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A Newsletter for the People of God
August 28, 2021 --- Issue No. 30

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Publisher: Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors, or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens Iron

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Articles

Endure to the End by Wayne Schatzle (West Chester, Ohio)

Like everyone else I enjoy the beautiful autumn leaves as they turn colors. People flock to the mountains to witness the sometime breathtaking event each year. What I have come to appreciate more than the autumn leaves is the late winter leaves. Why is that you ask? For some reason after a long winter of icy cold and forceful winds a very few leaves manage to hang on the trees. They are dry and shriveled, yet still clinging to their life source. Why do I like seeing them? Nature teaches us many lessons and, in this case, inspires the observer that it is possible to hold on to the end regardless of the conditions.

Jesus taught many times of the importance of enduring to the end, in fact it is only those who endure to the end the will be saved {Mt 10:22}. To the seven churches of Asia, each church was promised a reward only if they overcame their adversity {Rv 2&3}. A familiar story of Jacob receiving a blessing from God was a result of him hanging on all night during a wrestling match, in fact God was so impressed that He changed his name to Israel {prevailed with God} {Gen 32:28}.

The letter to the Hebrews lists many notables from Biblical history that impressed God by their determination to follow at all costs. Many were not even named, yet says: "...others were tortured, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, slain and wandered about in animal skins, of whom the world is not worthy" {Heb 11}. Truly the way to salvation is a narrow, hard way to travel {Lk 13: 24}. Why would God not protect His people from such hardship? First Peter One reveals that trials test the faith of the saints. Adversity builds character more than material blessings ever could. In fact, Jesus made it clear that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God {Mt 19}. Jesus had offered a discipleship to a wealthy man- and he passed on it because of his riches {Mt 19:22}. In spite of the clear warnings- many professing Christians still hope for wealth in a lottery or other get-rich schemes.

Why have modern churches not understood the concept that true followers of Jesus Christ will suffer in this life? Too many churches preach a health and wealth reward system and with little changes in living to those who accept Christ. While salvation is a simple acceptance of Jesus Christ for salvation, it is the step in a new direction, a direction that will be perilous at times and will require major life changes. The way of God is not the way of this world. As the world hated Jesus it will also hate those that follow Him {Jn 15:18}. Contrary to popular belief, Jesus is called the Prince of Peace, yet He says: "Think not that I came to bring peace on earth. I bring a sword, and a man's foes will be those of his own household" {Mt 10:34}. God's rewards are in heaven- not here, and He is not worried about our comfort {Mt 5:12}.

We need to be standing firmly on the Rock so we will endure the storms of life {Lk 6:48}, and realize that Satan is enraged with God's people, those that keep the commandments and the testimony of Christ {Rv 12:17}. We are in the last age of the church, a church described in Revelation as the lukewarm church, neither cold nor hot for the Faith. The question is still burning, "when the Son of Man returns, will he find Faith on earth?" {Lk 18:8}. "For you have need of endurance, so after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise {Heb 10:36}.

Books and Ledgers by David Antion (Pasadena, California)

Record keeping is a natural human function. People buy diaries, picture albums, and ledgers. Today people use such things as Facebook, QuickBooks, and Excel to help them remember and to keep records. Most cities have a Hall of Records containing property records, marriage licenses, death records and divorce records.

If you and I keep a record of our lives -- the trips, vacations, and special events, does God keep records too?

The Bible contains lists of genealogies and records of tribes and families. We read in Psalm 56:8, "You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?" It's as though God keeps a record on individuals. No wonder Jesus said that the very hairs of your head are numbered.

Through the prophet Malachi God speaks of a "book of remembrance" of those who feared The Eternal (Malachi 3:16).

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Several Old Testament passages refer to a book or record that God keeps. As early as the time of Moses there was a reference to the "book of life." Speaking with God, Moses said if God would not forgive Israel, then "lock me out of your book which you have written" (Exodus 32:32).

In one of the cursing psalms David was so angry that he wanted God to blot out his enemies from the book of life (Psalm 69:28). The prophet Daniel wrote about a time of terrible distress on God's people but wrote that "everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued" (Daniel 12:1).

The most numerous uses of the phrase "book of life" are from the New Testament where all but one appears in the book of Revelation. The one reference outside the Book of Revelation is in the book of Philippians where Paul wrote about his fellow workers "whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). To the church at Sardis Jesus wrote that he who overcomes will be clothed in white garments "and I will not erase his name from the book of life" (Revelation 3:5).

