

Jesus Christ and the Sabbath • God's Vision for You

The Good News

Premier Issue

***God's Holy
Day Plan***
*A promise of hope
for all humanity*

Which Commandments Did Jesus Break?

From the publisher

"What we need is some good news!" An often heard lament in this violent, anxious 20th century. Our century, it seems, has witnessed more misfortunes, disasters and catastrophes than any other in human history. A brief survey of our times reveals the shocking statistic of more than 150 million killed as a result of war alone since 1900. Diseases, pandemics and natural disasters have claimed the lives of well over 100 million more. Yes, we need some good news. The information age is here, and the bad news is ever present. It rains down on us from satellites 24 hours a day. But where is the source of good news? Surprisingly, the editors and writers of this magazine believe it's been available for thousands of years.

THE Good News is a biblically based publication. The much-neglected Book of Books contains good news, known otherwise as "the gospel." The Old English word *gospel*, or "good spell (tale)," simply means *good news*. And what is the gospel? It's the announcement of the rule of God on the earth, now and in the future.

The gospel is not a limited "religious" message about a historical figure. It is the answer to every human dilemma, because it speaks to a way of living and of God's own plan for humanity. When Jesus of Nazareth began His ministry of reconciliation, He came to Galilee "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14). It was good news about God's intervention in human affairs to save us from the bad news. Jesus' message included the truth about His own life, death and resurrection and the high decrees He embodied. It is the way of spiritual salvation.

So this new magazine is not so new after all. Its message is a timeless one, full of hope, faith and love—three aspects of human existence that have been debased and deconstructed in our time.

Whatever happened to our visions of a positive, hopeful future and lives lived in dignity with love and concern for all? THE Good News will recapture those visions and values every two months, beginning January-February 1996. The issue you hold is a premier one for your perusal and comment. Let us know how you feel about the contents.

In the following pages you'll find inspiring, touching articles for young people such as Darris McNeely's appeal to "Dare to Dream" and teenager Sarah Swenson's "Don't You Trust Me?" Compassion and empathy feature in Andrea West's "Heart of Flesh" and Mona Schurter's "Too Deep for Tears." Mother of three Bonnie Greider has some practical advice for Christian women under pressure in "Are We Thriving or Just Coping?"

THE Good News' strong biblical foundation comes through in the "Family Bible Study" about the enduring Ten Commandments and in the provocatively titled "Which Commandments Did Jesus Break?" by Larry Walker. Jim Franks takes a look a relatively unknown figure in American history: one of New England's early Sabbath-keepers. His struggles and triumphs speak powerfully to a world of shallow convictions. The plan of God for humanity is effectively summarized in the parallel articles "God's Plan as Revealed by His Holy Days," by Don Ward, and "What Do the Holy Days Mean for Christians Today?" by Roger Foster.

THE Good News is here to help you on your journey to the destiny our Creator has for us all. Let us know what you think.

—David Hulme

The Good News

THE Good News is published bimonthly by the United Church of God, *an International Association*, P.O. Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91066-1780.

Managing editor: Scott Ashley

Copy editor: Dixon Cartwright

Proofreader: Jeannette Anderson

Art director: Shaun Venish

Editorial reviewers:

John Bald, Roger Foster, Bruce Gore, Paul Kieffer, John Meakin, Peter Nathan, Brian Orchard, Richard Thompson, Leon Walker, Donald Ward, Lyle Welty, Dean Wilson

United Church of God board of directors:

Robert Dick, Jim Franks, Roy Holladay, Doug Horchak, David Hulme (chairman), Victor Kubik, Dennis Luker, Burk McNair, Ray Wooten

Special thanks to: Steve Andrews, Sheryl Carey, Tom Damour, John Elliott, Jim Hopkins, Lisa Howell, Darris McNeely, Scott Moss, Susann Ohmart, Richard Pinelli, Jana Reed, Melvin Rhodes, John Robinson, Dale Schurter, Jennifer Swenson, Larry Walker, Leon Walker

Photography: Images provided by © 1994 PhotoDisc, Inc., except front cover, page 5 © 1995 Scott Ashley; pages 26, 27, Jim Franks

© 1995 United Church of God, *an International Association*. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Published Fall 1995.

Subscriptions: THE Good News is sent free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, and their co-workers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible. To request a subscription, write to THE Good News, United Church of God, P.O. Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91066-1780, or to the international addresses below.

International addresses:

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia
P.O. Box 929 Beenleigh, Qld. 4207 Australia
Phone: 0755 35 6030 Fax: 0755 35 6106

BAHAMAS: United Church of God
P.O. Box N8873 Nassau Bahamas
Phone: (809) 324-3169 Fax: (809) 364-5566

CANADA: United Church of God, *an International Association*
9251-8 Yonge St., #303
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 9T3 Canada

SOUTH AFRICA: United Church of God
P.O. Box 4345 Randburg 2125 South Africa
Phone and fax: 011 792-4601

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: United Church of God P.O. Box 458 Big Sandy, TX 75755 U.S.A.
Phone: (903) 636-4928

UNITED KINGDOM: United Church of God (UK)
188 First St. New Greenham Park
Thatcham, Berks. RG19 6HW United Kingdom
Phone: 0115 944-4973

Contents

COVER STORY

God's Plan as Revealed by His Holy Days

Thousands of years ago, God commanded the nation of Israel to observe a series of festivals throughout the year. Far from being obsolete or a relic of bygone days, these days are rich in meaning for mankind today. Why? They reveal the very plan and purpose of God!

4



Page 4

FEATURE ARTICLES

God's Vision for You

God has a plan for humanity—and it includes you!

6

What Do the Holy Days Mean for Christians Today?

The incredible truth behind the biblical Holy Days

9

Which Commandments Did Jesus Break?

Jesus was accused of breaking God's law—did He?

12

Jesus Christ and the Sabbath

What the Bible shows about Jesus and the Sabbath

14

Feast Days: God's or Man's?

How were holidays substituted for Holy Days?

20

Are We Thriving or Just Coping?

How you can break the cycle of daily drudgery

22

A Heart of Flesh

How to be there for grieving friends

24

Too Deep for Tears

Encouraging words for troubling times

25

Governor Samuel Ward and His Confession of Faith

One man's devotion to his country and his faith

26



Page 6



Page 24

REGULAR FEATURES

World News and Trends

Lessons From Yugoslavia

8

Family Bible Study

Were the Ten Commandments Known Before Mount Sinai?

16

Just for Youth

Don't You Trust Me?

28

Four Ways to Patch Up Trust

29

Dare to Dream

30



Page 26

God's Plan as Revealed by His Holy Days

by Donald Ward

THE HOLY DAYS REVEAL GOD'S plan of salvation for all humanity. Just as the plan of salvation is universal, so are the Holy Days. They progressively provide hope for all humans as God's boundless love is made available through their fulfillment. The universality of these days is confirmed in Leviticus 23:4: "These are the feasts of the LORD," not just the feasts of Israel. These feasts include the weekly Sabbath. After Jesus Christ created the Sabbath day, He rested (Hebrew *shabbath*: "kept Sabbath") from all the work He had made (Genesis 2:2).

Since Jesus Christ created the Sabbath, He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3). Thus, anyone who attempts to confine the "feasts of the LORD" to the Jews must deny Jesus' own testimony. So to deny that Jesus Christ created the Sabbath is to deny His lordship and sovereignty.

Since the weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days are "feasts of the LORD,"

they stand or fall together. They reveal the greatest purpose of God: His desire to have a relationship with every human that has ever lived or ever will live. Human beings can have a relationship with God only through the Holy Spirit. Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth

would have been incomplete: cut off, without any hope or knowledge of how to relate to his Creator. So, at creation, our great loving Father revealed His love, care and concern for humans by revealing Himself as the spiritual Creator, who would commune with humans through the Holy Spirit as symbolized by the tree of life.

One cannot eat of the tree of life without recognizing God's sovereignty in all facets of His being. Adam and Eve rejected God's sovereignty in their lives. They refused to look to God for the knowledge of good and evil; that is, the knowledge of how to relate to God and fellow humans.

As a result of Adam's and Eve's rejection of God as spiritual Creator and

Revelator, humanity as a whole was cut off from the Holy Spirit, and hence a relationship with their Creator, for more than 4,000 years.

The progressive revelation and spiri-



God uses the harvest seasons to teach us about His plan for the great harvest of mankind in His coming kingdom.

(John 4:24). The Sabbaths of the LORD reveal God as a spiritual Creator who desires a relationship with humankind.

If, at the creation of man, God had not created the Sabbath and revealed Himself as the spiritual Creator, man

God has an incredible plan and purpose for mankind. But how does He reveal it, and how can we understand it?

tual fulfillment of “the feasts of the LORD” provide all humans who have ever lived with an opportunity to call upon the name of Jesus Christ as He has commanded for redemption and reconciliation with our loving Father. God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Yes, the “feasts of the LORD” are truly universal since they reveal God’s will for all humans.

Jesus Christ kept the feasts. The apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians, “Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump [a little leaven leavens the whole lump], since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8).

These passages demonstrate at least two vital truths concerning Christians’ observance of the Holy Days in the New Testament. First of all, they were clearly keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread in that they were unleavened (physically). Paul then admonishes them to keep the Feast spiritually by casting out the old leaven (sin), just as they had put out the physical leaven and had thus become physically unleavened. The spiritual keeping of the Feast is to be done through the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Jesus Christ is that unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The Church is to eat and drink of His Word so “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26).

With this backdrop we can now parallel the Holy Days with literal events in Israel’s history, with “the principles of the doctrine of Christ” (KJV) as outlined in Hebrews 6:1 and 2, and the spiritual fulfillment of the Holy Days that culminates with all humans being given the opportunity to enter into a spiritual relationship with their loving heavenly Father.

The weekly Sabbath

God revealed the Sabbath to Adam and Eve the day after they were created. The apostle Paul wrote that “the law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14). The Sabbath proves that God is a spiritual Creator. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is . . .” (Hebrews 11:6). So the Sabbath parallels the doctrine of faith in God. In



God’s kingdom will usher in a time of peace unparalleled in the history of mankind.

short, to deny the spiritual law is to deny that “God is.”

The author of Hebrews wrote that there remains a rest for the people of God, and the Hebrews were admonished to labor to enter into that rest (Hebrews 4:9-11). The word *rest* is translated from the Greek word *sabbatismos*, which implies a physical keeping of the Sabbath as well as the future millennial rest that is to be enjoyed by the entire creation at the manifestation of the sons of God during the thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints.

Passover

The servitude of Israel in the land of Egypt culminated with God hearing the cries of His people and raising up His servant Moses to lead them out of captivity (Exodus 3:7-11). Time after time, Moses went before Pharaoh pleading for freedom so Israel could hold a feast and “sacrifice unto the LORD” (Exodus 5:1-3). Time after time Pharaoh hardened his

heart as God sent deadly plagues upon the Egyptians and their land.

Finally God revealed to Moses how the Israelites could be saved. They were instructed to set aside an unblemished lamb on the 10th day of the first month. (Here we find God revealing His sacred calendar to the Israelites.)

On the 14th day of the month they were instructed to kill the lambs and sprinkle the blood of the lambs on the doorposts of their homes, so the death

angel would pass over their homes and spare their firstborn. In those homes where no blood was sprinkled, the firstborn of both man and beast were slain.

About 1,450 years later, Jesus Christ became our Passover Lamb on the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar. Jesus Christ is our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). His sacrifice makes it possible for the believer to leave spiritual Egypt. Leaving spiritual Egypt parallels the doctrine of repentance. The blood of Christ becomes the propitiation—the atoning sacrifice—for sin, for all persons who repent of breaking God’s great, immutable, spiritual law. Christ came to save us *out of* our sins, not *in* our sins. As Paul wrote, “But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!” (Galatians 2:17).

Christ instituted the new symbols of the Passover on the night before He was betrayed and crucified. The bread and wine represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ is the seal of the new covenant. Jesus said that “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53).

Christians are therefore commanded to keep the Feast of Passover. In light of His clear instructions, no Christian would deny the necessity of keeping the Feast of Passover. Are the other feasts of God any less important in the purpose and plan of God?

