will greatly expand and when the New Jerusalem—our future home—descends to this earth (Revelation 21:1-3). It will be a time when man has either ceased to exist or when he has been changed to born again immortal children of God in the Kingdom or Family of God. What a great time that will be!

Knowing what will happen to us and the world within a few years from now, when first the meaning of the Feast of Trumpets will find its fulfillment, we realize that now is not the time to let down, but to push on in accomplishing the task we have been commissioned to do—that of preaching the gospel to the world as a witness and feeding the flock. That is our collective responsibility as a church. In addition, our individual responsibility is to respond to this teaching and to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to support the efforts of the church in order to be faithful servants whom the Lord finds so doing when He returns (Matthew 24:46).

So, brethren, co-workers and friends, let us all be about our Father's business and let us look forward to the Fall Holy Days. These times of trouble will soon be ended. Joy, peace and happiness for all is not that far away. In the meantime, we have been given a tremendously important role and responsibility towards the world. We should be thankful to our God for our calling at this time. We can take hope and courage in the words of God in Revelation 21:3, describing our ultimate potential and future: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Let us all look forward to a tremendously joyous Fall festival season.

In Christ service



Rene Messier