The Bible talks about a time of great deception where people will receive the mark of the beast and will worship the beast "everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the lamb who has been slain" (Revelation 13:8; 17:8-9).

After Jesus had sent His disciples out to heal, cast out demons and preach the good news, they returned rejoicing that diseases and demons were subject to them when they used Jesus' name. But Jesus told them not to rejoice that the demons were subject to them in His name but to rejoice in this: "that your names are recorded in heaven" (Luke 10:17-21).

At the end of the great white throne judgment, we read that there are "books" and also "the book of life." It says, "If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:12 -15). It is most important to have your name written in God's book of life and never to have it blotted out!

You and I have our names in the Book of Life now. Let's be sure our names stay there.

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What is the True Gospel?

by Bill Glover (Eugene, Oregon)

Exactly what is the gospel of Jesus Christ? What did He actually teach? Why are there so many different Christian denominations all teaching different *gospels* about Jesus?

We first need to understand the meaning of the word ***gospel***. The literal meaning of the word "gospel" is ***GOOD TIDINGS*** or ***GOOD NEWS*** or ***GLAD TIDINGS***. The English word comes from the Old English expression "good tidings" or "glad tidings."

Mark 1:14-15 [in the King James translation] states: "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe *the gospel*.'" Here we find that there is a specific ***gospel of Jesus Christ*** with a ***specific*** message. But what is that ***gospel*** [this good news] and what is the ***message*** that Jesus preached?

Do you know what that gospel is? Are you sure? Let us see if you do! To evaluate this, let us first evaluate what Mark 1:14-15 actually says. First note the time setting. It was *after* John (the Baptist) was put in prison (John's work had been finished). Where did Jesus begin preaching the gospel? It was in Galilee. What then did Jesus preach? It was ***the gospel***. These are all key words in understanding this subject.

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Let us pause long enough here to note that there are two themes (or messages) mentioned in this passage. The first message is to REPENT and the second is to BELIEVE. These two points provoke two specific questions. One is to "Repent of *WHAT?*" and the other is to "Believe *WHAT?*" Later in this article we will fully understand what we are to repent of and why. But we find here that we are to "BELIEVE THE GOSPEL" - - **BELIEVE THIS GOOD NEWS**. But, once again, WHAT IS THE GOSPEL (the good news) JESUS PREACHED that we are to believe? What is the good news?

Several years ago, while attending Worldwide I selected 14 leading church members (7 married couples) and asked them to join me in a Bible study. This endeavor came about when some members began to claim that "Worldwide no longer has a gospel." What I wanted to learn was if these people actually knew what the ***gospel*** of Jesus Christ really is. I even drafted an outline for the Bible study covering most of the scriptures related in this subject. I gave each of these seven couples a copy of this outline at least two weeks before the actual study and assigned different sections to each couple. Even though they were given two weeks to study the subject based on the scriptures given, during the actual Bible study it became apparent they actually did not know what the gospel of Jesus Christ is. That is why I ask you at the outset of this article if you know what the gospel is and if you are sure of your answer. Members of most Christian churches do not know what Jesus actually taught.

Before going further let me relate another experience so as to illustrate the point this article will make. Back in 1974 a leading evangelist in Worldwide decided to split from the church and form his own church. One of the main points of contention he voiced was regarding the change from Monday to Sunday for observing the Feast of Pentecost. This evangelist was a relative and in a discussion my wife and I had with him and his wife, his wife suddenly blurted out "But we were NOT baptized to a Sunday Pentecost!" I immediately responded "We (my wife and I) were BAPTIZED TO JESUS CHRIST WHEREVER THAT LEADS!" We were not baptized to any "doctrine" but to ***Jesus Christ, Himself***.

Are you beginning to understand what I am asking? To this relative and her husband, the "gospel" they believed in was a Monday Pentecost. Obviously, it also included the weekly Sabbath, the annual Holy Days and numerous other "DOCTRINES." And with most denominational churches "Jesus' gospel" [as they see it] is the DOCTRINES and PRACTICES ***of that particular church*** even if those doctrines and customs are contrary to or not supported by the Bible.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Why don't we go back and read Mark 1:14-15 again and see what it does NOT say. It does not say that Jesus came preaching "A Monday (or Sunday) Pentecost!" It does not say He came preaching the weekly or annual Sabbaths OR A Sunday Sabbath, for that matter. Please do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not teaching against obedience to God through His laws. What I am doing is laying the foundation for the correct understanding of what the gospel of Jesus Christ really is. As for "obedience" to the laws of God let us consider the following.