Continued on page 18

God's Vision for You!

by Dale Schurter



*In God's master plan
everyone is created
with many things in
common. Yet each is
distinct from any
other human being.*

GOD HAS A GREAT PLAN, A VISION. And that vision includes *you*. Yes, it does, or you would not be here. You are special. You are different from anyone else. The great Creator God personally designed and made you that way. Therefore, you have a contribution to offer that no one else can make.

It is said that the difference between a chump and a champ is dedication, and dedication demands purpose, faith and vision—daily vision.

Having vision means being able to visualize. Visualizing is the beginning of fulfilled vision. When we think of an apple, we see it in our mind's eye.

Christians have vision and are able to dream the impossible dream. A man or woman of vision (of faith) fully believes the impossible dream is possible. I believe in this type of vision. How about you?

God's master plan

In God's master plan everyone is created with many things in common with everyone else. Yet each person is distinct from any other human being.

In God's sight you are not a washout. You are not a complete failure. You are not a hopeless sinner. God says you *are* worth having. You are worth loving. God's greatest physical creation is you.

Accept this fact: You have value and are not inferior to anyone. Different. Yes, wonderfully different. Remember, you are God's idea; and He never makes a mistake. You were not made to be exactly like any other person. But each of us was made for a purpose. God had a vision about you and has a vision for you. If you don't know God's present and ultimate vision for you personally, right now, let me share it with you.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

The apostle Paul summarizes God's will and vision for all humanity in a nutshell: ". . . God our Savior . . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3, 4).

God, through His Son Jesus Christ, reveals the



knowledge of truth Paul is referring to: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

That is God's vision prepared and outlined for mankind, including you. It is the offering of, and the way to, eternal life in the kingdom of God: "That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:15). "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29).

Revealing! Exciting! Awesome!

But is such a thing really possible? Maybe you are skeptical. Well, so were some of Jesus' disciples. "But Jesus looked at them and said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all

things are possible'" (Mark 10:27). There's the answer. Jesus said all things are possible to him who really believes they are possible, and according to God's will.

In Acts 2:38 and 39, the apostle Peter outlines the process, the steps, to begin fulfilling God's vision for you. "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'"

Christ then begins to live within you through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 3:16, 17).

In the book of Romans, God continues to explain His personal vision for you, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11).

In subsequent verses He nails down in detail His ultimate purpose and vision for you: your magnificent destiny, why you were born. "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:13, 14).

Hard to believe, but true. Your destiny envisioned by the Creator God is to become His very own son or

Continued on page 23



World News & Trends



Bosnia-Herzegovina



Croatia



Serbia



European Community

Lessons From Yugoslavia

The century that began in Sarajevo is also ending there.

It was in June 1914 that the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated while on a visit to the ancient Balkan city, an event that led to World War I: the “great war” that lasted over four years, changed forever the global balance of power and ended the lives of millions of people.

Europe was never to be the same again. At the turn of the century most European nations had their own kings, emperors or ruling princes. Various ideologies—nationalism, fascism, communism and democracy—forced kings off their thrones or forced them to change. Stable political systems that had endured for centuries were replaced by instability, ethnic strife and demagoguery. Tensions arose between new nations that had not existed before the great global conflict. Croats, freed from Austrian rule, fought Serbs, who had not long had their independence from the Ottoman Empire of the Turks.

After World War I, at the Treaty of Versailles, the major powers of the world tried to force ethnic groups together into artificial entities. One such “country” was Yugoslavia, dominated by Serbs, with their king, but containing within its borders groups such as Serbs, Croats and Bosnians.

Invasion by the Third Reich in 1941 led to the eventual fall of the Yugoslav monarchy. Serbian Chetniks and Croatian Ustashi led resistance to the Nazis. After the German attack on the Soviet Union, communist insurgents began a resistance under the leadership of their secretary general Tito.

Communist partisans fought the monarchist Chetniks as well as the Germans. Tito was victorious, but became a renegade in the communist world after World War II by refusing to take orders from Moscow.

Tito ruled over Yugoslavia’s various ethnic groups for more than 30 years. Realizing the potential for more strife

Europe is a patchwork quilt of ethnic groups, many demanding their own independence.

after his death, he arranged a rotating presidency system, whereby a leader from each ethnic group would have an opportunity at the top. It wasn’t to last.

As long as the Soviet threat continued, Yugoslavia held together. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of communism in Eastern Europe, nationalism again reared its head. The country broke up, with each ethnic group demanding its own territory. Antagonisms arose in areas where two ethnic groups had intermingled over the years. The result: the worst conflict in Europe since World War II.

There is a danger of it spreading, as other countries could get involved.

Already, the conflict has damaged the Atlantic Alliance, which has given Europe 50 years of peace. No longer do European countries look to the United States for leadership. American indecisiveness in the Balkan crisis has led France and Britain to take the lead. Even Germany is involved, having amended its postwar constitution to allow it to send some peacekeeping troops.

What is happening here?

The fact is that Europe is a patchwork quilt of ethnic groups, many demanding their own independence. It would be akin to all the minority groups in the United States wanting their own territory, governmental system and flag. For centuries the different groups with their differing languages, customs, cultures and even religions were held together by kings or emperors who claimed them as their possessions. With the ancient monarchies mostly gone, there is no reason now why each “tribe” cannot have its independence.

Aggravating these nationalist tendencies is the successful European Union (EU), formerly the European Community (EC). It is ironic that the economic union which is pledged to full military and political union at some point in the future should be contributing inadvertently to the disintegration of nations like the former Yugoslavia.

However, it is precisely because the EU has been such an economic success that new very small countries can now be born. The European Union has made borders irrelevant. Increasingly, Europe is one economy, as is the United States. Therefore there is no reason to persist with the old boundaries that separated one nation, one economic entity, from another.

There will be more nations breaking away from their former rulers. Already
Continued on page 23



What Do the Holy Days Mean for Christians Today?

God commanded Israel to keep His 'feasts of the LORD.' What is their relevance for Christians—and mankind—today?

by Roger Foster

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH. Old Testament Holy Days. Incompatible? Absolutely not! Why? How can festivals observed by ancient Israel be valuable to Christians today?

Simple! They reveal God's master plan of salvation.

The Holy Days unveil for us the crucial keys to salvation. They give us a step-by-step explanation of how God plans to reconcile all human beings to Himself. They reveal the big picture—the spiritual harvest of the whole world. They give vivid meaning to the gospel of the kingdom of God. Their value to the Church of the living God is incalculable!

How can we be sure that the Holy Days reveal God's plan of salvation for all mankind? After all, millions don't understand, or they simply disagree. How can we be certain that we are right? The key is in Paul's letter to the Colossians. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, speaks about these Holy Days to a Christian church. What he says—and does not say—carries immense weight. Let's examine what Paul says and understand what he means.

He says, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival

or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16, 17).

This passage, probably more than any other in the Bible, is interpreted by those who reject God's festivals as confirmation that the Holy Days are unnecessary observances for Christians. Their reasoning is not only false; it is based on poor scholarship. Paul, while countering a local heresy, pinpoints the real value of these Holy Days to Christians. They foreshadow "things to come," he says. They focus our attention on the future. They connect the plan of God directly to the commission Christ gave His Church.

Now let's examine what Paul really says about Sabbaths, new moons and Holy Days.

Background to Colossians

First, we need some essential background to Paul's letter to the Colossians. Paul was combating heresy. False teachers had infiltrated the church there. These deceivers heavily influenced the Colossians. They introduced their own religious philosophy—a mixture of both Jewish and gentile concepts. Paul warned, "Beware lest

anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men . . ." (Colossians 2:8).

Human traditions—the inventions of the human mind—were the foundation of the Colossian heresy. This human reasoning and teaching are what Paul opposed, not revealed instruction from God's Word. Earlier, Jesus had soundly condemned the Pharisees for the same thing. They had elevated their own traditions to greater importance than God's commandments (Mark 7:8, 9, 13).

Tradition played an extremely important role in the life of the Jews at that time. The Greeks had a long history of astrological traditions that related planets and stars to deities. Human tradition was beginning to subvert the Church of God in Colosse.

Paul fought to keep the Colossians focused on Christ as the Head of the Church. These false teachers sought to persuade them to worship angels (Colossians 2:18) to the neglect of their own bodies (verse 23). None of these distorted ideas came from the Old Testament Scriptures.

Paul characterized this Colossian heresy as "empty deceit" and "the basic principles of the world" (verse 8). It was more than just another harmless

Paul, while countering a local heresy, pinpoints the real value of these Holy Days to Christians. They foreshadow 'things to come,' he says.

local tradition. It was an intolerable deception designed to change the very focus of their worship. They were being persuaded to ignore plain biblical instruction in favor of “the tradition[s] of men” (verse 8). Some elements of that deceptive philosophy survive in Christianity to this day.

Man-made regulations

How does Paul characterize these basic principles of the world? “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations [?] . . .” What regulations? “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, . . . according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (verses 20-22). These man-made regulations concerned things “which perish with the using” (verse 22). Paul is discussing physical things—perishable items!

Why is this important?

The Colossian deceivers were among the forerunners of gnosticism, a major religious movement that flourished in the second century. Gnosticism gets its name from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.” Gnostics believed that higher, secret knowledge available only to its adherents was necessary for salvation.

The gnostic teachers influencing the Colossians blended both traditional and nontraditional Jewish beliefs with pagan superstitions and integrated their astrological beliefs with the worship of angelic beings. In no way did this mixture of beliefs represent the mainstream Judaism of that day. Theirs was an aberrant sectarian philosophy nowhere taught in Old Testament Scripture.

What were their main beliefs?

They believed that salvation could be achieved by constant contemplation of “spiritual” things, to the neglect of the physical body. They believed in various orders of angels and that humans should interact directly with angels. They regarded physical things, includ-

ing the human body, as decadent and unworthy of their time and concern.

Paul explicitly states that the judgmental attitudes he was countering “all concern things which perish with the using [obviously referring to physical things]—according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (verse 22). How clear! Paul plainly says that he is countering the commandments and doctrines of men, not the commandments of God.

Why can’t people believe him?

The Colossian heretics created their own prohibitive regulations—“do not touch, do not taste, do not handle” (verse 21)—against the enjoyment of physical things. They were especially critical of the eating and drinking aspects of the Holy Day festivals observed by the Colossian members. That was not compatible with their idea of being “spiritual.”

Their objections covered all feasting aspects of the Holy Days, but apparently not the observance of Holy Days as religious festivals. They regarded the observance of a Holy Day as spiritual, but feasting—eating and drinking for enjoyment—was beneath them.

Now we can understand what Paul really says to the Colossians. He is discussing judging—the critical objections of some narrow-minded heretics to the enjoyment of physical things. He commands the Colossians not to be influenced by the false teachers’ objections to eating, drinking and rejoicing on Sabbaths, Holy Days and new moons.

Criticized for feasting

“So let no one judge you *in food or in drink* [literally “in eating and in drinking” in the original], or *regarding* a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (verses 16, 17). The word *regarding* is translated from the Greek noun *meros*, meaning a “part” or “portion” of something. A more accurate rendering would be: “Let no man therefore judge you in

meat, or in drink, or in any part of a Holy Day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days . . .”

Paul is just being consistent. Eating or drinking is a part of Sabbath and Holy Day observance. Both were a part of God’s instructions for rejoicing in observing those days (Leviticus 23, Deuteronomy 14:22-26).

In writing to the Colossians, Paul uses the word *meros* (“part”) to cover any other part or aspect of these days that the heretics might condemn or criticize. Nothing in this passage even suggests that the Sabbaths or Holy Days were abolished. Succumbing to the judgmental influence of those early gnostic heretics is what Paul condemns, not the observance of Sabbaths and Holy Days.

Future fulfillment

Now back to the main purpose of the Holy Days for us today. Paul says they “are a shadow of things *to come*.” The phrase *to come* is a present active participle in the Greek. It means “things coming,” referring to the future, not the past. Any theologian who claims that Paul is referring to the Holy Days as a shadow of things in the past is not being honest with the Greek grammar. The Greek requires it to point to the future.

