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Immutability**

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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

God's Non-Transmittable Attributes (Part Four) Immutability
by Martin G. Collins (Charlotte, North Carolina)

Much of the essence of Christian hope is based on faith in something or someone guaranteeing a hopeful outcome. The author of Hebrews declares, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews

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11:1). Our faith is founded on the trustworthiness of God to keep His promises (Deuteronomy 7:9; Hebrews 10:23).

Such trustworthiness implies that God’s nature and character are unchanging or immutable. In all situations, God is constant and consistent. Unlike humans, He can always be trusted because He always keeps His word, never succumbing to emotional, impulsive, or temperamental actions.

In tandem with His supreme intelligence and foreknowledge, His immutability extends to never changing His mind about His plan or His requirements for salvation. He may occasionally use a new or different approach to account for human variability, but He never changes His standards or His goals. We can rest assured that the God we worship is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

1. Can God break a promise? Numbers 23:19; Psalm 89:34.

Comment: God never makes a promise or a declaration that He fails to stand by for all eternity (Isaiah 40:8; Titus 1:2). If He says He will do something, He does it (I Samuel 15:29; I Thessalonians 5:24). He confirms by an oath to His followers that His will is immutable (Hebrews 6:17-18). He cannot lie. The mind and the intentions of God never change, and all the hope that we have of our salvation and eternal life is founded on the fact that He and His purpose are fixed (Isaiah 14:24; 46:10-11). He cannot and will not ever break a promise (II Timothy 2:13).



2. Does God ever change anything? Isaiah 14:24; 46:9-11; Proverbs 19:21.

Comment: Solomon declares in Ecclesiastes 3:14, “I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it.” His father, David, proclaims in Psalm 33:11, “The counsel of the lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.”

Compare the chaos and confusion of humanity’s ever-changing world (Isaiah 24:5-8; Judges 17:6) with the absolute perfection and unadulterated truth of the coming Kingdom, designed by a God who has permanently established and fixed all principles of eternal existence (Revelation 21:3-5). He leaves nothing to chance! We can find comfort in our confidence that He and all He has promised and declared are unchanging (Job 23:13). Isaiah records God’s guarantee, “Indeed, I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it” (Isaiah 46:11).

3. Do some biblical passages represent God as changeable? Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:8-14. Why would a perfect God change? Psalm 102:25-27.

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Comment: The Bible often portrays God as a Teacher (Exodus 4:15; Psalm 32:8), Parent (Exodus 20:12), or Judge (Leviticus 26). All three portrayals allow for disappointment, aggravation, frustration (Psalm 78:40)—and mercy and forgiveness. As our Judge, God maintains the right and the power to bless or curse, to extend mercy, and to reverse His judgment in accordance with *our response* to Him (Exodus 34:6-7).

After all, He has called us to change. If we do so in accordance with His will—or if we fail to—He must, by His design and unchanging purpose, update His disposition toward us (II Timothy 2:12). This does not imply a change in His law or the doctrines of His church or an alteration of His promises. It signifies, instead, that we have changed (Exodus 32:10-14; Jonah 3:10).

Ultimately, God’s immutability grants us the assurance that “He who has begun a good work in [us] will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

In a world suffering from the constant and unpredictable changes of humankind, we find stability and peace in a God who does not change (Hebrews 6:19). We know that His truth and His values are grounded in His nature: the divine essence that defines the character of our immutable God (Psalm 119:89-90; James 1:17; Malachi 3:6; Romans 11:29).

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Like a Tree
by Mike Ford (Oxford, Georgia)



“He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” (Psalm 1:3)

The Eighth Day, often called the Last Great Day, immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles, represents the Great White Throne Judgment period, which will last, we believe, a hundred years. Just as this day follows the Feast of Tabernacles, the hundred years follow the Millennium, continuing all the benefits of that time. Isaiah 65:20-22, a beautiful section of Scripture, speaks of this period:

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No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall build homes and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

“As the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people.” The phrase “the days of a tree” suggests eternity. Once the second resurrection has occurred and the hundred-year period is over, we will have eternity to look forward to—not just the first fruits, but also all who have ever lived, other than the few (we hope) who will end their days in the Lake of Fire.

According to commentator Adam Clarke, Jewish tradition teaches that it refers to the Tree of Life. Revelation 22:1-2 mentions the Tree of Life in New Jerusalem in the context of the New Heaven and New Earth after the hundred years:

And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

At this time, God has established His throne in New Jerusalem. The river of the water of life runs along its course from God’s throne, and along its banks and down the center of the city’s streets stand trees called “the tree of life.” Each tree produces fruit every month, and its leaves never fade. These trees live forever. Won’t they be a grand sight!