In Matthew 19:17 Jesus Christ plainly preached "***IF YOU WOULD ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.***" These are the clear words of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul [whom many claim did away with obedience to the law] clearly said the following in Romans 3. Verse 31 states clearly "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the CONTRARY, we ESTABLISH the law!" Then verse 20 reads: "Therefore, by the deeds of the law (by merely obeying the law) NO FLESH WILL BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT, for ***BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN!***" And as verse 28 states, "Therefore we conclude that a man is JUSTIFIED BY FAITH APART FROM THE DEEDS OF THE LAW!" And as Romans 7:1 states The LAW of God has DOMINION over humans so long as they live. Thus, humans are OBLIGATED to OBEY GOD THROUGH HIS LAWS for as long as they live - - so says the Bible!

Then as Romans 4:1-4 states: "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to faith? For if Abraham was justified BY WORKS, he has something of which to boast, BUT NOT BEFORE GOD. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham BELIEVED God and it [that BELIEF] was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as a debt." Abraham clearly did NOT ***earn*** his salvation through human endeavor but by the grace of God. Abraham could NOT pay for his own sins - - Christ had to do that through His blood. You cannot pay for your own sins - - Christ must do that for you! You then must demonstrate YOUR FAITH IN GOD by your personal acceptance of that sacrifice that was made for you.

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Paul also pointed out other most important factors in the book of Romans. In Romans 3:23 we find that ALL HUMANS HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD. 1 John 3:4 states emphatically that he who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness and that SIN IS THE BREAKING OF THE LAW OF GOD. And in Romans 6:23 we find that the wages (penalty) for these sins is DEATH - - cessation from life. And, as we have already seen, we use the law to determine what sin is (Romans 3:20). Paul further explained in Romans 7:7 that he would not have known what sin is EXCEPT FOR THE LAW. He also states (under inspiration from God) that the LAW IS HOLY, JUST AND GOOD (Romans 7:12). He also said in Romans 7:25 "with the mind I SERVE THE LAW OF GOD but with the flesh the law of sin" [the law of sinful human nature every human has].

Abraham did not "earn" the right to be the father of the faithful by his works, as these passages show. Abraham obeyed God, as we clearly find in James 2:19-26. However, it was his BELIEF and TRUST in God that God used to grant him righteousness [meaning being right with God]. The clinching scripture regarding whether we are to keep God's commandments is 1 John 2:3-4 which read:" Now by this we know we know Him, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. He who says 'I know Him' [professing to be a Christian] and does NOT keep His commandments IS A LIAR AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN HIM!" If anyone claims to "know" Christ and claims to be a follower of Christ and yet refuses to obey the commandments of God, God says such a person is a liar! These are the words of God - - NOT something I made up!

Clearly then God EXPECTS obedience from His people. But such "obedience" is NOT what God uses to accord righteousness to us. God Himself shows which humans He will hear and answer in Isaiah 66:2. Only those who have a poor and contrite [repentant] heart and those who TREMBLE at His word will be heard by God.

Let us return to the subject of the gospel of Jesus. Does Mark 1:14-15 say Jesus came preaching "the Ten Commandments?" or "the holy days? Or the Sabbath or any point of the law? Does it say He came preaching "Sunday observance, Christmas and Easter observances, and Halloween?" No, it shows He came preaching THE GOSPEL. Then He said we are to REPENT and BELIEVE His **MESSAGE**. The question is "WHAT WAS THAT MESSAGE THAT JESUS PREACHED that we are to believe?" **To be continued in Issue #31**

A Blast from the Past

The Christian Sabbath

by Catholic Mirror 1893 (Baltimore, Maryland)

Continued from Issue #29

CATHOLIC MIRROR--BALTIMORE, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1893

(From page 8 of the *Catholic Mirror* of Sept. 16, 1893)

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH

THE GENUINE OFFSPRING OF THE UNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HIS SPOUSE. THE CLAIMS OF PROTESTANTISM TO ANY PART THEREIN PROVED TO BE GROUNDLESS, SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY, AND SUICIDAL

When his Satanic Majesty, who was "a murderer from the beginning," "and the father of lies," undertook to open the eyes of our first mother, Eve, by stimulating her ambition, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," his action was but the first of many plausible and successful efforts employed later, in the seduction of millions of her children. Like Eve, they learn too late, alas the value of the inducements held out to allure her weak children from allegiance to God. Nor does the subject matter of this discussion form an exception to the usual tactics of his sable majesty.

