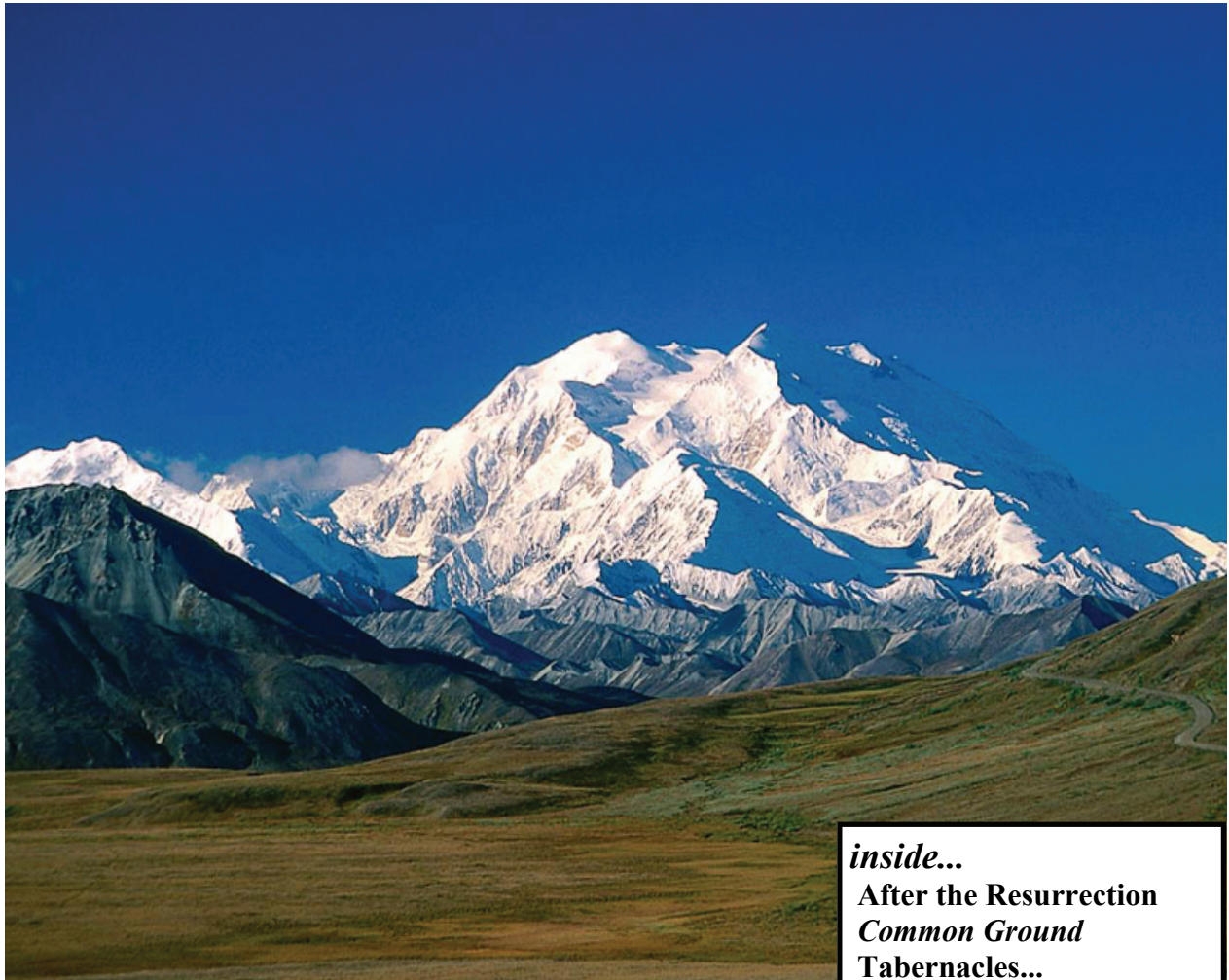


new **Horizons**

Vol 15 No 5

September/October 2011

addressing the important issues for today and tomorrow



inside...

After the Resurrection

Common Ground

Tabernacles...

...humanity in the flesh

Festival Dates

God's End Game

CGOM

Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

With around two thousand Christian denominations vying for your attention, it's easy to miss the important issues of life and religion. It's our hope that through *New Horizons* our readers will come to understand the true meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel was proclaimed by Jesus and by His apostles in the clearest of terms - and recorded for us in the Scriptures. Over the centuries that truth has been buried, dug up, buried again. Our desire is to restore the simple apostolic message. We hope you will be excited by what the Scriptures reveal about life, and the horizons beyond

Who We Are

The *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* is an international association of independent local assemblies - Christians who meet together for worship, instruction in the faith and fellowship. Each assembly is self-governing according to Bible principles, but co-operates through our Conference with other like-minded assemblies to work towards agreed evangelistic goals

These goals are within the framework of the commission set for his church by Jesus: "...going, therefore, disciple all nations, baptising them...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). He further commanded that we "...Shepherd...[and] feed my sheep".