The Sabbath and the Holy Days foreshadow things to come—future events. There is no doubt about what Paul is saying. The Holy Days still represent future events in the plan of salvation.

God’s Holy Days are also times for joy and celebration. He commands us to attend and rejoice with our entire family. “But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses . . . and there you shall go. There you shall take . . . your tithes, . . . your freewill offerings, . . . and there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you”

Satan hates God’s plan. He wants to destroy every vestige of that plan, eradicating all knowledge of it. He is still ‘the god of this age.’

(Deuteronomy 12:5-7).

God's festivals were designed to be a wonderful blessing! He desires that we thoroughly delight in them. He wants us to experience together the joy of being His children. No wonder Paul attacks the misguided philosophy of the Colossian heretics with such vigor. They sabotaged the very spirit of God's festivals. Paul defended the Christians' right to feast on these feast days.

The Sabbath and Holy Days are also called memorials. Their purpose is to make us aware of God's plan, both past and future. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation (Exodus 20:11). It also is a type of the rest that is to come (Hebrews 4:4-11).

Some aspects of God's master plan have already been fulfilled. The Holy Days represent them as memorials. The Feast of Trumpets portrays what is still future, yet it also is called a memorial (Leviticus 23:23, 24). Memorials make us remember all the plan of God. We keep them so we will never forget any major part of God's master plan of salvation.

Majority of mankind blinded

Why do so few understand God's Holy Days today? They have been taught to reject them.

Satan hates God's plan. He wants to destroy every vestige of that plan, eradicating all knowledge of it. He is still "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4). He "deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9), blinding the vast majority of mankind to the importance of God's ways, including the Holy Days.

No religion has maintained an accurate understanding of God's plan without the Holy Days. Some discern important details of that plan correctly. But, without an understanding of God's master plan as revealed by the Holy Days, they simply can't put all the pieces together. Confusion has been the result.

We should deeply appreciate the understanding these Holy Days give to

us. And we should thank God that these days also picture the future, when all mankind will understand God's great master plan. Those who are now blinded are just as much a part of that plan of salvation as we are. Only the timing is different.

We must remember that people who are spiritually blinded are often very sincere, and we should never be judgmental toward them. Some have deep convictions and follow many right principles. They may not yet see the big picture or fully grasp the awesome plan of God, but the time is coming when they will.

We need to appreciate the magnitude of the plan of salvation pictured by God's Holy Days. Our individual calling is important, but God is working out a much bigger purpose than just our personal salvation.

Christ died for all mankind

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins'" (Romans 11:25-27).

However, God shows no favoritism (Romans 2:11). Christ died so all may be saved! All mankind must yet learn the truth and come to repentance. We continue to have an important part in that process. "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men . . . For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Also, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any

should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Spread to the entire world

The wonderful truths we are learning now will be spread to the entire world. "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16-19).

There are no shortcuts. All peoples must be brought to real repentance before they will be saved. God's Holy Days will continue revealing the plan of God to mankind until His plan is complete. These days will always play a major role in bringing the whole world to repentance.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world . . . having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth . . ." (Ephesians 1:3, 4, 9, 10).

What a wonderful plan! What a wonderful God!

Our individual calling is important, but God is working out a much bigger purpose than just our personal salvation.

Which Commandments Did Jesus?

by Larry Walker

YES, YOU READ IT RIGHT: Which commandments did Jesus break? It may come as a shock to realize that Jesus broke *any* commandments. But He did. And knowing which commandments He broke and why He broke them is important for you to understand.

Let's look at the account of one such accusation, in John 5:18: "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only *broke the Sabbath*, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

Now, before anyone jumps to a wrong conclusion, let's understand what this verse means. Did Jesus break the Sabbath commandment in the law of God (Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15)? Let's let Jesus Himself answer that question: "I have kept my Father's commandments," He said (John 15:10).

Also, in response to the young man who asked Him what to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus said, "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). The verses following clearly identify the commandments He referred to as those God gave in what we call the Old Testament. He cited several of the Ten Commandments as well as the fundamental commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" to make the point.

On another occasion, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4). Clearly, Jesus believed in, taught and kept *all* the commandments of God during His earthly ministry. He also commanded His disciples to be "teaching them [new converts] to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20).

In the famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clearly and forcefully

states His theological position on the law of God: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets . . ." (Matthew 5:17).

Did Jesus destroy the law?

Unfortunately, many think He did just that. Even though they don't say it in those exact words, the result is still the same. Some say Jesus transformed the law, meaning that, by accepting Christ as Savior, a Christian is somehow credited with the righteousness of Christ. They assume this means we don't need to keep the law, because Jesus allegedly kept it for us, and the law really doesn't apply to us after all.

The effect of this reasoning is that Jesus did in fact destroy the law,

Jesus Christ came to set the record straight regarding the law of God. He lived a sin-free life and died to deliver us from the death penalty for our sins.

because the word "destroy" (*kataluo* in Greek) means "to loose or unloose what was before bound" (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, p. 836). So, if Jesus somehow transformed the law so that we don't have to keep it, He loosed us from its obligation.

But Jesus emphatically tells us that He did no such thing. To make His point even further, He said, "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (verse 18).

The word *fulfill* means "to complete," or to completely accomplish the purpose God intended. Heaven and earth have still *not* passed away.

Another meaning of *kataluo* is "annul," as is used in the Weymouth

translation. So God's laws are never annulled or repealed. They remain in effect as long as the conditions they govern continue to exist. Every detail! Not even a jot or tittle—the tiniest portions of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet—is exempted.

Jesus concludes His statement about God's law with a solemn warning to religious teachers: "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever *does and teaches them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 19).

Some carelessly assume and assert that "these commandments" refers to the teachings of Christ that follow in the remainder of the chapter. Not so! The wording of the Greek text simply will not allow such an interpretation.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary explains: "But what are 'these commandments'? It is hard to justify restriction of these words to Jesus' teachings . . . for the noun in Matthew never refers to Jesus' words, and the context argues against it. Restriction to the Ten Commandments

. . . is equally alien to the concerns of the context. Nor can we say 'these commandments' refers to the antitheses that follow, for in Matthew *houtos* ('this,' pl. 'these') *never points forward* [emphasis added throughout]. It appears, then, that *the expression must refer to the commandments of the OT Scriptures*. The entire Law and the Prophets are not scrapped by Jesus' coming but fulfilled. Therefore *the commandments of these Scriptures*—even the least of them . . . —*must be practiced* . . . The law pointed forward to Jesus and his teaching . . . so he, in fulfilling it, establishes . . . the way it is to be obeyed" (Volume 8, p. 146).

Actually, the word in verse 19 translated “breaks” (*luo* in Greek) is related to the word in verse 17 rendered *destroy* (*katalu*). *Luo* literally means “to loose.” The Greek concept of destruction is to break or take apart. Loosening a part is the first step in taking apart—thus breaking or destroying—an object.

Jesus’ warning

So Jesus’ warning not only applies to anyone who disobeys even a minor detail of God’s law and teaches others to do the same. Even “loosing,” or relaxing, any of the requirements is forbidden, because that is the first step toward destroying the law. Jesus pronounces the severest penalty on any who would break or loosen even the least of the Old Testament commandments.

Perhaps you have heard the story, “For lack of a lace, a shoe was lost. For lack of a shoe, a soldier was lost. For lack of a soldier, a battle was lost. For lack of a battle the war was lost.” The lesson is clear. No one should be careless about any detail of God’s law, however minor it may seem.

Jesus emphatically did not break *any* of God’s commandments. Not even the slightest detail!

So which commandments did Jesus break? The answer is found in another quote from Christ Himself, recorded in Matthew 15:9: “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Jesus quoted this statement from Isaiah 29:13 and applied it to the “tradition of the elders” (Matthew 15:2) as taught and practiced by the hypocritical, self-righteous scribes and Pharisees who sat in judgment of Him.

These “commandments” were also known to the Jews as the “oral Torah,” the oral law. It was this *distorted interpretation* of the law that Jesus sought to correct in the Sermon on the Mount. This is clearly evident by His statement, “You have heard that it was *said* to those of old,” which prefaced each of his pronouncements (Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43).

The *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* explains that He listed “a number of much-cited rabbinic parallels . . . Jesus is not criticizing the OT but the under-

standing of the OT many of his hearers adopted. This is especially true of vv.22, 43, where part of what was ‘heard’ certainly does not come from the OT . . . In every case Jesus contrasts the *people’s misunderstanding of the law* with the true direction in which the law points” (Volume 8, pp. 147, 148).

Jesus explained the proper application of the commandment upon which the particular tradition was based. He thus *fulfilled* the law by restoring it to its complete original meaning and intent. Our righteousness must therefore exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (verse 20) in that we must keep the law of God in its proper intent.

To put it another way, we must keep the *spirit of the law*, not just the letter. This is possible only through the presence of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:7-9), which God offers upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

The commandments Jesus broke were the commandments of men. When the Jews charged Jesus with breaking the Sabbath (John 5:18), they were accusing Him of violating their misguided *human traditions* regarding the

ed the true intent of the laws of God and deprived them of their beneficial effect (Matthew 15:6).

So, in their extremely narrow view, the scribes and Pharisees considered Jesus Christ a sinner worthy of death because He broke these commandments of men—rules which they considered even more binding than the law of God they vainly sought to interpret.

Jesus Christ came to set the record straight regarding the law of God. He obeyed it perfectly and commands us to follow His example and teaching.

Of course we will never live up to His perfect example, even though that should be our desire and intent. Jesus did not live by the law of God to deliver us from the obligation to obey it. He lived a sin-free life and died to deliver us from the death penalty for our sins because we have all broken the law.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus offers to live in us. But He does not live our lives *for* us. We must all repent and yield ourselves as servants of righteousness, with the realization that God is working in us “both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Love is the basis of God’s law, and one cannot claim to love God apart from obedience to His commandments (1 John 5:2, 3, 2:4).

The specific commandment Jesus stands accused of breaking is the Sabbath, which is the epitome of the blessings of the entire law of God and a type of the master plan of God. The majority of the Christian world has abandoned this blessed gift God made for all mankind (Mark 2:27). Instead, most keep a different day based on human tradition, or ignore the Sabbath commandment altogether.

Once again the pendulum of human nature has swung, from legalism back to careless disregard for the laws of God, especially the Sabbath. By replacing the laws and commandments of God with human traditions—especially by substituting Sunday for the Sabbath, and tradition-based holidays for God’s Holy Days—many today have “made the commandment of God of no effect by [their] tradition” (Matthew 15:6).

The scribes and Pharisees knew the two main sins that led to the captivity were Sabbath-breaking and idolatry. They determined never to make the same mistake again.

Sabbath. The Gospel accounts contain many such confrontations during which Jesus’ conduct on the Sabbath was condemned by the legalistic scribes and Pharisees (Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6).

From ditch to ditch

Why was it such an issue to them? They knew that the two main sins that led to the captivity of Israel and Judah generations earlier were Sabbath-breaking and idolatry (Ezekiel 20). Having learned their lesson, the returning captives determined never to make the same mistake again.

But they failed to deal with the underlying problem, which was human nature (Romans 8:7). They simply went from one extreme to the other, from careless disregard for the laws of God to a fanatical legalism that violat-

JESUS CHRIST *and the Sabbath*

by Gary Petty

THE GOSPEL WRITERS RECORD numerous confrontations between Jesus and religious leaders concerning the Sabbath. His healings on the Sabbath and teachings about Sabbath observance stirred frequent controversy in His day—disputes that have continued down to our time.

Did Jesus, through His teachings and actions, abrogate, annul or abolish the Fourth Commandment?

Those who argue against Sabbath observance claim that the Sabbath was a cultic law given under the Sinai covenant that has since been “fulfilled in Christ.” Citing Paul’s writings to show that the Sabbath is a “shadow” of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:16, 17), they reason that Christians no longer need to observe the shadow because the reality has come.

On the other hand, Sabbath-keepers see the Sabbath as an aspect of God’s will, as expressed to mankind, which transcends the Sinai covenant and has great importance for Christians.

Let’s explore the biblical examples showing what Jesus taught about the Sabbath. A brief overview of these passages makes clear which view accurately reflects His actions and teachings.

