

THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH—JUDE 3

FEASTS AND FULFILLMENTS



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VIEWPOINT

By Darrel Lee, SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

A man with a beard is shown in profile, reading an open book. The book is open to a page with text. The background is dark and out of focus.

+ May God's purpose for the holiday season be fully realized in your life today and throughout the coming year.

Beginning on page 10, you can read a study about the seven feasts God established for the Jewish people at the founding of their nation. God made it clear that annual remembrances would help the Israelites' faith, and that is true for believers today, too. For Christians in the United States, Thanksgiving has long been a reminder of the bountiful blessings God has bestowed upon us. Christmas reminds us of the fact that God gave His only Son for the redemption of the world, and Easter celebrates Jesus' resurrection. These days are spiritually encouraging and we are blessed to celebrate them each year.

When I was growing up, my family did not see the holidays that way. I had a good home and good parents, but for us, Thanksgiving was about food, Christmas was a time for exchanging inexpensive gifts, and Easter was for hunting colored eggs. One of my childhood memories from a Thanksgiving Day was when my mother attempted to acknowledge God as we gathered around the table to eat. We normally did not say grace, but that day my mom wanted us to bow our heads and thank God for our blessings. My dad, trying to be funny, commented that he was the one who had provided the food that day, so he was the one we should be thanking. We missed the real meaning of the holidays entirely! (When Dad was saved many years later, he was a different man. After that, he was the one who led the family in giving thanks to God for every meal, not just on holidays.)

Having the right holidays on the calendar is a blessing, but it cannot save a person, much less a nation, from failure. We see that in the history of the Israelites; at various times, the people forgot all God had done for them, neglected the feasts He told them to keep, and ultimately turned away from following Him. And sadly, over the last several decades, my family's former holiday experience has become the norm in the United States. People in our society generally focus on nonspiritual aspects—they celebrate Christmas without remembering the reason for Christmas. Our nation that has been so blessed by God now largely forgets Him.

We need more than just a seasonal reminder of what God has done—we need a daily practice of thanking the God of Heaven for His many blessings. Designated days such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, or Passover and Tabernacles, do not make a thankful heart, any more than a non-designated day makes a thankless heart. When we purpose to live each day in a way that honors God, annual holiday occasions will fortify our faith the way God intended them to.

As you read this edition of our magazine, may you be filled with gratitude to God, and may your holidays in the coming year be blessed by Him.

Darrel D Lee

FROM THE WORD

06

REMEMBER NOT TO FORGET

God gives instruction on what we should and should not recall.

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FEASTS AND FULFILLMENTS

Examining the feasts of Israel and their significance to Christians today.



By Darrel Lee

REMEMBER NOT TO FORGET

God gives instruction on what we should and should not recall.

Sometimes we hear the antithetical instruction, “Remember not to forget!” That is because it is human nature to remember things that should be forgotten, and to forget things that should be remembered.

The words *remember* and *forget* appear with some frequency in Moses’ instruction to the Children of Israel, found in Deuteronomy chapter 8. For example, we find both words in verses 18-19, where we read, “But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.”

We have all heard of various ways to improve memory. Nutritionists suggest that eating certain foods such as fatty fish, dark chocolate, and blueberries may help. Studies indicate that physical exercise is beneficial. You may have heard that tying a string around your finger will assist you in recollecting

something important. Noticing the string will supposedly cause you to remember *why* you tied it on your finger, which will then

If we occupy our minds with gratitude from our hearts, it will be difficult to simultaneously entertain thoughts that are contrary to a spirit of thanksgiving.

help you recall *what* you wanted to remember. However, we do not see many people with strings tied around their fingers, so that technique must not be very helpful. Most of us probably make notes to ourselves or put reminders on our phones when we need to remember something.

While certain actions may help us remember, how do we forget what should be forgotten? That may be more difficult than remembering! However, there is a solution. Since it is very difficult, if not impossible, to think about two things at once, the next time something God wants you to forget

comes to mind, replace that thought with a memory of what God wants you to remember—something you are thankful for! If we occupy our minds with gratitude from our hearts, it will be difficult to simultaneously entertain thoughts that are contrary to a spirit of thanksgiving.



The Israelites’ problem: a heart condition

Reflecting again on Moses’ admonition about remembering and forgetting, a case could be made that the Israelites suffered from memory loss. The Psalmist put it this way: “Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea” (Psalm 106:7). The Israelites provoked God multiple times after that as well, when they failed to remember His goodness.

However, Israel's problem was not with their memory. It was a heart condition rather than a mind condition.

We read in Numbers 11:5-6 that the people remembered what they

They said, “We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.”

should have forgotten. They said, “We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”

At the same time, they had forgotten what needed to be remembered. They had forgotten how hungry they had been, and the day they stepped out of their tents in the morning and found “upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground” (Exodus 16:14). The “small round thing” was God's provision for their nourishment. They did not know what to call this food the Lord had given them to eat, so they called it *manna*. Although that manna had sustained them for almost four decades, they forgot God's blessing in supplying it for them.

They also forgot the suffering they had endured back in the land of Egypt. Exodus 1:13-14 relates that “the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: And they made their lives bitter with hard

bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.”

They forgot that when they cried out to God, in His love and mercy, He heard their cry from Heaven and sent them a deliverer. They forgot how they passed through the Red Sea on dry ground, and how God had slain Pharaoh's army that followed them. They forgot how God led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, gave them water from the rock, and fought for them.

Moses—an example of remembering

Moses stands in contrast to the Israelites, who had problems properly remembering and forgetting. At the age of 120 years,

With clarity and courage, he helped the Children of Israel remember what they had already been taught. He had not forgotten, and he did not want them to forget. He admonished them, “All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do” (Deuteronomy 8:1).

Moses had no such problem. As the people were about to cross Jordan into the Land of Canaan, he reviewed their history, including the Law that God had given on Mount Sinai. With clarity and courage, he helped the Children of





Israel remember what they had already been taught. He had not forgotten, and he did not want them to forget. He admonished them, “All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do” (Deuteronomy 8:1).

Moses was speaking to a new generation, many of whom had not been born when the Children of Israel met with God at Mount Sinai. Those who were nineteen years of age and under at Sinai no doubt had memories of that quaking mountain and the fear-inducing experiences of that day. They remembered when Moses came down from the Mount and his face shone so brightly that he had to cover it with a veil. Moses wanted those who had witnessed it to remember it, and those who were too young to understand it or had

service because you were young at the time, that is a blessing for which you should thank God! However, whether or not we have a heritage in the Gospel, each one of us have current blessings for which we should be grateful.

What we want to remember

We want to remember the commandments of God. Jesus summarized them for us in the New Testament when He said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37-39). To love in that manner is to comply with the first four Commandments, while loving

If you do not remember your first church service because you were young at the time, that is a blessing for which you should thank God!

not been born yet, to remember what they had been taught.

It is important for us to remember what we have been taught as well. You may or may not remember the first time you came to church. Many in our congregation are blessed with a godly heritage that has been handed down from one generation to the next. Some in this service today have no memory of the first time they came to the house of the Lord because they were carried here as infants. If you do not remember your first church

our neighbor as ourselves fulfills the remaining six commandments. We want to remember these every day!

We want to remember the day we experienced salvation. God offered us the opportunity to pass from death unto life; we offered Him our unconditional, non-negotiated surrender. There were no terms attached on our part. However, there were terms on God's part. He required that we yield to His way, confess and forsake our sins, and turn from the world toward Him. When we came to the point where we gave our

“...remember the LORD thy God”
(Deuteronomy 8:18)

whole lives to God, such as they were, what a transformation He made in us!

We want to remember the consecrations we made subsequent to salvation. As we continued to seek the Lord, we promised Him that we would go anywhere, do anything, endure any hardship. Even if we did not use those exact words, that was the purpose of our hearts. We were determined to stick with the Gospel, and by the grace of God, we want to remember our commitments to God, and do our best to fulfill them day by day.

We want to remember the challenges that God has taken us through. Moses told the Children of Israel to remember the way God had led them through the wilderness. We can look back at times we faced difficulties that seemed like “wilderness” experiences. Perhaps at the time we could not see how we could get to the other side, but here we are! Even if we face another wilderness today, as we look back and remember the fact that God helped us in the past, we will be strengthened to believe that He will do it again. We want to remember God’s mighty deliverances!

We want to remember that God has promised to guide us. The Children of Israel had the pillar of the cloud by day and a fire by night to lead them. Jesus has promised that the Holy Ghost will be our Guide, and the Word of God will give us direction. We do not have to go through this life alone. The Lord will continue to lead and guide as He has done in the past.

We want to remember our destination. God promised to bring the Children of Israel into a good land. We read in verse 10 of Deuteronomy 8, “When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good

Like the Children of Israel, we want to remember what God has done for us so we can pass it on to the next generation.

land which he hath given thee.” We have a destination that is far better than Canaan. There are battles to fight and challenges to face before we get there, just as there were for the Israelites. However, we want to remember them only because God gave us the victory.

Why we must remember

It was important for the Israelites to remember the leading of God because the time would come when their children would ask, “What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?” (Deuteronomy 6:20). The elders among them would be able to respond with a history lesson, explaining what they remembered from their past or what they had been told by their grandparents and great-grandparents. Like the Children of Israel, we want to remember what God has done for us so we can pass it on to the next generation.

Moses exhorted the Israelites to “remember the LORD thy God” (Deuteronomy 8:18). As we begin a new year, let us remember God—the One who saved us and who has taken us through from the day of our salvation until now. Let us recall how God has helped and guided us. There is great blessing in reflecting on His goodness, His mercy, and His provision for us, and giving Him thanks! ❖

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A study compiled by the Apostolic Faith editorial team.
Illustrations by Sarah Lucescu.

FEASTS AND FULFILLMENTS

Examining the feasts of Israel and their significance to Christians today.

Spring Feasts

1	2	3	4
FEAST OF PASSOVER <i>PESACH</i>	FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD <i>MATZOT</i>	FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS <i>BIKKURIM</i>	FEAST OF WEEKS OR PENTECOST <i>SHAVUOT</i>
Date Fourteenth day of the first month	Date Fifteenth to twenty-first day of the first month	Date The day after the Passover Sabbath	Date Fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits
Next April 5-6, 2023	Next April 6-13, 2023	Next April 8-9, 2023	Next May 27-28, 2023
Theme Deliverance	Theme Holiness	Theme Resurrection	Theme Revelation of God's Law
Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:5; Exodus 12:1-46	Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:6-8; Exodus 23:14-15	Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:9-14; Exodus 23:16, 19	Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:15-21; Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 26:1-11

We all have days marked on the calendar that are special to us. These could include religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, national holidays, as well as personal anniversaries, birthdays, and even days that spiritual victories were

won. We tend to mark the most important, life-changing moments in our lives, and remember them annually to help us appreciate their value.

Have you ever considered what special dates are marked on God’s calendar? Leviticus 23 describes seven feasts that God instructed the Children of Israel to

keep annually. The word “feasts” is a translation of the Hebrew word *moedim* meaning “appointed times.” In other words, the Jewish feasts are days on the calendar that have been appointed by God. Some of these were to be joyful celebrations and some were to be somber. Five of them lasted for a single day

and two were week-long observances. All of them were considered holy to the Lord and had to be kept. Attendance was a requirement of Jesus in His earthly lifetime, and many Jews still keep them today.