To these ends we publish Bible-based literature - eg our bi-monthly e-mail Newsletter OUTREACH, the NEW HORIZONS magazine, the BIBLE BASICS on-line home study course, and the 32-lesson Study Course. The *Outreach Ministries* also supports a network of independent fellowships and scattered brethren

We cordially invite all independent fellowships of whatever size - and individuals - to associate with us in this worldwide ministry. Our *Statement of Beliefs* and a *Publications Catalogue* is available from any of our addresses or from our web site www.cgom.org. We are pleased to offer you, without charge, any of our publications

New Horizons is published by the *Churches of God Outreach Ministries*, an association of independent churches, to make known the good news of the soon-coming Kingdom of God

It is distributed free on request, being a co-operative voluntary effort financed by the members and friends of the *Churches of God*. We also welcome the financial support of all who benefit from our publications and who wish to labour with us.

If you would like a copy of our *Statement of Beliefs* please request it from any of the addresses listed

**Churches of God Outreach Ministries
P O Box 54621
Tulsa, OK 74155-0621
USA**

e-mail: information@cgom.org

1-800-611-8080

Editor: James McBride

e-mail: coguk@aol.com

The Churches of God, UK
PO Box 2525
LINCOLN LN5 7PF United Kingdom
Regd Charity No 283358
e-mail: coguk@aol.com

The Churches of God Outreach Ministries
PO Box 476 Don Mills Station
Don Mills Ontario M3C 2T4 Canada
www.canadianchurchofgod.com

or from:

Tulsa, OK 2011

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What will you be like in the resurrection? Is Jesus Christ a pattern for our own resurrection? What the Bible teaches is breath-taking!

Jesus Christ, according to Scripture, was raised from the dead. It's an attested historical fact. His mauled body was taken from the tree on which he was hanged. Entombed in a dark sepulchre, three days and three nights later he was raised from the dead! He burst the chains of cold death and became a powerhouse of spiritual energy.

During the next six weeks Jesus frequently appeared to the disciples. They saw him. They touched him. They ate with him. They walked and talked with him. Yet - he was different! Now clearly no longer simply a human being, he appeared -

and he vanished. He walked through solid matter into a locked room. He was seen as "a gardener". He "appeared in a different form" to other disciples. He levitated into Heaven, and now shines brilliantly like the sun. Certainly no ordinary mortal!

Does the resurrection body of Jesus differ from what the Christian can expect? What will *you* be like in the resurrection?

A Heavenly Reward?

Most Christians see themselves going to Heaven in the form of a wraith or disembodied soul or spirit or an angel - perhaps having sprouted a set of wings. Increasingly, Christians subscribe to the eastern notion that they will return to life as another creature - a horse, or a mouse, *etc.* Or, with

effort ("karma"), as a better human being.

Must we *guess* our future state? Must we stay ignorant? Or, does the Bible describe what we will be like in the resurrection? In fact - God leaves us in no doubt. We can know what lies beyond the grave!

In the famous "resurrection chapter" (I Corinthians 15) the apostle Paul says "We [*ie* Christians] shall all be changed" (v.51) at the return of Jesus Christ. Any of the people of God who are alive at that time will put on what the apostle terms a "spiritual body". Different. No longer subject to decay or death. Untiring. Powerful. Spiritual.

After the Resurrection

The apostle John's understanding of this exciting concept is no less dramatic. He writes "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God*" (I John 3:2), and continues "*Beloved we are now God's children, but what we are to be has not yet been manifested. We know that when he [Jesus Christ] appears we shall be like him....*" (I John 3:2). Could it be clearer? When we slip the bonds of mortality and are resurrected at the return of Jesus Christ we will share his nature, fully reflect his person - be "*like him*"!

We cannot take our human flesh or our human nature with us into the Kingdom of God. "*Flesh and blood*" wrote the apostle Paul, "*cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*" (I Corinthians 15:50). He continues, "*...the dead shall be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this*

perishable nature [our humanity and our human flesh] *must clothe itself with the imperishable, and this mortality must clothe itself with immortality*" (v.53).

Certainly a good and loving Father has given us glimpses of what is life's purpose! Not endless strumming on a harp on cloud nine or gazing blissfully forever at God's face but imbued with boundless life and power. Like Jesus Christ. Co-heirs In his thrilling exposition of this concept to the Roman Christians Paul wrote: "*Those whom He has fore-known He has also predestined to share the likeness of His son, that he might be the eldest in a vast family of brothers*" (ch 8:29). And in the book of Hebrews it is recorded "*[Jesus] is*

not ashamed to call them brothers" (ch 2:11). Earlier in Romans 8 (v.16-17) Paul tells us "*The Spirit itself bears witness with our own spirits that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs, too - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ*".