Over three centuries since, he plausibly represented to a large number of discontented and ambitious Christians the bright prospect of the successful inauguration of a "new departure," by the abandonment of the Church instituted by the Son of God, as their teacher, and the assumption of a new teacher- *the Bible alone* - as their newly fledged oracle.

The sagacity of the evil one foresaw but the brilliant success of this maneuver. Nor did the result fall short of his most sanguine expectations.

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A bold and adventurous spirit was alone needed to head the expedition. Him his satanic majesty soon found in the apostate monk, **Luther**, who himself repeatedly testifies to the close familiarity that existed between his master and himself, in his "Table talk," and other works published in 1558, at Wittenberg, under the inspection of **Melancthon**. His colloquies with Satan on various occasions, are testified to by **Luther** himself - a witness worthy of all credibility. What the agency of the serpent tended so effectually to achieve in the garden, the agency of **Luther** achieved in the Christian world. (Of course, we have not the least sympathy with what is here said about **Luther**. Only the **Lutherans** think that **Luther** had all the truth, but his was nevertheless a grand work. He was a Christian hero. Had his work only been continued as it began, papists would not now be taunting **Protestants** with the inconsistency of professing to accept the Bible alone and then following the traditions of the **Catholic Church**.)

"Give them a pilot to their wandering fleet, Bold in his art, and tutored to deceit; Whose hand adventurous shall their helm misguide To hostile shores, or 'whelm them in the tide."

As the end proposed to himself by the evil one in his raid on the church of Christ was the destruction of Christianity, we are now engaged in sifting the means adopted by him to insure his success therein. So far, they have been found to be misleading, self-contradictory, and fallacious. We will now proceed with the further investigations of this imposture.

Having proved to a demonstration that the Redeemer, *in no instance*, had, during the period of His life, deviated from the faithful observance of the Sabbath (Saturday), referred to by the four evangelists fifty-one times, although He had designated Himself "Lord of the Sabbath," He never having *once*, by command or practice, hinted at a desire on His part to change the day by the substitution of another and having called special attention to the conduct of the apostles and the holy women, the very evening of His death, securing beforehand spices and ointments to be used in embalming His body the morning after the Sabbath (Saturday), as St. Luke so clearly informs us (Luke 24 Ch. 1 v.), thereby placing beyond peradventure, the divine action and will of the Son of God during life by keeping the Sabbath steadfastly; and having called attention to the action of His living representatives after his death, as proved by St. Luke; having also placed before our readers *the indisputable fact* that the apostles for the following thirty years (Acts) never deviated from the practice of their divine Master in this particular, as St. Luke (Acts 18 Ch., 4v.) assures us: "And he (Paul) reasoned in the synagogues *every Sabbath* (Saturday) and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." The Gentile converts were, as we see from the text, equally instructed with the Jews, to keep the Saturday, having been converted to Christianity on that day, "the Jews and the Greeks" collectively.

Having also called attention to the texts of the Acts bearing on the exclusive use of the Sabbath by the Jews and Christians for thirty years after the death of the Saviour as the *only* day of the week observed by Christ and His apostles, which period *exhausts the inspired record*, we now proceed to supplement our proofs that the Sabbath (Saturday) enjoyed this exclusive privilege, by calling attention to *every instance* wherein the sacred record refers to the first day of the week.

The *first* reference to Sunday after the resurrection of Christ is to be found in St. Luke's Gospel, 24 Ch., from 33 to 40 vs., and in St. John's 20 Ch., 19 v.

The above texts themselves refer to the sole motive of this gathering on the part of the apostles. It took place on the day of the resurrection (Easter Sunday), not for the purpose of inaugurating "the new departure" from the old Sabbath (Saturday) by keeping "holy" the new day, for there is not a hint given of prayer, exhortation, or the reading of the Scriptures, but it indicates the utter demoralization of the apostles by informing mankind that they were huddled together in that room in Jerusalem *for fear of the Jews*, as St. John, quoted above, plainly informs us.