These feasts hold great significance for the Jewish people, but also for everyone in the entire world. They present a prophetic illustration of God’s plan of redemption, arranged chronologically from beginning to end, with Jesus as the fulfillment of each. Four of the feasts take place in the springtime, and these were all fulfilled by Christ during His first coming. The last three occur during the fall season and have been fulfilled in part, but are expected to be completed at Christ’s Second Coming.

As we review each of the seven feasts, we will consider their historical origins, prescribed observances, and prophetic meaning and fulfillment. This will give us greater insight into New Testament events, and help us recognize what is next on God’s calendar. When we understand why these dates are important to God, we will understand why they are important to us.

Fall Feasts

5	6	7
FEAST OF TRUMPETS <i>YOM TERUAH</i>	DAY OF ATONEMENT <i>YOM KIPPUR</i>	FEAST OF TABERNACLES <i>SUKKOT</i>
Date First day of the seventh month Next September 16-17, 2023	Date Tenth day of the seventh month Next September 24-25, 2023	Date Fifteenth to twenty-first day of the seventh month Next September 29 – October 6, 2023
Theme Regathering Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6	Theme Repentance Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:26-32; Leviticus 16:1-34	Theme Millennial Kingdom Key Scriptures Leviticus 23:33-43; Deuteronomy 16:13



SPRING FEASTS

The first three springtime feasts celebrate different aspects of one major event in Jewish history: deliverance from bondage in Egypt. They occur together in an eight-day period, beginning with Passover. Technically, Passover is only the first night of the celebration, but the three feasts are commonly referred to as “Passover week.” The fourth springtime holiday, the Feast of Weeks, occurs seven weeks later.



! THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The Hebrew calendar is lunisolar, based primarily on the phases of the moon. Therefore, it does not align with the solar-based calendar used in most of the world today. Each month starts with the appearance of the first sliver of the new moon. The first month is in the springtime for northern-hemisphere locations, and there are twelve or thirteen months per year depending on the moon cycles. As a consequence, the dates of Jewish festivals fluctuate on our calendar.

The Jews also consider the start of a day to be at sundown, following the pattern established in the Creation account that “the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:5). Thus, the Jewish feasts always begin and end at sundown, and consequently appear to last an extra day on our calendar.



1

FEAST OF PASSOVER | PESACH

- **DATE:** Fourteenth day of the first month
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:5; Exodus 12:1-46
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** April 5-6, 2023
- **THEME:** Deliverance



Origins

The word “passover” is a translation of the Hebrew word *pesach* and refers to the promise God made to the Jews while they were enslaved in Egypt. At that time, God commanded the Egyptian Pharaoh to release the Jews. When Pharaoh refused, God sent nine plagues in warning. For the tenth and final plague, God announced that His destroyer would pass through the land of Egypt and kill all the firstborn. The only way to escape death was to sacrifice a lamb without

blemish and cover the doorposts of the home with its blood. The blood was an indication of the substitutionary death of the lamb in place of the firstborn. God told the Jews, “For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you” (Exodus 12:13). God instructed the Jewish people to eat the entire Passover lamb that night along with bitter herbs

and unleavened bread (bread that did not rise).

The first Passover in Egypt and the Israelites’ deliverance from bondage marked the birth of the Jewish nation, and God established this as the start of their year (Exodus 12:1-2).

Observance

Passover is a joyful celebration of Israel’s miraculous deliverance from death and Egyptian bondage. It is commemorated with a special meal based on the foods eaten at the original Passover,

including a sacrificial lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. The Mishnah (see page 20) indicates that while the Temple was standing, Jewish men sacrificed their own lambs in the Temple courtyard, priests sprinkled the blood on the bronze altar, and then the men took their lambs to be cooked for the Passover meal with their families.¹

After the Temple was destroyed, some new traditions were incorporated into the holiday to compensate for the inability to sacrifice a lamb. The Passover meal

came to be known as the Seder, a Hebrew word that means “order” and refers to the specific order of events at the dinner.

Highlights of the Seder:

- A cup of wine called the “Cup of Sanctification” is shared, and a blessing of consecration is given.
 - A hand-washing ceremony is performed by all participants. (The basin used for washing hands could have been the basin referred to in John 13:5 when Jesus washed the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper meal.)
 - A leafy vegetable (usually parsley) is dipped in salt water and then eaten. The salt water represents the tears shed during enslavement. (This could have been the dish referred to in Matthew 26:23 at the Last Supper meal.)
 - A special bag holding three pieces of unleavened bread, or matzah, is opened. The middle piece is broken in half; one half is returned to the bag and the other is hidden, to be reintroduced later.
 - A second cup of wine called the “Cup of Plagues” is shared, and the account of the Exodus is rehearsed.
 - A second hand-washing ceremony is performed
- and then a blessing is prayed over the matzah, which is eaten with bitter herbs (usually horseradish), lamb, and a sweet paste made of nuts and fruits. The matzah represents how the people fled Egypt in haste; the bitter herbs represent the bitterness of slavery; the lamb represents the original Passover lamb; and the sweet paste visually reminds participants of the mortar used by the slaves. Since the Jewish people no longer sacrifice lambs, many substitute a lamb shank bone or a hard-boiled egg.
- A variety of traditional Jewish dishes are eaten as the main course.
 - The broken piece of matzah that had been hidden away is brought out and shared. (This could have been the bread referred to in Matthew 26:26 at the Last Supper meal.)
 - A closing blessing is given and a third cup of wine, called the “Cup of Redemption,” is shared. (This could have been the cup referred to in Matthew 26:27-28.)
 - An extra cup of wine is poured for Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, whom the Jews expect to arrive on Passover.

- A fourth cup of wine, the “Cup of Praise,” is shared, and the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) is recited or sung. (This could have been the hymn referred to in Matthew 26:28.)
- At the close of the meal participants say, “Next year in Jerusalem,” hoping that the Temple will be rebuilt and the next Passover will be held in Jerusalem.

**Fulfillment:
Christ’s Death**

Scripture explicitly states that Jesus is our Passover Lamb. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 5:7, “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” The Jews’ deliverance from Egyptian bondage foreshadowed our greater deliverance from the bondage of sin, which is accomplished through the Blood of Jesus applied to our hearts. Thus, the birth of the nation was a prophetic illustration of spiritual birth.

The key parallel between Christ and the Passover lamb is that the lamb had to be without blemish, and Christ was without sin. The lamb also had to be inspected four days before Passover, paralleling the day Christ entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. That week,

Jesus was tried and Pilot declared, “I find no fault in him” (John 19:6). The lamb could have no broken bones, and despite the physical abuse Christ suffered, none of His bones were broken (John 19:32-33).

At Jesus’ last meal with His disciples, He instituted the new ordinance of the Lord’s Supper that would reflect the New Covenant. We read, “Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take,

eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:26-28). Jesus died before sundown the following day.

The Passover was the first feast ordained for Israel and the first feast on their calendar year. Just as the Passover was the starting point of the nation of Israel, Christ’s

death must be the starting point of our spiritual journey. Passover was a time for the Jewish people to remember the Exodus from Egypt and look forward to the coming deliverance of the Messiah. For believers today, the Lord’s Supper is a time to look back to Calvary and our salvation from sin, and look forward to our greater deliverance at Christ’s return (see 1 Corinthians 11:26).

THE TEMPLE



Solomon’s Temple: © Jeremy Park, Bible-Scenes.com

Shortly after the Exodus, God gave Moses the design for His earthly dwelling place. During the Israelites’ wilderness wanderings, God’s house was a movable, tent-like structure called the “Tabernacle.” Once they had conquered most of the Promised Land, the Tabernacle was established in the city of Shiloh. Eventually, King Solomon built it as an impressive and beautiful permanent structure in Jerusalem that became known as the “Temple.” King Solomon’s

Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., but seventy years later, a less elaborate structure was built in its place, which is known today as the Second Temple. In the first century B.C., King Herod renovated that structure, making it an ornate and glorious Temple, but the Romans destroyed it in 70 A.D. and it has never been rebuilt.

Many aspects of Judaism, especially the feasts, centered around the Temple. All sacrifices were to be offered there, and all Jewish men were required to make a pilgrimage to the Temple for three of the feasts. However, since it was last destroyed, pilgrimages and sacrifices have not been possible. Practicing Jews still keep the feasts, but they are not able to perform observances that involve the Temple.

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD | MATZOT

- **DATE:** Fifteenth to the twenty-first day of the first month
- **THEME:** Holiness
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** April 6-13, 2023
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:6-8; Exodus 23:14-15

Origins

This feast commemorates the first days of the Israelites' freedom from bondage. When God brought the Jews out of Egypt, He instructed them to eat only unleavened bread, and to eat their meal with their shoes on and belongings packed so they could quickly flee Egypt. Exodus 12:34 records, "The people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders" (Exodus 12:34).

Observance

The Feast of Unleavened Bread officially starts on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after Passover, though leaven is also prohibited at Passover. Not only are Jews to abstain from eating leaven during the week, but all leaven is to be purged from their homes beforehand. If anyone eats leaven during the week, that one is to be cut off from Israel. The purpose of discarding the leaven was that the Jews would "remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 16:3). The holiday was also to be marked by daily sacrifices and a day of rest at the beginning and end of the week.

In Bible times, leaven did not come in jars of active dry yeast or containers of baking powder, as it does today. Instead, people relied on starter dough for leavening. The first batch would take several days to develop using yeast that is naturally occurring in the environment. Then, before baking the dough, a portion would be reserved for the starter of the next batch. Therefore, every new loaf of bread had some of the old dough in it. During the Exodus and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the starter dough was discarded, and subsequently the people had to make a new one from scratch. This indicated a break from the past, leaving old things behind, and making a new start.

This is the first of the three pilgrimage feasts, which all Jewish men were required to attend at the Temple. However, since the first three feasts

occurred together during one week, the men effectively attended all of them.

Fulfillment: Sanctification

In the Bible, leaven is commonly symbolic of sin, and thus unleavened bread is symbolic of a life without a trace of sin—including both outward sinful acts and an inner sinful nature. We read in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Discarding the old leaven represents a total break from the past life of sin. A spiritual birth is a new start, and the old sinful ways must be left behind (2 Corinthians 5:17). Just as the Jews had to carefully search out and eradicate leaven from their homes, sin must be eradicated from our hearts. When we search our hearts, consecrating our lives fully to God in prayer, He sanctifies us, purging the sin nature. The provision for this second definite work was also accomplished through Christ's sacrificial death, as Hebrews 13:12 states, "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."



3

FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS | BIKKURIM

- **DATE:** The day after the Passover Sabbath
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:9-14; Exodus 23:16, 19
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** April 8-9, 2023
- **THEME:** Resurrection

Origins

This feast commemorates the Jews' entrance into the Promised Land, and the fulfillment of God's promise to give them the land as an inheritance.

