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## Articles

# God's Non-Transmittable Attributes (Part Two) Omnipresence

by Martin G. Collins (Charlotte, North Carolina)



Source: NASA, ESA, the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA), A. Nota (ESA/STScI), and the Westerlund 2 Science Team

Since God is spiritual, He is not restricted to any spatial dimension in the physical realm. He is always present everywhere and at any time with His whole Being. Jeremiah 23:23-24 reads: "Am I a God near at hand,' says the LORD, 'and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?' says the LORD; 'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the LORD." This scripture helps to introduce another of God's non-transmittable attributes, omnipresence, which is the quality of being present in all places at all times. As long as we remain human, we will never possess this ability.

This attribute does not define God as an indescribable, vapor-like entity. Spiritual substance exists in a similar fashion to natural matter, except that it is a much higher form, governed by higher laws. In addition, God's Word and His creation provide abundant evidence that neither He nor His angels are floating around the universe without bodies. The Bible describes God with body parts—the same body parts as humans—confirming that He has shape and form, which manifests in a specific location (Genesis 1:26-27; Daniel 7:9-10; Isaiah 66:1; Revelation 4). Both the Father and the Son—while being united in mind and purpose—have autonomous bodies (Revelation 5).

1. Is God actually omnipresent? Isaiah 57:15; Proverbs 15:3.

**Comment:** Even though God is said to rule the universe from His throne in the third heaven, Isaiah describes Him as "inhabiting eternity," and Solomon declares that "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." In Psalm 90:2, Moses writes, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." While the noun "omnipresence" never occurs in Scripture, the fact that God is everywhere is presupposed throughout the Bible and sometimes explicitly expressed.

2. By what power is God omnipresent"? Psalm 139:1-7.

**Comment:** Omnipresence is an eternal attribute of God. He is omnipresent through His Holy Spirit, the same boundless power that provides for His omnipotence (Jeremiah 32:17; Zechariah 4:6).

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David understood and made the connection between God’s presence and His Holy Spirit. “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11). Because God is everywhere, He sees and hears us—just as He saw and heard David—personally (John 2:24-25). He is always present in all places through His Spirit. God is never confined but is present in all His power at every point in space and time. David addressed this attribute directly when he asked: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?” (Psalm 139:7).

**3. Is God’s omnipresence ever limited? Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26.**

**Comment:** No external force can place any limitation on God (Micah 2:7; Psalm 135:6). He perceives all things in all places and at all times (Hebrews 4:13; Proverbs 5:21; Jeremiah 16:17). No secrets are ever withheld from the all-seeing eyes of the Lord, whether in the highest heights of the heavens, the deepest caves of the earth, or the depths of the sea. David continues:

If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You. (Psalm 139:8-12)

There is no place in this universe where we can hide or that anyone is obscured from the presence of God (Romans 8:39; Psalm 23:4). The prophet Jonah confirms that it is useless and even unwise to try (Jonah 1:17—2:10)! Through His Spirit, our heavenly Father fills the entirety of our vast universe. He has absolute sovereignty to do anything He wills and to see and hear everything. Nothing is hidden! Because of God’s omnipresence, we can seek Him anywhere. Therefore, regardless of our location, we can be strengthened and encouraged by His presence while facing any circumstance.

In Part Three of our study, we will consider and examine God’s omniscience.

**Holy Days: Atonement**  
by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (Charlotte, North Carolina)



In our continuing study on the holy days, we have seen the plan of God broaden from our personal redemption and removal of sin in Jesus Christ’s offering of Himself on Passover to ridding the self of corruption in the Days of Unleavened Bread and to the founding of the church and giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Trumpets pictures the return of Christ,

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the changing of the saints into immortal spirit beings, and God's judgment on all mankind. But before Christ's rule on earth begins, another hurdle must be overcome: Spiritual cleansing leading to salvation must be made available to those coming out of the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord, beginning with the remnant of Israel.

The Day of Atonement depicts the accomplishment of this step in God's purpose. Christ's sacrificial work on Passover serves as the individual counterpart to this holy day, which is far broader in scope, eventually encompassing all humanity. Though Christ's prodigious feat of covering and bearing away all human sin deserves our joyous praise and thanksgiving to God, Atonement is the most solemn of the seven festivals. On this day, Christians fast—afflict their souls—to show that only when man sees himself in proper comparison to God will he have the right attitude to submit to Him. When more and more humans live humbly before God, then God's Word and Spirit will work wonders among the people of the world!

