

September 8, 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

On the 21st of this month we will be keeping the Feast of Trumpets as we again begin the autumnal round of Holy Days. How many of us who were called, almost a lifetime away in the 1960's and 1970's, would have thought that we would still be in the flesh, keeping these days many decades into the future?

I recall that I kept my first Feast of Trumpets in 1973 and this will be my 45th time of celebrating these pivotal days. Little did I know then that the majority of those whom I joined in the worship of God on days that were new to me, and many others, would soon disappear from view. I recall a young family that we met at our first Feast of Tabernacles at a holiday camp with around 4,000 people in attendance who seemed dedicated but I don't ever recall seeing them again, and they were from our local congregation. With so many other members who had been around for a few years, and new members coming into the Church at that time, I had many other things on my mind and didn't really take too much notice about not seeing a fleeting acquaintance again. It was only later that these things came to mind and, particularly, when the Church went through the traumas of the mid 1990's when the new leaders kidnapped a Commandment-keeping and Law-abiding Church of God, which was faithful to the true doctrine, and tricked many of its members to embrace a familiar track of "worldly Christianity".

It was when these things happened that a number of Scriptures came to life. Amongst these was 2 Peter 2:21-22: "For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'" I recall mentioning this to someone at headquarters at that time in correspondence, and he was offended that this "new truth" to them (which was nothing but old error) could be so described.

We have read many times the verse: "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12), and it has been a great disappointment to know that we have seen this verse played out in the lives of many who once embraced the Truth of God, but are no longer with us. The following verse gives us the answer that we must all hold on to: "But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Where will all of those many tens of thousands be who were once part of the Church of God, when faithful Christians celebrate Thursday 21st September for the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement (30th September), the Feast of Tabernacles (Thursday 5th October to the 11th October) and the Last Great Day (12th October)? How many of them who may still be alive even remember keeping these days? For many, it may well more likely be a time of preparation for Halloween and Christmas as they trample the Sabbath and annual Holy Days underfoot. Surely, our prayers should be that they would see the world for what it is—a cesspit of immorality where the rights of those practicing perversion hold sway, legally, in many countries over the explicit condemnation of such practices in the Word of God. Mention the Bible and you could be in trouble!

If we listen to some politicians and leaders in many nations, we could be forgiven for thinking that the society we have to endure as the people of God, is almost an utopian environment with many wonderful inventions and incredible accomplishments that have undoubtedly been achieved. What

they simply don't understand is that it is all underpinned by a godless attitude and a dismissal of the great blessings that God has given us all.

The threat of world war looms and the tribalism in the Middle East continues unabated with all of the human casualties that this brings. The recent stand-off between North Korea and the USA is but one area where serious problems could escalate at any time. We regularly read about wars and revolutions, displacement of individuals through civil wars and unrest, drought, hunger, earthquakes, hurricanes, robberies, murders and the regular terrorist activities that now take many different forms, and in many different countries. Mankind has been, and is, a serial offender in breaking the commandments of God, and that is why the terrible events of the coming Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord are such a necessity to grab the attention of a God-ignoring world. Nothing less will do.

In the book of Revelation we read an example of antagonism towards God: "And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds" (Revelation 16:9-11). This just shows why the upcoming time of trouble, "such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time" (see Daniel 12:1), will be necessary to concentrate people's minds, but even then, there will still be those who will harden their hearts towards their loving Creator.

Our minds must remain focussed on the Way of God at all times, never compromising, because that can be the start of a very slippery road, and we must heed this advice: "... be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:10).

Whilst we must take the apostle Paul's advice to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (see Philippians 2:12), let us never forget those who let down on their calling and who, at this time, will not be keeping God's autumnal Feasts days. It is a worthy matter to pray to God that He may grant them repentance and that they will thankfully accept God's great gift and return to the knowledge of the Truth.

As we keep the Feast days of God faithfully, let us hope and pray that others will see the error of their ways and return to the Truth that they once embraced and, again, be a part of God's true Church. Maybe only the upcoming troubles at the end of this age will concentrate their minds as they once again understand where their eternal future lies. Prayer can accomplish much!

With Christian love.



Brian Gale
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