

Our Passover & Unleavened Bread

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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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1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

Our Passover & Unleavened Bread

(Copyright 04-10-2025) by David Antion (Pasadena, California)

The Churches of God have traditionally placed emphasis on the death of Christ – observing the “night in which He was betrayed.” We do it “in remembrance” of Him as He instructed (1 Corinthians 11:24) “for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s **death** until He comes” (v. 26 NAS).

Editor’s Note:

There is nothing in scripture anywhere showing that Christ changed the date of Passover to be celebrated before his death. All Christ did on the night He was betrayed was to introduce the symbols, bread, wine, foot washing, which He wanted to be done on Passover which is to be celebrated with a meal on the early part of the 15th of Nisan. Common sense would tell most people that you would not remember anyone’s death until after it has taken place. In other words, why are you remembering Christ’s death the night before he died. That was not the purpose of the meal He had with His disciples the night before He died. Laura Lee

The crucifixion of Christ was a major teaching in the early church. Paul wrote, “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Peter wrote, “For Christ also died for our sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). And John wrote, “In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10 NAS).

Jesus’ own words predicted His crucifixion how “The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by elders and chief priests, and they will condemn Him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock Him and spit on Him and scourge Him and kill Him (Mark 8:31; 9:31-32; 10:32-34; John 12:20-36).

The Passover and Lord’s Supper held the symbols of the bread and wine. They symbolized Jesus’ body and blood given for all His disciples and for all mankind who will become His disciples.

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The Feast of Unleavened Bread became associated with the Passover ceremony. There are three main Hebrew words connected to the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. They are 1) Pesah 2) Hag and 3) Massot.

Pesah is the Passover offering that was eaten at night. It is a festival in its own right (Exodus 34:25). Pesah is connected with the Hebrew verb to “protect” in Isaiah 31:5. But in general it means to “skip” or “limp” or “halt.” See 2 Samuel 4:4; 1 Kings 18:21, 26. **Hag** means feast or festival and it is only associated with Passover in Exodus 34:25).

Editor’s Note:

So, unless you can prove that the date of Passover has changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament this would be part of the proof showing that Passover is a Feast of God and does not take place on a non-feast day such as the early part of the 14th of Nisan. Laura Lee

Massot means unleavened bread but when used with “hag” it means Feast of Unleavened Bread. While there is a special designation for the Feast of U.B. it was common to have unleavened bread as part of the standard process of sacrifices (Leviticus 2:11; 6:10; Exodus 23:18).

The linking of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was natural in that the lamb was selected on the 10th day of Nisan and slaughtered on the 14th day of the month “at even.” This phrase “at even” is the Hebrew “ba ereb” and is used in only 11 places in the Bible. They are: Exodus 12:6; 16:12; 29:39, 41; 30:8; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9: 3,5, 11; 28: 4,8. This phrase is often translated as “between the two evenings” or “twilight” which corresponds to our late afternoon. It was the phrase used for the evening sacrifice (Exodus 29:39).

Editor’s Note:

The phrase “between the two evenings” means between Noon and Sunset. The evening sacrifice in the temple was always done between Noon and Sunset. It was never done after Sunset. Laura Lee

Since the Passover was killed on the afternoon of the 14th it was eaten at night on the beginning of the 15th -- what we call “a night to be observed” (Exodus 12:42) It was easy to then apply the term Passover to the beginning of the days of Unleavened Bread. In Ezekiel 45:21, “In the first month on the fourteenth day, you are to observe the Passover, a feast lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast” (NIV). This Feast became one of the “pilgrim feasts” (Deuteronomy 16:16). And in 2 Chronicles 30:1-5, 13, 26 we read how Hezekiah celebrated it in the second month (Numbers 9). And according to the law, he had the Levites and Priests do the sacrificing of the lambs (Deuteronomy 16:5).

Editor’s Note:

Are you then saying that God inspired it to be written in Ezekiel 45:21 that Passover was a Feast of seven days when it actually was not true and the Israelites just made it up? Because that is essentially what you are saying. On the one hand you claim in the Old Testament Passover was called a Feast but now days it is not a Feast. You really can’t have it both ways. Christ died for our sins so that we can live. Why would that not be proclaimed as a Feast Day? Everyone knows that the way Worldwide celebrated Passover they did not esteem it as a Feast Day. They ate unleavened bread during their early 14 celebration and then they went back to eating leavened bread until the first day of unleavened bread which also started the first day of the Feast of Passover for seven days. Yet, scripture throughout the Bible says Passover is a Feast. Passover is a meal that takes place on the very start of the days of Unleavened Bread and you do a disservice to God’s people when you try to make Passover not important enough to be a Feast Day. Passover was the day to be much observed in Exodus because it was the most important Feast in the entire Bible. Laura Lee

Later on, Josiah also celebrated the Passover feast (2 Chronicles 35). In Ezra’s time, they celebrated it also (Ezra 6:19-22). From there it became a very popular celebration even in the time of Jesus.

Since the sacrificial lamb symbolized redemption, it was natural for the New Testament writers to connect it with Christ (John 1:29). Paul called Jesus “our Passover” (1Corinthians 5:7). He so fulfilled the parallels of the Passover lamb to prophecy that not even a bone of His body was broken. See John 19:33-36; Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12).

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Our main task during these days and always, was and is getting rid of the *spiritual* leaven and replacing it with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Christ condemned the hypocrisy of the old leaven (Matthew 23:13-28). For Christians, the spiritual application of the days of Unleavened Bread never ends!

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The Lamb

(Copyright 04-11-2025) by Gary C. Miller (Pocahontas, Arkansas)

“...In the tenth day of this month...take a lamb...” (Ex. 12:3)



PASSOVER LAMB SEPARATED on THE 10TH:

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 on this year's calendar, was Abib 10 when historically the Passover Lamb was separated from the flock and held until the 14th of the month, Passover (Ex. 12:3,6). “And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month Abib, the first month [Deut. 16:1,2] (Ex. 12:6).

KILLED:

“...and kill it in the evening [Ex. 12:6; KJV; of the 14th].”

Should be translated “...kill it Between the Evenings” (Ex. 12:6; also Ex. 30:8; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3,5,11; 28:4,8]

This is the period of while the sun is setting until completely down.

(For Hebrew of Ex. 12:6 see the “Interlinear Heb-Eng Genesis- Exodus”; Berry, p.266; For the word “between” used in the verses listed above, see “Biblical Hebrew”, Mansoor; p. 242)

PASSOVER LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH OF THE FIRST YEAR:

It was to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5).