**1. Is Atonement a commanded feast of God? Leviticus 23:26-32.**

**Comment:** God emphasizes this day's solemnity by threatening death to those who fail to afflict their souls or who do any work on this day. Nothing is more important than being at one with Him!

**2. What is it to "afflict your souls"? Isaiah 58:3.**

**Comment:** Fasting puts us in a proper attitude to submit to God. When we deprive ourselves of the necessities of life, we see how dependent we are upon God's providence. This is why in a true, spiritual fast we neither eat nor drink anything for the whole twenty-four hours of the day (Deuteronomy 9:18; Esther 4:16). God desires such a humble spirit in us so we can walk in harmony with Him (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 66:2).

**3. What are we trying to accomplish when we fast? Isaiah 58:3-12.**

**Comment:** The members of Isaiah's audience were fasting for all the wrong reasons! They fasted to get things from God and hypocritically appear righteous. God says, though, that we should fast to free others from their sins, to intercede with God for their healing, to help provide for their needs and to understand His will. Fasting is a tool of godly love we are to use for the good of others, and any benefits we derive from it are wonderful blessings! On the Day of Atonement, we fast to implore God to bring to pass the greatest blessing of all upon ourselves and the world: unity, oneness, with Him!

**4. Did the early church keep this Fast? Acts 27:9.**

**Comment:** Luke, writing this over thirty years after Christ's death, makes it clear that the early church observed this holy day.

**5. What unusual ritual did the Aaronic high priest perform on the Day of Atonement? Leviticus 16.**

**Comment:** This lengthy, involved ritual depicts all the steps that must be accomplished before mankind can truly be at one with God. In short, the following must occur:

» A high priest must be pure and sinless to mediate between God and man (verse 4). Christ, having lived a sinless life, is our eternal High Priest.

» The high priest must enter God's presence with blood to open the way between God and man (verses 3, 14-16). Christ, by His own sacrifice, gains us entrance before God's throne, having rent the veil (Matthew 27:51).

» The sins of men must be covered by the offering of an innocent victim (verses 9, 15). Christ's blood covers our sins, and God is appeased, granting us forgiveness.

» Human sin must not only be covered but also removed (verses 10, 20-22). Jesus Christ, the One upon whom all sin was placed as He suffered on the cross, also bears it away—"as far as east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12; see also Isaiah 53:6; Hebrews 9:28; I Peter 2:24; I John 3:5). Isaiah writes about the Suffering Servant, the Messiah:

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By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide Him a portion with the great, . . . because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:11-12)

6. What does Christ do immediately after returning from heaven to fulfill the Day of Atonement? Jeremiah 33:7-8.

**Comment:** The books of the prophets contain many similar passages to this one in Jeremiah 33 (see, for instance, Isaiah 9:20-23; 11:11-12; 27:13; 35:10; 40:1-2; Jeremiah 30:7; [31:8](#); 50:18-20; Ezekiel 6:8-9; 16:53-54; 36:22-28; etc.). The King of kings will call the survivors of Israel and Judah back to their ancestral land, and they will return with a humble attitude, ready to listen to His teaching. He will offer them redemption and forgive their sins, which is exactly what we see in type in the Atonement offering of Leviticus 16 and also prophesied in the Seventy Weeks Prophecy in Daniel 9:24. And so, the salvation of all Israel will begin (Romans 11:26)!

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## **Are UFO's Real?**

**by Ernest L. Martin (Portland, Oregon)**

The letters UFO stand for ‘unidentified flying object.’ Technically, any flying object that remains unidentified by humans can be called a UFO. This means that if you are walking down a gravel road and a car comes that causes a small stone to hit you and you are unable to later identify it (because of the mass of small stones on the roadway), that would be a UFO. However, that is not what we are referring to in this Doctrinal Report. We are also not speaking about weather balloons, lenticular clouds, new research aircraft, or unusual astronomical displays that professional people can easily identify though the general public in many cases cannot. How well I remember while I was a weather forecaster in the Air Force of monitoring some huge balloons (100 feet across) that the weather service launched on the west coast of America and having to regularly explain to the news media that people were not seeing UFOs when the balloons entered their areas of the world.

