

outreach

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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providing
leadership
information and
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Matthew 28:19-20

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CGOM
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"I don't know..."

Christians—and indeed members of other faiths—are fascinated by 'the end of the world', and especially with the question: *When?*

Even Jesus, who is the central figure in the end-time scenario (at least for Christians) admitted '*...I don't know*'. After his resurrection from the dead he told the disciples: '*...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*' (Acts 1:7). Earlier he had said: '*...of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*' (Matthew 24:36).

From this we can't assume that Jesus meant the Father had a pre-set date in mind (eg 20th Decembrer 2012). Simply that the Father would determine what would be the most appropriate time to send Jesus back—perhaps de-

pending on conditions. Indeed Jesus indicated it could be winter, it could be a Sabbath—or not.

It's quite foolish, then, to imagine we can discern the mind of the Father! Crises come and crises go, often without leaving a trace. But that doesn't stop pundits predicting again.

What is sure is that when the Father does release His awesome judgment on mankind it will be sudden—like '*... a burglar in the night*', says Paul. (I Thessalonians 5:2).

What's needed is that we '*watch*'—ie, stay awake, alert, vigilant, living as children of the daylight. Not in a drunken sleep (false doctrine), but '*... steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*' (I Corinthians 15:58). Ω

Keep the Feast!

Embedded in the Scriptures is a template for the worship of the one and only Creator God. It's a pattern that serves to highlight His plan for mankind—a plan that was prepared before man's creation.

Of course, with the Spirit of God in each believer, every day is a 'day of worship'. We reflect on the Scriptures daily. We are '*...instant in prayer*'—in constant communication with our Father. But there's much more to worship than such personal daily contact.

Followers of most faiths gather weekly on 'holy days'—Muslims on Friday, Christians on Sunday *etc*—for corporate worship. But in addition to

a weekly day of worship the LORD outlined seven time periods annually in which we present ourselves before Him. They are times for worship, for reflection, for instruction from His Word, and for fellowship with those of like mind.

Autumn Festivals

These 'festivals' were instituted at man's creation and were focused around the

annual harvests—spring, summer, autumn. Here we introduce the coming autumn series, known in the Christian Bible as *Trumpets, Atonement,*

| Holy Days 2011 | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Trumpets | Sept 29 |
| Atonement | Oct 8 |
| Tabernacles | Oct 13-19 |
| Eighth Day | Oct 20 |

Tabernacles, Eighth Day—names which are a clue to their eternal meaning.

But we focus here on the *Feast of Tabernacles*—known among believers affectionately as '*The Feast*' - and a highlight of the year. *cont'd p.4*

A Dysfunctional Family

Early August witnessed a horrifying outburst of violence on many of Britain's streets. Black and white, rich and poor rampaged through shops and private homes destroying property, looting—and killing.

Fingers are pointed largely in one direction—an absence of discipline in the home, and in schools. But, surprisingly,—and flying in the face of the teachings of Jesus—the failures of mainstream religion to impart the discipline of personal responsibility.

Personal responsibility, however, emerges from that great Christian value—'love': '*... If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples*' (John 13:35), said Jesus. The structure of the faith—when to worship or sound doctrine, for example—is held together by the 'glue' of Christian love: *ie* practical concern, emotional and material support. Without it factions arise, self-righteous positions are adopted, even hostility—and division.

Embracing the faith of Jesus too often results in alienation from family and friends. But it also incorporates us into a wider family. Jesus again: '*...You can be sure that anyone who gives up home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or land for me and for the good news will be rewarded. In this world they will be given a hundred times as many and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and pieces of land, though they will also be mistreated. And in the world to come, they will have eternal life*' (Mark 10:29-30 CEV).

An extended worldwide family, in other words! A family to be nourished through fellowship by every means of contact. A family circling to protect its weak and vulnerable.

Family Breakdown

Sadly, that 'family' is dysfunctional!. The glue, largely, has perished and brethren are often at loggerheads—often over trivia, over minor doctrinal points, over personal disputes.

The parents' (leadership) are often self-serving, seeking position and a comfortable living, neglecting the 'children'. And brothers and sisters neglect one another—especially if out of sight. 'My' church becomes a ghetto excluding all other.

Yet, said Jesus, *his* church is one. One body incorporating the spiritually healthy *and* the sickly and infirm. One body but embracing the mature and the babes in Christ. One body but welcoming the eccentric. A family to nourish and to heal. A family with 'parents' dedicated to service. A family that joyfully co-operates with all its 'relatives' (other assemblies).