Due to unbelief, observance of this feast did not begin until forty years after the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt. The Jews celebrated Passover in the wilderness, but they did not celebrate Firstfruits until they arrived in Canaan. According to Joshua 5:10-12, the Israelites held their final wilderness Passover just prior to the battle of Jericho. Two days later God stopped providing manna, so it is likely that their first meal in the Promised Land took place on the day of Firstfruits.

Observance

This is the first of three feasts that have a connection to some part of the harvest season. The point of this feast is to bring the first of the harvest to God, thanking Him in advance for the rest of the harvest that is to come.

Firstfruits lasts one day, and is celebrated on the day after the Sabbath (the day after Saturday) during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On that day, the priests were instructed to bring to the Temple the first harvest of the first crop of the season, which was barley. The people were prohibited from eating

of the barley harvest until this offering had been made. Another lamb without blemish was to be offered, as well as grains, oil, and wine.

Fulfillment: Resurrection Day

Christ's death is marked at Passover and His Resurrection was three days later, on the day after the Sabbath, which was the Feast of Firstfruits. Scripture explains plainly that Christ is the firstfruits offering: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

The Jewish people could not partake of the fruit of the land until the Firstfruits offering had been presented to the priests, and in John 20:17 we read that Jesus cautioned Mary not to touch Him because He had not yet ascended to the Father. In other words, the Firstfruits offering had not yet been made. After Christ ascended, the Old Testament symbolic type was fulfilled, and then He interacted with many people.

Just as God promised the land of Canaan for an inheritance to the Jewish people, He promises believers an eternal inheritance in Heaven. Christ was the first to be resurrected from the dead and receive that inheritance. When we celebrate Easter each year, we rejoice both in the resurrection power that raised us from spiritual death, and our hope of Heaven one day.



4

FEAST OF WEEKS OR PENTECOST | SHAVUOT

Origins

This is another harvest-themed festival, and is directly connected with the Feast of Firstfruits. In fact, they can be considered as the bookends of the start of the harvest season, and at times both are referred to as “firstfruits.” While the Feast of Firstfruits marks the beginning harvest of the first crop (barley), the Feast of Weeks marks the beginning harvest of the last crop (wheat), with several fruits ripening during the intervening weeks (these were traditionally dates, figs, grapes, olives, and pomegranates). This was a time to thank God for what had already been harvested, and make an offering in anticipation of what was still to come.

According to Jewish tradition, the Feast of Weeks also marks the date that Moses received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Scripture does not give the exact date, but Exodus 19:1 records that the Law was given in the third month, which is the month when the Feast of Weeks takes place. Thus, the holiday combines the two major themes of the early harvest and the revelation of God’s Law.

Observance

Shavuot means “weeks,” and refers to the seven weeks between Firstfruits and this holiday. Since Firstfruits is always on a Sunday, this feast is as well. This is to be a

day of rest when the people are not allowed to work. It is the second pilgrimage festival for which attendance in Jerusalem was required.

The Feast of Weeks offerings included grain, wine, and animal sacrifices, and some quantity of the later spring crops. It was prohibited to eat of the wheat harvest until this offering had been made. The people were also commanded to bring the unusual offering of two loaves of leavened bread (offerings of bread at the Temple were almost always unleavened). Since all leaven had been discarded at Passover, this offering was made with new leaven.

Fulfillment: Giving of the Holy Spirit

In the New Testament, the Feast of Weeks is referred to by its Greek name: Pentecost. Jesus told His disciples that He must leave so that the Comforter would come (John 16:7), and we read in Acts 2:1 that it was on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was first poured out. Thousands of pilgrims were in Jerusalem for the feast that day, which is why Jewish men “out of every nation under heaven” heard their own languages spoken by the individuals who were filled (Acts 2:5-6). The giving of the Holy Spirit resulted in 3,000 souls being saved and marked the birth of the Church.



- **DATE:** Fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** May 27-28, 2023
- **THEME:** Revelation of God's Law
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:15-21; Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 26:1-11

A correlation can be made between the Law given at Sinai and the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost. Paul referred to the Law as a “school master” (Galatians 3:24) and Jesus said the Holy Spirit would “teach you all things” (John 14:26). However, the Law reveals sin, which causes death, and the Spirit reveals Christ, who brings life. As Paul wrote, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2). Indeed, at Sinai 3,000 people disobeyed the Law and died (Exodus 32:28), but at Pentecost 3,000 souls heard the Gospel and were saved (Acts 2:41).

In the Old Testament, Jeremiah prophesied of the transition from the Law to the Spirit. He wrote, “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; . . . After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:31-33). The Law of the Old Testament was written on stone tablets, but the law of the New Testament is written by God's Spirit on the heart.

While a measure of the Spirit is given at salvation, the disciples in the Upper Room experienced a greater revelation of the Spirit when they were “filled with the

Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4). They were endued with God's power to serve Him more effectively, and that gift is still available to sanctified believers today.

Considering the harvest aspect of this feast, we can note its connection to the Feast of Firstfruits. On Firstfruits, Jesus ascended to the Father at the same time that the priests were making the barley offering; on Pentecost, the 3,000 souls were reconciled to God in Heaven as pilgrims made their Feast of Weeks offerings. They were the firstfruits of converts under the new dispensation.

It is also notable that the date of this feast is never given; instead, the date is calculated by marking fifty days after Firstfruits, which in turn is calculated from the date of Passover. This indicates that the work of Pentecost is inseparable from the work of Passover, and Passover must occur first. The spiritual implication is that to experience a personal Pentecost (the infilling of the Holy Spirit), one must start with a personal Passover (deliverance from sin, new life, and sanctification).

Because the Feast of Weeks falls at the start of the full harvest season, it has a sense that there is yet work to be done. The infilling of the Holy Spirit empowers one to labor in God's harvest field until the entire season is over.



FALL FEASTS

The fall feasts all take place in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. Since the number seven is representative of completion, it seems fitting that these feasts would mark major events of the end times. Christ fulfilled the spring feasts during His first coming and it is anticipated that He will fulfill these fall feasts during His second coming.

! JEWISH TRADITIONS IN THE MISHNA, GEMARA, AND TALMUD

According to Jewish tradition, Moses received both a written law and an oral law from God at Mount Sinai. While the written law was recorded in Scripture, the oral law was passed down verbally from generation to generation. After Jerusalem was conquered in 70 A.D. and the people were scattered, significant discrepancies in the oral law began to arise among the Jewish populations in different areas. In order to preserve the oral law, religious leaders formalized it in writing in the second century A.D. That document is called the *Mishnah*, and it prescribes several festival traditions that are not part of Scripture. In addition, Scriptural commentaries by rabbis throughout the ages have been preserved in a document called the *Gemara*. The *Mishna* and the *Gemara* are together referred to as the *Talmud*, which gives much of the guidance for how Judaism is practiced today. While these documents are not the inspired Word of God, they are helpful historical resources that provide a better understanding of how the feasts likely were observed in Jesus' day.





5

FEAST OF TRUMPETS | YOM TERUAH

- **DATE:** First day of the seventh month
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 29:1-6
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** September 16-17, 2023
- **THEME:** Regathering

Origins

This feast does not correlate to a specific event in Jewish history and Scripture does not state its purpose. Since it features the sounding of trumpets, it is commonly understood to be a warning call to prepare for the most sacred day on the calendar, the Day of Atonement, which occurs just ten days later.

Observance

This was to be a solemn day of rest that included animal sacrifices, grain offerings, and the blowing of trumpets. The word *teruah* means “blasts,” referring to the sound of a trumpet. Numbers 10:1-10 indicates that the feast trumpets were to be made of silver; the same horns that were used to call an assembly, call for war, and announce the first day of the month. However, the Talmud prescribes that the primary trumpet be a ram’s horn (*shofar*) and details exactly how to play it. The ram’s horn trumpet is fitting as it is associated with a call to contrition and penitence.

The mysterious nature of this feast may have contributed to the Jewish people adopting a number of extra-Biblical traditions related to this day. For example, the feast is now primarily viewed as the Jewish New Year (*Rosh HaShanah*). It is not known when or why this day was adopted as the New Year (as opposed to the first day of the first month), but many believe it is appropriate because of the extreme importance of the fall holidays. The Talmud also indicates that Yom Teruah is the anniversary of the first day of creation.

According to the Talmud, the Feast of Trumpets is also the day when God’s Book of Life is opened, to be

sealed on the Day of Atonement. The ten intervening days are called the “Days of Awe,” when people have the opportunity to have their names inscribed in that book, before it is sealed for the year. While these details have no Biblical support, the tradition is in keeping with the theme of the Day of Atonement being a time for spiritual introspection.

Fulfillment

This feast has not yet been fulfilled, but its mysterious nature and the blowing of trumpets suggests a connection to the Rapture of the Church: “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

This feast is the only one to occur on the first day of the month, which would begin with the first showing of the new moon. Because the Jewish people could not know exactly when that would happen, they had to watch the sky for the first crescent of the moon to appear. Likewise, no man knows the day or hour when Jesus will return, and we must be watching.

As it is traditional for the Jews to blow both silver trumpets and ram’s horns on this day, it could be that this feast will have a dual fulfillment: the joyful sound of silver trumpets calling the saints to Heaven, and the mournful warning of the ram’s horn calling the Jewish people to repentance.



6

DAY OF ATONEMENT | YOM KIPPUR

- **DATE:** Tenth day of the seventh month
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** September 24-25, 2023
- **THEME:** Repentance
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:26-32; Leviticus 16:1-34

Origins

This feast is not based on any historic event, but rather on detailed instructions given by God to the Israelites. The focus was a sacrificial ceremony to atone for the sins of the nation. The Hebrew word *kippur* means “covering,” which implies that God was providing a covering for sin. The title “day of atonement” only appears in Scripture three times, and in each instance the word translated “atonement” is *kippurim*, which is the plural form of the word, “atonements” (see Leviticus 23:27-28, 25:9).

The first Day of Atonement was held in the wilderness, seven months after the Jews were delivered from Egypt.

Observance

Sin is what separates mankind from God, and the Day of Atonement was about spanning that chasm. This was not a celebratory feast; it was the most solemn day on the Jewish calendar. God commanded that no work of any kind was to be done on this day. The Jewish people were to fast for twenty-five hours while abstaining from doing their own pleasure as well. They were instructed to afflict their souls, recognizing the gravity of their sins. The punishment for not doing so was death.

To understand God’s instructions for this day, we first need to know a little about the Temple, where the sacrifice for atonement was to be made. The Temple was divided into two rooms: the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. In the Holy Place was a golden altar for burning incense, a seven-branched candelabrum (*menorah*), and a table with bread on it. Behind a curtain was the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. That room was reserved as God’s

dwelling place, and was entered by only the high priest on one day of the year: the Day of Atonement. If he entered at any other time, or did not follow God’s precise instructions for entrance, he would die. In fact, days before the first Day of Atonement, two sons of the high priest disobeyed God’s instructions for bringing an offering and were consumed by fire (Leviticus 10:1-2).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest first washed himself and put on holy garments, and then sacrificed a bullock as a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering for his own iniquity and that of his own household. Taking coals from the altar of incense, he burned incense as he entered the Holy of Holies. Once inside, he sprinkled the bullock’s blood seven times in front of the Ark. Then he repeated the same process using a goat as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Next, he cleansed the altar of incense as well by sprinkling it with blood. In this way, the high priest made atonements for himself and his family, the Holy Place, the golden altar of incense, the Temple, and the people of Israel. Atonement for the physical structures was necessary because of human defilement. Thus, the Day of Atonement was to ceremonially cleanse both the people and their place of meeting with God.