On one occasion, however, when I was on duty at the weather station at Walker Air Force Base in Roswell, New Mexico, we got a report from an airman guarding a B-29 on the base that he was seeing what he thought was a ‘ball of fire’ high in the atmosphere southeast of the base and *traveling* northwestward towards the base. This time there were no balloons in the vicinity nor were there any experimental aircraft that we were occasionally warned about. We had strict orders to inform the base commander of any unusual things like this. After doing this, I went to our theodolite (a telescope type instrument for tracking balloons) and zeroed in on the ‘ball of fire.’ It was now high in the sky just south of us *and* it was turning westward toward the Sacramento mountains. After ten minutes, the base commander showed up and took a look for himself as the “ball of fire” went over the mountains on the western horizon. We estimated it had been about 50 miles in the sky and traveling at a very high rate of speed. We warned air force stations in Arizona and California to be on the lookout for it, but no one west of us reported later that they saw it. This was certainly a UFO - an unidentified flying object — but this is still not the type I am referring to in this Doctrinal Report. The reason is because this UFO appeared to be some freak of nature and it did not appear like anything that intelligent creatures (either from earth or extra-terrestrial) were maneuvering. Most of us at the air base came to the conclusion that this UFO was some kind of an astronomical occurrence that was simply unexplainable, and that is the last I ever heard of the matter.

The UFOs that I am referring to are those that people have supposedly witnessed that appear to be governed by intelligent beings and that cannot be explained as having an earthly origin. We are talking about things that appear to be airborne and maneuverable and that look to be extra-terrestrial in origin. Are there such things? Does the Bible say anything about them? Are there times in the past when things have been seen in the heavens (which people today might call ‘spaceships’) or seeing other phenomena showing intelligent displays that some people interpreted as ‘coming from heaven’? Were there times when people thought they saw (in our atmosphere or in the heavens ‘signs’ from God or ‘signs’ from celestial beings?) This is what we are interested in.

Christ Jesus told us that when the end of the age would come (the generation just before the Second Advent of Christ)

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there would be **"fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven"** (Luke 21:11). Some of these signs would be given to God's people (by God or angelic powers under God's direction) to warn them of impending events (Luke 21:25), while other signs would be allowed to be demonstrated by Satan and his angels to deceive the world. The apostle Paul spoke of the Man of Sin (whom some called the Antichrist) 'who's coming is after the working of Satan with evil power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved [from the end-time trouble]. And for this cause GOD SHALL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION, that they should believe a lie (Greek: *the* LIE, II Thessalonians 2:9-11 capitalization mine).

What the Word of God tells us is the fact that there are *good* signs that God will give to his people (some of them may frighten those who do not know God and his divine word in both Old and New Testaments), but there are also *bad* signs that God and Christ Jesus allow the world to admire and to follow. We need to be able to tell the good from the *bad*. Let us first look at some *good* signs.

### **Some Signs from God**

Christ Jesus told the apostles that when they (or any of the saints) would see Jerusalem surrounded by armies then let the people of God flee from Jerusalem and Judea. **"When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh"** (Luke 21:20).

The meaning of this verse has puzzled many people. How can it be that when Jerusalem is completely surrounded (encircled on all sides) with armies, then the people of God are told to flee the whole area of Judea (of which Jerusalem is a part)? If this is the strategy, then it seems that Christ is saying to surrender to the armies. But this is not what Christ meant in his warning.

In actual fact, this prophecy of Christ Jesus was fulfilled to the letter in the period just before the war that destroyed Jerusalem from A.D. 67 to 70. We have the eyewitness account of Josephus himself (he was the Jewish historian who accompanied the Roman armies to Jerusalem and saw or reported all that occurred in Judaea within that 3-and-a-half-year event that occurred in the heavens that could not be identified as having its origin on earth. This was clearly a 'sign' from heaven and I have not the slightest hesitation *in* stating that it was an exact fulfillment of what Christ Jesus said would occur that is recorded in Luke 21:20. Note what Josephus said happened just before the war with Romans commenced.