Restoration

God's Spirit in His children, if unhindered, will bring about that unity of spirit. *If* unhindered. If not suppressed or crushed by petty egos. If the virtues of true love (I Corinthians 13) are actively taught and practised.. If Jesus our Saviour is exalted in all his beauty of character and spiritual power.

Hear Jesus: *I know everything you have done, and you are not cold or hot. I wish you were either one or the other. But since you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. You claim to be rich and successful and to have everything you need. But you don't know how bad off you are. You are pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Buy your gold from me. It has been refined in a fire, and it will make you rich. Buy white clothes from me. Wear them and you can cover up your shameful nakedness. Buy medicine for your eyes, so that you will be able to see. I correct and punish everyone I love. So make up your minds to turn away from your sins. Listen! I am standing and knocking at your door. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will eat together. Everyone who wins the victory will sit with me on my throne, just as I won the victory and sat with my Father on his throne.*

If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 3). Ω

Federal Budget 101: a cautionary tale

The U.S. Congress sets a federal budget every year in the trillions of dollars. Few people know how much money that is so we created a breakdown of federal spending in simple terms. Let's put the 2011 federal budget into perspective:

It helps to think about these numbers in terms that we can relate to

Let's remove eight zeros from these numbers and pretend this is the household budget for the fictitious Jones family

- Total annual income [US Income, GDP] for the Jones family: \$21,700
- Amount of money the Jones family spent

[Federal Budget]: \$38,200

- Amount of new debt added to the credit card: \$16,500
- Outstanding balance on the credit card [National Debt]: \$142,710
- Amount cut from the family budget [the recent budget cut]: \$385

Note: Simply add *eight zeros* to these figures to determine the approximate income/debt of the US Government. *Eg:* US Income (GDP): 2,170,000,000,000 (*ie* \$2.17 trillion)

adapted from the Internet

The apostle Paul: '*...Owe no man anything, but to love one another* (Romans 13:8)

Insight from Paul

The apostle Paul's letters shed a bright light on our walk with God

As ever, the apostle Paul is bang up-to-date with his Life's Principles—garnered from his letters to the young churches. Not less so in regard to the on-going global financial crisis. Follow him, and we individually can face up to our financial constraints. And nations, too, can apply them—to the benefit of the populace.

The Law of Love

His key principle is '*...Owe no-one anything, but to love one another. For love is the fulfilling of the Law*'. Millions would wish they have implemented this!. It has application to many of our day-to-day challenges., and debt has brought the global economy almost to a standstill.

That Law (the much derided Ten Commandments) addresses the roots of our financial challenges: care for the elderly, the cost accrued from violence, the horrendous financial cost of disturbed marriages, the inevitable need to pay for physical security *via* Law and Order costs. And not least personal and national greed ('covetousness').

How much more prosperous would we be if that 'Law of Love' were universally applied!

Family Welfare

Paul was hot on the matter of personal responsibility for financial affairs. To the brethren in Thessalonica he writes: '*...We also gave you the rule that if you don't work, you don't eat. Now we learn that some of you just loaf around and won't do any work, except the work of a busybody. So, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask and beg these people to settle down and start working for a living*' (II Thessalonians 3:10-12 CEV). Guidance here for Government!

Elsewhere (I Timothy 5:9ff) he applies the principle to the widowed .and to church elders. Fair reward for fair effort.

Those widows who were without family support were beneficiaries of welfare. But where they had offspring it was for them to provide support.

Church and State

Paul recognizes that The State has responsibilities which must be paid for by the populace. Hence: '*...You must also pay your taxes. The authorities are God's servants, and it is their duty to take care of these matters*' (Romans 13:6 CEV). We have obligations to 'Caesar'!

Money Matters

Given the much publicized embezzlement within Christian (and secular) leadership, the apostle urges probity, himself setting the example (I Corinthians 16:1-4). The use of money is always a tender topic!

Nowhere does Paul condemn personal prosperity but urges the principle that '*...it is more blessed to give than to receive*' (Acts 20:35). He also echoes the parable of Jesus that the rich should not '*...trust in uncertain riches*' (I Timothy 6:17). Blessed with riches they should be willing to share (v.18). Ω

Letter from CGOM

Dear Friends and Brethren;

September 2011

What is the world coming to? Questions about the future of the world have plagued mankind for centuries. Yet the Bible has been explaining our future for thousands of years!

It was fifteen years ago that a group of independent Churches of God, elders, stewards and individuals came together with a common goal and desire to work together to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a manner that was greater than what they could do alone. It was then that the **Churches of God Outreach Ministries** began and we have been privileged to serve you with timely information concerning critical world events.