Trees in Scripture

Near the end of his life, Herbert Armstrong frequently spoke about the two trees in the Garden of Eden, each symbolizing a competing way of life (see Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-24). He preached that the Tree of Life represents God’s way, the way of “give,” and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil symbolizes Satan and his way of “get.” He hammered this insight home to us relentlessly. He wanted us to make the right choice, unlike Adam and Eve, who ate the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. He desired that we partake of the Tree of Life, which will line the streets of New Jerusalem.

It sounds like we need to know a little about trees if we desire to partake of the Tree of Life. What can we learn from them?

In the Bible, trees often serve as metaphors and similes for Christians. It mentions 26 different trees, from the almond to the willow, each created for a specific use. That number, however, is only a tiny portion of the world’s 23,000 different kinds of trees.

Trees enhance our lives in a multitude of ways. The average American uses 750 pounds of paper a year, and 95% of us live in homes built using wood. Each of us, then, uses the equivalent of a one-hundred-foot tall, 16-inch-diameter tree every year for our paper and wood needs. Whether for their beauty, fruit, wood for fuel, wood for building, or wood pulp for the paper that our Bibles are printed on, trees are a big part of our lives.

God seems to be big on trees too. His Son spent much of His human life as a carpenter. When He compares us to trees, however, it goes much deeper than their physical usefulness. Notice Psalm 1:1-3:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law, he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

We can take five insights from this short passage:

1. This tree, representing an individual among God’s people, is *planted*. It does not spring from a seed dropped by a bird or blown by the wind. Its planting implies purpose. Who would do that? God, of course. John 6:44 teaches that we do not come to God of our own accord; in fact, “*no one* can come to [Christ] unless the Father . . . draws him” (emphasis ours). He calls each person and directs his or her life, planting each where He desires.

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2. He plants each tree by rivers of water, which nourishes and sustains it. Water, of course, is a common symbol of God’s Holy Spirit throughout Scripture. So, if God in His wisdom plants us in the right spot and gives us plenty of water, we can guess what will likely happen next.
3. Unlike the fig tree in Jesus’ parable that failed to produce fruit and is cut down and thrown in the fire (see Luke 13:6-9; John 15:6), this divinely planted and nourished tree bears fruit in its season. It produces the good works God planted it to produce (see John 15:8; Ephesians 2:10).
4. Like the Tree of Life in Revelation 22:2, the leaves on this tree do not wither. The process God puts His “trees” through produces, not withering and death, which is the “natural” course of things, but growth, productivity, and life.
5. The psalmist proclaims that this person who is like a tree will prosper in whatever he does. The gist of the psalm does not imply material prosperity—land, houses, cars, jewelry, cash—but spiritual, long-term success. Ultimately, he means righteousness, rulership, and eternal life in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 19:7-8; 20:6)!

The Attributes of a Tree

Notice that the psalmist writes that the blessed person “shall be like a tree.” Why is that? Is it possible that, if we adopt specific attributes of a tree, we, like the blessed man, can avoid sin, delight in the law, and prosper eternally? We need to pursue this line of thought.

Trees get 90% of their nutrition from the atmosphere and only 10% from the soil. Humans receive physical nutrition from the soil, through the food it produces, but we get our spiritual nourishment from God through His Holy Spirit—through the “air” or on the “wind,” as it were. If we wish to think of the Holy Spirit like water, we can imagine the tree receiving nutrition when falling rain thoroughly soaks its leaves.

Another astounding fact about trees is that they grow from the top, not the bottom. A branch’s location on a trunk will only move up the trunk a few inches in a millennium. Have you ever hung a birdhouse on a tree branch in the backyard? It has not risen higher in all the years it has been hanging there, has it?

Consider the growth of a Christian. While our physical growth may occur in various parts of our body—especially in the middle! —as we age, our spiritual growth happens at the top. God opens our minds by His Spirit, and He pours in knowledge. We take it in by study, prayer, and meditation, and our minds expand. Christian growth is from the top.

We can think of this in another way: Jesus is the vine or the trunk, and we are the branches that grow off it (John 15:1, 5). He puts us where He wants us on the tree, and we should be content there to do what He wants us to do. As the Head of the church, He feeds us to prepare us to produce the fruit He desires (see John 6:45; Ephesians 4:7-24).

