

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 21, 2022 --- Issue No. 68
Special Edition

"They Shall Not Hurt Nor Destroy..."
by Arlan Weight (Bismarck, North Dakota)

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Contributors: Arlan Weight

Website: Church of God, Bismarck <https://www.church-of-god-bismarck.org>

A Blast from the Past

"They Shall Not Hurt Nor Destroy..."
by Arlan Weight (Bismarck, North Dakota)

The words shown above are taken from the text of Isaiah 65:25. It ends the section of scripture that describes a wonderful time in the future when there will be no more trouble or sorrow. There will be no destruction as we have recently seen in New York City.

These are the words that came to my mind as I watched the terrible mass destruction taking place September 11, 2001. It was so awful, so unbelievably heinous! How could any human being or group of human beings do what they did to other humans? Animals don't even do such things. Even the most vicious wild animals only destroy other animals for food. Never do they attack others of their own kind for wanton destruction only.

Watching those two aircraft smash into the **twin towers** of the **World Trade Center** looked like a Hollywood film production. It was only make believe... but no... this was for real. For a time, I wanted to shut the reality out of my mind as I didn't want to believe it. I think most people did. But why? Why did so many people have to die? Especially so senselessly this way? Is there ever going to be a time when we don't hear or see such inhuman acts of cruelty? Are there any answers?

In the wake of this awful event, we now know the perpetrators are members of an 'Islamic extremist group'. So now all Islam has come under fire. But is it Islamic? How about when the Christians are fighting the Jews or the Catholics fighting

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the Protestants or the blacks fighting the whites etc.? No, it's not Islamic, racial or any other specific cause such as this. The real cause is human nature. It's a human thing. Oh sure, it was an Islamic terrorist group that did the deed, but it all rests in the fact of their **hatred**... hatred toward America.

Hatred is one of the works of the flesh. Notice what Scripture has to say about it. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, **hatred, variance** (contention, quarrelsome), **emulations** (envy, jealousy), **Strife**..." (Gal. 5:19-20)

But why do they hate us so much? Where does it start? Does it not all start with education or more aptly named miseducation of the people? All of 19 young men that carried out this deed were taught to hate. When they were very young, they most likely were like other children... most lovable. Their only misfortune was to be born of parents who were hateful and misguided.

The children were thus taught to hate... **hate** America. They did not have this hatred at birth. America is pictured to these young children as the great Satan and to give one's life in fighting him is to be a great hero and upon one's death greatly rewarded in heaven. This sounds very much like what it says in John 16:2, "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Granted, these are words Jesus spoke to his disciples, but the fact of the matter is that he's saying, people will actually be able to do such heinous cruel acts as this and think they are **pleasing God**. This blows my mind! How about you?

People are actually taught that God is pleased with this, but this modern age is not the first-time people have been taught this. People of ancient times, including some Israelites, were guilty of sacrificing their young children by throwing them into the fire.

We look at this and say, "How could they do that?" But they did. And they did it thinking they were giving God their ultimate sacrifice. They were giving up something most dear to them and by doing so they thought they were really pleasing God! But what did God think of it?

God inspired Jeremiah to write, "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, **neither came it into my mind:...**" (Jer. 19:5) He repeats it again in Jer. 32:35. "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech, which I commanded them not, **neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination.**"

In fact, God says He hates this. Look at Proverbs 6:17-18. "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea seven are an abomination to him: A proud look, A lying tongue, and **hands that shed innocent blood...**" Imagine that. God says something like this was so remote in thinking that **it never even entered His mind and that He hates it**. But here they were, so called well meaning people, going to the ultimate limit of their ability and sense of worship, to give up their very own sons and daughters, thinking that it greatly pleased God.

It's hard to imagine, but is this much different than what this Islamic group did? They too, must have gone through much soul searching and struggle to come to this point... the point at which they would sacrifice themselves... thinking it pleased God. Did these hands shed innocent blood? Were the 5000 plus people who lost their lives in the **Trade Center buildings**, the **Pentagon**, and the aircraft innocent? Absolutely! Does God hate it? Absolutely! But the self-sacrifice of these 19 young men, along with many others, began when the mis-education began. Here is where the real problem lies. So, who is responsible?

Again, back in Jeremiah, it says they built the high places of **Baal**... to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto **Molech**... These were the gods they worshiped and sacrificed their children to. Do we think these people actually sacrificed their children to some great being, knowing full well he was not the true God... the Creator God of the Bible? No. They believed **Baal** was the true God!