The second reference to Sunday is to be found in St. John's Gospel, 20th chapter, 26th to 29th verses: And after eight days, the disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. "The resurrected Redeemer availed Himself of this meeting of all the apostles to confound the incredulity of Thomas, who had been absent from the gathering on Easter Sunday evening. This would have furnished a golden opportunity to the Redeemer to change the day in the presence of all His apostles, but we state the simple fact that, on this occasion, as on Easter day, not a word is said of prayer, praise, or reading of the Scriptures. The third instance on record, wherein the apostles were assembled on Sunday, is to be found in Acts, 2d chapter, 1st verse: "The apostles were all of one accord in one place." (Feast of Pentecost - Sunday.) Now, will this text afford to our Biblical Christian brethren a vestige of hope that Sunday substitutes, at length, Saturday? For when we inform them that the Jews had been keeping *this Sunday* for 1500 years and have been keeping it for eighteen centuries after the establishment of Christianity, at the same time keeping the weekly Sabbath, there is not to be found either consolation or comfort in this text. Pentecost is the fiftieth day after the Passover, (The Passover was always the fourteenth day of the first month, without any reference whatever to any particular day of the week, and therefore it was impossible that the Pentecost should always be "necessarily Sunday," as stated. This note is inserted merely in the interests of accuracy, and not with the intention that it should have any bearing on the controversy in the text.) which was called the Sabbath of weeks, consisting of seven times seven days; and the day after the completion of the seventh

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weekly Sabbath day, was the chief day of the entire festival, necessarily Sunday. What **Israelite** would not pity the cause that would seek to discover the origin of the keeping of the first day of the week in his festival of Pentecost, that has been kept by him yearly for over 3,000 years? Who but the Biblical Christian, driven to the wall for a pretext to excuse his sacrilegious desecration of the Sabbath, always kept by Christ and His apostles, would have resorted to the Jewish festival of Pentecost for his act of rebellion against his God and his teacher, the Bible?

Once more, the Biblical apologists for the change of day call our attention to the Acts, 20th chapter 6th and 7th verses: "*and upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,*" etc. To all appearances, the above text should furnish some consolation to our disgruntled Biblical friends, but being Marplot, we cannot allow them even this crumb of comfort. We reply by the axiom: "*Quod probat nimis, probat nihil*" "What proves too much, proves nothing." Let us call attention to the same Acts 2d chapter, 46th verse: "And they, continuing *daily* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house," etc. Who does not see at a glance that the text produced to prove the exclusive prerogative of Sunday, vanishes into thin air - an *ignis fatuus* - when placed in juxtaposition with the 46th verse of the same chapter? What the Biblical Christian claims by this text for *Sunday alone*, the same authority, St. Luke, informs us was *common to every day of the week*: "And they, continuing *daily* in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house."

One text more presents itself, apparently leaning toward a substitution of Sunday for Saturday. It is taken from St. Paul's 1 Ep. Cor. 16th chapter, 1st and 2d verses.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints," "On the first day of the week, let everyone of you lay by him in store," etc. Presuming that the request of St. Paul had been strictly attended to, let us call attention to what had been done each Saturday during the Saviour's life and continued for thirty years after, as the book of Acts informs us.

The followers of the Master met "*every Sabbath*" to hear the word of God; the Scriptures were read "*every Sabbath day.*" "And Paul, as his manner was to reason in the synagogue *every Sabbath*, interposing the same of the Lord Jesus Christ," etc., Acts 18th chapter 4th verse. What more absurd conclusion than to infer that reading of the Scriptures, prayer, exhortation, and preaching, which *formed the routine duties of every Saturday*, as had been abundantly proved, were overslaughed by a request to take up a collection on *another day of the week*?

In order to appreciate fully the value of this text now under consideration, it is only needful to recall the action of the apostles and holy women on Good Friday before sundown. They brought spices and ointments after He was taken down from the cross; they suspended all action until the Sabbath "holy to the Lord" had passed, and then took steps on Sunday morning to complete the process of embalming the sacred body of Jesus. Why, may we ask, did they not proceed to complete the work of embalming on Saturday? - Because they knew well that the embalming of the sacred body of their Master would interfere with the strict observance of the Sabbath, the keeping of which was paramount; and until it can be shown that the Sabbath day *immediately preceding the Sunday of our text* had not been kept (which would be false, inasmuch as *every Sabbath had been kept*), the request of St. Paul to make the collection on Sunday remains to be classified with the work of the embalming of Christ's body, which could not be effected on the Sabbath, and was consequently deferred to the next convenient day; viz., Sunday, or the first day of the week.