Most people do not realize that trees can induce rainfall by cooling the land and transpiring water into the sky through their leaves. A large tree, through transpiration, can lift a hundred gallons of water a day and discharge it into the air through evaporation. An acre of maple trees can put as much as 20,000 gallons of water into the atmosphere each day! When God’s children help Jesus Christ make the deserts bloom in the Millennium (Isaiah 35:1-2, 6-7), they will surely be planting a great many trees.

In this arboreal image, we can understand that the Holy Spirit flows both into and out of us. As we use the Holy Spirit in proper words and good works, God gives us more. When we pray, encourage others, share the truth, do acts of kindness, and the like, we are “transpiring” like a tree!

Trees keep us alive in other ways. A tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year, sequestering one ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches forty years old. A single tree can absorb enough carbon in a year as a car produces driving 26,000 miles. They not only inhale the bad stuff, but they also exhale the good stuff, oxygen, for our use. One large tree can supply enough oxygen for a family of four.

We, as Christians, spend our converted lives absorbing hit after hit, trial after trial, and if we do it right, we grow and overcome. Like a tree, we sequester or store away the lessons of life’s difficulties. We cannot afford to let them pull us down or stop us. While taking in these vital life-lessons, we respond by demonstrating an excellent example for those around us to see, remember, and we hope, follow.

Most people do not know that trees trap more of the sun’s energy than any other group of organisms on earth. They are,

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in a way, like giant batteries, the largest on the planet. While organisms trap only 0.1% of the sun’s energy, trees account for half of that figure. Without sunlight, there would be no photosynthesis, and without photosynthesis, no oxygen, and no human life. Consider how much trees do with only this minuscule portion of the sun’s energy!

How much of His Holy Spirit does God shine on us? No one knows, but it would make sense that Christians, among all earth’s people, absorb the vast majority, if not all, of what is absorbed. Yet, we probably fail to absorb all but a tiny fraction of what God sends—perhaps not even to the level of a tree’s 0.1% absorption of sunlight!

But just as trees accomplish so much with so little, so it can be with us. If we had the faith of a mustard seed, we could command a tree to be pulled up by its roots and thrown in the sea, and it would happen (Luke 17:6)! How far have we come in our spiritual lives on a small amount of the Holy Spirit? What will we be able to do when God deems us worthy to receive more?

Sages maintain that no tree dies of old age. Insects, diseases, droughts, or people generally kill them long before then. California is home to sequoias and bristlecone pines that are four and five thousand years old, still alive, and well! Other places around the globe showcase ancient trees for tourists to “ooh” and “ah” over.

From a purely physical standpoint, humans can and do die of old age, but like trees, something else kills us first more often than not. What do we humans do to kill ourselves? We fail to eat right, exercise, or get enough sleep, and we wonder why we get sick and die. We smoke, drink, take drugs, fornicate, drive too fast, and shoot each other. We contract innumerable diseases that take our lives.

Spiritually, though, we have the potential to live forever. The Tree of Life, lining the banks of the river coming from God’s throne and running down the center of New Jerusalem’s streets, will produce fruit abundantly for all eternity. We whom the Lord has planted will have the opportunity to partake of it.

Alpha and Omega

To know where we are going, it helps to know where we have been. In a spiritual sense, God makes it easy because He has provided us a road map, and He works in patterns. He also brings things full circle in His Word to help us see the process from beginning to end.

In Revelation 22:13, Christ tells the apostle John that He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” In Scripture, He shows us a complete cycle, from Genesis 1 to its end in Revelation 22. It is the cycle of the Tree of Life in the Garden to the Tree of Life in New Jerusalem.

Genesis begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth, and Revelation ends with a New Heaven and a New Earth. In Genesis, man meets Satan and is overcome, while in Revelation, Satan meets Christ and is cast down and ultimately put down. In Genesis, Adam and Eve pick the forbidden fruit from a tree and incur the death penalty and all its curses, but in Revelation, the Tree of Life heals the nations. Genesis relates the beginning of sorrows, while Revelation foretells the end of sorrows.

In Revelation 22:16, Christ proclaims some of His titles, and the very first one is “I am the Root”! From that Root grows many trees—His first fruits—planted by rivers of water. Like Psalm 1, which associates these blessed individuals with obedience to God’s law, Revelation 22:14 says, “Blessed are those who do His commandments,” a trait, one could say, of a godly tree. And why is that important? “. . . that they may have the right to the tree of life . . .”!