Jesus preaches on the Sabbath: Luke 4:16-30

Sabbatarians believe that Jesus set an example for His followers (1 Peter 2:21-25), and it is clear in Scripture that He was a Sabbath-keeper. While it is true that many aspects of the Sinai covenant are no longer in effect (circumcision, animal sacrifices, civil laws, etc.), Christ’s instructions about the Sabbath are explanations of how to observe it, not claims that He was abolishing it. The Gospel accounts were written many years after Christ’s death and served as

instructions to the New Testament Church on how to observe the Sabbath.

The passage Jesus quotes in Luke 4:16-30 is from Isaiah 61:1 and 2. Most commentators agree that the context is the jubilee year. The Sabbath, annual Holy Days and jubilee year were all types of the messianic age. In Luke’s account, on the Sabbath day Jesus declares His Messiahship by using a passage concerning the jubilee. Notice Luke 4:21 where Jesus said, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Jesus proclaimed Himself as the Messiah, yet the fullness of His kingdom will not be established until His second coming. That is why He omitted the end of the passage when quoting from Isaiah: “... And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn . . .” The rest of Isaiah 61 proclaims the work of the Messiah when He will reign on earth.

From this example, we see that the Sabbath not only points Christians to Jesus as the Savior, but its continual observance gives them the hope of His future reign. The Sabbath is a reminder of the gospel in its past, present and future fulfillment.

Jesus heals on the Sabbath: Luke 4:31-39

In Jesus, the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28), we see the concepts of God as Creator and Redeemer perfectly joined together. Since the Sabbath reflects both of these truths, Christians should observe the Sabbath in celebration of both, faithfully following Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath.

The disciples pick grain on the Sabbath: Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5

Jesus’ teaching in these verses is

capsulated in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Volume 5, “Sabbath,” Doubleday, edited by David Noel Freedman, pp. 855, 856:

“At times Jesus is interpreted to have abrogated or suspended the Sabbath commandment on the basis of controversies brought about by Sabbath healings and other acts. Careful analysis of the respective passages does not seem to give credence to this interpretation. The action of plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath by the disciples is particularly important in this matter. Jesus makes a foundational pronouncement . . . ‘The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath’ (Mark 2:27). The disciples’ act of plucking grain infringed against the rabbinic halakhah of minute casuistry in which it was forbidden to reap, thresh, winnow, and grind on the Sabbath.

“. . . Jesus reforms the Sabbath and restores it to its rightful place as designed in creation, where the Sabbath is made for all mankind and not specifically for Israel, as claimed by normative Judaism . . . It was God’s will at creation that the Sabbath have the purpose of serving mankind for rest and [to] bring blessing.”

Jesus heals on the Sabbath: Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

Why did Jesus Christ perform miraculous healings on the Sabbath day, knowing that it conflicted with the narrow, restrictive views of Sabbath observance held by many of His fellow Jews?

The Sabbath in the New Testament, by Samuele Bacchiocchi (Biblical Perspectives, 1990, p. 68), explains:

“Christ’s proclamation of lordship

over the Sabbath is followed immediately by a second episode about the healing of the man with the withered hand . . . It is noteworthy that all of the seven Sabbath healings reported in the gospels are performed by Christ on behalf of chronically sick persons. These intentional healing acts by Christ on the Sabbath on behalf of incurable persons serve to demonstrate how Jesus fulfilled Messianic expectations nourished by the celebration of the Sabbath."

It is important to note Jesus' instructions concerning Sabbath observance in Matthew 12:11, 12 and Mark 3:4. The Fourth Commandment instructed that the seventh day was set apart by God and that people were not to do their normal work on that day. The commandment didn't instruct people on what they were *to do* on that day, just what they were *not to do*.

Jewish legalism had created a plethora of laws restricting even the very basics of human activity. Yet, even their regulations gave way to emergencies like getting a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath. Jesus declared that the Sabbath was a day in which good should be done.

Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath: Luke 13:10-17

Christ is the great Liberator! This verse is important in understanding God's intent for Sabbath observance. Even the strict Jewish regulations allowed for the feeding and watering of animals on the Sabbath. If caring for the basic life needs of animals wasn't breaking the Fourth Commandment, then how much more is "loosing" by healing appropriate on the Sabbath.

Jesus' example reminds us that the Sabbath is an appropriate time to visit the sick and elderly, helping them celebrate the day of renewal.

Jesus heals a man of dropsy on the Sabbath: Luke 14:1-6

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus pointedly asked the lawyers and Pharisees. "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?"

They couldn't answer Him. Ques-

tions such as these had been debated among the Jewish teachers for years, and even they recognized that the command to rest didn't include ignoring emergency situations where life and limb were at stake.

For the Sabbath-keeper, every day is to be lived as a Christian. But God has set aside one day when mankind is to renew the relationship of the created with the Creator; the redeemed with the Redeemer.

Jesus heals an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath: John 5:1-18

Those who oppose Sabbath observance view Christ's statement that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" as ending any distinction of days for worship or other religious purposes.

But there is a huge flaw in that reasoning. To conclude that by teaching that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath we negate its distinctive nature, requires the assumption that it was originally *unlawful* to do good on that day. The *NIV Life Application Bible* (Tyndale/Zondervan, 1991, p. 1883) comments on that view regarding these verses:

"If God stopped every kind of work on the Sabbath, nature would fall into chaos, and sin would overrun the world. Genesis 2:2 says that God rested on the seventh day but this can't mean that He stopped doing good. Jesus wanted to teach that when the opportunity to do good presents itself, it should not be ignored, even on the Sabbath."

Circumcision and the Sabbath: John 7:21-24

Some argue that since circumcision, a sign of the old covenant, was permissible on the Sabbath, which was also a sign of the old covenant, then circumcision must have been more important than the Sabbath. Thus, they reason, once the sign of circumcision was "done away in Christ," then the Sabbath was also nullified.

Samuele Bacchiocchi, in his book *From Sabbath to Sunday* (Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), answers this argument on pages 46 and 47:

"Why was it legitimate to circumcise a child on the Sabbath when the

eighth day (Leviticus 12:3) after his birth fell on that day? No explanation was given since it was well understood. The circumcision was regarded as a redemptive act which mediated the salvation of the covenant. It was lawful, therefore, on the Sabbath to mutilate one of the 248 parts of the human body (that was the Jewish reckoning) in order to save the whole person. On the basis of this premise Christ argues that there is no reason to be 'angry' with Him for restoring on that day the 'whole man' . . .

"His opponents cannot perceive the redemptive nature of Christ's Sabbath ministry because they 'judge by appearances' (John 7:24). They regard the pallet which the paralytic carried on the Sabbath as more important than the physical restoration and social reunification which the object symbolized (John 6:10-11), more significant than the restoration of sight to the blind mind (John 9:14-15, 26)."

Jesus heals a blind man on the Sabbath: John 9:1-34

The context of this passage is Jesus' declaration of His messiahship. As Messiah, He is also Lord of the Sabbath. Here Jesus continues to teach, as He does so many times on the Sabbath, of His redemptive work for mankind.

Following Jesus' example

When asked, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered: "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment" (Mark 12:28-30).

Here Jesus restated the greatest commandment of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5). Those who observe the biblical Sabbath strive to put God first in their lives and follow Jesus' instruction: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me" (John 14:21).

Sabbath-keepers see Jesus as their Lord and Master. And, since Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, they follow His example in observing the Sabbath in the way that He taught and lived.

Were the Ten Commandments Known Before Mount Sinai?

Sometime around 1400 to 1500 B.C., God spoke directly to the Israelites from Mt. Sinai, located in a desert region south and west of modern-day Israel. Exodus chapters 20 through 24 chronicle the establishing of a covenant, or agreement, between God and the descendants of Abraham; his son, Isaac; and grandson, Jacob.

God gave the Ten Commandments, and He spoke from the mountain directly to the people. They were so frightened by the sound that they pleaded with Moses for God not to speak to them, but that they would hear from Moses what God wanted.

When God spoke the Ten Commandments, did He reveal something entirely new to the Israelites, and through them, to the gentile nations and peoples of the world? Or did God "codify," or write down and then include in a specific covenant with Israel, preexisting definitions of sin and righteousness?

Many say that the Ten Commandments were simply the "old covenant." They also say that when the old covenant passed away, so did the need for obeying the Ten Commandments, unless they were specifically repeated in the new covenant.

Others say that God has had a standard of righteous conduct that began at the time of the creation of Adam and has not changed since. Let's study this together and see what we can discover about God's intention for how His people should act toward each other and toward Him, and whether His standards of sin and righteousness have changed through the years.

Going through the Bible together:

Exodus 20:1-20 (*Hint: Ask someone to read these verses out loud.*)

Discussion: Why are the Ten Commandments important? (*Hint: You might explore the following questions with your family.*)

- Who decides what is right and wrong?
- Who has the right to decide what is right and wrong for everybody to do?
- Are there any books or writings other than the Bible that define for us what God says is righteousness and what is sin?
- Which of the Ten Commandments reveal information that man cannot understand except by revelation from God? Which could be understood through scientific study or contemplation?

What are the general definitions of sin given in the Bible?

Discussion: What do these scriptures teach us about what sin is? (*Hint: You might have someone read the following scriptures and then ask the family how these define sin. Are there other scriptures that define, in general terms, what sin is?*)

- **Romans 14:23** Whatever is not of faith
- **James 4:17** Not doing the good we should
- **1 John 3:4-10** Transgression of the law (lawlessness)
- **1 John 5:17** All unrighteousness
- **James 2:19** Having respect for persons

Discussion: What conclusions can we draw about what defines sin? (*Hint: In what ways does God use definitions that relate to physical conduct and definitions that relate to attitudes to define sin?*)

Was there sin before God spoke the Ten

Commandments to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai?

Discussion: What examples are there that specifically define sin, wickedness or other lawless conduct before Exodus 20? (Hint: Have family members look up the following, read the passage and identify which Commandments were broken.)

- **Genesis 4:1-16** Cain
- **Genesis 6:1-12** Noah
- **Genesis 18:17-22** Sodom and Gomorrah
- **Genesis 20:1-20** Abimelech and Abraham
- **Genesis 26:5-11** Abimelech and Isaac

Did God have a different standard of sin for a gentile nation than He did for His chosen people? (Hint: Was Abimelech, the gentile king in Genesis 20, subject to the same commandments defining sin and righteousness as was Abraham?)

What are the consequences of sin?

- **Romans 6:23** Eternal death
- **Ezekiel 20:7-43** Being cut off from God
- **1 Samuel 15:7-31** When leaders reject the commandments, it causes them to be rejected by God as leaders, and new leaders to be put in their place (example of Saul)

Discussion: What other consequences are there for sin? (Hint: You might ask what the physical and psychological consequences are when people sin. Also, what happens to relationships when there is sin? How are families, communities or even nations weakened by sin? Does righteous conduct strengthen relationships?)

Has God always wanted obedience from the heart?

- **Genesis 4:1-12** Did God want Cain to master the temptation before it mastered him? Is temptation a matter of the letter of the law or the spirit of the law?
- **Hebrews 8:7-13** What laws were to be written on the "new heart" of a Christian? (This is cited from Jeremiah 31:31-34.)
- **Matthew 15:1-9** Did Jesus want obedience that was "lip service," or did He want heartfelt obedience?
- **Ezekiel 36:24-36** Was this new heart free

from commandment-keeping? What was this new heart supposed to do? What will God's attitude be in the Millennium toward commandment-keeping? What will God's Spirit cause people to do?

Discussion: What kind of obedience did Jesus want from His people? (Hint: Was keeping the "letter of the law" enough? What does the phrase "keeping the spirit of the law" mean to you? Can we keep the intent of the law and break the letter of the law? Should the intent or spirit of the law guide us in how we can best keep the letter of the law?)

Family Research Topics:

How many of the Ten Commandments can you find mentioned before Exodus 20?

(Hint: Look for either a specific statement about them, like the Sabbath in Genesis 2, or the scriptures showing a sin, like murder in Genesis 4:6. A concordance will help with this study.)