Having disposed of every text to be found in the New Testament referring to the Sabbath (Saturday), and to the first day of the week (Sunday); and having shown conclusively from these texts, that, so far, not a shadow of pretext can be found in the Sacred Volume for the Biblical substitution of Sunday for Saturday; it only remains for us to investigate the meaning of the expressions "Lord's Day," and "day of the Lord," to be found in the New Testament, which we propose to do in our next article, and conclude with apposite remarks on the incongruities of a system of religion which we shall have proved to be indefensible, self-contradictory, and suicidal. **To be continued in Issue #31**

(This article has been updated and re-printed from "The Church of God Messenger" January/February 2002— Issue No. 7)

Be Strong and of Good Courage

by Tommy S. West (Wake Forest, North Carolina)

Recently, I was given the honor and privilege to present a short message to a small local church group in Garner, NC -- The Sabbath Church of God -- on the important subject of courage. Yesterday, I presented it to a group in Clinton, NC -- The Clinton Church of God. Courage is an attribute that God demands of us as we trek the road of life. It is NOT limited to Christians only -- it is a universal trait and is a characteristic of every successful person. Please allow me to further explain to you in deeper detail the meaning and consequences of this valued asset.

Let us begin with a secular dictionary meaning. Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition defines

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courage as: "Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty." Some synonyms are: mettle, spirit, resolution, tenacity.

We have seen a secular definition. Now let us spend a little while on the Biblical definition of courage. There are 5 uses of the word "courage" in scripture. As we examine each of these, perhaps we can achieve a clearer understanding of what this asset means to each of us. (KJV Throughout)

The first definition: Strong's #2388, chazaq, khaw-zak; a prim. root; to fasten upon. This definition has many applications. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew And English Lexicon define courage (2388) as: "be or grow firm, strong, strengthen" Now, let's look at 2 examples.

- ❖ a. 2 Sam. 10:9-12 -- "When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians:
- ❖ V. 10 -- And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.
- ❖ V. 11 -- And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then you shall help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.
- ❖ V. 12 -- Be of good courage [emphasis mine throughout] and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."
- ❖ b. Num. 13:17-20 -- "And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:
- ❖ V. 18 -- And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;
- ❖ V.19 -- And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strongholds;
- ❖ V. 20 -- And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes."

The second definition: Strong's #7307, ruwach, roo'-ach; from 7306; wind. There is only one occurrence of this definition. It is found in Joshua 2:11 -- "And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God of heaven above, and in earth beneath."

The third definition: Strong's #3824, lebab, lay-bawb' ; from 3823; the heart (as the most interior organ). Again, there is only one application in scripture. This is found in Dan. 11:24-25. The subject here is the coming BEAST and his exploits.

- ❖ V. 24 -- "He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his father's fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.
- ❖ V. 25 -- And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him."

The fourth definition: Strong's #2294, tharsos, thar'-sos, boldness. This is the only New Testament usage of courage and it pertains to Paul. Let's look at Acts 28: 11-15.

- ❖ V. 11 -- " And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.
- ❖ V. 12 -- And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.
- ❖ V. 13 -- And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:
- ❖ V. 14 -- Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.
- ❖ V. 15 -- And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

Now we come to the fifth and last definition. I feel that this is the most important. This is Strong's #553, 'amats, aw-mats', to be alert. There are 8 uses of 'amats found in the Authorized Version, all of them in the O.T. We need to look at all 8 of these.

1. Deut. 31: 1-6

- ❖ V. 1 -- "And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel,
- ❖ V. 2 -- And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.
- ❖ V. 3 -- The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.