There was also a second goat used in the ceremony, which is called the scapegoat. Initially, both goats were brought before God and lots were cast to determine which would be sacrificed and which would be sent away. After sacrificing the first goat, the priest laid hands on the other, symbolically placing the sins of the people onto the animal. Then the goat was released into the wilderness, never to return. The ceremony ended with the priest removing his soiled garments, washing, and putting on clean clothes.

Fulfillment

This feast has not yet been fulfilled because no major event has taken place on the tenth day of the seventh month. However, the atonement ceremony foreshadowed Christ's death. His sacrifice fulfilled all the steps of atonement.

At Passover Christ was the Sacrificial Lamb, but in the Day of Atonement He is both our High Priest and our Atoning Sacrifice. Hebrews 9:11-12 says, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

Because Christ was sinless, He did not need to first bring an offering for His own sins. Instead, He offered His own Blood as a sin offering to make a complete atonement for the sins of all mankind. Atonement is no longer limited to one day of the year; a sinner can come in repentance to God at any time and the offering of Jesus' Blood will atone. Jesus' sacrifice also fulfilled the symbolic type of the burnt offering, which was to cleanse inward iniquity. Because of that, individuals who have been saved can come to God in consecration and have their sin nature purged.

The instructions for the Day of Atonement give insight into the way to receive salvation today. For instance, God's command for the people to afflict

their souls reflects how a sinner comes in repentance, mourning for his sins and asking God to forgive. God told the Children of Israel that no work was to be done on this day, illustrating that man cannot do anything in himself to atone for his sins. Jesus did all the work and He offers salvation as a free gift.

We can also learn from the negative examples of the two sons of the high priest who were consumed by fire. God rejected them because they disobeyed His instructions for approaching Him. This teaches that we cannot make up our own ideas of how to come to God. We must reverence God enough to obey His instructions.

In the Tabernacle, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies bearing incense. We know from Bible passages that incense represents prayers (see Psalm 141:2 and Revelation 8:3-4), and this helps us understand that we must come before the Lord through prayer.

The scapegoat illustrates that Jesus bore our sins and carried them away, so we do not have to bear the weight of guilt and shame for our sins.

Some Bible scholars suggest that the Day of Atonement will be fulfilled in the future day of mourning when Christ will return to defend the Jewish people at the Battle of Armageddon. The prophet Zechariah foretold that day: "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

HALLEL

The Hebrew word *hallel* means "praise," and we can recognize that it is the root of the word *hallelujah*, meaning "praise God." Hallel refers specifically to the collection of Psalms 113-118, which are rehearsed in their entirety at three of the Jewish feasts: Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles. A shortened version, called "Half Hallel," is used at the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits, and at the new moon observances that mark the start of a month.

Hallel is always preceded and followed by a blessing to God, and the psalms may be sung or recited, either in unison or in a call-and-response format. It is always a joyful expression of praise and therefore is not part of the somber holidays, the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. Psalms 113-118 have no known authors. They all incorporate the concept of praise, and individually touch on the topics of God's goodness, the Exodus, God's unique greatness, His salvation, His mercy, and the Messiah.



7

FEAST OF TABERNACLES | SUKKOT

- **DATE:** Fifteenth to the twenty-first day of the seventh month
- **THEME:** Millennial Kingdom
- **NEXT OCCURRENCE:** September 29 – October 6, 2023
- **KEY SCRIPTURES:** Leviticus 23:33-43; Deuteronomy 16:13

Origins

Leviticus 23:39-43 identifies two sources of inspiration for this feast. The first is that the harvest season has ended, so this is a time to thank God for His provisions during the current year. For this reason, this feast is also called the Feast of Ingathering (see Exodus 23:16, 34:22). The second is to remember the years that the Israelites lived in tents (tabernacles) in the wilderness. Thus, the people were to remember and thank God for His provision, protection, and presence during the challenging wilderness years and in the present year. The joyful mood of this holiday stands in stark contrast to the somber Day of Atonement that takes place just five days prior.

A prophecy about this feast is given in Zechariah 14:16, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” This indicates that when the Messiah reigns, all nations will keep this feast. For that reason, the Jewish people celebrate it with their minds centered on the Messiah. In addition to thanking God for His provisions, they long for the Messiah to usher in a time of even greater rejoicing.

Observance

This final feast on the Jewish calendar is also the third pilgrimage festival, so all men would go up to celebrate in Jerusalem. It occurs five days after the Day of Atonement and lasts eight days, with a Sabbath of rest on the first and last days. Deuteronomy 31:10-11 indicates that the Law was to be read aloud every seventh year during the feast.

The word *sukkah* means “booth.” As a reminder of God’s provision in the wilderness, the Israelites were instructed to build booths (simple shelters) outside their

homes, where they would dwell for seven days. These booths were to be made from the boughs of various trees, including palm branches. The Israelites were also instructed to make a large quantity of animal sacrifices and grain and wine offerings daily.

This feast is a time of great jubilation; the people were specifically commanded to “rejoice before the LORD” (Deuteronomy 16:11). It has the sense of a Thanksgiving holiday and is marked by joyful music, dancing, and daily reciting of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118).

The Talmud describes two important traditions associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. The first was the “Water Drawing Ceremony,” when priests would lead a celebratory parade from the Temple to the Pool of Siloam to fill a golden pitcher with water. During the march, the people would sing, wave branches, and rejoice, as instructed in Leviticus 23:40. They would all return to the Temple, where the priest would walk around the altar and then pour out the water on the altar. This ceremony was repeated each day until the seventh day, known as “The Day of Many Hosannas,” when the priest would circle the altar seven times before pouring out the water. This was the pinnacle of the celebration. The Talmud records, “He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life.”² The ceremony is believed to reference Isaiah 12:3, “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

The other tradition was the “Candelabrum Ceremony” which involved the lighting of massive candles in the Temple courtyard of the women. These candles stood 75 to 150 feet tall, held gallons of oil, and had wicks made of the priests’ worn out garments. They added to the festive



TODAY

atmosphere, as the Talmud describes: “There was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the place of the water-drawing. Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands, and sing songs and praises. And Levites without number with harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and other musical instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the court of the Israelites to the court of the women.”³

Fulfillment

This feast also has not yet been fulfilled. Since Zechariah prophesied that the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated during Christ’s Millennial Reign, it could be that this date will mark the beginning of His governance or some other key date related to His kingdom.

While the Water Drawing and Candelabrum ceremonies are no longer practiced today, they would have been held during Jesus’ lifetime. The account in John 7, when Jesus went to Jerusalem on the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles, would have been on the most exuberant day of the Water Drawing Ceremony. This was the moment when Jesus, standing at the Temple, cried out, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38). Thus, as the Jews symbolically drew “water out of the wells of salvation,” looking for God to send the Messiah, the Messiah Himself announced that He would give them living water. In fact, some who were present that day concluded from Jesus’ comments that He was the Messiah.

The following day, after the feast had ended, Jesus taught in the courtyard of the women. The immense candles had illuminated the area the day before, but the celebration had ended and the lights had gone out. John 8:12 records what Jesus taught there: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Again Jesus spoke directly to the deeper spiritual meaning of the traditions.

It is interesting to note that rejoicing with palm branches was the hallmark on Palm Sunday as Jesus entered Jerusalem. Because this was a Feast of Tabernacles tradition—a feast closely associated with the Messiah—it would have been a natural response when the Jewish people recognized their Messiah.

If God continues fulfilling the feasts in chronological order, this will be last to be fulfilled, and it seems fitting that God’s “grand finale” would be the biggest celebration.

¹ Mishna Pesachim 5:5-7

² Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 51a

³ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 51a and 51b

God’s calendar of appointed feasts shows us that the times and seasons are in His hands and He is orchestrating world events to accomplish His great plan of redemption for mankind. Many of the Jewish people of Jesus’ day did not recognize the season they were living in, and they missed their opportunity to participate in God’s plan. Luke 19:41-44 records that Jesus wept over Jerusalem “because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

Today, we know what season we are in. The Feast of Weeks has been fulfilled and the Feast of Trumpets has not yet come. We are in the middle of the harvest season, and we are called to labor in God’s fields to bring in the harvest of souls. May we do so faithfully until the Trumpet sounds! ❖

WITNESS

27

TRADING OUR WAY FOR GOD'S WAY

Confidence and Monicca lived in their own ways, but satisfaction and fulfillment came when they surrendered to God.

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PRAYER IS OUR POWER SUPPLY

Private and family prayer is the hallmark of this pastor's life.

33

GRIEVING WITH GOD'S HELP

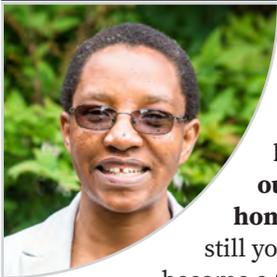
Insight and advice for dealing with a significant loss.

TRADING OUR WAY FOR GOD'S WAY



Confidence and Monica lived in their own ways, but satisfaction and fulfillment came when they surrendered to God.

By Confidence and Monica Nemaungani



Monicca

I was the seventh child born into my family, and ours was not a Christian home. However, when I was still young, my oldest brother became a Christian and joined one of the prominent churches in South Africa.

He started taking me to Sunday school and he later became a pastor in that organization. Because of him, nearly all of my free time was spent at church and I lived a careful lifestyle. Most days, I would come home from school and go straight to church for a service or practice. I never got involved in sinful activities because I didn't have time to be with friends from school or participate in any worldly activities like partying.

In high school, I met my future husband, Confidence. He was in his last year of high school, and I invited him to my church. He did not know it, but that day I prayed that if it were God's will, He would bring us together in the future.

Shortly after that, I moved away for college. I was a chorister and a Sunday school teacher for my church at the time and I wanted to work for God as a minister, so I joined the church's college program. For two years I trained to be a pastor. Yet, at that time I was not even saved. I thought I was a Christian because I was very involved at church and did my best to live a good life. However, I did not understand what real salvation was.

Later on during my training period, I reconnected with Confidence and we fell in love. Sadly, before we were married, I became pregnant. The church I attended taught that Christians should live a life without sin, but they did not live what they taught. Yet, becoming pregnant before marriage was still not acceptable to them. Since I already had been ordained as a minister and was supposed to begin serving a large congregation, my pregnancy was a big problem and this brought a lot of conviction in my life. I felt

Above: Confidence and Monica in 2019 at the Southern Africa camp meeting in Zimbabwe.

I learned that we should not just say a prayer and then immediately move on; after praying and repenting of sin, we need to wait for God to answer.

unworthy to continue serving and decided to leave the organization, and I also went to the church leaders and apologized to them for my wrongdoing, which was not easy. Confidence lived in a different town at that time, and the whole situation put a strain on our relationship. Then, when the baby was born, he only survived one day. I wondered if my relationship with Confidence might be over at that point, but that was not the case. We experienced a lot of heartache by not following God's ways, but He did bring us together and we married in 1998.