Did you catch that? We - now mere flesh and blood and subject to the sufferings and limitations that are part and parcel of the human condition - *we* are to be brothers of Jesus Christ, heirs of God! We, if we overcome, are to "*...inherit all things*" (Revelation 21:7 *KJV*). That means everything. That includes the whole of creation, the entire vastness of the incomprehensible universe! As Christians we - if we stay faithful to the end - will inherit all there is as joint-heirs with our Saviour.

Humanly, the heir receives the "estate" on the death of the benefac-

tor (parent *etc.*). But such is the love of God our Father for us that (just like the father of “the prodigal son”) He who never dies, who has ever been and who ever will be, shares His estate - the whole of creation, all of His powers - with His “...sons and daughters” (II Corinthians 6:18).

This explains why Paul ecstatically exclaims “*If God be for us, who can be against us? He who did not withhold even His own son but gave him up for all of us, will he not also with him freely give us all things?*” (Romans 8:31-32). That’s the reward God has laid up for His faithful children!

It’s the fulfilment of the divine purpose of creating man “...*In the image of God*” (Genesis 1:26).

Divine Deeds

Would you, with but a word, like to make the blind see? Would you like to heal the deaf ear? Miraculously feed the hungry around the world? Restore to full health the millions of acute and chronically ill? Raise the dead to life? Jesus Christ did. And he said that those who trust him will do the same. He told the disciples “*In very truth I tell you that he who trusts in me shall do the deeds I do; and he shall do greater deeds than these because I am going to the Father*” (John 14:12).

We see just an inkling of this in the Body of Christ, in the Church, today. But its supreme fulfilment will be in tomorrow’s world. As Paul wrote, “*You were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest [deposit, down-payment] of our inheritance*” (Ephesians 1:14).

Coming soon is a utopian time when all that now mars human life will be healed. When Jesus Christ returns as King of kings, with him will be today’s saints resurrected to be with him as joint-heirs of the Father’s Kingdom. “*Then*” prophesied Isaiah “*the eyes of the blind shall be*

opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing for joy” (ch 35:5-6).

Miraculous, indeed. But administered at the hands of the resurrected saints as they exercise the powers of God.

Can you imagine a world where God’s healing power surges over the whole earth? Can you imagine personally sharing this power? Can you imagine the mighty Spirit of God flowing through you in doing these mighty works? Jesus said “*Whoever is thirsty let him come to me, and let him drink who believes in me. From within him - as the Scripture has said - rivers of living water shall flow*” (John 7:38).

That thought almost blows the mind. Out from those who are co-heirs with Christ will flow to others the very divine life. By this, John says, Jesus “*referred to the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive*” (v.39). As the angel informed the apostle John, God’s chosen ones “*shall reign over the earth*” (Revelation 5:10). That means unlimited power to serve with Jesus Christ. It’s but a glimpse of what you will be like in the resurrection!

But...Divine?

Clearly, then, each Christian who is victorious to the end of his or her life is to share the powers exercised by our elder brother Jesus Christ - “*...the eldest in a vast family of brothers*” (Romans 8:29).

Upon repentance, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit of God, we enter into a family relationship with our heavenly Father and with Jesus Christ - what Paul describes as “*...the whole family in heaven and on earth*” (Ephesians 3:15).

Does that mean, then, that we actually become God? It seems a blasphemous assumption, indeed!

Yet the apostle Peter exclaimed that we will be “*partakers of the divine nature*” (2 Pet 1:4). Now that’s an awe-inspiring thought! Does Peter’s concept that you will share God’s nature sound abhorrent? It almost seems blasphemous! And the idea lies uncomfortably with most Christians.

Yet - isn’t that what Peter says?

Note again what he wrote: “*His divine power has given us all things that are needful for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and perfection. Thereby He has given us His exceeding great and precious promises, in order that through them you may become sharers in the divine nature*” (II Peter 1:3-4).

In each Christian - each person, that is, in whom dwells the Spirit of God - lies the seed of the divine. A seed that will later flower as full membership of the divine Family! The apostle Paul puts it this way: “*God has put His Spirit [His divine power and being] in us as a guarantee*” (II Corinthians 1:22). If we have Christ’s Spirit in us, our eternal future in the Family of God is guaranteed. If we do not disqualify ourselves through neglect.

In fact, Jesus had to straighten out his inquisitors on this matter. Certain Jews who opposed him gathered baskets of stones ready to kill him. Jesus remonstrated with them: “*Many good deeds from the Father have I shown you*”, he said. “*For which of them will you stone me?*” The Jews replied, “*For no good deed are we going to stone you, but for blasphemy, and because you who are only a man are making yourself out to be God*” (John 10:31ff).