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- ❖ V. 4 -- And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed.
- ❖ V. 5 -- And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that you may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.
- ❖ V.6 -- Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."
2. Deut. 31:7 -- "And Moses called unto Joshua [Joshua's original name was Oshea (Num.13:16b) and meant "salvation" but was changed by Moses to Joshua which means "God is salvation"], and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it."
- 3. Josh. 1:1-7**
- ❖ V. 1 -- "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,
- ❖ V. 2 -- Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.
- ❖ V. 3 -- Every foot that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.
- ❖ V. 4 -- From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.
- ❖ V. 5 -- There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
- ❖ V. 6 -- Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.
- ❖ V. 7 -- Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."
- 4. Josh. 1:9 -- "Have not I commanded thee, Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."**
- 5. Josh. 1:18 -- "Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage."**
- 6. Josh. 10:24-25**
- ❖ V. 24 -- "And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to all the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.
- ❖ V. 25 -- And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom you fight."
It is interesting to note that Joshua is a type of Christ which is proven by Heb.4:8.
There are 2 more examples of 'amats found in the O.T. They both pertain to incidents in the life of Solomon. These are 1 Chron. 22:9, 12-13 and 1 Chron. 28:20 1 Chron. 22:9 -- "Behold a son shall be born to thee [David], who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon [peace], and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days."
- ❖ V. 12 -- "Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.
- ❖ V. 13 -- Then shalt thou prosper, thou takest heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed."
- ❖ 1 Chron.28:20 -- "And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD."
- Examples always serve to emphasize an edifying message. One only need to look at Joshua to observe a sterling example of courage. We see from Numbers Chapter 13 -- 14:10 that of the 13 spies who were sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan only two returned to give a good report. Caleb was one of these; the other was Joshua. Numbers 14:30 states that only Caleb and Joshua of the generation that left Egypt -- a multitude of over one million people -- would live to inherit Canaan. Surely, God rewards courage.
We also have the perfect and universal example of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who so courageously gave His life for all of us. (Remember that Jesus is an anglicized version of "Joshua" which means, God is Salvation.)
A more personal example of 'amats concerns my mother who lost her right leg to amputation last May. Over the past

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few years, mother, who will be 78 on April 16th, has experienced several severe health crises including open-heart surgery in 1994. As a small child I remember her story about the train that was struggling to climb a steep hill. Every chug of the engine would say, "I think I can, I think I can". Because of that positive attitude, the little train engine successfully climbed the steep hill. Mother's attitude has always exemplified courage. Even when she was told that because of poor circulation, she would lose her right leg, she courageously accepted the news. At present, her circulation problem is under control and she is learning to use a prosthesis. Her attitude is still one of courage and optimism. I am deeply gratified to know that her blood flows in my veins. I thank God for her every day.

Hopefully, this word study on the word "courage" will edify and strengthen all who study it.

A friend sent a poem to me recently that directly relates to this study. I would like to leave it with you in closing.

**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
STRENGTH AND COURAGE**

It takes strength to be firm,
It takes courage to be gentle.

It takes strength to stand guard.
It takes courage to let down your guard.

It takes strength to conquer.
It takes courage to surrender.

It takes strength to be certain.
It takes courage to have doubt.

It takes strength to fit in.
It takes courage to stand out.

It takes strength to feel a friend's pain.
It takes courage to feel your own pain.

It takes strength to hide feelings.
It takes courage to show them.

It takes strength to endure abuse.
It takes courage to stop it.

It takes strength to stand alone.
It takes courage to lean on another.

It takes strength to love.
It takes courage to be loved.

It takes strength to survive.
It takes courage to live.

-- Author Unknown

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**(This article has been updated and re-printed from "The Church of God Messenger" January/February 2002—
Issue No. 7)**

Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: Are there Still Elders in the Church?

Article by B. L. Cocherell

Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

I will start with the last first. What Christ builds never malfunctions. Christ is perfect so therefore what he builds is perfect. As I went through this article, I got the feeling that you are expecting to find a whole bunch of people in one place that are appointing people to leadership positions as the Worldwide Church of God did when they existed.

Let's look at this in a different light. There have been so many church splits over the last several years that some people no longer have anyone to meet with. Some people are in circumstances beyond their control and have been without physical contact with brethren for years.

Most people meet in home churches both today and at the time of Christ. And the way Christ is building His church is by the Gifts of His Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:27-31, Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Ephesians 4:11-16, And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Church doesn't mean large group.