ENTERS JERUSALEM ON 10TH OF ABIB

(when lamb was taken); a Friday that year, 31 A.D.

Editor's Note:

We believe the year Christ died was 30 A.D. Laura Lee

Riding a donkey, Yahshua enters Jerusalem 5 days before Passover (Jn. 12:1: 6 days before Passover; v. 12 next day: 5 days before Passover: vv. 10,11,12,13,14).

“Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Yahweh [“Lord”; KJV; a quote of Psa. 118:26].

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YAHSHUA, OUR UNBLEMISHED PASSOVER

Yahshua was the unblemished Lamb of Yahweh (Jn. 1:29).

Who did no sin (1 Pet. 1:22).

"For even the Messiah ("Christ"; KJV) our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. 5:7)

Notice Paul omitted the crucifixion day and month. (See, "*Yahshua was Crucified on Wednesday, Abib 15, 31 A.D.*";

Editor's Note:

Christ would have been crucified on Abib 14 and not on the 15th which is Passover/First Day of Unleavened Bread. Scripture clearly shows Christ was crucified on the preparation day for the high day which was Passover/First Day of Unleavened Bread. In 30 AD the 14th of Abib was on a Wednesday with Passover/First Day of Unleavened Bread on a Thursday. Laura Lee

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Root of bitterness + demons = mass shootings
(Copyright 04-15-2025) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

"The question isn't why an all-powerful God allows tragedy to happen; the question is what is wrong with us that we take the freedom God made us with and use it for tragedy?" – Steve Deace

THIS is the column I've been putting off. Through personal experience, I've been forced to study the subject of mass shooters. I knew one. I even traveled with him to events three times and shared motel rooms with him. In the middle of March 2005, he shot and killed seven of my close friends and himself during a church service. I was on my way there, but due to a car problem, my fender wells were packed with ice and snow, so the car bottomed out on every bump in the road. I turned around and went home. It was a miracle. I lived to write another day.

Ironically, on new year's day that year, I had posted a column entitled "Why does God allow such things to happen." To the end of his life, the leader of our church wondered why such a thing happened. Could it be that God allowed it so that some of us could empathize with the victims and survivors of mass shootings? There is an answer.

The apostle Paul warned us not to allow bitterness to take root in our minds.

"... Some commonalities do stand out." A 2016 study published by psychologist Dr. Peter Langman revealed that 82% of the perpetrators of mass shootings came from broken homes with seriously dysfunctional families where 'not just divorce and separation, but also infidelity, substance abuse, criminal behavior, and so on were present. Psychotropic drugs are often involved, and lately, transgenderism (mental illness).

The shooter in our case lived with his divorced mother. He had been bullied on the school bus years ago, something we didn't know. I saw his temper more than once and offended him one time. His defense mechanism was humor, but life for him was not getting any better. And *finally*, we believe he was possessed by a **demon**. A judge's husband had been shot in Chicago a few days before, and the killer drove to Milwaukee. A cop thought he was parked suspiciously and approached him, and the guy committed suicide. Unfortunately, that doesn't kill the demon. And it looks for someone else to possess. We believe it found Terry a few miles away, and the rest is history. A few days later an Indian school in

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northern Minnesota was shot up, probably by the same demon. The shootings in 2022 ought to convince us that America needs a great spiritual Awakening. If not now, WHEN?

P.S. What was the homicide rate per thousand before Roe v. Wade, and after? I believe there is a partial causation in violent crimes. Human life is no longer considered sacred.

PPS: For survivors of shootings and for friends and families of the victims, the combined words of Herrick, Herbert, Hood, and Cowper (paraphrased).

FOR ANYONE GRIEVING

My Shepherd is the God of Love, and He's your Shepherd too.
Are you apart from one you love?
No warmth, no ease, no butterflies, no trees?
Methought, I heard One calling "Child."
And I replied "Adonai, el Shaddai,
Sweet Spirit comfort me, O God above."
And He replied, "I move in mysterious ways, My wonders to perform;
I plant my footprints on the beach, and ride upon the storm,
So, focus on Me, not your enemies."
And I replied, on bended knees, "The God of Love my Shepherd is."

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Living on the Resurrection Side of the Cross

(Copyright 04-17-2025) by Eddie Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)



Throughout history the Church has emphasized the passion, the sufferings, and the death of Christ on the Cross, and thus highlighting the sufferings and sorrow of earthly existence. This is well and good, but we must not park there. There is the other side of the Cross—the Resurrection side—that we must embrace and live in.

On the suffering side of the Cross, the disciples of Jesus, as depicted in the Gospels, are dull, fearful, and selfish, even arguing over who will be the greatest in the kingdom. On the Resurrection side of the Cross, as depicted in Acts,

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everything has changed. They are now alive, insightful, and fearless as they proclaim the Good News of Jesus and His Resurrection. They are living on the Resurrection side of the Cross.

I have preached at the funerals of my father, my mother, and two brothers. In each case, I experienced, not just a sense of comfort, but a sense of jubilant triumph because of the Resurrection of Jesus. Living on the Resurrection side of the Cross makes all the difference in the world when facing death.

Living on the Resurrection side of the Cross also makes all the difference when facing devastating situations in life. In the early days of our marriage and ministry, Sue and I lost everything, including a place to live. A God-given vision and ministry seemed to have died.

One day, however, as we prayed, the Holy Spirit rose up in me and began praying through me in tongues. I could actually feel His presence flowing up from my spirit and out through my mouth. All the time this was happening I was hearing these words, “Don’t be afraid of death because I Am the Resurrection.”

I immediately recalled that these were the words Jesus spoke to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus after He had said to her, “Your brother will live again.” Martha had replied, “I know He will live again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus then said, “I Am the Resurrection” and proceeded to raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11:23-25).

Through this encounter, God was calling me to live on the Resurrection side of the Cross. I also realized for the first time that the Resurrection is more than just a past or future event. The Resurrection has been personified in the person of Jesus Christ. Our resurrected Lord is now living in His people through the person and power of the Holy Spirit.

After the above experience, we listened, persevered, and took a step of faith. A Catholic brother whom we had never met was sent our way and made a building available to us. We opened the doors, and a powerful revival broke out. The building quickly filled to capacity with standing room only. Out of death, Resurrection life had burst forth!

The New Testament Church knew nothing of an Easter Sunday. They did not celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus once per year. Read Acts! They were consumed with the reality that Jesus was alive and His Resurrection was the center of their life and the daily focus of their witness and preaching. They lived on the Resurrection side of the Cross.