**"On the twenty-first of the month Artemisium [the last day of the 2nd Passover season In A.D. 61], there appeared a miraculous phenomenon, passing belief. Indeed, *what I am about to relate would, I imagine, have been deemed a fable, were it not for the narratives of eyewitnesses and for the subsequent calamities which deserved to be so signalized. For before sunset throughout all parts of the county [everywhere throughout Judea] chariots were seen in the air and armed battalions hurtling through the clouds and encompassing the cities."* War, VI.5.3 or Loeb VI.298, emphasis mine**

This is the very thing that Christ Jesus said to watch for. And then (about two weeks later) Josephus tells us:

**"Moreover, at the feast, which is called Pentecost, the priests on entering the inner court of the temple by night, as their custom was in the discharge of their ministrations, reported that they were conscious, first of a commotion and a din, and after that of a voice as of a host, 'We are departing hence'." War, VI.209,300**

With these two signs what did the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea do? Eusebius tells us that this is the time they began to leave the region because of the command of Christ and went to a city called Pella on the east side of the Jordan River (*Ecclesiastical History, III.5*). They and the apostles obtained safety from the holocaust that soon enflamed Jerusalem and Judaea.

These chariots and armed forces seen in the skies all over Judaea and encompassing the cities of the Jews was similar to times recorded in the early history of Israel. Angelic powers (in this case, *good* angels) accompanied the armies of Israel when it was the normal period (in ancient Times) for hostilities to occur. The Bible says: **"And it came to pass, after the year had expired., at the time angels go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon"** (II Samuel 11:1). The King James translators (and most

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modern ones) read the Hebrew as "kings," not "angels." But there is no reason whatever for reading the text as 'kings.' The verse was intended to show that angelic powers were there to aid Israel in their battles when they went to war.

A further reference (which even corroborates angelic connections with wars or the preparations for wars on earth) is 11 Samuel 5:23,24 God said to David that when he heard **"the sound of a going [forth] in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you [David] shall bestir yourself [to war],"** This swishing sound in the top of the trees of a turbulent waving action of the wind was recognized by David as caused by the Lord and his angelic hosts going to battle with David (see also Genesis 32:1.3 and II Kings 6:17 about angels accompanying God). But in A.D.66, instead of helping Israel win the war with the *Romans* that the people of Judaea were about to start, the angelic hosts were seen in the clouds in chariots and as armed soldiers encompassing the cities of Judaea and enclosing them on all sides for capitulation. This is precisely what Christ Jesus said to watch for in his Olivet prophecy.

Not only that, Josephus said that a week before the Passover in A.D. 66 an amazing thing happened that the authorities in Jerusalem saw. **"At the ninth hour of the night [3 A.M. — the darkest part of the night], so brilliant a light shone round the altar and the sanctuary that it seemed to be broad daylight; and this continued for half an hour"** (*War*, VI.290). A similar thing happened in the time of Solomon when the Temple was first dedicated, and God entered the Sanctuary for the first time (II Chronicles 7:1-3).

But in early A.D. 66, this manifestation occurring a week before Passover culminated in the statement that God was leaving the Sanctuary given at the feast of Pentecost about eight weeks later (*War*, VI.299,300).

About 600 years before these events that happened in the skies over Jerusalem and Judaea, the prophet Ezekiel saw a whirlwind and clouds and in the air, he saw the glory of God reflected in four creatures that appeared to travel with wheels like chariots (with wheels shown within wheels) giving a circular shape to each creature (Ezekiel 1). These glorious creatures appeared like cherubim or other angelic hosts that surround the throne of God. *If* people would see such a scene today, they could easily imagine them to look like UFO's which resemble "flying saucer" types of maneuverable vehicles that were in the clouds of heaven and having a swishing sound of a whirlwind (perhaps like jet propulsion) accompanying them (Ezekiel 1:4). Since we are now living not long before the Second Advent of Christ back to this earth, we should expect to see similar signs as these once more.

In the past they did not occur regularly or in a flippant or frivolous manner (such flippancy is not found in Scripture). The events mentioned above however were given by God at specific times when God's people were in need of such signs to warn them of impending dangers to themselves and to the nations in which they lived. We should expect the same today on an irregular basis and at crucial times in history. But God is not in the habit of giving flippant and frivolous sign or signs that are designed to tease people.