Matthew 18:20 "When two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

I will give this newsletter as an example of how many scattered brethren are able to use their gifts. First of all, I originally did not start a newsletter on my own back in 2001. I wrote an article for another church newsletter and my husband Darwin came to me one day out of the blue and said I should start a newsletter. I thought to myself "large time-consuming workload" and I said "No" as in "No way". Then it bugged me for the next week or so and then I told him "Okay, I will do it". I still to this day have no idea why I changed my mind and I also have no idea how we ever printed and mailed between 300 – 500 24-page issues every 2 months using first an HP Printer that cost a fortune for ink. Then we started buying the ink in bulk and refilling the cartridges (what a mess), later I bought and figured out how to use a continuous ink system which splattered on me, the wall the carpet more than once. This was a major undertaking. We spent more of our money than we ever got from others. Eventually we couldn't afford to buy postage, so we had to start charging at least for postage and paper.

I not only had to learn how to put a newsletter together but if I wanted a decent Website, I had to learn some coding, and this turned out to be very time consuming. So then toward the end of 2009 our website was hacked to the point where it would have cost close to several hundred or more dollars to get it cleaned or we had to take it down. We had no backups and so it was all gone in two seconds as my server deleted the whole thing. I attempted for a while to get the website back up, but it never seemed to come together, and I was just at the time, overwhelmed and burned out. As humans we

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do have limitations. Perhaps it was God's way of telling me to rest. So, I rested for over a decade.

People liked that newsletter mostly because it gave everyone who participated a way to use their God given talents (their gifts of the spirit), whether it was to write an article, write a letter, answer a letter, or send a joke for us all to laugh at.

I would never have restarted it again probably, because of all the work that goes with it. But I woke up one morning in February 2021 and said, "We are going down." It was in reference to who became our President. I thought if we have to go down, let's do it as a group who loves God. Let's do it in preparation for the end of this age.

I have to read a lot, so I get tired, sometimes literally falling asleep at my computer. In our busy season which is now I work from 6 AM to 8 PM doing not just the newsletter but other stuff that has to be done besides. I don't consider myself to be of any importance, but I can use my organizational skills to go over and organize what needs to be done to put this newsletter together every week. Saturday seems like a good day to send it out because of the scattered brethren in the church and this helps everyone who is alone to focus on the Sabbath. I guess you could liken me to a gate keeper. I go over what comes in and add to it as needed with editors notes or now iron sharpening iron.

I know some probably don't like editors notes or iron sharpening iron, but I use these tools to keep everyone grounded. I believe there are things we have not yet learned but I also see many things that come in that I know are not biblical and when that happens it has to come with a warning of some kind. It is not meant as a bad thing and if the author looks at it and does more research, he or she may find some things they understood wrongly and will maybe change. There are many people that contribute to this newsletter which have a lot to offer but sometimes no one to bounce it off of. Eventually we will all be on the same page but getting there sometimes comes with a humbling effect. This isn't to say I know everything, because I don't but that is why you are all reading this newsletter. You need to learn to speak when you see something is wrong because I can't possibly catch everything.

God has given me certain talents and he has given the rest of you other talents different from mine. Everyone reading this newsletter is either just being called, somewhere in the middle, or is matured to a point where they can help me with this gate keeping job, because we don't want to teach wrong doctrine and those who do teach wrong doctrines generally believe they are beyond a shadow of a doubt right but if I am the only one that says it is not biblical perhaps I won't be believed where if others see it and back me up, it helps others to see the problem. So, whatever your gift of the spirit is, use it because everyone reading this newsletter is part of the end time church that Christ is building. And if you have come here to purposely deceive you will be found out. Most people who write wrong doctrine just don't understand the subject. And just because someone is out there trying to help others, it does not mean they appointed themselves.

We are a part of the church, and we are not malfunctioning. There will always be elders in the church, whether they are old people or appointed by God/Christ for a certain task.

To get back to the rest of your article, I could not find a Nazarene Sanhedrin when I searched. What I found when I did a search was the following: "There were two classes of Jewish courts called Sanhedrin, the Great Sanhedrin and the Lesser Sanhedrin. A lesser Sanhedrin of 23 judges was appointed to each city, but there was to be only **one Great Sanhedrin of 71 judges**, which among other roles acted as the Supreme Court, taking appeals from cases decided by lesser courts." (From Google)

So, I am not saying there was no Nazarene Sanhedrin because it was probably a lower court but still a part of the Great Sanhedrin. In other words, it was all one in the same, just a Lesser Sanhedrin. If anyone has any information in regard to the Sanhedrin, we will welcome it.

Holy Days 2021

Trumpets - September 7, 2021

Atonement - September 16, 2021

Tabernacles - September 21 to 27, 2021

Last Great Day - September 28, 2021