The year after we married, Confidence was saved and we started attending his family's church, the Apostolic Faith. There, my spiritual eyes were opened and I finally began to understand what salvation really is. I learned that we should not just say a prayer and then immediately move on; after praying and repenting of sin, we need to wait for God to answer. Also, I had seen people who claimed to be Christians and lived two lives—a good life at church but a sinful life outside of church. At the Apostolic Faith they

There was a real change in me—not from my own efforts, but from God transforming me on the inside.

taught that Christians cannot serve two masters; we need to choose one or the other.

As my understanding of the Gospel deepened, one day I prayed and truly repented, asking God for forgiveness of my sins. I promised God that I would serve Him with all of my heart for the rest of my life, and He saved me! For the first time, I experienced true salvation. It was totally different than my experience with Christianity growing up because there was a real change in me—not from my own efforts, but from God transforming me on the inside. When He came into my heart, my behavior changed automatically. The sinful things I had done before, I did not do anymore. There was a real difference.

In time, God gave Confidence and me three more children, and we served God together. However, there

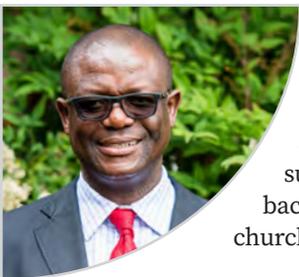


were still struggles in some areas of my life. It was difficult for me to express myself, so when problems came, I would bottle up all of my stress on the inside. It felt like I was facing my troubles alone. Burdens piled up until I became overwhelmed and depressed.

I wanted a way out of my troubles and wished my life would end. However, God showed me my children, and the thought came to me: “If you die, what about your kids?” Then He reminded me of the joy I had felt at salvation and the promise I had made to serve Him with all my heart for the rest of my life. I decided to pray about all the troubles that were weighing on my heart, and then I felt relief. It took time, but as I continued to bring my concerns to God, He lifted my burdens. He also sanctified me during that time. From then on, my life became peaceful. The depression went away and I was able to fully enjoy my family.

Later, God filled me with the Holy Ghost, and I started serving in children's ministries. My husband served as an assistant minister and mainly as an interpreter for over fifteen years, and then in 2018, he was asked to be the district superintendent of South Africa. Thinking back now on how I once wished to die, I realize that if I were gone, it would have affected God's call on my husband's life too. At that time of discouragement, I did not imagine all God had planned for our future. Now I can see that our choices have real consequences, and I am so thankful God helped me to follow His plan.

Today, I truly love and appreciate the life God has given me. I want to serve Him in whatever way He sees fit, and my focus is to make Heaven my home.



Confidence

My upbringing was in the Apostolic Faith Church. My father was a pastor and he later became the district superintendent of South Africa. Looking back, I can say that being raised in the church was a comfort to me. Seeing God

As a youth, I did not appreciate being raised in the Gospel. In fact, to a certain extent I resented it. Yet, whenever I ran into problems in life, I would return to what I had been taught at home—I would pray.

work in our home was a normal way of life, but it was so normal that I did not realize how special it was until I had lost it.

As a youth, I did not appreciate being raised in the Gospel. In fact, to a certain extent I resented it. Church seemed boring to me, and I wanted something exciting. I planned that once I was old enough to be independent, I would leave church behind and do my own thing, and that is exactly what I did. Yet, whenever I ran into problems in life, I would return to what I had been taught at home—I would pray. That was all I knew to do. I remember praying at times, “God, if You will help me pass through university, I will work for You.” Unfortunately, when I finished my studies, I forgot those promises and continued on my own.

In His mercy, God kept calling after my heart. After I graduated from university, I started my career, and when I was twenty-eight years old, Monica and I married. My father had passed away three years before that, and then my mother passed the year we married. Up to that point, my life had been blessed by my parents’ faithfulness, and I had taken it for granted because I had never known anything else. For

Confidence and Monica with their children in 2021.





The Nemaunganis at a Thanksgiving celebration.

example, though our family had never been well off, we were always healthy. We could not afford nutritious meals, yet we were never malnourished or sick, and that was true even through my years at university. After my parents passed away, I noticed that I started to get sick often. I could not eat the same diet anymore because it was making me ill. This was just the start of the troubles I experienced as I moved further away from the Lord.

My first job after graduation was as a creditors accountant at a computer equipment company. I was responsible for implementing systems for their suppliers, payments, and training. In time, I started noticing that other people seemed to live better than me, and thought I would be happier if I had more material possessions. Regrettably, greed led me to try to steal from the company. I issued a fraudulent check, intending to turn it into my own bank account. However, my employer caught me before the money was transferred, and I was immediately suspended. I was facing criminal charges that would destroy my future.

I knew my actions were indefensible and was ashamed of what I had done. Because of my upbringing, I instinctively sought God in my desperation, asking for His help. Though I did not go as far as surrendering my life to Him, I made a sincere prayer: "God, help me. Forgive me, and let Your will be done." When I went to my disciplinary hearing, I confessed everything, including some things my employer had not known about. The man who was chairing the hearing was so amazed by how repentant I was that he decided to let the whole thing go! I was astounded. They told me, "You are forgiven." They even offered to let me keep my position at the company, but I decided I should leave. Even then, they insisted on paying me for the rest of that month, including the time I had been suspended at home. I walked away with nothing on my record.

When I became wise in my own eyes and nearly destroyed my future by committing theft, God delivered me. I should have been in jail with a criminal record, but God prevented it. Through all of this, I realized that God is good. Unworthy as I was, He showed me mercy and love.

This whole event caused me to realize how good and merciful God had been to me. Despite the selfish and sinful life I was living, God was still there for me. I started to see how good my life had been when I was in a Christian home, and how terrible things were going without God in my life. I had always been healthy growing up because God was helping our family, and with my parents no longer praying for me every day, I was exposed to problems in a way that I had not been before. I had passed university not because of my own capabilities, but because I made a promise and God was faithful, even when I was not being faithful to Him. Then, when I became wise in my own eyes and nearly destroyed my future by committing theft, God delivered me. I should have been in jail with a criminal record, but God prevented it. Through all of this, I realized that God is good. Unworthy as I was, He showed me mercy and love. From that time, I began seeking God in prayer and going to church again. When I repented of all my sins, God was merciful and saved me.

My wife started attending church with me too, and God saved her as well. Because I had been raised in church, I knew that I needed to seek my deeper experiences. Soon God sanctified me, and then baptized me with the power of the Holy Ghost. There have been challenges along the way, but those foundational experiences helped me to stand firm, and God has led us. God also gave us children, and we are blessed to serve Him together.

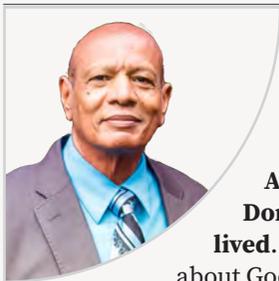
Before I was saved, there were times when I felt good about my life and thought, "Ah, things are working for me!" But that all fell apart. Now I know, "God is good and *He* is working for me!" I owe Him more than I could ever repay. My desire is to serve Him more and to remain faithful wherever He calls me to serve. Though my parents did not live to see me saved, I am encouraged by the hope that I will meet them in the clouds when the Trumpet sounds. ❖

Confidence and Monicca Nemaungani worship at the Apostolic Faith Church in Tembisa, South Africa, where he serves as the pastor and the District Superintendent of South Africa.

PRAYER IS OUR POWER SUPPLY

Private and family prayer is the hallmark of this pastor's life.

By Andres Pichardo Richards



My parents were not Christians, but they were very religious and sent me to Sunday school at the Apostolic Faith Church in the Dominican Republic, where we lived.

I went regularly and learned about God and His Word. One night in my teenage years, while I was alone in my room I heard the voice of God telling me, **“If you do not repent, you will perish.”** Those words resonated in my heart.

The next evening, I went to church service and heard the preacher say, “You can accept Jesus into your heart this night.” I did not pray right then, but after I returned home and was alone in my room, I got on my knees in the dark and prayed. I asked God to forgive my sins and save my soul, and suddenly the room lit up and the Spirit of God came down. I started to give glory to God because I knew something powerful had happened in my life; God had saved me.

I went back to the church the next evening and told the pastor I had experienced genuine salvation. God

After I returned home and was alone in my room, I got on my knees in the dark and prayed. I asked God to forgive my sins and save my soul, and suddenly the room lit up and the Spirit of God came down. I started to give glory to God because I knew something powerful had happened in my life; God had saved me.

had fully changed my life, taking away my desire to use bad words, listen to secular music, and dance. I began attending all the church services, and the Lord gave me Christian friends. Together, we read the Bible, prayed, sang hymns, and talked about the Gospel.

My pastor often emphasized the need for entire sanctification, and I began to pray that God would give me this experience. When time passed and I did not receive it, I decided to fast and pray. As I was crying out to God on the third day, He did something beautiful in my life that has lasted: He purified my heart. The



Adamic nature was removed and an inner fight was gone, leaving only peace in my soul.

Later, God filled me with His Holy Spirit, and I knew the work was complete when I spoke in another language. After the Holy Ghost came into my life, there was more power in my words to reach souls with the message of the Gospel.

Over the years, God has been good to me. He gave me a Christian wife, and we have five children and many grandchildren. God has answered so many prayers for our family in miraculous ways that I could tell of them for hours. When our children were at home, we prayed for them whenever they were sick, and God answered every time. One dramatic miracle took place when our eldest daughter became sick and could not keep down any food for seven days. My wife and I were praying for her one evening when she became very weak and lifeless. We called for our pastor to come. When he arrived and checked her vital signs, he concluded that she was already gone. However, he said, "We must pray." **We started praying and her spirit revived and she spoke**, but she was still very weak. My wife gave her some milk,

The Lord told us that if our family would pray together, He would bless us.

and we continued to pray. After an hour, strength came into her hands, and within several hours she was walking. God in His mercy and love had returned

her life, for His honor and glory. Now she is over fifty years old and glorifies God as a minister in this Gospel.

When my wife and I were raising our children, we set aside Sundays for fasting and praying as a family. This came to an end when the children grew up and left home. Then in 2008, there was a great move of God within the church, and many of our family members were saved, sanctified, and baptized with the Holy Ghost. At that time, the Lord told us that if our family would pray together, He would bless us. We began coming together on Tuesdays to fast and pray, and we have continued this practice since. It has been a blessing and we have seen many answers to prayer. Today, all of our children are ministers. We praise God for this. He is full of mercy.

God allowed me to serve Him as a Sunday school teacher, youth leader, minister, and since 1994, as a pastor. Yet the biggest call on my heart is to pray. We are living in days of apostasy where even some churches are straying from sound doctrine. Though I preach, my focus is on praying, because I know that prayer is our power supply. We need to pray to maintain our experiences, remain loyal to the Gospel, and hold firmly to sound doctrine.

I am so thankful for God who has been with our family in a mighty way. My goal is to be loyal to Him, and one day to obtain eternal life. ❖

Andres Pichardo Richards is the pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Haina, Dominican Republic.