But even though these people thought they were serving the true God, they weren't. They were **deceived**. They were following after god's that had been invented by the various nations at that time. The Bible is specific. It says the people **forsook the Lord and served Baal**. (Judges 2:13) Two different personalities, not one and the same.

At one time they had knowledge of the true God, but eventually, they lost it and turned to other gods. Baal was just one. There were many more. These people became more and more deceived. They thought they knew who or what God is, but they were deceived, and a deceived person doesn't know he's **deceived**!

Satan - The Great Deceiver

In our society today it's not fashionable to believe in a Creator God, but it's even less so to believe in a devil. Could it be we are overlooking something when we simply apply atrocities to humans, not recognizing there could be a diabolical force behind their actions? Could it be that this unseen evil spirit may be actually behind all the unrest and hostility since man appeared on the earth?

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So, if the God of the Bible says sacrificing children is an **abomination**, which God did they sacrifice to? And which God was pleased with the killing of the innocents? It can be only one. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 it says, "**the god of this world hath blinded...**" In Ephesians 2:2 He's called "the **prince of the power of the air.**" But in Revelation 12:9 he's labeled as none other than "the **Devil and Satan**, which **deceiveth** the whole world." In Revelation 9:11 it describes this being "whose name in the Hebrew tongue is **Abaddon**, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." **Apollyon** means 'destroyer'. Abaddon means destruction' (Young's Concordance)

This is the real god who was pleased with all this destruction and killing. He is the one who **hates** humans. He has deceived a certain segment of population to think otherwise. He would **deceive** humans into thinking it's the God of the Bible, the Creator, but again this God says it never "**entered his mind** and he **hates the killing of innocent people.**"

Just like the Ancients of long ago this Islamic group thought they were sacrificing themselves to the true God, Allah. But whether you call him Allah, Baal, Molech, or some other, it's clearly not the Creator God... the God of the Bible. They were **deceived!**

These young men were misguided by this force to believe they were doing good when in fact it was a great evil. First, they were taught, falsely, that America was the great evil... the great enemy... Satan. Once they had this teaching firmly entrenched in their young minds, then they were led to believe it's ok to **hate** them.

Hate is the beginning. It is the spirit of murder. Occasionally you will hear it said we need to 'hate evil and love good'. (Amos 5:15) But does it follow then that it's ok to hate 'evil' men and love the 'good' ones? Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 5:43, "**Love** your enemies, **bless** them which curse you, **do good** to them that hate you, and **pray** for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Love, bless, do good, and pray for them... that's a tall order. Is there any person in this country, or for that matter the civilized world who can love these young men who did this evil act? It's unlikely. Yet isn't Jesus saying we need to look beyond the persons. Look beyond the people and realize they are only pawns doing what they have been programmed to do.

From birth they have been taught and taught some more to **hate**. Until finally, it's their nature. This is the way they are, and they do what hateful creatures do... **kill** and **destroy**.

But is it the people? Isn't it that what caused the hate? Who influenced them in the first place? Notice what Jesus said in John 8:44. He told these people that wanted to kill him that they were simply doing what **their father** taught them and that was to **murder**. "Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts (desires and over desires) **you will do. He was a murderer** from the beginning..."

Plainly Jesus is saying the real guilty one is Satan and if we murder, we are simply doing as he did... **murder**. And if we hate, it's the start of it all and anyone who does it is a murderer. "Whosoever **hateth** his brother is a **murderer...**" (1 John 3:15) These are strong words, but we must come to see the nature of this problem if we are ever to have a chance of solving it.

Notice how Jesus was able to live up to the words he spoke in John 8:44. When he was hanging on that stake, exhausted and in extreme pain, bleeding to death, some of his final words were, "Father forgive them for **they know not what they do.**" (Luke 23:34)

Can you even begin to imagine that! Here he was dying, beaten, and bloodied beyond recognition by men who had been trained for that purpose. These were soldiers who were accustomed to cruelty. They did not feel any sense of remorse or guilt. This was something they did. This was their job. And yet Jesus said **they didn't know what they were doing.** They were simply following orders!

Jesus knew who was the real source of the anger and hatred. It was not these soldiers, neither was it the angry mob who cried out 'crucify him'. (Mark 15:14) The real source of the anger and hatred was the individual he alluded to the night before in John 14:30... Satan the devil. This was the real power and influence behind it.

Do you think these 19 young men who flew those planes into the **twin towers**, knew what they were doing? No, not any more than what those who killed Christ did. They too were simply following what they had been taught. The 19 young terrorists had been taught to **hate**. They were consumed with it. But hate does not start out as hate. It grows out of a spirit of anger and anger comes from being offended in some way. It can even come from envy and jealousy.