Notice also, that the signs mentioned above were given when a large number of people were eyewitnesses to them to such an extent that there was no mistaking their reality or their significance, People may have interpreted the signs wrongly, as Josephus said many of the Jews did at the time they were given, but the signs themselves were not done in a corner. There were many eyewitnesses to attest to their truths. But flippant and teasing manifestations are not of the caliber that God and Christ give to their people. Whether circles in grain fields in England are hoaxes or caused by angelic powers, such frivolous manifestations are not helpful to God's people and should not be given attention by those who respect the Word of God.

Now all of the above examples in God's Scripture and from the history of Josephus are what God's people would correctly call *good* manifestations. They would not even be considered as UFOs in one way of looking at it because the saints of God would know them to be manifestations of God for the benefit of his people. Indeed, these can also be called *good* because they cause no one (or no nation) to have deception in regard to them. But there are also *bad* manifestations, and these are to be avoided on all occasions. Sometimes, though, it takes experience and some testing to find out if the angelic displays are *good* or *bad*.

### **How to Tell Bad Signs**

If any of us should see some kind of a manifestation that we might call a UFO (or some sign in the heavens), how can we know if it is *good* or *bad*? First and foremost, before even testing the 'sign' the apostle Paul stated the full armor that all the children of God should put on. Christ Jesus will be constantly at our aid, if we do what Paul said in Ephesians 6:11-

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18. Paul said that **"we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** (Ephesians 6:12). First, be fully armed with the truth of God — understand and use the Word of God as your defense and offense (verse 14). Claim the righteousness of Christ as being your own righteousness no matter if people say you are not righteous (verse 14). Be peaceful but armed with a full knowledge of the Gospel of Christ and don't be swayed by the false "Gospels" of this world (verse 15). Have full faith that Christ will protect you and use His name (His authority) to back you up in any encounter (verse 16). Understand that you are already saved (salvation has been granted to you by Christ already – II Timothy 1:9) and this gives you the power of sitting on the right hand of the Father in Christ right now (Ephesians 2:6). Take the 'sword of the Spirit' which is "the Word of God" (Paul states this in a double sense to show where your real power rests) (verse 17). And be in an attitude of prayer with God and Christ because the Father and our Elder Brother are with all the saints on a permanent basis (verse 18). Then speak the Gospel of truth to such powers with authority as the apostle Paul did (verses 19, 20).

Now, if any manifestation of any kind appears to you (as a type of UFO, angel, spirit, etc.), be armed with the above armaments! We are then told to *test the spirits* because many false prophets who are deceived by seducing spirits have gone out into the world (I Timothy 4:1-5; I John 4:1-3). There are numerous "tests" that one can make, but the central and primary test is this: If there is anything that the manifestation does or teaches (or promotes) that is in any way contrary to the Bible that you as a MATURE CHILD OF GOD KNOWS, then ask Christ to rebuke the false manifestation (Jude verse 9). The name of "Jesus" (or any derivative) is of utmost authority (Philippians 2:9-11) and all evil will submit to it. Also, *if any manifestation* (even if it comes from prophecies uttered by those professing Christ, speakers in tongues, or those motivated by any spiritual forces) that promotes or advances men and women who teach false doctrines such as the Immortality of the Soul (who teach that the dead are not really dead but that the dead are either alive in heaven or alive in hell or alive in a kind of 'limbo'), this is clearly contrary to biblical teaching (see I Timothy 6:15,16). The Bible shows the dead (and their souls) are not alive (Ecclesiastes 9:5,10). If contrary teachings are sustained, then ask Christ to rebuke such false manifestations (Jude verse 9). Akin to this, if one or more of your dead relatives or friends (that is, *supposedly* "dead" friends) should make an appearance with a 'UFO' or whatever, you are in touch with lying spirits trying to influence you.

In a word, some appearances of what some people have called UFOs, may be false angelic spirits trying to contact you or others. If such things should occur, then be always prepared to put on the armaments that the apostle Paul told us to display - and wear them with faith, confidence and with full authority! You can have the firm conviction from God's word that if any of the false spiritual powers that God allows to exist at the present knows that you or I are steadfast in always applying Ephesians 6:11-20, they will avoid you and all the people of God like the plague. After all, they do not want to be defeated in their schemes to influence people. They are after those who are willing to succumb to their deceitfulness and falsehoods.

And remember, Satan is called a serpent that has a venomous bite. If you and I stay away from rattlesnake dens (or where the rattlesnakes —roam), we will not be bitten by them. Too many people get curious about (and associate with) 'rattlesnakes' and their teachings and then they wonder why they got bit (James 4:7).