Jesus reply is startling. He answers, “*Does it not stand written in your Law ‘I said you are gods [Psalm 82:6]? If those [men!] to whom God’s word was addressed are*

called gods (and the Scripture cannot be annulled), how is it that you say to one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming' because I said 'I am God's son'?"

Jesus saw no theological difficulty in the concept of men becoming "gods"!

Is it then blasphemy for me to claim, as a Christian, that I am God's son? Of course not! Constantly throughout the New Testament, Christians are called "sons" and "daughters" and "children" of God. As we have seen there is a family relationship. The Godhead, indeed, is a Family.

Notice Paul's words in Romans 8: *"All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons"* (v.14). He adds (v.23) *"...we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste, yet we ourselves inwardly moan as we wait for full sonship [KJV - 'adoption' is a weak translation] in the redemption of our bodies [ie at the resurrection]"*. Now - though sons and daughters of God - we are lumbered with our physical limitations. *Then* we shall receive full sonship and enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Read Romans 8:14-21).

Notice what the book of Hebrews teaches: *"It was fitting that he [Jesus], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons of glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin"* (ch 2:10-11). Why can't we simply accept what the Scriptures teach! Whatever Jesus now is, Christians will become so at the resurrection of the just.

"New Age" God

Of course, the idea of the 'god in man' is nothing new! It's a concept planted in man's mind (by Satan) shortly after man's creation.

"Disobey the Creator God, acquire your own standards of good and evil - and be god-like" was the Devil's message (see Genesis 3:1-7). It's a path ever since pursued by mankind!

The idea that all humans nurse within themselves a divine spark is a common one. It is fundamental to Hindu belief, to many eastern religions - and to the not-so-modern New Age movement. And fundamental to Mormon teaching. Basically it is Satan's lie dressed in modern clothes! Certainly it isn't what the Bible teaches!

Man is physical and all of us will die. We have a sinful nature - and unless that nature is transformed we will die, be buried and never again see the

God's chosen will reign with Jesus throughout the thousand years

light of day - until our time of Judgment. There's only one way for any human being to live forever (become immortal) and that's through Jesus Christ. Each of us must "die" to our human nature, be converted and cleansed of all sin through the shed blood of our Saviour.

Only then, upon baptism, can a loving Father place in a human being His Holy Spirit. It is that Spirit in us that is the spark of the divine. We are not born with it. And unless we become converted we will die like the animal creation!

The apostle Paul wrote to his young disciple Timothy *"[God] alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light"* (1 Timothy 6:16). Are men immortal? Of course not - only God is without beginning! But if you have within you the divine seed of God's Spirit you will at the resurrection be, fully, a part of - be born into - the divine Family. Truly "born again"!

After The Resurrection

Few will deny that Jesus Christ, while he walked this planet, was

unique. But controversy has raged as to his real nature. Was he God dwelling in a shell of human flesh? Was he an ordinary man mightily used by God? Was he an angel? Is he different now from what he was while on earth?

A fuller answer to these questions is beyond the scope of this article. Write for the article **Is Jesus God?**]

Clearly, during his life-time Jesus the Messiah was subject to human limitation - though he exercised perfect faith. He was subject to human emotion, he tired and had to rest and sleep, he became hungry and thirsty and had to eat and drink, he on occasion got angry. When wounded he bled and suffered pain. He was at times anguished. He was tempted in every respect just as we are. He constantly struggled against sin.

But when, because he overcame (he never sinned), death could no longer contain him Jesus had new powers. He could at will assume a solid body of flesh and bone (Luke 24:34) - yet he could walk through solid walls (John 20:19,26). He walked with his friends - but could instantly disappear (Luke 24:31,36). He appeared in different forms (John 21:4-7). He ate (Luke 24:42). He could ascend to the throne of God and return at the speed of light. He could appear shining as the sun in full strength, his eyes like flames of fire (Revelation 1:12-16).

Now he is alive for evermore. And he has all authority in heaven and earth given into his hands. And remember - we will be like him!

God All In All

Of course, Jesus has pre-eminence. He has a name above every name. Jesus Christ is *"high above all other government and authority and power and dominion, and every title of sovereignty used either in this age or the age to come"* (Ephesians 1:21-22).

But in essence the reward *cont'd p.8*

Hi, I'm Steve,
-- and I'm a recovering addict.
So, what's *your* "addiction"?
[a personal view]

Steven Kieler

What is an addiction? The medical, psychiatric, and pharmacological professionals all wrestle with the definition but from their own perspective. Is it a mood disorder, a dependency, or a disease? Or could we call it a "social disease"? A song in the movie, "West Side Story", carried the line "No one wants a fellow with a social disease."

Regardless of the various labels attached, let's ask the key question; do we, do I, have an addiction? If I answer *no*, could I just be in a state of denial? How can we know?

Here is a guide by Dr. Howard Shaffer, of Harvard Medical School. He reported three observations in the November *Good News* magazine.