The point of this is that all humanity can be led down this path where hatred, death and destruction are its result. And it all starts in the human heart as a spirit of anger, and if left uncontrolled, it can lead to **hate**.

Jesus said it this way. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that whosoever is **angry** with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment..." (Mat. 5:21-22)

Did Jesus ever get angry? Of course, he did. When he threw the money changers out of the temple, was he angry? You bet! When he called the Pharisees a bunch of 'hypocrites... a generation of vipers', was he angry? (Mat. 23:13-33)

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Yes indeed. But what else did he say of them? He said they were **blind**. (Mat. 25:16,17,19, 24 and 26) He said they were in the same mode as their fathers who **killed** the prophets. (Mat. 23:31-32)

So, did Jesus have a reason to be angry? Was he justified? After all wasn't he the one who sent the prophets in the first place? Yes, he had every right to be angry. But those leaders, to whom he sent the prophets, were angry at the prophets for a different reason, and they **killed** them! They, too, **didn't know what they were doing**.

Today people get angry and stew over things and sometimes it grows into hate to the point of taking another person's life. This kind of anger comes from a different source than from what Jesus expressed. Jesus' anger was because of their **actions and what it was doing to them!**

We too can be angry and should be at times. But let's clearly understand and think about it that our anger is for the right reason. Is it because of the things we humans are doing that is causing all the havoc and calamities? Or is it simply because someone offended us or hurt us? We must be careful. We must come to recognize what anger and hatred can do to us. We must recognize where the source is and what it can do to us. September 11, 2001 is a stark realization of that. Anger and hatred can **destroy us**.

We must come to really see our enemy. It's not other humans even though it's humans who carry out these acts of violence and war. Our real enemy is unseen, and he is active. He's active in society at large, and he's especially active in the Churches. For true Christians it's like a wrestling match. However, for much of the world they are blindly following his (Satan's) lead. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph 6:12)

Furthermore, mankind seems utterly helpless in controlling the anger and hostile nature. It's as if he's a captive, a willing captive, but doesn't know it. Notice what Jesus told the Pharisees and leaders of his day. He indicated to them that they were in bondage, but they could be freed from it. He said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)

They answered him, we be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:33-34)

These people didn't remotely get what Jesus was talking about. They simply were looking at bondage in a physical sense. But Jesus was talking about spiritual bondage. A person given to bursts of anger and hatred is bound to it just like any other sin. Therefore, all the bombs in the world will not eradicate it. Only a change in the heart... a change in the mind, will do.

A Time of Trouble

Will America's response to the terrorist's attack make it go away? It's highly unlikely. A recent journalist commented on his experience in covering terrorist events. He said he'd seen when terrorists kill innocent victims, the government usually responds in like manner. They may kill some of those responsible but usually the government also kills innocent people. Every time this happens a new terrorist is born. And so, the violence escalates. He went on to say the only way terrorism will be eradicated is when we look deeper into the religion and come to grips with why we do these things.

But will America be victorious in its 'war on terrorism'? Many voices in America's churches are saying it depends on whether the nation as a whole repents and turns to God. This most assuredly could be the case. But whether America wins this battle may depend on another factor, one which the world, as well as the churches seem oblivious about. This factor may be the same as what it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah or as in the days of Noah.

In Genesis 18 Abraham is discussing the issue of Sodom with one who claims to have the power to save or destroy it. In the course of the discussion, it came down to how many righteous people there were as to whether the city would survive or not. In Genesis 18:32, "he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." If there would have been ten people there, whom God viewed as righteous, the city would have been spared. But from the Bible record there were not ten. Only Lot and his two daughters were saved, and they were taken out of the city.

In the end of the age, the end of this present society, just before Jesus returns, conditions are going to get quite severe. In Matthew 24:6-8 Jesus foretold, "ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars... but the end is not yet... for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: ... All these are the **beginning of sorrows**." It's just the beginning.

Could it be we are seeing the beginning of something with the terrorist attacks September 11, 2001, to signal just that... "the beginning of sorrows." America may win this bout, but on the other hand, as stated above, how do you win a battle over ideology? How do you change people's hearts and minds from **hatred** to that of **love** for one another. So even if America wins this battle against terrorism, in the long run it only postpones the inevitable. Could it be we are seeing a sampling... the beginning of turbulent times ahead?

In Jeremiah 30:7 it says a time is coming described as "Jacob's Trouble." In Matthew 24:21 Jesus describes this time,

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"For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be..."