Why is sin, or unrighteousness, bad? Why is righteousness, or obedience to God's commandments, good? Who is hurt when any of the Ten Commandments is broken? What happens when the Ten Commandments are obeyed? (Hint: You might go through each of the Ten Commandments individually and ask the same questions for each: "What happens when this Commandment is broken? What happens when this Commandment is obeyed?")

Does the New Testament teach commandment-keeping? Will there be commandment-keeping for all people after the return of Jesus Christ?

- **Matthew 5:19-32** What did Jesus teach about obedience to the commandments?
- **1 John 2:3-6** What did John say about those who do not obey the commandments?
- **Revelation 22:10-21** At the end of all things, does Jesus Christ want commandment-keepers?

This outline is intended to suggest topics and questions to spark discussion in Bible study. You may find it useful to spread the study out over a number of days and to adapt it to fit the age groupings within your family. Special thanks to Ken Graham Sr. from Indianapolis, Indiana, for his discussion on this topic, which inspired this study guide.

Holy Days

Continued from page 5

First Day of Unleavened Bread

The children of Israel left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This freedom was made possible by the blood of the Passover lambs and the Israelites' faith in God. After we are convicted of sin by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit and repent and exercise faith, we too can begin to leave spiritual Egypt.

It took Israel seven days to completely leave the geographical environs of Egypt. But the moment a person exercises faith in God for the remission of sins that are past, he is justified and the penalty for sin is abolished. The repentant sinner is viewed as sinless and righteous in the sight of God (Colossians 1:21, 22).

The Christian is to continue in a state of repentance and contrition before God by eating of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8). Thus the repentant sinner is supposed to continually put sin out through faith. Faith without works is dead. Therefore Paul said, "... For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Romans 2:13).

The justified person commits himself to perpetually living what the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures—a life of removing sin by living in faith before God.

Last Day of Unleavened Bread

The Israelites crossed the Red Sea on the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Paul wrote that this was their baptism (1 Corinthians 10:2). The crossing of the Red Sea marked the Israelites' final departure from Egypt, symbolic of sin and death.

Immediately after Israel crossed the Red Sea, the Israelites sang the victory song of Moses: "... The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation ..." (Exodus 15:2, KJV).

Israel prepared God a physical habitation, the tabernacle. In this habitation, Israel approached God through offerings and sacrifices, none of which changed the heart. Today God wants us to approach Him with a new heart. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

Today God's habitation is in the individual believer's heart and mind. God dwells in the hearts and minds of believers. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the believer is given the power to crucify the flesh and keep the hosts of Pharaoh, the works of the flesh, in their watery, baptismal grave.

The subject of the Holy Spirit leads us to the parallels of the Feast of Pentecost.

Feast of Pentecost

According to Jewish tradition, Israel received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai on the Day of Pentecost. The Ten Commandments became the basis of Christ's marriage covenant with Israel.

The law is spiritual, but humans had been cut off from the Holy Spirit since Adam and Eve rejected the source of all things spiritual in the Garden of Eden. Thus Israel did not have the heart and mind to keep the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:29).

God recognized the weakness of the people and promised a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31, 32). This covenant made it possible for the laws of God to be written on the inward parts of the believer (Hebrews 8:10). Jesus Christ is the "Mediator of a better covenant [the new covenant], which was established on better promises."

The Greek word *nomotheteo*, translated here as *established*, means "furnished with law." So the new covenant was furnished with law. What law? The same laws that were codified at Mount Sinai, which included the "feasts of the LORD."

The better promises are spiritual. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ replaced the sacrificial laws of the old covenant, making it possible for the conscience of the believer to be purged (Hebrews 9:14). Upon repentance and faith in the blood of Christ for remission of past sins, God

gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to the believer (Acts 2:38).

The new convert is to become a new creation in Jesus Christ. He is now a son of God, having received the Spirit of sonship (Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:5, 6). He can now be led by the Spirit of God. There is a new mind abiding in his inward parts, providing the power to walk after the Spirit rather than the flesh (Romans 8:1).

As the believer yields himself to obey the mind of the Spirit, he is actively involved in "put[ting] on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). This means that God is actually present and active in his mind. God is writing His laws, His ways, in the mind and heart of the believer.

The spiritual mind and the power to become a new creation were made possible when God sent His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 31 (Acts 2:1-4). On the very feast day that the law was given, God sent His Holy Spirit to correct the fault of the people, who did not keep the terms of the covenant (Hebrews 8:8).

Under the old covenant, Pentecost (also called the Festival of Weeks) marked the harvest of the firstfruits (Leviticus 23:20). On Pentecost, the priest waved the bread of the firstfruits from the early wheat harvest.

On Pentecost, A.D. 31, God began to call out the firstfruits of the new Israel—the Israel of God (Acts 2:39; Galatians 6:16; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4).

Pentecost parallels the doctrine of the laying on of hands (Hebrews 6:2). The new convert receives the Holy Spirit of sonship by the laying on of hands. The Samaritans who repented and were baptized by Philip received the Holy Spirit when Peter and John came down to Samaria and laid hands on them (Acts 8:14-18). Through this ceremony God demonstrates through whom He is working.

Simon the sorcerer desired this gift of the Spirit but refused God's conditions for receiving it (Acts 8:18-23).

The meaning of the Feast of Pentecost is lived every day in the life of the believer. The inward man is to be renewed daily through God's Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:16). God gives His Spirit to those who ask for it, to those who eat and drink of His

Word and to those who obey Him (Luke 11:13; John 6:63; Acts 5:32).

Feast of Trumpets

In ancient Israel, trumpets were blown to assemble the congregation when it went to war, on feast days and on other special occasions (Numbers 10:1-10). The blowing of trumpets could signal a time of alarm or a time of joy and rejoicing. The Feast of Trumpets marked the beginning of the great fall harvest in ancient Israel, a commanded time of rejoicing and thanksgiving before God.

In the New Testament, the sounding of trumpets marks a time of great contrasts. On the one hand, the trumpet plagues are poured out on the unrepentant inhabitants of the earth (Revelation 8:6-9:21). And on the other hand, the sounding of the trumpet marks the completion of the mystery of God (Revelation 10:7).

Paul explains the mystery: "Behold, I tell 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 trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51, 52).

So the sounding of trumpets in the New Testament parallels that of the Old Testament. Trumpets may be a time of great travail or a time of great victory. The resurrection from the dead is the greatest victory of all victories for humankind (1 Corinthians 15:54-58). The resurrection will indeed be full of glory and a time of unspeakable joy.

The first resurrection marks the harvest of the firstfruits that have been called out since A.D. 31. It will be the greatest turning point in human history. "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Revelation 11:15).

The Feast of Trumpets parallels the doctrine of resurrection in Hebrews 6:2. Believers who have been crucified with Christ in the watery grave of baptism are raised to newness of life to serve God in the newness of the Spirit (Romans 6:3-6). This means that

Christians are to live a new life, a "resurrected" life, by yielding themselves to God as servants of righteousness (Romans 6:13).

The "resurrected" Christian can call on God in this time of travail, and God will deliver. God delights in your reliance upon Him as you live the new life of resurrection (Psalm 50:14, 15).

Day of Atonement

On the Day of Atonement, the Israelites were commanded to afflict their souls by fasting. "From evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath" (Leviticus 23:32). The casual reader may think it paradoxical for God to command a Sabbath fast and at the same time call it a celebration. The solemn significance of this day truly called for a celebration.

This was the day that the high priest put on special garments and went into the Holy of Holies in the very presence of God to offer blood to atone for his sins and the sins of the people, and to cleanse the sanctuary. The sanctuary had not sinned, but the sins of the nation had been placed on the altar during the year. Therefore it, too, had to be cleansed.

Jesus Christ entered into the Holy Place in heaven, in the presence of God, to provide a new and living way for each believer to enter into the holiest of all through His blood (Hebrews 9:23-24; 10:18-21).

The blood that was sprinkled on the altar in the Holy of Holies of the earthly sanctuary was the blood of a goat that had been selected by the casting of lots (Leviticus 16:6-10). The other goat was called the scapegoat (Hebrew *Azazel*: the "goat of separation"), signifying entire removal.

Some commentators believe that Azazel means the "great demon" or "Satan." They continue to debate who or what the Azazel goat represents. It is obvious that the blood of the goat that was sprinkled on the altar in the Holy of Holies represents the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:10).

In some ways, it seems that both Passover and the Day of Atonement point to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the same way. And, in some ways, they are the same. That is, the sins of humanity can be passed over through

faith in the blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25).

The Day of Atonement adds a new dimension. Not only have we been redeemed by the blood of Christ, we have a High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us. Moreover, we can live in the Holy of Holies, in the presence of God. Thus we are able to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

In view of our position in the Holy of Holies before the throne of God, let us return to the significance of the Azazel goat. It is clear from the Scriptures that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, it is not possible that the Azazel goat could have anything to do with the remission of sins.

The Levitical high priest took the blood of the goat (which represented the blood of Christ) into the Holy of Holies. Then he was to come back out and "lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, [and] confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel." Then, putting the sins of Israel on the head of the goat, he sent the goat "away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:21, 22).

Placing sin on the head of the goat represents responsibility. We commonly say "your sins are on your head." Satan is the author and father of sin and death. The individual believer can have his sins atoned for through the blood of Christ, but that does not expiate the accountability of the being who is responsible for the way of sin and death. The Azazel goat was taken into an uninhabited land and let go. That is, he was taken to a place that prevented him from having any contact or influence upon the people.

In like manner, Satan and his demons will be banished to a place that will prevent them from influencing mankind (Revelation 20:1-3).

We have been given the power through Jesus Christ to cast Satan out of our lives now. As John wrote, "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Paul wrote, "If God is for us, who can be against us? . . . We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:31, 37).

"And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly . . ." (Romans 16:20).

Christians should continually celebrate the significance of the Day of Atonement. We rejoice in its importance

in bringing peace and rest to the entire creation and our reconciliation to God made possible through Christ's sacrifice.

Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles (Hebrew *succah*: "hut" of woven boughs) was observed by Israel after the fall harvest. The Israelites were commanded to leave their houses and build temporary

dwelling places (booths) to live in as they rejoiced before the Eternal.

Because the feast was held after the great fall harvest, it was also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16). The Feast of Tabernacles was the most meaningful of all the feasts in that it reminded them of Passover and how they dwelt in booths after God brought them out of Egypt.

Feast Days: God's or Man's?

MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT familiar with God's festivals and Holy Days as given in the Bible, but Leviticus 23 lists and discusses all of them.

In verses 1 through 4 of Leviticus 23, God states in no uncertain terms that these days are *His* feast days and that they are holy convocations.

In Nehemiah 8:9 Nehemiah, inspired by God, states strongly that these feast days are "holy to the LORD your God."

In 1 Corinthians 5:8 the apostle Paul tells us directly that we are to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is one of God's feasts.

Kept in New Testament

Why do most people keep the holiday seasons they keep instead of those listed in the Bible? Luke 2:42 and John 7:10, 11 and 37-39 are only a few of many places where the Gospel writers spoke of Christ's observance of the biblical festivals.

A study of the New Testament also reveals that the early Church observed these days. Acts 2:1 and 1 Corinthians 5:8 show the original Christians keeping these days. The apostle Paul also kept them (Acts 18:21; 20:16).

A cursory study into secular history demonstrates the same thing. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (13th edition), under the article "Festivals" states that it is "abundantly clear that Christ and His disciples observed the appointed Jewish feasts . . . Jewish Christians for the most part retained all the festivals which had been instituted under the old dispensation . . ."

The festivals, including the Sabbath, will be kept when Jesus Christ returns and begins to establish the kingdom of God.

This is made clear in Isaiah 66:23: "And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD."

In Zechariah 14:16-19, God emphatically states that the world will eventually keep the Feast of Tabernacles or face dire consequences.

Why the change?

The Scriptures are clear that God commanded observance of these days, they were kept by Jesus Christ and the New Testament Church, and they will be kept in the future in God's kingdom. So what happened? Why are they almost universally ignored? Why don't people who claim to follow Christ keep the feasts He kept, the feasts of God?