The Tree of Life, while very real, is also a metaphor for a way of life, one that requires overcoming and obedience. As we have seen, it requires taking on the positive attributes of a tree. Adam and Eve lost their chance to eat of the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:22-24), but by God’s grace, we have that chance!

And not only us. We must remember that the Last Great Day pictures the inclusion of all who have ever lived after they have learned the truth and lived it. God will welcome into His Kingdom whole orchards and forests full of godly trees that have grown to maturity in the way of the Lord.

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Just What Do You Mean Apostasy?

by Robert E. Tigue (Des Plains, Illinois)

An apostasy is not people leaving an organization.... but it is the organization leaving.... turning aside from...or abandoning Truth.

Apostasy (from Greek, meaning a defection or revolt, from, apo, "away, apart", stasis, "standing") is a term generally employed to describe the formal abandonment or renunciation of one's religion, especially if the motive is deemed unworthy. In a technical sense, as used sometimes by sociologists without the pejorative connotations of the word, the term refers to renunciation and criticism of, or opposition to one's former religion. One who commits apostasy is an apostate, or one who apostatizes. Apostasy is generally not a self-definition: very few former believers call themselves apostates and they generally consider this term to be a pejorative. One of the possible reasons for this renunciation is loss of faith, another is the failure of alleged religious indoctrination or brainwashing.

pejorative - adj. vilifying, disrespectful, scornful; declining, depreciatory; changing for the worse, calumnious

Mat 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

There is much symbolism here.... here it is talking about a spiritual virgin.... now just what is a spiritual virgin? It is one who would not in any way at all associate themselves with any of the churches of this World...and the organization they had been with, if it was doing away with God's Laws and Holy Days...and becoming a Worldly Church.

Mat 25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Mat 25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

Let's look at the symbolism of a lamp

Pro 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

reproof n. admonition, reproach; censure, condemnation; expression of blame, accusation - (this is the way any dictionary describes reproof....and it is the human way.) Reproof from GOD is this way - a kindly intent to correct a fault.... remember King David said "I would rather fall into the hands of GOD rather than the hands of men.... King David knew GOD'S correction would be firm but gentle.

Psa 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

These spiritual virgins were told that the Law (Commandments) are no more...forget them...they have been done away with. Also, they were told the Sabbath was no longer a sign of GOD's people. So, these spiritual virgins left with the Commandments...they were not going to give them up...they knew God's Laws and Holy Days were not done away with!

Exo 20:1 And God spoke all these words, (the Ten Commandments) saying,

Exo 20:2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Exo 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

Exo 20:6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Exo 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exo 20:9 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work:

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Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

Exo 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

Exo 20:12 Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Exo 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Exo 20:15 Thou shalt not steal.

Exo 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Exo 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Lev 23:1 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts.

Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:4 These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.

Lev 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's Passover.

Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

Lev 23:7 In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Lev 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Lev 23:9 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest:

Lev 23:11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Lev 23:12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf a he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Lev 23:13 And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savor: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin.

Lev 23:14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

Lev 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

Lev 23:17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first fruits unto the LORD.

Lev 23:18 And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the LORD, with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the LORD.

Lev 23:19 Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

Lev 23:20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

Lev 23:21 And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be a holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Lev 23:22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

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Lev 23:23 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.

Lev 23:25 Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Lev 23:26 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:27 Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Lev 23:28 And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.

Lev 23:29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.

Lev 23:30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

Lev 23:31 Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Lev 23:32 It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.

Lev 23:33 And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

Lev 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, the fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.

Lev 23:35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Lev 23:36 Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein.

(solemn - adj. grave, somber, serious; ceremonial, formal, dignified; sincere, earnest)

Lev 23:37 These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, everything upon his day:

Lev 23:38 Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.

Lev 23:39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath.

Lev 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

Lev 23:41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

Lev 23:42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:

Lev 23:43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

Lev 23:44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

Don't see anything done away with here!

Mat 25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

They all slumbered and slept.... they were not studying to show themselves approved....they were not searching the scriptures to see if these things be...not redeeming the time....perhaps not enough prayer time...or fasting...or maybe very little time on any of these things.

Mat 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Mat 25:7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

Mat 25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

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Mat 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

It is easy to think that the oil is symbolic here of the Holy Spirit...but not in this case.

Let's look at what GOD has to say about this matter

Act 8:18 And when Simon (Simon Magnus) saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, (he wanted to buy this Gift!)

Act 8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.

Act 8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Joh 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken;

So, we see that the Holy Spirit cannot be bought!