- Behavior motivated by emotions, ranging from craving to compulsion.
- Continuance of participation in the behavior regardless of adverse consequences
- Loss of control over the behavior. [lack of self-control]

Are you feeling a little uncomfortable now? It is easy to see these faults in others but, if we are honest, we might find at least one in ourselves. Our task is to look inward; not outward, and it sounds uglier when we look for and call it an ADDICTION.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind," (Ephesians 4:17-19):

That word "vanity" means *meaninglessness*. Author, Victor Frankel, wrote of *Man's Search for Meaning*

in which he identifies

the addicts hallmark: meaningless lives, lives without a purpose. It is interesting to note that Princess Di and Victor Frankel died on same day but you have probably never heard of him. I would guess that shows that beauty trumps wisdom.

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (Ephesians 4:18f)

Has Paul here touched the genesis of addiction?

Thayer defines "*past feeling*" (Gk *apalgeo*) as 1) to cease to feel pain or grief 2) to become callous, insensible to pain, apathetic. That is where we get the meaning of the word "analgesic"

Twelve Steps

The *Twelve Steps* are a recognized treatment program for AA (Alcoholics Anonymous). After reading the "Big Book" on alcoholism, I believe it is very conceivable Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob were inspired by God. Imagine that -- God working through and for the unconverted - especially when his people are too disconnected or too busy with "more important matters". Could that possibly be of value to us? After all, alcoholism (drunkenness) is just one of many sins that afflict us "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*". (Romans 3:23)

Quotations from the Bible in New Horizons are from translations which clearly express the meaning in modern terms

"Common Ground"

Let's take a look at the *Twelve Steps*. You may wish to substitute the word *sin* for *alcohol*; it seems to fit just fine.

- We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable
- came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity
- Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*
- Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves
- Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs
- Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character
- Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings
- Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all
- Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others
- Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it
- Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God (*as we understood Him*), praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Common Ground

- Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs

How many steps have you already implemented? Are there any you need to reinforce? Ω

TABERNACLES

...humanity in the flesh

The Festival of Tabernacles is an age-old divinely inspired festival that has relevance to all mankind throughout history

Many Christians share the understanding that the Biblical *Festival of Tabernacles* is a 'type' of the millennial reign on Earth of Jesus Christ. The festival has, however, layers of meaning that shed light on the entire history, past, present and future, of mankind.

The Festival was outlined by the LORD to ancient Israel as they departed Egypt, but existed long before. The 'ten tribes' lived in tents for their forty years spent in the wilderness, and the Festival, in one of its aspects, commemorates this. But it does have wider relevance for all of mankind.

To state the obvious, we humans are totally dependent for our life on the nourishment derived from our food. We are physical beings. It's not surprising, then, that mankind celebrates this. It's in the religious calendar of ancient faiths—and in the form of our autumnal 'harvest festivals' is firmly planted to this day in Christianity.

The ancient Canaanites of Biblical notoriety, for example, observed spring, summer and autumn festivals dedicated to the ingathered harvests. It's a time of thanksgiving to the Deity for earth's bounty. Not surprising, then, that the nation of Israel also observed 'harvest festivals' - *Unleavened Bread, Pentecost* and the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

A Divine Plan

When our first parents rejected God's guidance they lost the right to live in Paradise—and direct access to their

and our Creator. The LORD had literally walked and talked with them in the Garden. Having through their awesome sin rejected the divine way they had to leave 'the Garden'. They still had to till the soil, but there are indications in the record that it was no easy task. All of nature was topsy-turvy. Some commentators have suggested that for some seventeen centuries earth yielded its harvest reluctantly, and there may have been no defined seasons. Only after the terrible world-shaking trauma of the Flood did 'mother nature' settle to the regular seasonal pattern on which we still depend.

The merciful LORD did not abandon mankind but instituted access to Himself through sacrifices. All nations developed a sacrificial system. We have a detailed record of the system inspired by God in the record of the nation of Israel and described in the book of Leviticus. Their significance was for all mankind—Adam's progeny down the centuries and to this day.

Sacrifice was, of course, a mere substitute for reality. They pointed forward to the One through whom sin could be conquered. Each sacrifice appointed by God had significance in the future life, death and work of Jesus. The sacrifices made by other nations obscured their true significance and were often corrupted, as among the Canaanites, to human sacrifice—a practice forbidden by God. Before the time of Moses, Israel had observed both sacrifices (Exodus 5:3) and festivals (v. 1).

Festival Reality

God's annual festivals similarly look forward to Jesus the Messiah and His divine plan for all mankind. They have as much significance in today's world as anciently. Probably more, as the end of the age approaches when

they will have their final fulfilment.