## **The Test Commandment!**

**by Robert Schmid (Westminster, California)**

Please open your Bibles to the gospel of John, the 14th chapter. John 14 and verse 15.

Jesus Christ - God - is speaking to His disciples, that is, He is speaking to you and me, and He says:

"IF, IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU WILL KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS".

In other words, those who do not keep all of Christ's commandments do not love Him!

Now we know that there are many people who claim to love Christ, claim to love God, but do all of them keep all of His commandments? How do we know? How can we tell if someone, or for that matter, you, and I, keep all of Christ's commandments and thereby prove that we really love Him?

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The purpose of my Sermonette is to show you that we can know if we really love Christ, or if our love for Christ is just an empty profession, unacceptable to Jesus Christ?

In the 15th chapter of John in verse 10, Jesus Christ repeats Himself and He said: "IF YOU KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, YOU WILL ABIDE IN MY LOVE, JUST AS I HAVE KEPT MY FATHERS COMMANDMENTS AND ABIDE IN HIS LOVE." In other words, Christ is our example in the correct and acceptable expression of our love for Him, and He, Christ expressed acceptable love to God by keeping all of His Fathers commandments.

What about us? Can we keep all of the Fathers commandments and thereby express our love to God, as did Jesus Christ our example?

Well, the answer is both Yes and No. Let me explain.

The answer is an obvious NO, we cannot keep the Fathers commandments as did Christ, because we have all sinned and will continue to sin and fall short in our ability to keep the commandments, no matter how hard we try.

"ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT", says Paul in his letter to the Romans. So, if we all have sinned, and we have, and if we all continue to sin and we will, how then can we express that we love Jesus Christ with commandment keeping?

In the 7th chapter of Romans where Paul continues to develop an understanding of sin and how to deal with it, he gives us the answer of how we can love Jesus Christ even though we continue to fall short in keeping God's commandments.

In Rom. 7 we find what is known as the Christian Struggle and Paul says in verse 18: "FOR I KNOW THAT NOTHING GOOD DWELLS WITHIN ME, THAT IS, IN MY FLESH". That's what we have just established: We have sinned, and we will continue to sin. Paul knew it, and we know it. Continue in verse 18: "I CAN *WILL* WHAT IS RIGHT, BUT I CAN NOT DO IT". Did you catch that? Here is the YES answer to our question. Paul says, he can *will* to do what is right, but he cannot *do* it. In other words, if we will, in our mind, in our spirit, to do that which is right, that is acceptable to God.

Listen to verse 19: "FOR I DO NOT DO THE GOOD I WANT, BUT THE EVIL I DO NOT WANT IS WHAT I DO."

Paul doesn't want to do evil. You and I, if we are converted, do not want to do evil. When we do evil it isn't *us* that does evil, it is *sin* that is in us that causes us to do evil. Read it for yourself in verse 20 of Rom 7:

"NOW IF I DO WHAT I DO NOT WANT, IT IS NO LONGER I THAT DOES IT, BUT SIN WHICH DWELLS WITHIN ME."

In other words, it is our inward desire not to sin that counts, not our lack of, or our superior law-keeping.

Can you see now why the answer to our original question is both YES and NO.

But someone might say, that sounds like double talk. I mean anybody can say: "I really wanted to do what is right, but sin - the devil made me do it." In fact, someone might use this line of reasoning without even knowing what the will of God is, without knowing what His commandments are.

Well, because of that, or to avoid that, God gave us a test commandment, a test commandment that establishes if you knowingly and with understanding willed to do that which is right or not.

A test which shows, both God and our fellow man, if you really love God or not. That commandment is the 4th commandment, the Sabbath commandment and I dare say that if you know the Sabbath commandment, that is the weekly and the annual Sabbaths you will know most of the rest of God's commandments, his statues, and His ordinances.

Think about it! The world, that is the society we live in, can teach us, and require of us that it is wrong to lie, steal and murder, but would our desire not to do those things prove that we love God? No, not at all! There are lots of people who keep these laws without acknowledging, in fact without even knowing God. No, that wouldn't prove anything.

But, when someone keeps the Sabbath holy, well, why would someone do it? Is there any government, any society in

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this world that requires of its citizens to keep the Sabbath holy? No, not a one, except of course the Jews and they don't accept and acknowledge Jesus Christ.