We are not a big corporate church with a headquarters or paid ministry. We don't even have an office building! We work from our homes and kitchen tables using mostly volunteer labor with only a couple of part-time paid staff that work on a daily basis to send out the booklets, articles and magazines throughout the world. We have grown from a small mailing list of a few hundred to several thousand in over 100 different countries! This has only been possible with God's blessing and your support through these years. The past couple of years have been especially lean for all of us due to the economy, job situation etc. We have done all that we can to operate as efficiently as possible and still provide the booklets and articles free of charge to all who are seeking and studying the Word of God, and looking for understanding of what is happening around them and in their lives. We ask for your continued support and prayers that God and Jesus Christ our Saviour will continue to bless and support this work.

We've already observed the Spring Holy Days of **Passover**, **Days of Unleavened Bread**, **Pentecost** and are now quickly approaching the **Feast of Trumpets**, the **Day of Atonement** and culminating with the **Feast of Tabernacles**! If you have not already read the booklet **God's Holy Days**, revealing His plan of salvation for mankind, ask for your free copy of this informative booklet now. And if you are not currently receiving our bi-monthly magazine **New Horizons**, we invite you to ask for your free subscription. The magazine, booklets and our articles are all designed to educate and inspire greater understanding of God's plan and purpose for all of mankind. An order form and reply envelope have been enclosed for your convenience.

The **Feast of Tabernacles** is an important reminder of future events, and there are several locations across the United States where people will be meeting to worship our Creator and learn about a soon coming time of peace and prosperity. To learn about a location near you inquire at our web site **www.cgom.org**.

We thank those who have financially contributed and made it possible to offer these free services. Ω

Worship...at the end

The observance of the day for worship is especially significant as this age draws to a close. The religious and secular authority [the ‘beast system’] which is predicted to exert worldwide authority will impose a worship system—a system that directly contrasts with God’s way.

To be powerful enough to command worship implies you prescribe *how* your subjects will worship you. So the ‘beast system’ imposes its own form of worship—a system that opposes that of the one true God, the Creator. Significantly, it ‘makes war’ against those Christians who ‘...keep the commandments of God’—*Revelation 12:17*.

Consider the following summary of those Commandments:

- God is one—there is no other. The apostle Paul tells us this individual ‘...sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is god’ (II Thessalonians 2:4)
- God says don’t worship images. The Beast commands an image of itself: ‘...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast (ch 13:14 etc).
- God says don’t take My Name in vain. The Beast ‘...was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies’ (v.5).
- And God sets Himself apart from other gods (so-called) by commanding His worship on Sabbath—the seventh day.

Reflecting this Sabbath command (Exodus 20:11), John records an angelic message: ‘... *Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water*’ (Revelation 14:7).

That’s a direct reference to the Sabbath command, implying that the Beast will establish its own day to be worshipped. Indeed the entire system—inspired by Satan (ch 13:4)—is a mirror image of the first four of God’s ‘Ten Commandments’.

A Word of Warning

In those coming dark days of divine judgment there comes a further angelic message: ‘...*If any*

man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand [cp Deuteronomy 11:18], The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone [ie explosives] in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb’ (ch 14:9, 10).

The message of these chapters of the book of Revelation is that all mankind will be faced with a stark choice. Choose between the worship of this alien self-styled god—or worship the God whose identifying mark is the observance of those first four of the Commandments—including, and notably the seventh day Sabbath. (Exodus 31:13-17).

As God’s final judgment unfolds mankind is given countless opportunities to change: ‘...*And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils...Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts*’.

Obedience to those ten widely-despised commands from the Creator are, in this age, man’s last chance of deliverance. Ω

Keep the Feast! ...cont’d

Tabernacles is a seven day festival [see p.1 for this year’s dates] celebrated by many thousands of Christians who when possible gather for fellowship in designated locations. Anciently, until the time of Jesus, the festival came to be observed—in Israel—in a central divinely-appointed location, Jerusalem. In the Christian era a suitable place is selected, the number of sites depending on numbers attending and limited by travel challenges.

At these times, the main focus of the festival is its significance in relation to the coming reign over mankind of Jesus Christ as ‘...*King of kings and Lord of lords*’—supreme Ruler over man’s political and religious life. He will ‘tabernacle’ [live among us] for a thousand years. It pictures a coming time of restoration of all those true values to which we aspire—peace, abounding health, economic stability—and a pure religion that perfectly reflects the mind of our Creator. Ω

For you to be part of a Tabernacles assembly we can direct you to a selection of sites in many countries

*Request the free booklet: **God’s Holy Days** for an overview of all the divinely-appointed festivals*