This latest bout with terrorism seems to have all the makings of leading up to world upheavals of a magnitude never before possible. Up until September 11, terrorism seemed to plague smaller nations, although America was plagued to some extent. But the latest event was of a magnitude great enough to generate a war.

In a recent news report on '**National Public Radio**', a reporter interviewed some official as saying, "If these terrorists would have had nuclear devices or 'weapons of mass destruction' on September 11, the carnage would have been **far worse**." But think of it. Do these terrorist groups have this potential? Do they possess this capability or are they gaining in their capacity? What about the latest with the Anthrax attacks? What next will it be?

The leader of the fanatical group that attacked the **Twin Trade Center Towers in New York** 'has called it a **religious duty to acquire weapons of mass destruction**'. He is urging all Islam to join in seeking to develop the "Nuclear Bomb of Islam **to fight against the enemies of God**". The worst possible scenario might be on the horizon where a group of fanatics will have weapons of mass destruction and will be driven to believe they are '**pleasing God**' in using them. The unthinkable now becomes thinkable..., maybe a reality!

In Matthew 24:22 Jesus said, "and except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved." ...The world would end in a ball of fire... but **for the elect's sake** those days will be shortened." In Genesis 18, ten righteous people could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah. How many **elect** will it take to spare this world in the future from total destruction? Who are these elect? How is it that they weigh that much in the balance of things that God would intervene in sparing the world?

For years the church has been on radio and television warning this nation and the world in general of a time of great trouble coming. Through all this preaching America and the world have not really turned around and made peace. The world in general is still heading down that path of total destruction unless... unless something changes that course. The only thing this writer sees from scripture to change that course is that God will intervene '**for the elect's sake**' (Matt 24:22)

The Church as the Elect

Today's world is in captivity to that unseen spirit, and peace will not come until that being is removed. Today he (Satan and his demons) occupy an unseen world we humans think little about. We can't see this world now, but we can know how it works. These evil forces are behind all the unrest and all the hostility between nations and neighbor to neighbor.

Paul spoke to newly converted church members, those who were called to a different way of life. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein time past ye walked **according** to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit that now worketh** in the children of disobedience among whom also we had our conversation (conduct) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of **wrath** even as others. (Eph 2:1)

The word 'wrath' comes from the Greek word 'orge' meaning 'anger', indignation, or vengeance'. (Young's Concordance) Did you get that? Paul is saying at one time the converted Christians were children of **anger, indignation, and wrath**. Do people today still operate under those things? You bet, and how! But the church is to be different. Those whom God has called and is working with, is training, is teaching to put away these things.

Notice what Paul told the Ephesians. "Let all bitterness, and **wrath**, and **anger** and clamour, and evil speaking **be put away** from you... (Eph 4:31) Are we there yet? Are all the churches of God, with all their various groups, really working on putting away all the differences and accepting one another in the spirit of true fellowship? Do we truly exhibit the character traits of God's holy spirit when talking about the brethren, no matter what their affiliation is, no matter what 'church of God' corporation, or what splinter group they choose to meet with?

Let's be honest about it. The very fact of all the splits is a result of **unwillingness** to really confront this issue. If we have disagreements do, we exhibit forbearance, longsuffering, mercy, and forgiveness with one another? Or rather do we suspend, disfellowship and shun each other? Do any of these latter character traits have any place in God's church?

Well, you say, "There are times when we must exercise authority to **maintain unity** by sidelining those unsavory elements. This is what God would have us do." Would he? Would God say we are to treat each other this way? What kind of message are we sending to our children?

Recently my grandson was pointing a make-believe gun at something or someone. When I told him we're not to do that, he responded by saying, "grandpa, I'm only shooting monsters." (bad guys). Is this much different than when church leaders say, "we're only **disfellowshipping** the 'bad guys'"?

No, it's very much the same as when those 19 terrorists were taught to **hate**. Hate what? The bad guys... in this case the USA. No, we've got to think deeply about this. Is God really pleased with baring the doors and forbidding brethren from fellowshiping with one another. Just as our ancestors were deceived into thinking they were pleasing God, when

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they were displeasing him, we, too must be careful we're not being **deceived**. Could it be possible the 'Church' today has some of the same blindness Jesus said the Pharisees had? One of the things He (Jesus) said of the Laodiceans was that they are 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and **blind...**' (Rev. 3:17)

When Jesus said, "**Love** your enemies, **bless** them who curse you, **do good** to them that hate you, and **pray for** them that spitefully use you and persecute you...", he was all inclusive. He didn't give us permission to be angry or hate anyone, much less those whom we once called brethren. Anger leads to hate and **hate** is the spirit of **murder**. Again, let's really think about who's children we are when we harbor ill will or shun those of the brotherhood or bar them from fellowshiping.