I pray that this Resurrection season the modern Church will experience a renewed vision of the significance and magnitude of Christ’s Resurrection. I pray that once again the people of God will live on the Resurrection side of the Cross.

Editor’s Note:

Easter is a pagan holiday. God’s true church keeps Passover. Laura Lee

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Why Jesus Appeared First to a Woman After His Resurrection

(Copyright 04-17-2025) by Eddie Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)



During the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus appeared to His disciples at various times and on one occasion appeared to over five hundred of His followers at once (I Corinthians 15:3-7).

The gospel writers, however, are very explicit in noting that it was Mary Magdalene to whom He appeared FIRST after His resurrection. The importance which the evangelists attach to this fact indicate that it was no accidental occurrence, but that Jesus purposely appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

A Revolutionary Act

Jesus not only appeared first to Mary, but He sent her forth as the first herald and witness of His resurrection, the most important event of human history. This was revolutionary because in both Roman and Jewish courts of law, the testimony of women was not allowed as evidence.

It was revolutionary because the orthodox Jewish man of this time normally began his day with a prayer that included thanks to God that he was not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. By appearing first to Mary, and not Peter, James or John, Jesus was cutting through the cultural prejudice towards women in His male disciples and forever affirming the gifts and callings of women.

Therefore, in appearing first to Mary Magdalene, Jesus was making a very important statement to His followers. It was a statement, perhaps, that they could not have grasped and retained by a mere lecture. This statement was further clarified and enhanced by the words which Jesus spoke to her on this occasion.

Mary Receives the First Apostolic Commission from the Risen Lord

When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, He gave her certain, specific instructions. Matthew 28:10 records His words to Mary: "Go and tell my brethren...."

In other words, He sent her on a specific mission defined by the words, "Go and tell." Interestingly, the New Testament word apostle literally means "one who is sent" or "a sent one." Mary, therefore, was a "sent one" and as such received the first apostolic commission from the Risen Lord.

Her commission was to go and tell the other disciples that Jesus was risen. What is preaching but telling about Jesus and His resurrection? A perusal of the book of Acts will, in fact, reveal that the essence of the preaching message of the early church was Jesus and the resurrection.

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Mary, therefore, received the first apostolic commission to preach the good news of the resurrection. And notice that her commission was not limited to a "women's ministry," for Jesus instructed her to "Go and tell My brethren." She, in effect, became the apostle to the apostles.

By appearing first to Mary Magdalene and giving her an apostolic commission, Jesus was saying that His death and resurrection had ushered in a new era of freedom for all of humanity. He was saying that sexism and racism would not be tolerated in His kingdom. Paul echoes this in his letter to the Galatians saying that *in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek ... there is neither male nor female* (3:28).

True Revival Elevates Women

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent back the Holy Spirit to take His place (John 14-16). The Holy Spirit thus carries on the work of distributing gifts and callings to women as well as to men,

This is why, during times of spiritual awakening, when the Holy Spirit is honored and recognized, women emerge alongside men in ministry and leadership. This phenomenon has been documented by Dr. Susan Hyatt in her groundbreaking book, *In the Spirit We're Equal (Second Edition)*,

She shows how this was true in the 18th century Methodist revival where John Wesley had to deal with the fact that women were being anointed to preach and lead as well as men. He finally yielded to the reality of what the Spirit was doing and began giving his approval to women preachers.

Wesley came to the realization that the authority to minister is rooted in one's possession of a divine call or gift and ordination is simply the Church's recognition of that gift. When asked why he gave recognition to women preachers, Wesley replied, "Because God owns them in the conversion of sinners, and who am I that I should withstand God."

We Must Not Quench the Spirit

Based on a faulty interpretation of two passages by Paul about women, much of the church has ignored Jesus' powerful resurrection statement and refused to recognize the gifts of its female members. In doing so they have also violated Paul's command in I Thessalonians 5:19 not to quench the Spirit.

As a result of this disobedience, many gifts have lain dormant while millions have perished without Christ and the Church has languished in defeat. The Great Commission has not been fulfilled and the Lord's coming has been delayed. It is thus time for the Church to allow the gifting of the Spirit rather than religious tradition to determine who should "go and tell."

If the Church will be open to God's gifts in both women and men this decade might yet see the greatest Spiritual awakening yet known. Psalm 68:11 might yet be fulfilled which, in the Hebrew, literally says, *The Lord gave the word and a great company of women proclaimed it.*

Jesus appeared FIRST to Mary Magdalene to affirm every woman who has ever heard His call to "Go and Tell."

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Devil-Worship Decrees – Unconstitutional: Mock “June” Brides!

(Copyright 05-10-2025) by Richard Frates (Easley, South Carolina)

JUNE-Defiled - Why? Homosexuals Mock Marriage. FIRST AMMENDMENT: Prohibits congress and judges from

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establishing religion. “Separation of church and state.” Driven by Devil-Media, lawmakers, and judges - unconstitutionally - have established - **Devil-Worship as America’s State Religion.** Honoring what God decreed evil is Devil-Worship and competing with God for sinners.

Jesus Christ said, “By your words you will be acquitted or condemned” Matthew 12:37. “Death and Life are in the power of the tongue” Proverbs 18:21. Christians and Jews call for national repentance, instead of inviting homosexuals parading sin against God to church.

Republicans, conservatives, lawmakers, and judges: Free Americans and their children, from imposed Devil-Worship. **REVOKE THESE TWO - Devil-Worship decreed:**

1 - Five democratic party judicial snakes: Effectively said, “I worship the Devil, all must do the same.” To Justify it they themselves falsely decreed “same sex marriage” constitutional. That is **MOCKING MARRIAGE** and **BLASPHEMY AGAINST GOD.** **That will remove God’s blessings from America.** Congress should have removed those judges for promoting Devil-Worship in America. And outlawed the madness of judges, creating law and rewriting our constitution. What madness is next? Bestiality is constitutional. Transgender Honor as Constitutional. Dr Frankenstein cannot change gender. That medical malpractice should be outlawed.

2 - Double Blasphemy “JUNE” Decreed “Pride” of Homosexuals perverts making marriage month. Democrat President Bill Clinton and the Devil’s beloved President Biden decreed - JUNE - America’s PRIDE of homosexual perverts on parade month. These diabolic decrees “unconditionally” force Devil-Worship on men, women, and children captives in the classroom. Again “honoring what God decreed evil is Devil-Worship - Leviticus 20:13. **President Trump, Congress, Governors, and State Lawmakers: Counter national Devil-Worship decree with these two decrees.**

1-A, Same Sex Marriage is MOCKING MARRIAGE: And **BLASPHEMY** against GOD and is outlawed in the states. Except in states where lawmakers agree with the five, Supreme judicial Snakes, and unconstitutionally, approve Devil-Worship for that State.