There are hints in the Biblical record that they were observed in some form by the people of God long before Moses. As with sacrifices the nations corrupted the festivals and obscured their significance. This is true with the modern form of Christianity, which ignores the divine festivals and substitutes pre-Christian ones, as Easter, Christmas, All Hallows, the various saints' days.

At 'the Exodus' from Egypt the nation of Israel had the chance to put sacrifice behind them and experience the reality. They agreed to what was a spiritual 'marriage covenant' with the LORD, and to become a 'kingdom of priests' (Exodus 19:6). By this Covenant God did not require sacrifice (Jeremiah 7:22-24). But Israel soon embraced idolatry and, in consequence, were 'divorced'. A sacrificial system, administered by a Priesthood, was re-instated until the birth of Christ made them unnecessary. [*Check out the article **The Law of Life***]

Providence

Within Judaism to this day the Festival of Tabernacles is observed in part as a remembrance of the forty years they wandered in the wilderness. During those years they lived in tents—temporary dwellings, booths or 'tabernacles' - and experienced direct divine provision for every material and spiritual need. The LORD was with them daily, visible in a pillar of smoke by day and of fire by night. Their food and drink was miraculously supplied, and their clothing didn't wear out. To this day within Judaism there is annually an observance representative of their long period of wandering.

The festivals, then, are an expression of thanks for 'harvest home', for divine provision of every need: food, shelter, God's presence. They are no less significant for Christians of every race, and an appropriate obser-

vance amid the secularism of the world today. All outside the Christian faith can experience the same benefits by entering into the same Covenant.

As did the early church of God, it is appropriate to annually observe this ‘pilgrimage’ festival. It honours the Creator and is a reminder of His great plan.

Humanity in a Nutshell

Death is a guaranteed exit for all of us. Life is brief, temporary, a puff of vapour. The *Festival of Tabernacles* is, for all mankind, a picture of our brief existence. Not only for individuals or for nations but also for mankind in the flesh. A time will come when there will be no more flesh with all its trials and tribulations and when Earth will be peopled by a race of spirit beings. But not yet. That—Eternity—is represented by another festival.

Tabernacles is a snapshot of all of this. It is a *seven-day* festival picturing the whole of our physical existence as the human race—from man’s beginnings separated from God till Eternity begins. It encompasses every age of man right through what is known within Christianity as ‘the Millennium’ - the thousand-year reign on Earth of Jesus Christ as King of all kings, and LORD of all religious ‘lords’. During that time the physical survivors of man’s destructive activities in these last days, and their off-spring, will re-build a peaceful and prosperous world under the guiding hand of Jesus Christ at the head of a supervisory army of the Spirit-born saints from all ages of man.

The prophet Zechariah was inspired (*ch 14*) to record that the entirety of mankind, from every nation, every faith, will be required—under duress if necessary—to observe the *Feast of Tabernacles*: ‘*And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jeru-*

salem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts and to keep the feast of Tabernacles’ (*ch 14:16*).

The Devil Bound

Satan will be ‘locked up’ during the Millennial period, and released only *after* the thousand years are complete. It will be a test for this evil spirit as to how its long years of confinement will have changed it. John again: ‘*And he [an angel] laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan and bound him a thousand years...that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled*’ (Revelation 20:2, 3).

This evil spirit will then seek to once again—as now—deceive mankind. It will be a ‘cut-off point’ for the final generation of the thousand year reign of Messiah: *will they worship Jesus—or this evil being?*

Fate of the ‘Unsaved’

Many ponder the fate of all those who, down the centuries before and after the lifetime of Jesus, have never ‘accepted Christ’, or had opportunity to do so. ‘*Tabernacles*’ also includes, represented by the seventh day of the festival—the resurrection from their graves to physical life of all those who have died without a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In their flesh they will be given opportunity to live a godly life, to be transformed by the divine Spirit, to experience life without the malign influence of Satan. Recorded the

apostle John: ‘*The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*’ (Revelation 20:5).

Prophetic Week

In parallel to the seven annual Bible festivals, there is also a ‘prophetic week’. The seven-day week is a strangeling as far as the calendar is concerned. It doesn’t accurately tie in with movements of either sun or moon. It was, of course, the time assigned to the material Creation. The LORD ‘worked’ for six days—and rested on the seventh. The latter He humanely set aside as a day for man to rest from his daily toil and to fellowship with Him, to recharge our physical and spiritual ‘batteries’.

To further His plan He chose a godly man, Abraham and his progeny through his son Isaac, to raise up a godly nation, Israel. The sign (like a wedding ring!) of His Covenant with Israel—and it remains to this day for all His people—was the seventh-day *Sabbath*.

The apostle Peter gives an interesting insight. He tells us: ‘*a day represents a thousand years*’ (II Peter 3:8). Each day of the literal week, that is, has prophetic meaning with each day representing ‘a thousand years’. Man, having rejected divine guidance, has six ‘days’ to work—a notional six thousand years—to do his own thing: form governments, educate, devise religions *etc.* All without reference to his Creator. Then there would be a ‘seventh day’ lasting a thousand years for us to ‘rest’ and to allow Messiah to clear up the mess we have made.