So just what was it that they were told to buy? And when something is purchased, one has to use something to pay for whatever is purchased....so what does GOD'S Word tell us we are to buy?

Pro 23:23 Buy the truth and sell it not; also (buy - implied) wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. - (The Holy Bible)

sanctify - v. consecrate, make holy; make free from sin, purify; become holy

How does one get wisdom, instruction and understanding? By personal Bible study, prayer and fasting...redeeming the time...the time that each one of us has left on this Earth. Asking GOD for more Faith...more of His Holy Spirit.

Were the unwise virgins doing this? Remember what GOD calls them...unwise!

What is the symbolism of a vessel...it is one's Mind!

The Apostle Paul was a chosen vessel...highly educated!

Act 22:2 And hearing that he spoke in the Hebrew dialect to them, they showed more quietness. And he said:

Act 22:3 Indeed I am a man, a Jew having been born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but having been brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, having been trained according to the exactness of the ancestral law, being a zealous one of God, even as you all are today.

Act 26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Act 9:15 And the Lord said to him, Go, for this one is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before nations and kings and the sons of Israel.

Act 9:16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name.

Gamaliel

Gamaliel the Elder (gYm'IYI), or Rabbi Gamaliel, was a leading authority in the Sanhedrin in the mid first century and the teacher of Paul the Apostle. He was the grandson of the great Jewish teacher Hillel the Elder. He died twenty years before the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem. Gamaliel was a guardian of the early Nazarene Christian church (Acts 5), and it is noteworthy that James the Just was martyred (62 AD) soon after Gamaliel's death.

All Paul needed was to have the Law magnified to him by Jesus Christ...and then Paul understood that GOD'S Law was a Law of LOVE.

Gal 1:11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Gal 1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

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Mat 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Mat 25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

Mat 25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

(Why... What was it they lacked...can one suppose they were just sitting around waiting for Christ to appear?)

Mat 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

John the tenth chapter also talks about what to do when an apostasy occurs.

Joh 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

Joh 10:2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

Joh 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Joh 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Three key statements here - (1) leadeth them out and (2) He goeth before them, (3) and the sheep follow him

Question... Who left first? It should be very plain that Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd left first and those who were around in "90-95" saw how the attitudes changed once Christ left.

Joh 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Joh 10:6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Joh 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

Joh 10:8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

Joh 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (good spiritual meat)

Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Joh 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Joh 10:12 But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

Joh 10:13 The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

Joh 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one-fold, and one shepherd.

Joh 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

Joh 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Many apostasies have occurred down through the centuries...and perhaps the biggest one occurred in the 1st century.

Gal 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Gal 1:7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Gal 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Gal 1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

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GOD'S Laws will continue to be watered down and even cast aside....so watch and listen...search the Scriptures to see if these things be...study to show yourself approved...pray...fast...redeem the time!!

Other Items

On the Lighter Side of Life
Sent by Ted & Joanne Saunders (Renton, Washington)

Bilingual Barnyard

A flock of sheep are romping in a field, happily going "baa baa" to each other and discussing life as usual when suddenly they hear a "moo moooooooooooooooooooooo!"

They look around and see only sheep. They carry on playing as before. "Moooooo moooooooooooooo mmmoo!"

One sheep can hear it all too clearly next to him. He shuffles away a little from his friend, a worried look on his face, and then asks, "Georgie, why are you mooing? You're a sheep. Sheep go "baa!"

His friend replies gladly, "I know. I thought I would learn a foreign language!"

Must Women Be Silent in the Church?
by Jeffrey Caldwell (Redwood City, California)

Ralph Woodrow, an evangelical Christian minister, is a correspondent of mine. He is a bit famous for formerly supporting Alexander Hislop's thesis in *The Two Babylons*, but then repudiating his support in a follow-up book when he was challenged to check into the quality of Hislop's scholarship, which he found quite lacking. He's taken a lot of heat for that, but I believe he is being quite honest about it. He has written many short books which are edifying biblical studies and his latest is:

Must Women Be Silent in the Church? a biblical study regarding women in ministry.

He presents a good case that some of the 'admonitions' we suppose are from Paul seem to be quotations from letters sent to Paul [which have been lost] rather than actually Paul's teachings and that, in fact, Paul did not agree with them. This the announcement of the book:

[A biblical study regarding women in ministry](http://www.ralphwoodrow.org/assets/books/women-in-ministry.html)

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I personally have found many of his studies edifying.

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