1-B, Or - President Trump consider this executive order instead: No Judge, Lawmaker, educator, or state official is to impose their sexual practices or the sexual lifestyles of others on anyone or in K-12 education. That is “first amendment constitutional.” Supreme court forced honor for “same sex marriage” nationwide Devil-Worship Religion, is NOT Constitutional.

2-A “JUNE” is God ordained marriage month: And Matthew 19:4 honored Sacred scripture of JUNE. “The Creator made them male and female and decreed, for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. And the two will become one flesh.” We become one in our children. That should be K-12 education. Instead - **LGBT sexual indoctrination of children rules nationwide.**

2-B, Ban sex education K-12. State this publicly - Send a boy or girl to school, Dr Frankenstein’s child comes home. Diabolic seeds of multiple sexual perversion planted in children, crowds out God given innocence.

Making these executive orders will fish out the Devil’s faithful they will be screaming like Tasmanian Devils Worldwide. Will the Supreme court rule 1-B is unconstitutional when it is obviously “constitutional.”

Jesus Christ preached “repent” to warn of Judgment Day and save sinners Luke 13:1-5. **Nondiscrimination law” “hate crime” law and “same sex marriage” law preaches “the Devil’s Gospel” do not repent parade sin against God instead. The evil motive:** For “nondiscrimination” law: License homosexuals to parade sin against God, “discriminate” against those who will believe God, and pander for black votes.

PERFECT NONDISCRIMINATION LAW: The greatest two commandments Matthew 22:37-38. **The first commandment** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart.” How? Fear God instead of - Devil-Media and Judicial snakes who honor evil as good: If God’s word is not the anchor of your conscious Devil-Media will be your conscious. 8:44: The Devil is a “murderer” “when he lies, he speaks his native language” that describes the democratic party!

The second great commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” That eliminates resentment, and racism. “As

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yourself” means consider a white person as black “as yourself” and a black person as white “as yourself.”

Misdirected Love from neighbor to religion and the state: Blinds hearts and minds. Many love their religion to such an extent they can no longer obey God and “love your neighbor as yourself.” An obvious example “**Love your neighbor as yourself**” is **against Muslim law**. Muslims misdirected love for neighbor law - is “Honor my Muhammad or I kill you and your children. Pray - [Muslims Reform](#).”

The State is Democratic Party RELIGION: Misdirected love from neighbor to democratic party control of the state. A thief or murderer irrelevant as long as you are a democrat. But democrats hate and would feel justified murdering republicans. Democratic party in control of America: Subjecting all to democratic party policy, and doctrine is – HELL - but to democratic party faithful - HEAVEN.

Perfect two “nondiscrimination” laws: 1- No lawmaker, judge, state official or educator is to impose their sexual practices or the sexual lifestyles of others on anyone. 2- In court all are the same race. No one is to be rewarded or condemned or “discriminated” against based on race. ***That will take money out of the white is racist and black is not, pander for black votes, uncivil civil rights law.*** Then blacks playing victim and charging racism and their damned lawyers, like vultures will fly away. **No money will disarm, loudly playing offended black racist.** God have mercy on America and shine light and truth on deep darkness and deception that infests the hearts of many.

Praise God: His sacrifice for sin has been given. The Son of God, Crucified saves from sin and death. Jesus Christ is the great Light that shines today and beyond the grave. Forward to President Trump.

A Romanized Expression of Christianity?

(Copyright 05-12-2025) by Eddie Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)

*Tracing the Roots of the Pomp and Ceremony
Surrounding the Choosing of a New Pope*



The world seemed mesmerized with the magnificent pomp and ceremony surrounding the announcement of Cardinal Robert Prevost as the next pope. In the excitement of it all, Catholic news journalists found themselves declaring religious dogma rather than objectively reporting the news. One Fox News reporter, for example, could not contain his excitement, and gushed forth calling the new pope, “the direct descendant of Saint Peter.”

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There is, of course, no biblical basis for such pomp and ceremony, nor for the pope being the successor of Peter.

Jesus spoke against the use of special outward clothing and titles for self-promotion. He warned Peter and the other apostles,

But you, do not be called “Rabbi”: for One is your teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your “father;” for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called “teachers;” for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant (Matthew 23:8-11).

In the New Testament, we find no sign of hierarchy in the leadership of the church. Words that carried connotations of authority such as *archon* (ruler), *timē* (rank), and *despot* (master) are used of Jewish and secular rulers but are glaringly missing in regard to Christian leaders.

Instead, the word *diakonos* is used for Christian leaders and it is a word that means “servant” and carries no connotations of status, rank or authority. This means that the pomp and pageantry of the modern Roman Catholic Church cannot be traced to Jesus and the New Testament, but to Constantine and imperial Rome.

The Source of the Pomp and Pageantry Surrounding the Pope

When the Roman emperor, Constantine, converted to Christianity in 312, he began bestowing special favors on the Christians. He built magnificent buildings for their gatherings and made elevated throne-like seating for the bishops. He also began funding the salaries of the bishops. The church obviously had an impact on the emperor, but the emperor seems to have had an even greater impact on the church.

Constantine convened, at government expense, a church council that became known as the Council of Nicaea. Although he had not been baptized, Constantine opened this council and intervened in the discussions of the bishops at certain points. The most widely read Roman Catholic theologian in the world today, the late Dr. Hans Kung, wrote,

Constantine used this first council not least to adapt the church organization to the state organization. The church provinces were to correspond to the imperial provinces, each with a metropolitan and a provincial synod. In other words, the empire now had its imperial church (Hyatt, *Apostolic Leadership*, 50-51).

This was the Romanizing of Christianity. The bishop of Rome now had special status afforded to him by the emperor. This status would be greatly increased when, in 330, Constantine moved the capital of the empire from Rome to the town of Byzantine located in present day Turkey. Constantine renamed the town Constantinople, after himself. It is today known as Istanbul.

The power vacuum left in Rome by the removal of all the governmental apparatus from Rome to Byzantine was filled by the bishop of Rome who began to make his claim that he was the successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles, and the head of all Christendom.