So, anybody who knows about and keeps the Sabbath holy received such knowledge from God, through His Word the Bible.

Let's face it, humanly speaking; the 4th commandment makes no sense at all. Most human governments and religions will acknowledge that man should rest one day out of the week, but primarily for health or recreational reasons, not because God said so. But to insist that it has to be the 7th day from sunset to sunset is not only not required, but rejected, and ridiculed and condemned as working for your own salvation. In other words, you are called and labeled a Judaizer, and what could be worse than that!

And so, the 4th commandment does indeed become our test commandment. With the Sabbath commandment God has given us the ability to discern if someone keeps certain laws because man said so, or because Jesus Christ said so. God has not left us without a clear sign to identify those who love Him, identify those with who we are to fellowship, identify those who constitute the true Church of God.

In the 31st chapter of Exodus verse 13 Jesus Christ said:

"SAY TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, (in other words, 'SAY TO MY PEOPLE'), YOU SHALL KEEP MY SABBATHS, FOR THIS IS A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR GENERATIONS, THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT I, THE LORD, SANCTIFY YOU".

Today Christ says: "IF, IF YOU KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS",

But someday soon He will say: "BECAUSE, BECAUSE YOU HAVE KEPT MY COMMANDMENTS, COME NOW AND ABIDE IN MY LOVE AND THE FATHERS LOVE FOREVERMORE".

Praise God for His love, His mercy and forgiveness, and for His Sabbaths.

Brethren, I appeal to you, hold fast what you have and what you know, so that no one, no man, will take your crown.

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## **As It Was in The Days of Noah**

**by Alfio La Spina (Victoria British Columbia)**

### **Genesis 6:5 (ESV)**

5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

### **2 Peter 2:5 (NIV)**

5 if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Noah and his family were the only ones saved from the flood. The rest were wicked and would not repent. Noah likely preached repentance to the wicked however they did not repent.

### **Revelation 9:21 (ESV)**

21 nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Today we are very close to what it was like then however we are not quite there yet. At the time of the flood the people's thought and intentions were continually evil. At this time not everyone is wicked with no hope of repentance. There are many that will repent during the coming great tribulation. The two witnesses will be preaching the gospel at that time along with the brethren from the true church.

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**Revelation 7:14-14 (NIV)**

14 I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Here we see that lampstands represent churches.

**Revelation 1:20 (NIV)**

20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

**Revelation 11:3-6 (NIV)**

3 And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 They are “the two olive trees” and the two lampstands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.” 5 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. 6 They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

Not only are the people of the world in need of repentance but also members of the Churches of God. During the time of the early Church there were many false disciples as there still are now. For those Christ will come as a surprise to them.

**2 Timothy 3:1-9 (ESV)**

1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins, and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. 9 But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

**1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (ESV)**

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

When the two witnesses have finished their testimony, they will be killed and lay in the street for 3.5 days.

**Revelation 11:7-12 (ESV)**

7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, **10 and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.** 11 But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.

It is after the tribulation that it will be like the days of Noah.

The ones that remain on earth are the wicked that would not repent. They actually think they have victory and are rejoicing because they had gotten rid of the two witnesses. They have no idea what is in store for them just like in the days of Noah when the whole earth was flooded.

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**Matthew 24:38-39 (ESV)**

38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

There only remains destruction for them. So, Jesus comes to put an end to their wicked ways.

**Revelation 19:11-21 (ESV)**

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.” 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

**A Blast from the Past**

**A Parable**

**by Author Unknown (Internet)**

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark...

- # 1--Don't miss the boat.
- # 2--Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- # 3--Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- # 4--Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
- # 5--Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- # 6--Build your future on high ground.
- # 7--For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- # 8--Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- # 9--When you're stressed, float a while.
- #10--Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.
- #11--No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

(This item has been updated and re-printed from “The Church of God Messenger” March/April 2001—Issue No. 2)

**Holy Days 2022**

**Passover – April 16, 2022 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)**

**Unleavened Bread – April 16-22, 2022**

**Pentecost – June 5, 2022**

**Trumpets - September 26, 2022**

**Atonement – October 5, 2022**

**Tabernacles – October 10-16, 2022**

**Last Great Day – October 17, 2022**