GRIEVING WITH GOD'S HELP

Insight and advice for dealing with a significant loss.

By Vickee Martin



In one way or another, grief comes to all of us. Whether you are six or sixty, eighteen or eighty, experiencing sorrow is an eventuality that everyone will experience in their lives.

On her way home from college for the holidays, your daughter is badly injured in a car accident and your whole life radically changes as your family tries to adjust. Perhaps you lose a pregnancy, or find out that it will never be possible for you to have children as you had hoped. Maybe you have been laid off at a crucial point in your career and have a family to support.

Suddenly, you are face-to-face with grief. How will you cope with your loss?

After years of working on a hospital Supportive Care Team as a nurse, I have learned a lot about grief. To begin with, grief can be caused by many situations besides the death of a loved one. Also, no matter what has caused your loss, it is important to grieve. No, you shouldn't just put your chin up, suppress your feelings, ignore your pain, and move on. Sorrow is the

Grieving is a process; it is a period of time in which you seek to come to terms emotionally with a loss.

proper reaction to a loss, and it needs to be released. The bigger the loss, the harder you will need to grieve, and the longer it will take. Grieving is a process; it is a period of time in which you seek to come to terms emotionally with a loss.

Grief is probably the most painful emotion you will ever experience, and the only way out of it is to go through it. However, you do not have to go through this difficult time alone. There is Someone who understands your sorrow completely and wants to comfort you. The Bible assures us, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18). Your Creator is the only One who knows all about you, every circumstance that led to this moment, and the pain you are feeling. He can provide the best source of support. Cling to the Lord and the promises in His Word, and He will bring you through.

One such promise was written thousands of years ago by King David, who suffered terrible losses,

including the deaths of three sons. Drawing from experience, he gave this timeless encouragement: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). Hold on to this promise and others like it, knowing that the “morning” will eventually come.

While the timing of recovery from loss is individual, the process is generally universal. **On the way to recovery, each person will go through the common stages of grief and eventually learn how to live with the loss.** This process will be easier if you know what to expect and rely on the Lord to help you each step of the way.

The stages of grief

Acute grief affects not only our emotions, but also our bodies, minds, and spirits. You may have trouble sleeping, experience an empty feeling in your stomach, or find yourself crying at unexpected times. Don't berate yourself if you feel numb, are restless, lack energy, or find it difficult to concentrate. All of these are associated with the following stages of grief that most people go through as they heal.

DENIAL/SHOCK. One of the early stages of grief is denial, or a feeling of unreality. This is a defense mechanism that engages when something is so painful that it threatens the mind. It acts as protection from the full impact of the loss and allows a person to continue to function.

You may also experience shock—a sudden and violent disturbance of the mind or emotions. Any reaction during this time, from hysterics to icy calm, is normal and acceptable, so be gentle with yourself. Let reactions happen and lean fully on the Lord. The Bible tells us, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). Turn to Him, and He will carry you through.

ANGER/GUILT. Many find themselves haunted by feelings of anger or guilt. Anger is a basic emotion of extreme displeasure or exasperation. It is characterized by irritability, bitterness, and an impulse to lash out. Guilt is an emotion based on a combination of sadness, regret, and anxiety. When these feelings come, a natural tendency for many is to keep them bottled up inside or take them out on others. A better way is to take our burdens to God in prayer. Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Confide in Him your feelings of frustration and guilt. Only He has the power to resolve anger, remove guilt through reassurance or forgiveness, and give rest.

BARGAINING. Bargaining is generally the briefest stage of grief. It is an attempt to gain time through making promises. Sometimes these promises are made to oneself such as, “If I survive this, I will take better care of myself.” Other times, they are made to God, as in, “If You let my dad live, I will serve You for the rest of my life.” This stage is a time when people think about any unfinished business and complete or come to terms with it. Though you may feel compelled to bargain with God, it is never necessary, because He wants what is best for you. We are told in Luke 12:32, “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Simply surrendering to God will bring about the best outcome.

DEPRESSION/DESPAIR. Depression is a normal part of the grief-growth process. It is characterized by a lack of interest in activities that you once looked forward to and the absence of emotional, physical, or mental energy. At times, physical energy may be so low that you have trouble concentrating or thinking clearly.

Despair is a feeling of hopelessness. When a person despairs, the future seems pointless, without meaning, and dark. Certain losses, such as a spouse dying or when children leave home, can cause one to feel that he or she has no more purpose in life. Regardless of the phase of life you are in and the responsibilities it brings, your greatest purpose is to serve and glorify God. As you seek His direction, He will give your life meaning and your hope for the future will be restored.

ACCEPTANCE. Acceptance is the final phase of the grief cycle. It is when you are able to accept the loss, and not merely be resigned to it. With acceptance comes a sense of peace and the ability to move on to a new phase of life. Once again, you will be able to enjoy life and look forward to the future.

Advice for the grieving process

It is likely you had no control over the circumstances that brought your grief, but you can decide how you will handle it. Here are some practical suggestions for how to continue moving through the stages of grief, with God's help, to a place of healing.

MAKE IT REAL. When death occurs, society follows certain rituals like holding a funeral or memorial service. It is important not to skip these events because they bring closure and help the one grieving to accept the reality of their loss. Where there is no accompanying ritual, in situations such as losing possessions in a housefire, you will find it

more difficult to come to terms with your loss. It will be easier to ignore your pain, which could result in carrying that sorrow within you for years. One way to avoid this is to plan some type of occasion, however brief, to recognize and let go of your loss.

FEEL THE PAIN. Sorrow is a painful longing over a significant loss. It may be characterized by sharp emotional pain, weeping, sobbing, and moaning. To process your grief, you must feel the pain, which may include such physical manifestations as shortness of breath, a feeling of tightness in your chest, or fatigue. In addition, you may experience an inability to sleep even though you are tired. During this time, remember that you are not alone. Turn to God in prayer, “casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

TAKE CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS. Nutrition, physical activity, and sleep are vital components of grief recovery. It is important that you eat on a regular schedule, whether you want to or not, and include nutrient-rich foods. Good eating habits will help balance your mood, energy level, and weight. Physical activity is also important because it improves general attitude and health. Working through grief is tiring; adequate rest will enable you to get daily tasks accomplished as well as do the things you enjoy.

EXPRESS WHAT YOU ARE FEELING. In addition to talking to the Lord about your sorrows, many who are grieving find comfort in talking to others. If you have trouble verbalizing your feelings, you could also try expressing your grief through a non-verbal activity such as writing. Journaling is a good outlet because it allows you to be honest with yourself. Also, describing your feelings can bring clarity to what seems confusing, making it easier to process what is happening.

HAVE A PLAN FOR DIFFICULT DATES. For some types of losses, holidays and anniversaries will be difficult. In some cases, you may choose to lessen the pain by simply avoiding situations that you know will be difficult. If you have lost a loved one, you may want to find a way to acknowledge him or her on certain dates. This could be anything from displaying a photo to visiting a special place to reminiscing with someone who also knew your loved one. You may find encouragement by spending these times with someone else who has suffered a major loss.

ASK FOR HELP. If you need help, don't hesitate to ask for it, particularly from those who have offered their support. If you need a shoulder to cry on, someone to accompany you to the cemetery, or if you just want to

go to lunch, say so. If there is no person who can meet your needs, remember to bring every concern to God.

PLAN ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BRING YOU JOY.

We read in Proverbs 17:22, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” Activities that bring you joy are just as important to your mental and physical well-being as work, so be sure to make time for enjoyable activities. Since you may not feel like doing something fun, it is a good idea to schedule it or invite someone to join you. These activities will help shift your perspective and increase your desire to live.

At the same time, you can still expect to experience waves of sadness triggered by reminders of your loss. Allow your feelings to surface—cry when you need to and laugh when you want to. Both laughing and crying provide a release from the tension you may be experiencing.

ADJUST TO THE LOSS. As you begin to feel a sense of peace regarding your loss, you will be able to look to the future with new hope. Though you will continue to experience occasional waves of emotional pain and sadness, the frequency and intensity will wane. Do not let yourself become preoccupied with the past, but instead embrace the new future that is before you. Yes, the loss may have altered your life forever, but you can move forward in a new way, finding new meaning in life.

Drawing closer to God through grief

In Isaiah 61:3, God promised “beauty for ashes,” and that phrase is far more than just a casually offered platitude with no real significance. For each adversity in life, there is an accompanying spiritual dimension—an opportunity to discover deeper meaning in your life, and to affirm that God is your Source of strength.

If you are walking through the valley of grief today, you can gain from this hard time. Allow God to teach you and help you through your struggle, and the spiritual purpose can and will be found. Every experience of sorrow prepares us for dealing with the more challenging areas of life that are inevitable. God perfects us through suffering and brings us into a closer relationship with Himself. That is reason enough for you to hang on. ❖

As a Supportive Care Team nurse, Vickie Martin walked alongside people with life-threatening or terminal illnesses and their families, helping them deal with grief. This article was adapted from a booklet she wrote on the subject. She attends the Apostolic Faith church in Grants Pass, Oregon.

EVIDENCE

Curt Cook (Portland, Oregon)

I was born and raised right up the street from the Portland church and attended all the time with my family. I was brought to Sunday school, but the Gospel message went in one ear and out the other. I didn't like going to church because



I was more interested in playing sports like baseball, football, and basketball. If there was ever a time when my family couldn't go to church, I would think "Oh good!" Then I would go outside and find a ball to throw around.

When I started high school, my physical education (PE) instructor was the freshman basketball coach. He happened to be watching me one day when I was playing basketball and

my shots were right on. He said, "Hey, Cook. Why don't you try out for the team?" I said, "Okay, cool." However, when the day for try-outs came, I had to do my afternoon paper route instead. I wanted to go to the try-outs and felt guilty about not showing up after I said I would, but I couldn't just leave my route.

The next day in PE class, the teacher got right in my face, saying, "Where were you last night?" I told him I had

a paper route, and he just shook his head, turned around, and walked off. I thought, "Wow, I really messed up," and it upset me. Thinking I had done something wrong, I started to feel down. What I did not know was that God was calling after my heart and convicting me.

A few weeks or so later, I went to church on a Sunday night, and the Lord started talking to my heart. When the service was over, one of my friends walked toward the aisle, turned left, and went out. Then another friend turned left and went out. I turned right and went to the altar. Hallelujah! I prayed and Jesus made a change in my heart. There were no fireworks going off, but on the walk home I felt light. It was cold outside and there was ice on the street, but I didn't care.

The days after proved that God had made a change in my heart. Before, I had wanted to play ball all the time, but after receiving salvation, that desire was just gone. I never even missed it. A short time later, the music director asked if I wanted to take up an instrument. I said, "Okay," and my mom bought me a ten-dollar trombone. It was an old, used, beat up trombone, but it started me on a path of playing in the church orchestra for over fifty years.

The Lord has guided me all through life. He has been wonderful to me, and I am glad He saved me. ❖

Rutendo Khozomba (Blantyre, Malawi)

For years, I prayed for salvation.