This seventh ‘day’ represents the Millennium. During this time of God’s direct rule the physical layer is mankind ‘at rest’ with Christ as King of kings, while the spiritual layer is the reign of Messiah with the resurrected saints as spirit beings.

Autumn Festivals 2011

Trumpets	Sept 29
Atonement	October 8
Tabernacles	Oct 13-19
Last Day	Oct 20

unsigned articles are by the Editor

Mankind in the Flesh

Tabernacles, in sum, covers the whole time man *in his flesh* has existed and will exist on Planet Earth. It encompasses the ‘six thousand years’ of human civilisation during which we have ruined earth and pillaged its resources, time and again killed our fellow man in needless war.

It includes, too, that ‘thousand years’ of the direct hands-on rule of Jesus Christ as symbolized by the seventh day of the prophetic week, the *Sabbath*. And it embraces the period during which the dead will be resurrected, the veil of deception lifted from their eyes and have opportunity—for the first time—to become part of the divine Family.

There are, then, various layers of significance to this divinely-inspired annual festival that are important for all of mankind through all generations.

Tabernacles...

- is a festival representing the temporary presence on Earth through the centuries of all humanity in the flesh as we are born, live and return to dust
- is a remembrance by Israel’s descendants of the time of their pilgrimage through the wilderness following their miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt
- reminds them of ‘tabernacling’ - living in temporary dwellings in booths or tents—during that time
- is an annual reminder to Christians that we, too, are ‘*strangers and pilgrims*’ on earth, surrounded by a world that rejects God’s way of life and spiritually ‘enslaves’ mankind
- and that Christians, through Jesus, have been freed from bondage to that world system
- is an autumnal ‘harvest festival’ of thanksgiving for God’s bounty and provision of our material needs
- is a time for ‘holy convocations’ - assembling to hear God’s Word proclaimed, and for fellowship with

those of like mind

- incorporates the reign of Jesus Christ (represented by the seventh day of the prophetic week) over physical humanity as He restores Earth to its pristine beauty
- and teaches all who survive the coming time of awesome trial on Earth the true way to peace and prosperity
- includes those who experience, after the ‘thousand years’, Satan’s final attempt to deceive and to usurp the authority of Jesus Christ
- encompasses the time of resurrection from death to physical life of all who have never understood the good news of God’s plans for us
- It includes the ‘*second death*’

Closing Day

But that’s not all there is to God’s interest in mankind. The seven day *Festival of Tabernacles* is immediately followed by a final ‘closing day’. It is an annual gathering of the people of God. Tabernacles encompasses mankind’s earthly sojourn *in the flesh*. That will end.

The plan of God is for all who will to join him in His spirit-born family, and *this* life is ‘boot camp’. After Tabernacles all that remains will be spirit—each fit to accompany God through the coming aeons [see p.9].

The *Closing Day*—the eighth day of the festival—represents that time. *Eternity*. **Ω**

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Festival Dates...

...why are they moveable?

The dates for the Biblical festivals can be something of a puzzle. The *non*-Biblical festivals mostly fall on fixed dates on our calendar. *Christmas*—always December 25. Or the various Saints Days—*Michaelmas* for example, always September 29. Of course, *Easter* varies from year to year, and this gives a clue to why the Bible festivals move around.

Easter is loosely attached to one Bible festival, Passover, the date of which varies from year to year on our current calendar. It is, however, held on a fixed date but on a different calendar—the Hebrew.

This calendar is to this day used within Judaism, but it has roots long ante-dating the time of Moses. As with our Gregorian calendar, there are twelve months—but with an occasional additional added month. and each month named.

Passover is always in the first month—usually our March/April—and always on the 14th day of Nisan (also called Abib). The other festivals, with one exception (Pentecost), are also on fixed dates.

There is a complex system to ‘translate’ these dates into our own calendar, and these have been published—as in Spiers: *Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. [Request: *The Origins of the Calendar*]

Resurrection...cont'd from p.3

of the Christian is that we inherit that same quality of spiritual life and power. We are to share these divine powers and attributes as Kings and Priests in his Kingdom.

It is in this sense that mortal man may become immortal! How can this be? It's because within the true Christian resides that same Holy Spirit which was the power on which Jesus himself totally depended. As we read in Hebrews: "*He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin*". At conversion we are given the same Holy Spirit - the same Spirit that empowered and motivated Jesus Christ. At our resurrection (on the return of Jesus - Colossians 3:4) all that will remain of us is that same Holy Spirit who now dwells in us! Our human character moulded by the divine Spirit.