Again, history provides the answers. Notice this passage from the book *Heritage of the Past*, page 402: "Constantine, though not baptized a Christian until on his deathbed, took an active interest in the religion, presiding over the important Council of Nicea, which defined the doctrine of the Trinity. During the fourth century, under imperial protection . . . the Christian religion in spite of considerable opposition to it throughout the empire, made rapid progress, even in the rural areas where the old gods had never altogether lost their appeal. When at the end of the century (A.D. 392), Theodosius I decreed that

henceforth Christianity would be the only religion of the Roman Empire, the countryside populace had to submit at least to the forms of Christianity.

"But it would have been difficult for any observer to detect much difference. Instead of the pagan deities, Christ was enthroned; instead of a pagan shrine, a church was erected, but it was clear that these folk knew little enough of the teachings or theology of Christianity, and the festivals and ceremonies of paganism for the most part were incorporated directly into the new official religion" (Stewart C. Easton, *Heritage of the Past*, Rinehart & Company, 1955).

Sad to say, this incorporation of pagan practices has been repeated through the ages as the truth of God has been exchanged for error.

Warnings from Scripture

Paul often warns of this: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

Paul also tells us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

It is God's will that we keep His festivals instead of the practices that religious leaders have passed on to us from paganism. We must set our hearts to do those things that are pleasing to God, in spite of pressures to conform to this world.

—Dean Wilson

It was a time associated with rest, peace and prosperity. The needs of all people including the stranger, the widow, the poor and the Levite were provided for at this feast. The people were commanded to rejoice before the Eternal for seven days.

A high point of the Feast of Tabernacles occurred in the year of release in the seven-year cycle. “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing” (Deuteronomy 31:10, 11).

It was the responsibility of the Levites to teach and expound the law of God throughout the year, but in the year of release there was special emphasis placed on the law of God. This was evidently done to remind the people that God was the source of all blessings and the Author of rest and release.

The prophets Isaiah and Hosea wrote of a time in which all of God’s creation will be at rest and peace. The nations will beat their swords into plowshares, and even the enmity between man and beast will be removed. “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

All of the types of Israel’s keeping the Feast are contained in these prophecies for the future kingdom of God. In that day the nations shall go up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and they shall be taught the ways of God. The peoples of all nations will learn the way of love, joy and peace in God’s kingdom (Zechariah 14:16-19; Isaiah 2:2-5).

The resurrected saints will be made priests of God and Christ, and they will rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6). Thus the Feast of Tabernacles pictures the rule and reign of the saints in the kingdom of God.

Judgment is now on the house of God. The saints are being prepared to become kings and priests in the kingdom of God. In that thousand-year period, the saints and converted

humans will help bring all nations into a relationship with God, Christ and each member of the family of God. It will be a time of judgment for all the world. The Feast of Tabernacles parallels the doctrine of judgment (Hebrews 6:2). This judgment is not to be construed as a final sentencing, but a time for salvation.

The Feast of Tabernacles is rich in meaning for Christians today for many reasons. We who have entered into His spiritual rest in this church age are given the opportunity to preach the good news of the kingdom of God here and now. We are given the opportunity to demonstrate to the nations the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness so God may be glorified in the day of their visitation (1 Peter 2:9-12).

Last Great Day

“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink’” (John 7:37).

During the time of Christ’s ministry on earth, the Jews drew out water from the pool of Siloam and poured it on the altar every day, but on the last great day of the Feast they circled the altar seven times and poured out the waters of Siloam the last time. The waters of Siloam represented healing for the people. Jesus interrupted their ceremony and identified the Spirit of God as the source of eternal life.

The apostle Peter wrote that “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Yet countless thousands of members of the human race have died having never heard the name of Jesus Christ, much less been given the opportunity for salvation.

Is God a respecter of persons, or will all humans who have ever lived be provided with an opportunity to drink of the living waters?

The Scriptures reveal that there is a first resurrection of the firstfruits and then a second resurrection for those who were not called to salvation in this age. “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who

have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28, 29).

The prophet Ezekiel foretold a time in which God will open the graves of the dead and give them physical life (Ezekiel 37:13, 14).

For all the qualities and characteristics of God’s will and character to be fulfilled, it is incumbent upon him to allow every person who ever lived to enter the process and plan of salvation. He “desires all men to be saved” and is “not willing that any should perish” (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

The fulfillment of the Last Great Day will provide this opportunity. “But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:5). All of those who have died, cut off from the precious saving knowledge of God and the gift of His Spirit through repentance and faith in Christ, will be resurrected to physical life and given this priceless opportunity.

God calls each person at the time that is best for that person. Today is not the only day of salvation. If it is, God’s purpose and plan for humanity have been miserable failures. But, praise be unto God, this is not the only day of salvation. “I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a [not the; see Isaiah 49:8 and original manuscripts for verification] day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2, KJV).

The Last Great Day parallels the doctrine of judgment and going on to perfection (Hebrews 6:2). It will be a time in which all humans who ever lived can know God and go on to perfection. We who have been called to salvation in this age must go on to perfection now, thereby fulfilling the intent of the Last Great Day.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” Revelation 22:17). That’s the purpose and plan of God as revealed by the Holy Days. O the depth and the riches of God!

Are we thriving or just coping?

by Bonnie Greider

AFEW WEEKS AGO, MY co-workers and I were standing by the copier when one of them posed a question: "If you could have \$10 million or live forever, which would you choose?"

Without hesitation, the woman next to me replied, "That's easy. I'd take the money. Who would want to live forever?"

Amazingly, the entire group nodded in agreement.

Why has life become such a drudgery to so many of us? When did we begin thinking we could exist without really living? Can we learn how to thrive, rather than being content merely to cope with our daily lives?

Many of us adult women entered the workplace out of economic necessity. The continued press of financial needs, emotional problems of the family and stress of society exact a heavy toll on our sense of well-being.

We begin each day with a huge list of seemingly overwhelming tasks and end each day frustrated over the matters left unresolved. All too often our lives seem to be an endless trudge down a path surrounded by unfulfilled and unattainable desires.

Yet there are ways to break the daily cycle of drudgery and learn to actually enjoy life without changing the circumstances that surround us. Here are some simple methods that can help you thrive again, rather than just cope!

Go on a treasure hunt

My son had worked and saved his money to buy a pair of sunglasses. He had never really shown an interest in

sunglasses, but suddenly there was something enticing about a pair he had seen at the local corner drugstore.

The glasses were really nothing special, but he valued his prize. To him, they were a treasure. It didn't matter that they cost only \$10. In his mind they were worth a great fortune.

All too often we have lost the ability to treasure simple joys. Even a hot cup of coffee on a cold winter morning is a luxury we sometimes take for granted.

I recall an instance when life had been extremely busy and hectic, and I was frustrated and exhausted. I looked up at my youngest child, then an infant, and was greeted by the most adoring smile I had ever seen. Suddenly it struck me that there is no amount of money, no career title and no worldly treasure that can compare to the feeling of being totally and unquestionably loved and adored by this baby. I realized that I had forgotten how to appreciate the simple thrill of a baby's smile.

Appreciate accomplishments

Whenever my mother used to tell me that any job worth doing is worth doing well, I knew that I'd soon be doing a job that I didn't want to do at all. Most of our days are filled with tasks and assignments we really do not enjoy. Let's face it: life can be a drag.

But, when we take the time to step back and appreciate what we have done well, we are giving ourselves well-earned rewards. Sometimes no one else notices we accomplish a task well, but we know when we have done a good job.

I know a bright, intelligent college student who is working at a large toy store stocking shelves to pay college

expenses. Although she is capable of much more, this is the only job she's been able to find. She once told me, "When I step back and look down the aisles at the end of the day, I can tell where I have been working. All the skates, trucks and cars point the same way. All the games are lined up evenly and all the shelves are neat and tidy."

She has learned to find the joy of a job well done. She is following the principle found in Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." A neatly typed letter, a beautifully decorated cake, a spotless house—most people may not notice the job unless it is *not* done. But the joy that comes from knowing that you did a good job is a small victory in an otherwise mundane chore.

We forget to laugh

My family decided that, at the age of 43, it was time I learned to water-ski. After many unsuccessful attempts, I was becoming frustrated. But then I visualized myself as seen through the eyes of those in the boat. When I realized how funny I must look, I couldn't help laughing out loud.

Did you ever notice that children can have fun doing the most ordinary things? Laughter comes easily to children, but sometimes we take ourselves and our lives so seriously that we forget to laugh, especially at ourselves.

Taking ourselves too seriously is a big mistake. Most of the irritating, annoying events that come our way daily are already forgotten by the next day. We waste a lot of time worrying about what might happen and what has already happened. We fail to find the humor and the joy in what is happen-

ing right now. Looking for the lighter side of life can help us cope with the mundane chores of life.

When I reentered the workplace a few years ago, my new job seemed difficult at first. There were so many personal responsibilities that I had to leave undone, and other things were simply not done as well as I would have liked.

I had to get up early in the morning and dress in the dark so that I didn't disturb anyone else. The results were not always the professional look that I desired. More than once, I glanced in the rest-room mirror at work and discovered that I had two mismatched earrings on! Funny, nobody at work ever mentioned it. Still, it would annoy me that, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't seem to get all the pieces of the daily puzzle to fit.

It has been a long time now since I've worn mismatched earrings, but the pieces of life's puzzle still don't always fit where they should. Sometimes it just takes a moment to step back and look at the entire puzzle and stop concentrating so much on each little piece.

Greater goal and purpose

None of the points listed above will help much if one important point is missing. There must be a greater goal and purpose for life for each of us. Every event that occurs, every action and reaction we take, is part of the learning process. Revelation 21:1-3 tells of the time when a new kingdom will come to earth. Verse 4 tells us that "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."

The world as we know it now, with its trials, sadness and sorrow, will pass away. What remains will be beautiful and perfect. The lessons of life we learn now help determine how we will fit into this new world. Each daily activity we undertake shapes and molds us in preparation for our part in this awesome future of all mankind.

Our education can be a much more enjoyable experience if we keep our eyes fixed on the ultimate purpose of human existence.

So don't be content with merely coping. Learn how to thrive in life.

Yugoslavia

Continued from page 8

the Slovaks broke up Czechoslovakia; the Scots are increasingly demanding independence from Great Britain; Belgium may divide into two.

As more and more of these ethnic groups assert their independence, there will be an increasing need to come together again in some other form—hence the drive for a United States of Europe. Dozens of small countries carry no clout, unless they can unite under one banner.

Many times in history there have been attempts to unite Europe. The Romans succeeded 2,000 years ago, with an empire that lasted hundreds of years. After the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D., there was chaos as different tribes tried to control Rome. In 554, the Roman Emperor Justinian tried to resurrect the Roman Empire. Further attempts to unite Europe were made throughout the centuries, the most recent one by Hitler's Third Reich.

God's Word predicted all of these resurrections and show that another is still ahead. Daniel 7 and Revelation 17 are key chapters to understanding the broad sweep of history. Revelation 17 shows us that the final resurrection will lead directly into the return of Jesus Christ.

It doesn't say when, but it does show that 10 kings are going to unite under one leader, the prophesied "beast." Revelation 18 indicates that they will form a great economic superpower, and many nations will share in this materialistic system and its enormous wealth. But it will have a dark and evil foundation, for it traffics in the "bodies and souls of men" (Revelation 18:13). This sinister side will emerge once more, threatening and devouring those that will not take part in that system.

The good news is that this final union will be short-lived, as it is destined to be shattered and replaced by the Kingdom of God at Christ's return.

—Melvin Rhodes



God's Vision

Continued from page 7

daughter. His child. His family, His heirs. Read on in Romans 8:16, 17: "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ . . ." There is not, nor can there be, a greater hope or destiny.

Are you being called?

Will you act to fulfill God's vision for you? Those called now are invited to be living examples of a better way, a richer and fuller life. You are called to the joy of sharing God's vision for mankind with others, called to be trendsetters in high moral values and conduct, in physical and spiritual integrity. You are called to leadership through service, called to sonship. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

The Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, does change lives, and for the better. Christians, bought and paid for by the death and blood of Christ, have been wonderfully invited by God to join Him in His vision for mankind. In baptism, we covenant with Him and fully dedicate our lives to His purpose for us.