I thought God wasn't listening to me and got angry at Him, wondering, Why doesn't He answer my prayer? But the problem was me. I always went to prayer with doubts in mind: Would He save me? With all that I have done, would He save me? Then I would just leave the altar and go home.

Yesterday, a brother sat down with me and started teaching me

about faith. He said, "For you to receive salvation, you have to have faith." I listened to him, and last night I went to the altar and I prayed with all my heart. I had faith that He would save me, and it happened—I was saved! I thank God for the joy I feel in my heart. ❖



Rob Parker (Portland, Oregon)

God allowed me to be born into a very good family right here in Portland and I am so thankful for that.

I had parents who loved me and brought me to church regularly. This church was a big part of our lives, and that heritage is very precious to me. Some of the older saints here today were examples to me in my formative years. Their faithfulness in the Gospel made an impression on me. I observed the lives of other adults such as my teachers and saw that God had made a difference in the lives of my parents and the people at church.



From an early age, I wanted to have the Lord in my life and make Heaven my home.

As a child, I was never sure if I had the victory and there were multiple occasions when I thought Jesus had come and I had missed the Rapture. Then, when I was fifteen years old, I prayed in the chapel and the Lord made salvation real to me. The distinction in my heart was clear—my anxiety was gone and in its place was peace. I knew God would be with me every day, and He has not failed. I am so thankful for all He has done for me. ❖

WORLD REPORT

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CAMP MEETINGS RESUME AROUND THE WORLD

In 2022, many of our churches worldwide were blessed to resume their former schedules of camp meetings.

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SHORT TAKES

Brief reports from our churches worldwide.

CAMP MEETINGS RESUME AROUND THE WORLD

In 2022, many of our churches worldwide were blessed to resume their former schedules of camp meetings. Here are a few of the highlights from various locations.

Western and Central Africa (WECA): The two-week camp meeting began on Sunday, August 14, at the Faith City campground in Igbesa, Nigeria, with over sixteen thousand in attendance. After the first week, Reverend Isaac Adigun, the WECA District Superintendent, reported that God was blessing in a mighty way. The Friday and Sunday evening services had been preempted by prayer. This happened after hundreds stayed on their knees seeking God from the close of each service to the start of the next. In the days following, proving that God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, more than two thousand prayed through to salvation!

Ghana: Two weeks of prayer meetings at all branch locations in Accra preceded the camp meeting, held August 28 to September 11. The universal prayer was for God's blessings to fall in abundance during the event.

The opening message was delivered by Reverend John Bekoe, the Ghana District Superintendent, and emphasized the camp theme of "O LORD, Revive Thy Work," from Habakkuk 3:2. He reminded the congregants that current events point to the need for revival. Fervent prayer at the altars followed the service.

In the final weekend, a water baptismal service was held for ninety-one converts and nearly eight hundred participated in the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Foot Washing.

Australia: The camp meeting, which ran from September 25 to October 2, was an inspiring time for all who participated. In line with this year's theme of "Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord," the services truly drew the attendees to the mountain of the Lord.

God helped the choir and orchestra to bless every meeting with joyous music. In addition, wonderful testimonies of victory were shared. One brother told

how he was healed of cancer. Another said he had lived a life of crime until God saved him and set him on a new path. A third thanked God for delivering him from a bad car accident.

Following every meeting, people rushed to pour out their hearts to God in prayer. As the camp meeting came to an end, one participant commented, "We have received so many spiritual dividends this week. God has revived; God has healed; God has blessed in ways we cannot quantify."

South Africa: Great altar services and music punctuated the camp meeting held at the Bapsfontein campground from October 2-9, and the first day's services set the tone. During the morning meeting, Reverend Confidence Nemaungani, the South Africa District Superintendent, welcomed the one thousand in attendance. He then invited everyone to stand and sing the National Anthem, "Nkosi Sikelele' iAfrika," which means, "Lord Bless Africa." Throughout the service, the music varied by language and was outstanding. The message was taken from Luke 10:1-9 and 17, focusing on "A Gospel Light that Works." There was a rush to the altars as the sermon was concluding and earnest prayer followed.

In the afternoon, a youth service was held, and one young man testified to praying through to salvation earlier that morning. The sermon was from Genesis 35:1-2 on going "Back to Bethel." There was a great response from the youth, and a tremendous prayer meeting followed. That evening, a fiery message was delivered on the topic of "choices," and there was another rush to the altars. ❖



SHORT TAKES

Brief reports from our churches worldwide.

Haiti Struggles, but the Lord Continues to Provide

In recent years, the collapse of society in Haiti due to natural disasters, political instability, government corruption, and crime have impacted our congregations there. Our churches were forced to close during the pandemic, and for safety reasons only a few have been able to reopen, and that on a very limited basis.

However, God has continued to provide for their daily necessities, and the congregations look forward to the day when they will hold services again. During the closures, a donation made it possible to rebuild our church in Tirette and replace the roofs of our churches in Roche-a-Bateau and Port-Salut. All three had been severely damaged by hurricanes.

In addition, until recently, we have been able to maintain an evangelistic effort through a secondary school by providing salaries for twelve teachers. The school is located next door to our headquarters church in Mirebalais and is operated by the Apostolic Faith. It serves one hundred students. We join in praying for the school classes to resume very soon.



A New Church in Jamaica after Roof Collapses

Last May, the roof collapsed at the Albert Town church in Trelawny, Jamaica, where Reverend Sheila Ricketts is the pastor. The Jamaica District Superintendent, Reverend Rohan Clough, contacted the Portland headquarters about the situation asking if a loan would be possible. It was determined that headquarters could hardly *loan* funds for the roof; we wanted to *give* funds for the roof. When United States pastors learned of the pressing need, funds were soon donated to cover the cost of building a new church!

By November 2022, construction had progressed to include outer walls and a roof. The congregation looks forward to worshiping in the new building and holding a dedication service in the coming months.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

ACKNOWLEDGE

- “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” *Romans 3:23*
- “God be merciful to me a sinner.” *Luke 18:13*

CONFESS

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” *1 John 1:9*

REPENT

- “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” *Luke 13:3*
- “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” *Acts 3:19*

FORSAKE

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him... for he will abundantly pardon.” *Isaiah 55:7*

BELIEVE

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” *John 3:16*

If you are a new Christian, contact us and request the tract entitled “Starting Out.”

Construction Resumes on Mozambique Headquarters

Construction has resumed on a new headquarters church for our work in Mozambique, which is led by Reverend Francisco Chatisso. The building is much needed as the congregation long ago outgrew the current church. The project was started twelve years ago, but a major setback occurred three years ago when Cyclone Ida devastated Mozambique and knocked down nearly half the structure.

On September 28, Reverend John Musgrave representing the Portland headquarters and Reverend Oniyas Gumbo, the Southern Africa District Superintendent, traveled to Mozambique. They were accompanied by their wives and several leaders of the work in

Southern Africa. The next morning, the group toured the construction site, which is located on the same property in Chimoio as the current headquarters church. They noted that the outer walls are in place, forming an impressive stone structure, and nearby are mango trees and a fifty-foot hand-dug well.

Members of the congregation who were arriving for a church service soon gathered at the construction site and began singing. Then words of encouragement were shared as well as prayer for completion of the project before the group dispersed.

Since then, construction has been ongoing, and the saints in Mozambique look forward to



holding a dedication service in the near future.



Top to bottom: Construction in Mozambique; Dedication service in Kapavaram, India; Dedication service in Pedapudi, India.

Previous page: A new roof on our church in Haiti; Roof replacement in Jamaica.

Two New Churches Dedicated in India

Two congregations in India dedicated new church buildings in October. The first dedication took place at our Kapavaram location on October 11. The saints there have been worshipping under a rented tent since 2012. They acquired a scenic parcel of land in 2016 with donated funds but did not have the means to begin construction. Nearly five years later, on January 26, 2021, they rejoiced as the foundation to the building was laid.

Now the congregation has a beautiful church, located at the edge of the village, in a setting that has been described as “breathtaking.” During the dedication ceremony, the doors were left open to the view of green rice fields stretching for miles with an occasional coconut tree.

The pastor, Reverend Jaya Raju, and his wife, Santhi, along with their children, Jyothi and Suvarna, hosted the event. A special cake was made for the occasion and everyone received a slice following the ceremony, which included a dedicatory message and prayer.

The second dedication took place on October 18 at our Pedapudi location. As guests arrived, a small band played while several saints tossed flower pedals. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held outside and included a dedicatory prayer.

Inside, a ladies’ choir sang, visiting pastors shared words of encouragement, and a minister shared how the new church came to be built. The congregation outgrew the previous church and made plans to expand the square footage. However, it was soon discovered that the roof was unstable, and all services had to be halted. The saints prayed for a solution and God answered by providing funds through the Portland headquarters to build a new church.

The dedication service continued with a brief exhortation in which the new church was compared to a type of “gas station” where individuals can “fill up” with God’s Spirit. Following the service, dinner was provided for everyone who attended, as well as others who heard about the meal. In all, over eight hundred were fed. ❖

OUR CLASSICS

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THIRTY YEARS OF PRAYING REWARDED

After being saved, a young mother prayed that her husband would give his life to the Lord.

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THE THIEF OF TIME

A serious warning about a wicked intruder.



By Gert Tolles-Mixer

This article was originally published in the January 1987 edition of our magazine.

THIRTY YEARS OF PRAYING REWARDED

After being saved, a young mother prayed that her husband would give his life to the Lord.

There is a song that says, “If I could only tell of Jesus as I know Him. . . I am sure that you would make Him yours today.” That is why I like to tell what God has done for me.

As a little girl, I used to go into the bedroom on many nights and kneel beside my Christian mother as she was praying. I believe Jesus remembered those prayers in later years, and I’m glad He did. The truths of the Bible were planted in my heart from my wonderful mother, and also from Sunday school and church. Someday I would meet God—I never got away from that fact, and I wanted to go to Heaven.

As a young girl, I was saved, but I somehow missed the necessity of praying to keep the treasure in my heart. One day I realized by my actions that I was not saved. Right then I should have turned to the Lord, told Him I was sorry, and asked Him to save me again. Instead, I quit going to church. At eighteen years old I married a nice young man named Jim, and life went on.

Through the years, I was pretty careful about doing things I knew would have to be straightened out if I did get saved. But I could not control my temper or keep myself from taking God’s name in vain when I was angry. Eternity did bother me, so I kept very busy so I wouldn’t have time to think about it.

Time went by. One Sunday when I was twenty-nine years old, I went to church again with my mother, and God called me. At the close of the meeting, I handed my baby to my mother and went forward to pray. Although I did not get saved that day, I had seen my need and I began to seek God earnestly. I kept seeking until I knew that I was a Christian—born again!

Salvation was just the first taste. Soon I heard a sermon on the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians

One Sunday when I was twenty-nine years old, I went to church again with my mother, and God called me. At the close of the meeting, I handed my baby to my mother and went forward to pray. Although I did not get saved that day, I had seen my need and I began to seek God earnestly. I kept seeking until I knew that I was a Christian—born again!

about the love that God could give to His people. That day, He put that love into my heart when He sanctified me. Then I prayed a long time for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and one day I felt that fullness of His Spirit come in. I still start my prayers thanking the Lord for my baptism. It was just that good.