The Fabled “Donation of Constantine”

In the eighth century a fable began to be used by the popes and the Roman Church that supported and enhanced those

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claims. This fable, known as “The Donation of Constantine,” is now recognized as a myth by both Catholic and Protestant historians. Nonetheless, it served its purpose in infusing the papacy with imperial pomp and authority.

According to this fable, Constantine, the persecutor of Christians, was smitten with leprosy and then healed by Pope Silvester who also converted him and baptized him. When Constantine later decided to move the capital to Constantinople without papal approval, he soon realized his sin and came and prostrated himself before Pope Silvester. When his sin was forgiven, he then moved the capital to Constantinople with the pope’s consent.

According to this myth, before departing, Constantine bestowed on Silvester the right to wear the Roman imperial insignia and robes and bequeathed to him Rome and all the provinces and cities in Italy and the western regions. In other words, Constantine bestowed on the Roman bishop a kingly royalty and authority like that of an emperor over all the cities and churches of the West.

Popes latched on to this fable and it became the basis for the papal throne and the pope’s royal insignia, garments, entourage and crown. It became the basis for popes exercising civil as well as spiritual authority.

In addition, the story implied that Constantine had received his authority for establishing the Byzantine empire of the East from the bishop of Rome. This was used by later popes to claim universal authority over all churches everywhere, even those of Byzantine.

Found to be False

It was not until the 15th century that this story was challenged by the Catholic official and historian, Lorenzo Valla. The Donation of Constantine is now widely recognized, even by Catholic historians, as fictitious. Nonetheless, it served its purpose in providing a powerful argument for the medieval popes to further their claims of universal preeminence and authority.

Indeed, after Constantine, the Romanizing of the church continued, leading the historian, Rudolph Sohm, to say, “The constitution of the Church was, in the main, modeled on the organization of the Empire.” And the late Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens admitted,

When I was young the Church was presented to us as a hierarchical society: it was described as “juridically perfect,” having within itself all the powers necessary to insure and promote its own existence. This view reflected an image of the Church which was closely modeled on civil, and even military, society (Hyatt, *Infallible Pope: Key to Unity or Source of Division*, 29).

After Constantine, the bishops were generally looked upon as the successors of the apostles and the bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter, the chief of the apostles. They began dressing in imperial regalia, surrounded by Romish pomp and ceremony. This was based, not on Scripture, but on Roman imperial custom and law. Kung has commented on this, saying,

Bishops were accorded secular titles, insignia and privileges which up to then had been reserved for the emperor or high officials: candles, incense, a throne, shoes, the maniple, the pallium and so on (Hyatt, *Apostolic*

Leadership, 49-50).

So, the grandiose ritual and ceremony that we have observed in the choosing of a new pope is clearly rooted in ancient, imperial Rome, not in Jesus and the New Testament.

Consider Ourselves

But before we become too critical, we must come down off our own religious thrones and consider to what degree we have been impacted by modern culture. To what degree are we preaching an "Americanized" Gospel that has more in common with Hollywood and Wall Street than with Jesus and the New Testament?

There is plenty of room for repentance in Protestantism as well as Catholicism. Let us, therefore, pray for the new pope and pray that during the next decade there will be a return to Jesus and the New Testament throughout the universal church. We have the promise of Joel 2:28, repeated by Peter in Acts 2:17,

And it shall come to pass in the last days," says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, and on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out of My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.

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<http://www.godstowomen.org/>

The year the tree trimmer gave the commencement address at Yale (Copyright 05-12-2025) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

Y'ALL probably wonder what I'm doing up here, eh? Well, all the invited speakers got rejected by the cancel culture, and I said I could fill in today and Yale was really hard up for a speaker, so here we are. I want to open with a quotation by Al McGuire, coach of the Marquette *Warriors* (if I can say that):

"I think everyone should go to college . . . and then spend six months as a bartender and six months as a cab driver. Then they would really be educated."

Ironically, many of y'all *will* be tending bar or driving a cab after all this "pomp and circumstance." You have dumped tons of filthy lucre into your "education," but some of you still don't know what you want to DO with your life. That's why I'm here. The title of this little chat is "Get out of the house and climb a tree or something." The subtitle is "If you already have a job lined up, are you SURE that's what you really *want to do* with the rest of your life?"

What I have here is a little book that was written over a hundred years ago by a housewife in the northwestern part of the country. The cover is long gone, but the binding is mostly holding together, so I'm going to read a few paragraphs. It starts out like this, quote:

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I always laugh when I think of Agnes, the child of long lines of professorial people, early slated for more of the same thing. But Agnes hated Greek, loathed Latin, and as for higher mathematics, she wasn't there at all. She failed in college after college until a family member asked her a dumb question:

"Well Agnes, what do you want to do?" and Agnes said she "wanted to cook."

Poor child, no one in her family had ever had to cook, but when her shocked parents recovered, they offered to send her to a school for "Household Arts" (which was once called Homemaking 101). If you want to see Agnes today, you'll have to go to one of the fanciest tea-rooms in the country, where she's responsible for feeding hundreds of people every day. And Agnes loves it.

We cannot afford to divide ourselves into two compartments, one for work and one for pleasure. Our work must *be our pleasure!* The quality we put into our work is too sensitively affected by our attitude toward it, and the reaction on ourselves is too intense for such a division to be other than highly injurious to both. We must do the work that is a pleasure to do, the work that – even if it wears us to the bone – provides a *joyous wearing*.

And no matter how dimly obscured your gift is, or how humble its first employment, if you work from it as a starting point, you will soon have a song in your heart.

A true dealer in music will catch the liquid notes of a lark or the swishing sounds of a falling brook.

But when we traffic in someone else's business, what contribution does the common day make? You've taken up music because the family urged it, but off in the country do you revel in a lark's notes or a babbling brook? Not a bit; you're engrossed in a new barn and wondering about the construction of the rounding roof. We need carpenters too, you know. I heard about an English professor who gave up his tenure to go into climbing trees. Which brings me to the personal part of this story:

I was born to raise hay, growing up on a dairy farm that had the babbling brook, the singing birds, and also the "joyous work" that makes for a good night's sleep. But between milking cows or driving a tractor, I never had time to climb a tree. My family had expectations, quite rationally, that I would stay on the farm and keep the herd together. The problem was, I won two college scholarships and felt obligated to use at least a part of the providence. The main thing I wanted to "learn" is whether this country boy from out in the middle of nowhere could keep up with the city boys at the University we called Berkeley East. I also attended a small Christian college that we called a college for small Christians.