Ahead of us lies the most exciting thousand years of all time. History has progressed according to God's own inexorable time-table. By best estimates we have now well passed the two thousandth year since the birth of Jesus the Messiah, and the sixth thousandth year since creation.

God's purpose has been "*to bring many sons to glory*" and the task has from the beginning been entrusted to the one we know as Jesus of Nazareth. [Request the title **God's Grand Design**]

The apostle Paul neatly summarizes it for us in the famed "resurrection chapter". He writes: "*Just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive again. But each in his own order - Christ first, and afterwards Christ's people at His return. After that comes the end when he is to surrender the kingship to God the Father, when he has abolished all other government and all other authority and power. For he must be King until he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy*

that is to be abolished is death; for God has put all things under his feet.... But when all things have been put under him then the Son himself will also come under Him who has put all things under him, in order that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians 15:22-28).

Did that statement somehow pass you by unnoticed? Paul says that the purpose and summation of history is "...in order that God may be all in all!"

When that time comes all that then exists that was human will be God.

Man was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Clearly, the physical "mould" that was Adam and his descendants is a mere shell of that image. But its fullness comes when each and every human life will become the divine. Not an impersonal faceless mass, but a Family of all-powerful divine Beings. Each of us will express our individual character - a character forged in partnership with God's indwelling Spirit during a lifetime of training. Yet we will as did Jesus - perfectly reflect the Fa-

ther, carrying out His sovereign will throughout all eternity.

Divine Sharing

The Family of God so loves you that they are prepared to share totally with you their glory, their universe and their incredible power. If this is what you want - and it is indeed the fulfilment of life's purpose - you must here and now fully submit your will to God! For God gives the precious Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32).

How you can receive God's Spirit is clearly stated in the Scriptures. The essential fundamental first steps towards fulfilling life's purpose are, in the words of the apostle Peter: "*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

Do you want to share in the climax of God's magnificent plan? Then here and now submit your will to His will as revealed in Jesus. Do you want to know what you will be like in the resurrection? Then look to Jesus Christ and to his resurrection body.

For we will be like him!

Ω

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MiniStudy***God's End Game: Eternity***

on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; it is a solemn assembly; you shall do no servile work (Leviticus 23:36)

The seven-day *Festival of Tabernacles* is symbolic of the seven thousand years of human experience 'in the flesh', from Adam to the 'second death'. The symbolism of the '*eighth day*' of the autumn festival (it follows immediately on the Festival of Tabernacles) focuses on *eternity*. It is God's 'end game'. [*This somewhat different approach is offered for your consideration*]

- The number 'eight' - mentioned eighty times in Scripture - is associated with new beginnings, a new order. Examples are the 'eighth day' - the first day of a new week. Jesus, following his resurrection as the eighth day was beginning, Sunday, presented himself before the Father on that day in his new spirit body. Eight persons survived the Great Flood to enter the new world. God's people were covenanted through circumcision on the eighth day of life. Even in physics - for the eighth note on a musical scale is the same as the first note, etc
- Under the Old Covenant, seven days were required for cleansing, consecration (eg Leviticus 8:33ff, Exodus 8:33ff, Ezekiel 43:25). On the eighth day they were ritually clean. Jacob served seven years for Rachel—then followed their marriage (Genesis 29:20)
- Within Judaism, this eighth day - following the seven days of Tabernacles - is '... A festival in itself'. It is a time of exuberant jubilation - a veritable marriage feast; it is this day which above all expresses the joy of the Jewish religion" (*Teach Yourself Judaism p.188*)
- This eighth day is called '*a day of restraint*' (Nehemiah 8:18, KJV margin), but known also as the '*closing day*' (Heb. *azareth*, see also LXX). It represents the culmination, the fulfilment, of God's plan for man. We begin, formed from earth's elements in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). as 'clay models' of what God wants us to become
- The Psalmist wrote: "*What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him. You made him a little lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honour and set him over the work of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet* (Psalm 8:4-6)
- However, it doesn't look that way right now! So the writer of Hebrews comments on this passage: We are '*to be brought to glory*'! That's God's end-game for mankind. He gives us opportunity - and we must each one of us grasp it personally - to be transformed from dirt to glory. It is summed up by Hannah (I Samuel 2:8) "*He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory*". Interestingly, the context of her prayer was an annual sacrifice - likely, the autumn festival (ch 1:7)
- *For that He [the Lord] put all in subjection under him [ie mankind] He left nothing that is not put under him. But now do we not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour that he by the grace of God may taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*" (Hebrews 2:6-10). Paul adds: "*The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children then heirs - heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together* (Romans 8:16-17)

Each of the 'holy days' God has revealed is an important guide to the divine plan for mankind - for now and for eternity. Not least is this *closing day* of the festival year, pointing us to the culmination of His magnificent plan. It is the 'time without end' when the Father Himself will take up residence on Earth: '*...behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God*' (Revelation 21:3) Ω

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