Jesus was the best Friend in our family. Our four daughters and I called on Him for every kind of problem. One time our oldest daughter was knocked down by a pickup truck, and got up unhurt. Another time our fourteen-year-old came into the house while it was being burglarized and heard someone run out the door. The Lord was our great Physician, sometimes instantly healing us. He took a big wart off our daughter’s foot just overnight. One time

I had pneumonia and was sick a long time, but the Lord healed me. The Lord has done so many things for us.

All of our daughters gave their hearts to the Lord when they were still young. And if my husband Jim could have been talked into becoming a Christian, he surely would have been by our daughters and myself. He did come to church and even prayed twice, but never gave God a chance. He was always occupied with business and restless. He traveled all over the world.

Living with an unsaved husband wasn't always easy, but the Lord was a good teacher. One memorable time soon after I was saved, I said something to Jim that made him angry. I quoted from the Bible, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." I can still remember the look on his face. He stopped and did not say one more word. A long time later, I said something a bit sharply to him and he reminded me, "Ah, ah—a soft answer." That was quite a lesson!

For thirty years I prayed for my husband. Sometimes the Lord must use drastic measures in order to get someone's attention. After one of his trips to Europe, Jim had a stroke. It affected his language but not his memory. Our pastor came to see him and was talking to him about the Lord. My husband said, "You've got to have something there," pointing to his heart.

Jim began to go to church and pray. And one day he found that "something"—something so great he would tell everyone he met about it! His ability to speak was limited by the stroke, but seldom anyone escaped without hearing about "the wonderful day" or "the wonderful change." He sat on the front row at church and would testify in just a few words, ending with "I love you all."

This love for others proved the change in Jim. I had a good friend whom he had never liked through the years. He treated her deplorably. After he was saved, he told her many times that he was sorry. One day I said, "You've already told her." He said, "Get her on the phone again."

Jesus told in the Bible about working in the vineyard. Some stood idle until the eleventh hour. It was the eleventh hour of my husband's life when he was saved. He lived about a year longer, and I believe he gave more testimonies for the Lord in that year than some people give in their whole lifetime. But the wonderful mercy of the Lord is that the pay—Heaven—is the same for those who worked from the first hour.

Am I glad I gave God my life? Of course! It has proved to be the very best way. ❖

Gert Tolles-Mixer attended the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon. After being a widow for fifteen years, she married Dick Mixer, who had also been widowed, and they enjoyed serving the Lord together until her passing in 2016.



Top to Bottom: The Tolles family in the late 1950s; Gert working in the library of the headquarters church office in Portland; Gert helping in the church correspondence department.





By Josiah Soyinka

This article was originally published in the September 1992 edition of our magazine.

THE THIEF OF TIME

A serious warning about a wicked intruder.

Today's message to you is a very serious one, and it is a warning. There is someone coming into our ranks who is uninvited. He has been doing a wicked work, and you need to beware of him.

Who is this "person"? Before revealing his name, I will tell you some of his characteristics so that you can easily identify him. This person is a cheat, somebody who takes advantage of other people. This person that we must beware of is an intruder. He involves himself in other people's business. He is a thief; he robs people of their property, their lives, their eternity. This person holds back people's progress. His name is Procrastination.

In 2 Corinthians 2:11 we read, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." That is the main purpose of this message: We need to prevent Satan from taking advantage of us. We do not want to be unaware of his devices. You see, Satan, in his cleverness, often uses Procrastination to do his work.

We are told that Procrastination is the thief of time. I have seen him working. He has robbed many people of their blessings. He has held back the spiritual progress of many. And we do not want you to fall victim to him. Procrastination tells you, "Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow." In spiritual matters, this thought comes to many young people. They are young and healthy, and that is their hope of the future. They postpone what they should do today because they think they have tomorrow. That is a dangerous idea indeed. Nobody is sure of tomorrow! The only time you can be certain of is today. But Procrastination will not allow you to make the best use of this day.

Today you have an opportunity to come before God and lay all your problems and spiritual needs before Him. This opportunity is a golden one. The windows of Heaven are open and the blessings of God will come down copiously. But Procrastination comes your way and begins to discuss the matter with you. "You

had better do some other thing," he tells you. "There is plenty of time tomorrow to take care of the needs of your soul." Don't allow him to have his way in your life. **Opportunity knocks at the door of every person, but the outcome depends on how you respond.**

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." That means when you have a chance to get hold of God, accept it and

move forward with your whole heart, because one day your opportunity will be over.

Yes, it may please God to allow you to enjoy long years in this life. But that is the exclusive choice of God. And what if you did have a long life? That is no reason why

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you should postpone until tomorrow what you should do today. You don't know what will be in your tomorrows. But you have today, so respond to God with all your power, with all your will.

Perhaps you have heard about the way of salvation and still have not taken that step. What are you thinking? Do you plan to get saved next year? Who told you that you will live to see next year? You think you will seek God next Sunday? Who told you that you will be alive next Sunday? You must make the best of your opportunity today.

Think about Felix, the governor of Judaea. He had the opportunity of hearing the Gospel through the ministry of Paul the Apostle. When Felix heard what Paul had to say, he trembled. But instead of taking a step further and acknowledging his sins, he said, "At a convenient time I will call upon you and hear the whole matter." But he never had a convenient time. Do you want to be like Felix?

When Paul went to Athens, he saw that the city was very religious. They had raised an altar for every god and goddess that they were worshipping, and there were altars all over the place. In an attempt to not annoy a god they did not know, they had even lifted up an altar to the "Unknown God." Paul told the Athenians that the God they did not know was the God he was preaching to them. He taught repentance. He taught salvation. He taught them that they would face the judgment of God. But when the Athenians heard this, they mocked. They said, "Go! We shall call thee again." But they never had the opportunity.

There are also some people who do make use of their opportunity. Samson disobeyed God, broke his vow, and lost the power of God. He was in great affliction, but in that sad condition he turned back to God, and began to feel the presence of God once more. Samson was waiting for his opportunity, and one day it came. His persecutors brought him before the people to torment and mock him. But Samson started to pray. "O God! This is my chance. I want to make the best of it." At his request, they took him to the posts of the house where the great crowd had gathered. As he leaned against the posts, he looked toward Heaven, and God restored his mighty power. Samson shook the pillars of the house, and there was a great collapse. The Bible tells us that he killed more of Israel's enemies in his death than he had in his lifetime. Why? Because he made use of the opportunity that came his way.

Bartimaeus was blind and a beggar. He was by the roadside asking alms. One day, opportunity knocked at his door. Jesus was passing by. When he heard this, he

did not say, "I know He is passing by, but I will wait and let Him come to me." No. Immediately he started to cry out, "Jesus! Thou son of David, have mercy on me!" And he began moving toward Jesus. Of course there were obstacles. No doubt that agent, Procrastination, was there. Perhaps he whispered, "Why should Jesus pay attention to you? Wait till some time when there is not such a crowd. It will be easier to talk to Him then." But Bartimaeus would not listen, and something wonderful happened that day. He received his sight and went home rejoicing. Why? Because he made use of the opportunity that came his way.

Do you remember the account of the two malefactors who were crucified on either side of Jesus? Their lives were almost over. No time left for prayer, no time for restitution, no time for consecration. These men were just moments from eternity. But they still had an opportunity. One of the men railed on Jesus, crying, "If You are the Son of God, why don't You come down? Deliver Yourself and us!" The other chided him, "We are justly receiving what we deserve. But why are you saying such things to this just man?" The thief did not have time to say much. Jesus was soon to die. So he just looked at Jesus and said, "Remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Immediately Jesus told him, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." That thief didn't pass up his moment of opportunity.

You know, here in this life we make appointments to attend to one thing or another. But God does not make appointments like that. He says, "**Today is the day.**" God's appointment isn't next Sunday. It isn't next month. It isn't tomorrow. He says, "today." At this time, this hour, He will bless us.

Do you need something in your life from God? Don't procrastinate, but make use of your opportunity today. ❖

Josiah Soyinka was the Overseer of the Apostolic Faith Churches in Africa from November 1983 until he passed away on September 4, 1999.

ANNUAL USPS STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: **The Apostolic Faith**

2. Publication Number: **1 3 - 3 9 2**

3. Filing Date: **08-22-2022**

4. Issue Frequency: **QUARTERLY**

5. Number of Issues Published Annually: **4**

6. Annual Subscription Price: **0**

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):
Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke St, Multnomah Co., OR 97205-6842

Contact Person: **ZELMA PIERCE**
 Telephone (include area code): **503-777-1741 EXT.314**

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):
AS ABOVE

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):
 Publisher (Name and complete mailing address):
AS ABOVE
 Editor (Name and complete mailing address):
DARREL D. LEE, ADDRESS AS ABOVE
 Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address):
CATEY HINKLE, ADDRESS AS ABOVE

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH	AS ABOVE
(A CHURCH CORP. WITH NO SHAREHOLDERS)	

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one):
 The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, July 2014 Page 1 of 4 (See instructions page 4) PSN 7530-01-000-9911 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	
The Apostolic Faith		July 01, 2022	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		2655	2660
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Other Means)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distributors above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	1191	1176
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distributors above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	0	0
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail (Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®)	1240	1440
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	71	67
h. Total Paid Circulation (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		2502	2683
c. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Other Means)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies (Indicated on PS Form 3541)	0	0
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies (Indicated on PS Form 3541)	0	0
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	0	0
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15c (1), (2), (3) and (4))		0	0
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		2502	2683
g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		153	177
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		2655	2860
i. Paid and Free (15c divided by 100 times 100)		100	100

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

16. Electronic Copy Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies		831	980
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		3333	3643
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		3333	3643
d. Percent Paid (Both Paid Print & Electronic Copies) (16c divided by 15c x 100)		100	100

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership

If this publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed on the **01/01/2022** issue of this publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner

KAREN L. BARRETT, Senior Editor Date: **08/22/2022**

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A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it. Following is a summary of our basic doctrines.

THE DIVINE TRINITY consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. *Matthew 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7.*

REPENTANCE is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. *Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.*

JUSTIFICATION (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. *Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. *John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.*

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST is the enduement of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. *John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:5-8, 2:1-4.*

DIVINE HEALING of sickness is provided through the atonement. *James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.*

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS will be as literal and visible as His going away (*Acts 1:9-11*) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. *Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.* Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. *2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14-15.*

THE TRIBULATION will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. *Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.*

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. *Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.*

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. *Revelation 20:11-15.*

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH will replace the present heaven and earth, which will be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. *2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.*

ETERNAL HEAVEN AND ETERNAL HELL are literal places of final and eternal destiny. *Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.*

MARRIAGE is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. *Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.*

RESTITUTION is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. *Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.*

WATER BAPTISM is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Matthew 3:16, 28:19.*

THE LORD'S SUPPER is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. *Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23,26.*

FOOT WASHING is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. *John 13:14-15.*

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at www.apostolicfaith.org. Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

The Apostolic Faith (ISSN #2475-9988-print; ISSN #2572-4401-online) is published quarterly by the Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. and is available free of charge. Periodicals postage is paid at Portland, Oregon. Postmaster: please send address changes to The Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A.



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