In Matthew 20:26-28 Jesus said, ". . . But whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

While still in this life, your opportunity is "by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Wherever you are, work every day to be the best person you can be, doing the best you can do with what you have to do with, to the glory of God.

Yes, this is your destiny, God's vision for you!

A Heart of Flesh

by Andrea West

W

We all want to be there for grieving friends. Having the heart to make the right choice—and knowing practical things to

We all want to be there for grieving friends. Having the heart to make the right choice—and knowing practical things to do—can enable us to help our friends through their darkest moments.

My husband, Roger, and I rejoiced when the announcement was made that the Ryans' baby was born. We had a young family of our own, and I was happy to help Mary with the problems she was experiencing with breast-feeding. We gladly traveled the hour-long drive through a winter storm to offer our tips on the care and feeding of a newborn. The time we spent together really bonded us with the Ryans.

Closest to death

Then, several months later, we received tragic news. The baby had contracted an illness and died. I had never experienced the loss of a family member. To that time, this was the closest I had ever been to facing death. I didn't think I could possibly attend the funeral.

How could I cope with my emotions and fear of death, especially the untimely death of an innocent child? My husband had been visiting Church members until midnight the night before, so we decided it wouldn't matter if we weren't there.

We were saddened when one of the family members told us what the Ryans had mentioned before the funeral: "We know for sure that the Wests will be at the funeral, even if no one else comes." The Ryans had an understandably hard time with their baby's death. Over time we lost contact with them.

We weren't there for the Ryans at a time when they needed us. We had

allowed our own emotions, fears and needs to get in the way of reaching out to them. But the realization that we had disappointed our friends in their time of need softened our hearts. We began to realize how important it is to be there for those who suffer loss.

Perhaps that's why the church in Kentucky we served for eight years made such an impact on us. The members there continue to set an outstanding example of heartfelt support for grieving families (James 1:27). Upon news of a death, people immediately respond with food and other physical help. What is more, they give of themselves.

The members not only set aside time to attend funerals, they often pay their respects at the funeral home as well. This sends a clear message to the grieving family: "The person we honor today was important to me, and you are too."

Kentuckians' example

Conversation customarily ranges from tears of sorrow and loss to happy remembrances of the person now taken in death. The example of our Kentucky brethren helped me realize that death is a part of life, and I learned that we can help lighten the burden of death in a small way by being there in person.

These Church members also provide for the physical needs that can seem overwhelming in a time of sorrow.

On one tragic occasion, a young child drowned. The grieving family was immediately surrounded by community and Church friends. People carried in platters of food. One friend washed clothes. Another baby-sat the

Too Deep for Tears

There is a pain too deep for tears, and there are tears too deep to cry. Somewhere, buried inside our wellspring of life, our hopes, our dreams, our courage and our very essence lie shattered, torn and crushed.

Sometimes this happens in life, and, from pains suffered before, we know that this pain too shall pass away.

Yet, ironically, it feels almost good to hurt because somewhere we've been told we deserve this; this crushed hope is all we're worth. We don't deserve happiness because we're *nothing*.

And, in a sense, of ourselves we are nothing, but God makes us *something*.

It's a thin line we walk between *nothing* and *something*. Satan, in his rage to destroy us, strips that thin line bare, and we fall crashing into a heap of nothing.

Then God, in all His magnificent glory and power, reaches down to lift us out of our nothingness. He carefully, lovingly and mercifully pieces our life back together piece by piece, brick by brick, until we are once again *something* by His hand.

It isn't easy, because as the pieces are cleaned off it hurts, and it hurts even beyond hurt. But He restores hope, and therein lies our strength.

In Psalm 27:7 and 8 (Moffatt translation) David says, "O thou Eternal, listen to my cry, be gracious to me, answer me. 'Tis my heart calling, 'Thy face do I seek.'"

Then in Psalm 28:6 and 7 he says, "Blessed be the Eternal, who has listened to my voice of pleading! The Eternal is my strength and shield, my heart has faith in Him; so I am helped, my heart exults, and I sing to his praise."

You will sing again. You will be strong again, for the mortar God uses to put us back together is the mortar of love, joy, hope and strength. Then, when your life is once again pieced together and rebuilt, you will be a fortress: a masterpiece by God.

—Mona Schurter

surviving children. Others brought paper plates, cups, towels and toilet paper.

Even children realized they could be of help. Brothers and sisters of the victim were surrounded by their friends, who hugged and comforted them.

Deeper understanding

That famous passage from Matthew's Gospel about taking care of others is all the more poignant to me now. "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'" (Matthew 25:40).

The painful experience with the Ryans taught us the importance of being there for friends at a time of loss. The shining example of our Kentucky

brethren showed us what we can do to help. Through them God has helped soften our hearts and shown us how to be there for our friends in need.

Names used in this article were changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.



Governor Samuel Ward and his Confession of Faith

by Jim Franks

While searching through records of early Rhode Island Sabbatarians, I came across a document that piqued my interest. It was dated August 6, 1769, and it was signed in an unusual manner—“Sam: Ward.” It was addressed to the “Sabbatarian Church of Christ in Westerly & Hopkinton.” The volume that contains this document refers to it as a “confession of faith.” I decided to read further in this book, which bore the title *Sam: Ward, Founding Father*.

For the Sabbatarians, this period of their history was remarkable. The Revolutionary War was on the horizon, but the church was reaching its zenith in attendance and influence. Who was this Sam Ward? What was this confession of faith all about? Samuel Ward’s story provides us with an important insight into the lives and doctrines of the Rhode Island Sabbatarians.

Samuel Ward was born in Newport, Rhode Island, May 27, 1725. He was the second son of Governor Richard Ward and a descendant of Roger Williams. Richard Ward and his wife, Mary, were both members of the Sabbatarian Church in Rhode Island.

On their grave a large flat stone honors them. Carved into the stone is a testimony of their lives stating that both were members of the Sabbatarian Church. To have included this on their grave is proof that their religious beliefs were a major part of their lives. These were the parents who gave Sam his start in life.

Samuel Ward rose to prominence in this tiny New England colony in the



The Newport Sabbatarian meeting hall where Governor Ward attended.

middle of the 18th century. He served in virtually every major office of the colony, being elected governor in May 1762. In 1765 he was reelected governor and, upon the passage of the infamous Stamp Act (a tax levied on the colonies by the British Parliament), he immediately made his opposition known. The governors of all the colonies except one took an oath to sustain and enforce this law. The one abstention was Governor Samuel Ward, who alone among his peers stood in opposition to the king of England. He refused to swear allegiance to the king or to enforce the Stamp Act.

Elected to Continental Congress

Through a system of town meetings in the fall of 1773, which Samuel Ward was instrumental in organizing, the colony of Rhode Island united in its opposition to England and its oppressive laws. As a result of these assemblies, on May 17, 1774, at a town meeting in Providence, a general congress of all the colonies was first proposed. On June 15, during a session of the General Assembly, Samuel Ward and Stephen Hopkins were elected the first delegates from any colony to the

Continental Congress, which subsequently met in Philadelphia. Governor Ward was to serve as a delegate to the Continental Congress until his death in 1776.

Samuel Ward was also selected to chair many of the meetings of the Continental Congress. His name appears on many of the offi-

cial documents from that time. He was the man who nominated George Washington to be the general of the Revolutionary Army. Governor Ward also stood alone at first in recommending that the colonies build a navy. Eventually he garnered enough support to have 13 ships built. He was the chairman when the “Resolution of Secrecy” was adopted in the spring of 1776.

His activities, however, took a great toll on his health and well-being. In October 1775, Samuel Ward wrote the following to his family back in Rhode Island:

“I am almost worn out with attention to business. I am upon a standing committee of claims, which meets every morning before Congress, and upon the secret committee which meets almost every afternoon; and these, with close attendance upon Congress, and writing many letters, make my duty very hard, and I cannot get time to ride or take other exercise. But I hope the business will not be so pressing very long” (Charles Denison and John Ward, *The Life of Gov. Samuel Ward*, Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society, 1907).

Samuel Ward’s signature is affixed to

the “Resolution of Secrecy” which preceded the Declaration of Independence. Here we also find the unusual signature *Sam: Ward*, along with those of Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams and others.

The story of Samuel Ward’s death provides a further glimpse into the unusual dedication of this man. According to Kenneth Smith in his book *Sam: Ward, Founding Father* (Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society, 1967):

“... While the Continental Congress was in session an epidemic of smallpox broke out in Philadelphia and many of the delegates to the Congress were inoculated. This was in the early days of inoculation when it meant that you had to be deathly ill for two weeks and hope that you would live. It was still the best way to avoid the smallpox, but it meant you had to resign yourself to sickness for some time.

“The other delegate from Rhode Island, Mr. Hopkins, decided to be inoculated. Ward decided that since his colleague was to be out of action he had to push through his efforts to secure a navy. So week after week he continued to postpone his inoculation, always convinced that he had so much else to do that he couldn’t do this. And on the 15th day of March in 1776 the chairman was taken ill while he was presiding over the Continental

was a beloved and dedicated patriot of that time and a Sabbatarian. Among the papers he left behind was a letter containing his confession of faith (reproduced below).

Anti-Trinitarian document

This document is remarkable. Some claim it reflected a standard formula that was used by the people of that day. Whatever it may be, a personal reflection of belief or recitation of a formula, it is significant because of its anti-Trinitarian stance. This was unusual since there were many people of that day who had embraced the idea of the Trinity. This confession of faith helps illustrate the doctrinal position of these early Sabbatarians.

We find further explanation of this in Henry Clarke’s 1811 book about the history of the Sabbatarians. Clarke was a personal friend of the Ward family and pastor of a Sabbatarian group in New York state. Notice what he says about the doctrinal beliefs of these people:

“I conclude that all believe in one God, the Father and Maker of all things, sin excepted, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, or that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and also in the Holy Ghost, as the operative power or spirit of God. But there are few if any, of this denomination, as I conceive, who believe that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are three absolute distinct per-

sons, coequal, coessential, and coeternal Gods, and yet but one God; as such an idea would be in the face of scripture, and repugnant to right reason” (Henry Clarke, *A History of the Sabbatarians or Seventh Day Baptists in America*, Seward & Williams, 1811).

The Sabbatarians had a strong history of rejecting the Trinity doctrine. When we analyze history, we see that certain beliefs resurface over time and must be readdressed. The doctrine of the Trinity appears to be one of those. In reading the history of people such as Samuel Ward, it is enlightening to glimpse into the doctrinal beliefs of those who lived more than 200 years ago.

The story of the Sabbatarians in New England during the colonial period is both fascinating and reassuring. They were people of strong belief and character. I see many similarities in our day.

Samuel Ward is but one of many during this period who was willing to state his strong belief in God’s Sabbath and rejection of other ideas such as the Trinity. I have grown to respect them for their courage and to appreciate their willingness to take a stand on matters that were controversial even in their day. We would all do well to emulate the strengths and convictions of these rather extraordinary people.

*To the Sabbatarian Church of Christ in Westerly & Hopkinton:
Being fully satisfied that Baptism is a Christian Duty I desire to be admitted to that Ordinance this Day: my Life and Conversation are well known; my religious Sentiments are That there is one God the Father of whom are all Things and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all Things, That the Universe thus created has been preserved and governed by infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness from the Beginning, That mankind having fallen into the most gross & unnatural Idolatry, Superstition and Wickedness it pleased God for their Recovery to make a Revelation of his mind & will in the holy Scriptures which (excepting the ceremonial Law and some part of the Judicial Law peculiar to the Jews) it is the Duty of all mankind to whom they are made known sincerely to believe and obey: my Sins I sincerely & heartily repent of and firmly rely upon the unbounded Goodness and Mercy of God in his only begotten Son Christ Jesus for Pardon & eternal Life: and I sincerely desire and Resolve by his Grace for the future to walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord.*

Sam: Ward August 5, 1769

Samuel Ward’s confession of faith (from Sam: Ward, Founding Father).



Congress. And on the 25th of March, ten days later, Governor Ward died of smallpox at the age of 51.”

The untimely death of Samuel Ward was a shock to the delegates. The congressmen passed a resolution that said all the delegates would attend the funeral. The sermon was delivered by the Sabbatarian minister. Governor Ward

Why would we care whether our parents trust us or not?



DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, but I can't seem to get away with anything. It's like my parents have this radar that tells them when I've done something wrong. Of course I do get away with a few things, but 8 out of 10 times I get caught. Maybe parents have a sixth sense given to them when their first child is born.

When I do something wrong, it can break trust. Broken trust takes a long time to rebuild.

Why would we care whether our parents trust us or not? Well, one reason is freedom. Most teens want to be able to go out with friends, date, talk on the phone, do things their own way. Parents are a lot more likely to give us our freedom if they trust us.

peeled off the sheets and mattress pad, and bit two tiny holes in the plastic covering. We put our mouths over the holes and sucked up water that tasted like chlorine. This was much more fun than drinking out of a glass.

Our only problem was that we couldn't close the holes up again no matter how hard we tried to squeeze the plastic. As the water slowly leaked out, I started thinking that maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all. Of course, Anne's parents found out. At first they were afraid we'd been poisoned by the chemicals. But we hadn't drunk much, and we were fine.

I didn't tell my parents when I got home. I was too ashamed that we had ruined Anne's new bed. That was a mistake. Not telling was almost as

Don't You Trust Me?

by Sarah Swenson



We all break trust in some way, even as little kids. I've done some stupid things that got me into trouble, and now I wish I'd handled them better. I remember one time when I was about 5 I was spending the night at my best friend's house. Anne's parents had just bought her a water bed, and I thought it was just the neatest thing.

After we'd gone to bed we decided we were thirsty.

Neither one of us wanted to get up and go to the kitchen, so I came up with a brilliant idea. We

bad as lying to my parents. Anne's parents ended up telling them. Then my parents made me go back and help patch it up.

I remember crying as I helped smooth the shiny silver tape over the two holes. I was so embarrassed! It all seems funny now, but at the time it was a major crisis.

It's not easy dealing with your parents when you've broken their trust. But, yes, it can be done. I'm not talking about groveling and sweet-talking them into forgiveness. I'm talking about getting them to respect you again.

How can you rebuild trust and respect? Here are some ways that work for me, points I've learned from my parents.

I find it easy to make the mistake of not telling my parents things I've done wrong, hoping they won't find out. There are lots of reasons I don't tell them:

I don't want to get into trouble.

I don't want them to be disappointed or get mad at me.

I don't want to lose their trust.

I don't think they will ever find out.

And the list goes on and on. But usually they find out somehow, and then I am in hot

Parents are a lot more likely to give us our freedom if they trust

water. Of course, even if Mom and Dad never find out, God knows. And I know.

My parents have helped me see why it might actually be in my best interest to tell them. I'm serious. Think about it. Most parents will respect you more for coming to them and telling them yourself. Doing so shows honesty, responsibility and maturity. Those are elusive qualities that parents love. If you can't tell them face-to-face, you might try writing a note.

Also, if you don't tell them yourself, that leaves you a target for gossip and hearsay. Mom and Dad might hear something you have done in a version blown way out of proportion. Wouldn't you like to give them your side of the story first?

So, when I blow it, I try to tell my parents, and I usually get into a lot less trouble than I would have otherwise.

When your parents find out about your mistakes, try not to justify your actions. This only makes things worse and proves to them you haven't learned your lesson. Then you're usually in for a lecture. This happens to me all the time, especially when it comes to getting ready in the morning.

I have to admit that I'm probably one of the slowest people to get ready. This drives my mom crazy. She can shower, dry and fix her hair, apply makeup and put on clothes in 15 or 20 minutes. She doesn't understand why I can't do the same thing. I've tried explaining (I call it explaining, not justifying) to her why I'm always late. I tell her I am not a morning person; I accidentally slept late. My hair takes longer to dry and style. I couldn't find my shoes. You know how it is. We make excuses, and they lecture.

Try agreeing with them for once. Yes, it may shock them into a heart attack, but take the risk. When they harass you about a bad habit, or find out about a mistake you made, don't talk. Listen. Say yes, ma'am, or yes, sir, once in a while, and say you're sorry. Then, if you want to tell them your reasoning, calmly say something like, "Could I explain why I . . . ?" If they say no, save it.

Four Ways to Patch Up Trust

After you goof and your parents lecture or punish you, there is something that you still need to do. You have to find ways of rebuilding their confidence in you. It's not that you have to do any one big thing; it's the little things that count.

• ACT, DON'T TALK

You could start by doing extra things to help your parents out. I know you'll moan and groan when I say this, but housework is a good place to start. Trust me, cleaning bathrooms is about my least-favorite thing to do. But when I voluntarily clean the bathroom—or if I simply don't complain and do it cheerfully when Mom asks—I think I really endear myself to her. Just making my bed in the morning is appreciated, or cleaning up after a meal. She feels it is a step toward being more responsible—one of my parents' favorite vocabulary words.

• BE OPEN AND HONEST

While you are doing the little things, don't forget big ones like honesty and being open. Most of us will probably never be able to share every detail of our lives with our parents. And, yes, sometimes we might even lie. We're only human. But we have to be super careful while trust is being built. Mom and Dad will be watching closely. If they think you are being dishonest with them in some way, it's not going to help.

My advice is to talk to them, using full sentences instead of one-word monotones. And don't try sneaking around behind their backs. If you don't know what to say, talk about your friends, love life (if you dare), school or why a movie or song is your favorite. They'll appreciate it. After a problem, I sometimes want to withdraw. But doing something with them can also be a good way to open up communication.

• SHARE VALUES

Your parents have a value system of what's right and wrong. A good value system includes the Ten Commandments, but it doesn't have to stop there. No drugs, no sex before marriage, no gambling and always putting God first are probably important values to your parents. Most likely they've been trying to instill these values in you.

But parents can't know if their values are your values unless you tell them. If you have never told them what's important to you yet, try it. I didn't realize this until I was talking to my mom one day and she was asking me these weird questions like, "So how do you feel about sex before marriage?" and "Would you ever do drugs?"

I was really surprised she asked. Didn't she know how I felt on those issues? It turns out she just needed reassurance because she was afraid my views might have changed over time. It will make your parents feel you are a lot safer if they know you are committed to doing the right thing. If you've decided to turn over a new leaf, don't keep it to yourself. Tell your parents and ask for help.

• PROVE YOURSELF

Building trust is often a slow process. As it builds up, you will need a chance to prove that you can handle yourself better now. For example, I was allowed to sleep over at friends' homes later, and I *never* tried to bite another water bed again. Show your parents you learned your lesson. A lot of times we'll beg them to give us just one more chance. But building trust requires that we determine not to make the same mistake again. As our folks let out more and more rope, we don't want to hang ourselves with it. That would put us back to square one.

I don't think anyone can have a perfect relationship with his or her mom and dad. Probably all of us have broken trust or made our parents worry at some time.

Like I said, it may take some time to rebuild trust. But, once you establish an open and honest relationship, improve communication skills and show by your actions that you are trustworthy, your parents will feel closer to you and you might even get more trust (and freedom!) than before.

Rebuilding trust doesn't happen overnight. But it *can* happen!

—Sarah Swenson

Dare to Dream!

by Darris McNeely

BACK IN COLLEGE WE OCCASIONALLY had sing-alongs for the student body. I remember well one of the songs we sang every time: "Far-Away Places." The lyrics went like this:

*These far-away places with strange sounding names, far away over the sea.
Those far away places with the strange sounding names are calling, calling me."*



I always liked that song, not just because of the wistful melody, but for the yearning emotions it evoked in me. I would listen to the names of those far-off places and wonder what they were like. Castles in Spain, mysterious China and even Siam (Thailand today) were among the many places I dreamed of seeing. Over the years I have seen many parts of the world with even stranger sounding names. Try pronouncing Zidlocovice or Castlevechio Pascoli.

My family has had the experience of cruising Alaska's magnificent Inside Passage, full of icebergs and soaring eagles. We have taken in the breathtaking vistas of the Hawaiian Islands and snorkeled in the sapphire waters of the Caribbean.

On another trip we stayed in a small family-run Swiss-chatalet hotel and woke each morning to the mighty

Making a list of our dreams is an important first step in bringing dreams to reality. Putting it down in black and white takes an idea out of the realm of the abstract into the world of the concrete and specific. It leads one closer to commitment.

Matterhorn towering above us. Some years ago, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, we even spent some time behind the iron curtain, in Czechoslovakia and East Berlin.

What experiences sound inviting to you? Exotic trips, great adventures, an interesting career? What might be on your dream list?

Several years ago a friend of mine and fellow minister delivered a sermon about dreaming. He spoke on the importance of dreaming beyond our present circumstances and picturing ourselves accomplishing things we had only dared to imagine. He showed how making a list of our dreams is an important first step in bringing dreams to reality.

Take the challenge! By forming your own list of dreams and hopes, you also map out your future.

You may wonder why it would be important to actually write out your list. Putting it down in black and white takes an idea out of the realm of the abstract into the world of the concrete and specific. It leads one closer to a commitment.

This technique has worked for many others, and it can work for you.

Find a quiet place to think about what you would like to achieve in your life. Take the time to discuss your goals with your parents. Then record your dreams and put your chart where you can refer to it often. It will remind you of your dreams and prod you to action.

In *The Good News* we want to challenge you to seek the truth and always aim high in your life expectations. We have provided here a chart you can use as an example to list your dreams: travel, finances, education, spiritual, possessions, family and adventure. Start dreaming today!

"One man with a dream . . . shall go forth and conquer a crown."

Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy

How to get more information

Your spiritual nourishment is important to us, and we're ready to help you in any way possible, from simple informational needs to personal ministerial counsel. Here's how to learn more:

Local Congregations

The United Church of God has almost 200 congregations and 300 ministers in virtually all states and many international areas. For locations and times of services in your area, write or call the addresses listed below or dial our fax-back service. Visitors are always welcome.

Printed Publications

Two exciting publications are now available to you free of charge: *New Beginnings*, which is the newsletter of the United Church of God, and *The Good News*, the bi-monthly, full-color magazine you are now holding in your hands. For your free subscriptions write to the address nearest you.



Fax-back Service

Using an ordinary fax machine, you can dial (317) 526-2036 (effective October 18, 1995, it will be [317] 839-5002) and get instant information on a wide range of topics,



from doctrine to discounts on festival travel. A complete menu of choices guides you through how to receive by fax items such as the location of ministers and congregations near you, current and back issues of *New Beginnings*, Bible study and sermon summaries, news releases, details on our audio- and videotape service, and more. Simply lift the handset on your fax machine, dial the number and follow the voice instructions.

World Wide Web Page

Use your home computer to access the United Church of God home page on the World Wide Web portion of the Internet. The address <http://www.ucg.org/> gives you access to general information and current news about the Church,



automatic E-mail forms for contacting the home office, issues of the *New Beginnings* newsletter, church locations and ministers, festival information, facts about our computer bulletin board, and more.

Audiotapes and Videotapes

If you have no nearby congregational tape library to draw from, you may have sermon and Bible study tapes mailed directly to you at no cost. Simply mail your request to the home office.

Addresses

United Church of God
an International Association
P.O. Box 661780
Arcadia, CA 91066-1780 U.S.A.
Phone: (818) 294-0800
Fax: (818) 294-0808

International addresses:

Australia:
United Church of God—
Australia P.O. Box 929 Beenleigh, Qld.
4207 Australia Phone: 0755 35 6030
Fax: 0755 35 6106

Bahamas:
United Church of God
P.O. Box N8873 Nassau Bahamas
Phone: (809) 324-3169
Fax: (809) 364-5566

Canada:
United Church of God
an International Association
9251-8 Yonge St., #303
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 9T3 Canada

South Africa:
United Church of God
P.O. Box 4345 Randburg 2125 South
Africa Phone and fax: 011 792-4601

Spanish-speaking areas:
United Church of God P.O. Box 458 Big
Sandy, TX 75755 U.S.A.
Phone: (903) 636-4928

United Kingdom:
United Church of God (U.K.)
188 First St. New Greenham Park
Thatcham, Berks. RG19 6HW
United Kingdom Phone: 0115 944-4973

United Church of God