But a funny thing happened on my way to a degree. I needed a summer job if I were to afford another year of college (we didn't have Pell grants or government loans in those days), and the only job I could find was working for a tree expert company. The pay was \$1.75 an hour and they sent you up a tree as soon as you got to the first job site.

At that moment I knew what I wanted to do the rest of my life, herd or no herd, scholarships or not! So I became an arborist by profession and did some writing on the side.

An aspiring artist once was heard bragging about his future. A wet blanket told him, "I see no such gift in you," and the young art student says:

"It isn't important that you should – only that I DO!" And he was right (I was once told that I wasn't a very good writer).

Which brings me back to this century-old book: "You've cold-bloodedly decided to become an artist, as artists run in your blood, and it's expected, but freed from the studio, do you see colour everywhere? NO. You see that there are fine truck gardening opportunities in a neighboring bottom-land – if only the *'family'* wouldn't have a fit over a truck gardener in its midst – a **FARMER!** [end quote].

WELL, that's my address, but I want to conclude with some words written by the president of your school, Yale University.

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"Your ancestors, who leaned on the arm of God and walked in the sunshine of the Scriptures, laid here such foundations of human happiness under His guidance as were probably never laid elsewhere. In their establishment of rational freedom and just government, in their schools and their colleges, in their churches and their worship, in their exemplary life and their fervent prayers, they left a glorious inheritance to you.

"On this stock you have lived and become rich, and the fund, though impaired by waste and negligence, is still large, Wantonly squandered it may vanish in a year, but carefully husbanded it may last for ages. Would you provide for your children as your ancestors provided for you?

"Would you secure the favor and blessings of God? Would you escape the woes, denounced and executed on an unbelieving and profligate world? Then at the fireside, in the street, in the court of justice and in the legislature, **BE AND BE SEEN TO BE THE FRIENDS AND FOLLOWERS OF GOD . . .**

"If you contend manfully you will be more than conquerors; if you yield, both you and your children are undone. Let me at the same time warn you that your enemies are numerous, industrious and daring, full of subtlety and zeal. Some of them are your own brethren, endeared to you by all the ties of nature. The contest is therefore fraught with hazard and alarm.

"Were it a war of arms you would have little to dread, but it is a war of arts, of temptations, of enchantments, a war against the magicians of Egypt, in which no weapons will prevail but Moses' 'rod of God.' Fear not; the Christian world rises daily in prayer to heaven. The host of sleeping saints calls to you from the grave and bids you **Godspeed. May you and your children to a thousand generations rise and call YOU blessed."**

P.S. Those are the words of Timothy Dwight, Yale president from 1795 to 1817, spoken on January 7, 1801 from a pulpit. He was also the pastor of the campus church. It's an example of the way one man's words sparked a "revolution" – the Second Great Awakening of the United States (quoted in *DECISION* magazine, September 1961).

If such words were spoken at an Ivy League commencement this year, would the Yalies be able to make heads or tails of them?

PSS: May America wake up and have a great Memorial Day this year.

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How to Conduct Ourselves as Ambassadors for Christ

(Copyright 05-21-2025) by David F. Maas (Charlotte, North Carolina)

To the members of God's church in Philippi, the apostle Paul writes, "For our citizenship is in heaven" ([Philippians 3:20](#)). While some may spiritualize this fact away, Paul's words come across as literal and real to those who understand that [God](#) has called us out of this world ([John 15:19](#)) and transferred us into His Kingdom ([Colossians 1:13](#)).

Having our citizenship in the [Kingdom of God](#) by definition makes us aliens in the physical country in which we live. Like ambassadors of a foreign government, we cannot participate in the politics of another country, a practice that would distract us from our real spiritual goal. However, we realize the apostle Paul has challenged us to be ambassadors for Christ: "Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" ([II Corinthians 5:20](#)).

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Do we have what it takes to be ambassadors of [Jesus Christ](#)? Do any of us know what an ambassador is supposed to do, or how an ambassador should behave? Do we know how an ambassador is expected to interface with the various publics with which he comes into contact?



A Real Ambassador

I met my first ambassador in the late 1980s in Pasadena, California, when a fellow Ambassador College faculty member introduced me to the Press and Cultural Consulate of Finland, Mr. Jaako Bergquist. I struck up an informal conversation with him, mentioning I had lived and taught in a Finnish community up in Moose Lake, Minnesota. Since the faculty member had previously told Ambassador Bergquist that I hosted a classical music program on KBAC, the college radio station, I also informed him that Jean Sibelius—a Finn—was my favorite composer.

A week later, my colleague and I were invited to a get-together at the consulate's home in Beverly Hills. I had no idea what to expect, but I counted it as an opportunity to learn a little bit more about the diplomatic community. Through this, as well as other later encounters, I gained a better insight into what an ambassador does. Subsequently, I have had several opportunities to talk with Dr. Zion Evrony, the Israeli Consul General to the Southwest Region, when he visited Longview and Tyler, Texas.

A consulate, incidentally, is a branch embassy headed by a Consul General and many junior consuls. The Israeli Consulate for the American Southwest region, for example, is based in Houston. Its service area includes Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. It does not have the same kind of diplomatic immunity as the main embassy in the nation's capital, but it is a real branch of an embassy, carrying on the same business that an embassy does.

Consulates are found in every major city, conducting the business of the countries they represent within the regional spheres of influence of those cities. We might draw a parallel between the embassy of a foreign country and the churches

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of God (whose real citizenship and headquarters are in heaven). The main embassies of Finland and Israel are located in Washington, DC, but consulates are found in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and a number of other major metropolitan areas.

We could consider one of God's embassies to be the headquarters of one of the churches of God, with the leading pastor or evangelist serving as the Chargé d'Affaires or the Consul General. The branch consulates are the individual, outlying congregations with their members serving as junior consuls. Every baptized church member's home could be designated as a branch consulate for the Kingdom of God. Realizing that we are members of God's diplomatic corps, it is important to know how to behave as diplomats.

The first thing that impressed me at the get-together was the humble and gracious attitude and manner of our host, Jaako Bergquist. Mr. Bergquist assumed the position of a humble servant or steward, looking after the interests of his country, as well as serving and helping people like me to learn more about his country and its culture. For example, when he learned about my classical music radio program, he asked me if I would like to receive some musical recordings. Later that week, I received a package of fifteen long-playing records containing the complete symphonic works of Jean Sibelius. We played these recordings many times over KBAC and KBAU (as it was later redesignated).