In this world and in this society leaders and governments operate under a different set of standards and rules from what God's government requires. In the Old Testament God gave rules governing when killing or warfare were to be done. To this writer it was very much like when Moses permitted divorce on certain occasions. But what did Jesus say, "Moses **because of the hardness of your hearts** suffered you to put away your wives: but **from the beginning it was not so...**" (Mat. 19:8)

From the beginning of time, it has been God's intent that humans learn to live in happiness and peace. But it appears evident, God has decreed, man must make a choice. Man has to choose to learn which way he will walk in. Over the centuries you would think it would become clear to him which way works and which way doesn't. The lesson of history, though, is that man still has not learned. Man, still is blind to his captivity.

But again, the **elect** are different. They are operating under different guidelines, different rules of engagement. They are the called, chosen, and faithful. (Matt. 20:16, 22:14, 1 Pet. 2:9, Rev. 17:14) They are truly learning that **God's way** of breaking the **cycle of violence** is the only way that works. If someone treats you wrong or causes you pain, don't retaliate in like fashion. "Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not... Recompense no man evil for evil... If it be possible, as much as lies within you live peaceably with all men... avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink... be not **overcome** with evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:14-21)

This sounds absolutely ridiculous to this world. They simply can't or won't follow these clear instructions. The **elect**, on the other hand, can see it is the **only** way that really will work in bringing peace and maintaining it. The word 'overcome' comes from the Greek word 'nikao' meaning "to gain the victory". (Young's Concordance)

Overcoming surely means rejecting every way that is contrary to God's law. But the context of overcoming in Romans 12:14-21 is that of putting away **anger** and **hatred**. The message to all seven churches in Revelation is the same as what Paul told the Romans. The word 'nikao' is the same one used.

1. **Ephesus** - "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." (Rev. 2:7)
2. **Smyrna** - "He that overcometh shall not be hurt with the second death" (Rev. 2:11)
3. **Pergamos** - "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2:17)
4. **Thyatira** - "He that overcometh... will I give power over the nations." (Rev. 2:26)
5. **Sardis** - "He that overcometh... I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." (Rev. 3:5)
6. **Philadelphia** - "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God" (Rev 3:12)
7. **Laodicea** - "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (Rev. 3:21)

When God sends Christ back to this earth, he will finally put an end to war. He will use his great power to do so. But then he says his government will take over and rule this world. Those who he now calls his **elect** will be ready to start their term in office. They will be the ones trained to **love** instead of **hate**. They will be the ones who have grown in the use of God's spirit of longsuffering and mercy. They are they who will be given the chance to **change the world**. Not by **power** or **might** but by my **spirit** saith the Lord of Hosts. (Zechariah 4:6) Then all nations will learn not to make war and destroy.

So, who are God's **elect**? We say, "well... only God knows." But in Matthew 7:15-20 Jesus said you can know who they are. It's not a mystery. It's by what they are producing. What is the fruit of their doing? In John 13:35 Jesus highlighted the one-character trait that un-mistakenly identifies those that are truly his. He says, "By **this** shall **all** men know that ye are **my disciples, if ye have love one to another**. He says all men can and will know. It's plain to see.

So, what kind of picture does the world have today of the 'Church of God'? Do they see all the various groups intensely interested in each other that we will still drive hundreds of miles a week to fellowship with those of like faith? Or rather are they seeing the many factions as proof positive that we are not that special group Jesus talked about? Does it not appear more like the latter?

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The terrorist action that took place September 11, 2001, should be a wakeup call to each one of us how insidious anger and hatred can be. We in the church ought to see it as high time that we begin **building bridges** to reconcile with each other. It's not that we can't have different thoughts, opinions, or understanding, but the bottom line is that we must be actively working toward the goal of loving each other. We all have things to **overcome**. None of us can say we have no sin. Therefore, none of us have a right to point fingers at anyone. But if we have an attitude of sincere desire to help one another, it will become quite evident to all, who is doing God's will.

Hate is one of the things true Christians must put away and overcome. Those who do will be the ones to teach the world how to in the future. Then the earth will finally find rest. Then "many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and **he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths:** for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war anymore.**" (Isaiah 2:3-4)

Then "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. **They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,** saith the Lord." (Isaiah 65:25)

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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