Jaako Bergquist was not a glad-handed super-salesman for his country but more of an accommodating steward practicing what the apostle Paul counsels us to observe in [Philippians 2:4](#): "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Accordingly, the Finnish diplomat did not seem to be self-interested in the least but always interested in supplying the needs of others, actively esteeming others more than himself (verse 3).

A Cultural Representative

A member of the diplomatic community realizes his extreme vulnerability as a minority member of a majority alien culture. Like it or not, that role fits all of us. In such a position, a diplomat must be circumspect in all his words and activities, careful not to offend his hosts or bring disrepute upon his homeland.

I was amazed at how many of the qualifications of an elder or overseer Paul lists in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) Jaako Bergquist possessed, including hospitality, teaching ability, having his home in tip-top order, and exercising temperance and [self-control](#). Like a busy switch engine in the Union Pacific freight yard, the industrious ambassador constantly moved from guest to guest, linking people together with common interests. At one point during the evening, he made sure I became acquainted with the Program Director of KUSC, a classical music station run by the University of Southern California. Later, he introduced me to an elderly couple from Esko, Minnesota, who had lived close to the community where I used to teach.

He made available, but did not push, the culture of Finland, somewhat like the philosophy of the Hershey Chocolate Company, which at one time relied largely on goodwill and word of mouth to advertise its products.

Occasionally, we may be afforded opportunities to assist other church of God groups with a special need. Not long ago, a local minister was somewhat vexed by intruders from other groups attempting to persuade members of his flock about the Nisan 15 [Passover](#). [Sabbath.org](#)—one of our church's websites—contains a series of abstracts on sermons that thoroughly examine the subject. After downloading and printing these sermon abstracts, I dropped them off at the local minister's office on my way home from work. I reassured him that I did not want to proselytize or steal sheep, but only wanted to provide resources to help him defend his flock. To what extent he used those documents or how deeply his curiosity was piqued, I do not know, but he expressed a great deal of gratitude for those resources, promising that he would bookmark our site.

Editor's Note:

Scripture takes precedence over what other people teach including myself. Instead of studying material that others have written, study your Bible instead. Scripture clearly shows in many places that Passover is on Nisan 15 from the beginning and has not been changed. Passover and Unleavened Bread are the same Holy Day season, which lasts for seven days. Laura Lee

Another of our websites, [BibleTools.org](#), provides another non-threatening resource to the greater church of God and [the world](#) at large, providing a lavish smorgasbord of truth and choice spiritual meat for those starving for understanding.

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Just pointing people to these resources can be a diplomatic way of availing others of the culture of the Kingdom of God.

At the Consulate's get-together in Beverly Hills, there were gentle but ubiquitous reminders that we guests were at a Finnish party: abundant Finnish food, Finnish vodka, Finnish artwork, murals and paintings of Finnish lakes and forests—reminding me of northern Minnesota and of northern Wisconsin—Finnish books, and Finnish symphonic and folk music playing over speakers throughout the residence. I became extremely homesick for Suomi or Finland—and I am not even Finnish!

Gracious Speech

Besides humility and hospitality, Mr. Bergquist demonstrated diplomacy and [wisdom](#), speaking very circumspectly, carefully considering the consequences of what he said, extremely careful not to injure the feelings of others needlessly. Later, while comparing notes, my colleague mentioned that he never heard Jaako Bergquist or any other member of the diplomatic community let his personal feelings enter the discussion. He merely repeated the official position of his country.

Likewise, we junior consuls of God's Kingdom need to keep our pet opinions to ourselves (or at least qualify them as our own pet opinions). However, we must be knowledgeable of His Word on any given subject, being ready to give an answer ([1 Peter 3:15](#)). In addition, our words must model the gracious speech of our Elder Brother, who in [John 14:10](#) says, "The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."

Without scriptural backing, our personal opinions are essentially useless hot air. Consequently, as diplomats of God's government, we must learn to submerge our own feelings, being quick to listen and slow to speak, reflecting Jesus' half-brother's admonition in [James 1:19](#).

The apostle Paul was perhaps one of the most skillful diplomats the world has ever seen. In [1 Corinthians 10:32-33](#), he explains his task when he meets diverse peoples and cultures:

Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God [perhaps during the current scattering the most difficult task of all], just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Paul's mentor in diplomatic skills, Jesus Christ, had earlier proclaimed, "Woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" ([Matthew 18:7](#)). Some of us have been past masters at creating [offenses](#), being wise as doves and harmless as serpents! As Christ's ambassadors, we must [repent](#) of such behavior.

If we want to follow the example of the master diplomat, the apostle Paul, schooled under both Jesus Christ and Gamaliel, we should look at a significant encounter he had with the philosophers at Athens in Acts 17. To begin, Paul paid the Athenians a compliment: "Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious'" ([Acts 17:22](#)).

If we were to read between the lines, Paul might be saying, "You Athenians are to be commended for your devotion to spiritual things." The King James' rendering of "religious" as "superstitious" exposes the latter word as having undergone what linguists call semantic drift. In Shakespeare's day and King James' time, this word did not have the negative connotation that it does now.

From the context of this account, it is plain that the apostle Paul was not, as some theologians like to characterize him, a feisty, wrangling, argumentative hothead. The men of Athens, who vastly outnumbered Paul and loved a good philosophical debate, could have made short work of any know-it-all smart aleck. The apostle Paul was thus lavish in his compliments.

Throughout his ministry, he frequently resorted to diplomatic language. At one point, he acknowledged a cultural debt both to the Greeks and to barbarians ([Romans 1:14](#)). In addition to complimenting strangers, Paul continually sought out similarities he shared with other groups. In a conflict in which both the Sadducees and the Pharisees were breathing fire down his neck, Paul masterfully ingratiated himself to the Pharisees, reminding them that he and they shared the same view on the resurrection ([Acts 23:6-8](#)). Paul, to the right people, let it be known that he was a Roman citizen ([Acts](#)

16:37-39; 22:25-29).

Common Ground

We also need to find common ground, not only with people in the other groups of the church of God, but with the world at large, emphasizing (like mountains) the things we agree upon and de-emphasizing (like molehills) the things we disagree upon.

In the process of finding common ground, we dare not compromise our core values or syncretize them with the world. Instead, we should practice more of what the late church of God minister, Sherwin McMichael, counseled: "You don't have to tell all you know." Oftentimes, keeping our traps shut is the most diplomatic behavior of all ([Ecclesiastes 3:7](#); [Lamentations 3:28-29](#); [Amos 5:13](#)).

In [Acts 17:23](#), the apostle Paul deliberately builds a bridge of common understanding and similarity, referring to something the Athenians already understood:

For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the one whom you worship without knowing [a more proper rendering than "ignorantly," another word that has also undergone semantic drift] Him I proclaim to you."

Later, in verse 28, Paul again seeks common ground by quoting from their own literature: "For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'"

The important thing to remember is that the apostle Paul started at the Athenians' current level of understanding, continually finding commonalities between himself and his audience upon which to build mutual understanding and foster growth. An ambassador skillfully demonstrates how his country and another country share similar interests. As the late Rabbi Meir Kahane pointed out, an alliance is not so much built on friendship as on common interests.

To summarize, in successful diplomatic negotiations, points we agree upon must be stressed, and any disagreements must be de-emphasized. An ambassador should never be a pushy salesman or an overly friendly public relations man. Whatever his rank in the diplomatic community, Ambassador, Consul General, Chargé d'Affaires, junior consul, envoy, or diplomat, he has the following characteristics:

1. He is a representative of another culture, another way of life.
2. In this capacity, he does not give his own opinions but advances the positions of his home country.
3. He functions as a servant or steward, representing his country faithfully.
4. As such, he practices hospitality, courtesy, and graciousness.

[Proverbs 13:17](#) reads, "A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful ambassador brings health." As faithful ambassadors of Christ, we ought to bring health, refreshment, and comfort to the people with whom we come into contact.

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What is the true origin of Halloween? (Copyright) by BibleStudy.org (Farmington Hills, Michigan)

What connection does the origin of Halloween have with Noah's flood? Who, in the world, celebrates a version of the holiday?

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Evidence suggests that Halloween and the flood are linked by a certain fixation on the dead, death itself, and the occult. This link between the holiday and a celebration called the "day of the dead" is written about by Frank Humphrey. He wrote, "What is often overlooked, however, is that there is the remembrance of the 'Day of the Dead' followed by a New Year. This occurs on our (modern Roman-based) calendar at the end of October or the beginning of November" (The Great Flood and Halloween).

Day of the Dead

The link between the flood, Halloween and the day of the dead is worth noting. Many scholars believe the flood started around the Fall of the year, specifically within the first two months of the Hebrew civil calendar. This two-month period corresponds, in our modern calendar, to mid-September to mid-November, which clearly includes the time when Halloween is celebrated.

The beginnings of Halloween may have begun shortly after the flood, when rebellious humans built a giant tower in a vain attempt to try and save themselves should the flood return! This tower existed in Babel (Babylon). God's solution to man's hard heart at Babel was to change the one language humans used into many (Genesis 11:1 - 2, 4 - 9), thus encouraging them to scatter!

Virtually every culture since the scattering of man at Babel has maintained (in one form or another) a legend of a "great flood." Often, the traditions that sprung from the legend are associated with a period known as "the day of death (the dead)" as well as a "new beginning." These traditions generally occur and are celebrated in the fall of the year.



The Flood
Masseot Abaquesne

In relation to when Halloween occurs, how widespread was (and is) a day dedicated to the dead celebrated? According to Humphrey's book, the ancient Assyrians had ceremonies for the souls of the dead during the mid-October through mid-November timeframe. In Egypt, Osiris' box or coffin, which floated on water for a year, was a distorted Egyptian memory of the Flood. This box was placed on water between October to November each year (around the time of Halloween).

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The ancient Peruvian Incas began their year in November with a celebration called Ayamarka, which concluded with the placing of food and beverages on the graves of the departed. Shadows of the fixation on death that is the core of Halloween can also be seen in the early Anglo-Saxon period known as the "November Blood Month."

In India, the Hindu Durga celebration for those who have died was first tied to their New Year (which began in November).

Aboriginal Australians, each fall, put white colored stripes on both their legs and arms to symbolize a skeleton. In parts of Europe, November 2nd is celebrated as a day of the dead. In Wales and Scotland, early November is a time when ghosts are remembered, which is strikingly similar to the use of such "spirits" in Halloween celebrations.

Humphrey's conclusion regarding the link between the flood and this holiday is, "The legends cited . . . are found all over the world . . . yet they all have in common this remembrance of death . . . at the end of October and the beginning of November." All the above are tantalizing clues as to the true origin of Halloween. It is entirely possible that the holiday is a perverted memorial to the people put to death in Noah's Flood.

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<https://www.biblestudy.org/>

Countdown 465

(Copyright 04-12-2025) by Warren Zehrung (Little Rock, Arkansas)

Dear Brethren,

Genesis 15:6 [Abraham] believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Happy First Day of Unleavened Bread. Passover, the Night to be Much Observed, and Unleavened Bread have deep spiritual meaning for us. Passover commemorates the sacrifice of the Lamb of God and the death of Jesus Christ, the Night to be Much Observed commemorates Israel's exodus from Egypt, and Feast of Unleavened Bread is a memorial of God's deliverance. These observances are closely tied together. In Genesis 14 and 15 we find events which prefigure these occasions. The Bread and Wine that Melchizedek brought to Abram were symbols of the New Covenant!

Editor's Note:

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are the same Feast with two different names. The same thing happens with Pentecost which is called The Feast of Weeks, Pentecost and The Feast of First Fruits. See Ezekiel 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. Laura Lee

"Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and He was the priest of the Most High God". (Genesis 14:18)

The bread and wine were symbols which prophetically pointed to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine on Passover at the beginning of the 14th of Abib at the same time of day that Jesus instituted the New Covenant bread and wine.

Editor's Note:

The meal that Christ ate with His disciples on the early part of the 14th of Abib before He was crucified the next day was just a meal. The Passover meal and start of Passover week started at sunset after Christ was crucified. People are ignoring clear scriptures that say Christ was crucified on the preparation day for the high day which was Passover/First Day of Unleavened Bread. You clearly cannot eat the Passover meal until the Passover Lambs have been killed. Laura Lee

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God promised Abram with an incontrovertible oath, that he would become great — Abraham himself becoming a father of many nations (Genesis 12:2, :7; Galatians 3:16; Genesis 17:5). The difficulty in Abram’s mind—being advanced in age, was that he yet remained childless. Abram asked God for some reassurance.

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless... And Abram said, “Behold, to me thou hast given no seed... And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying... he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” (Genesis 15:1-5)

This vision took place during the night portion of the 14th of Abib. When Abram asked for a sign from the Lord that he would indeed inherit the land and children, the Lord had him prepare a very special **Covenant Sacrifice** on Passover Day.

“And [Abram] said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.” (Genesis 15:8-10)

Then as that Passover Day came to an end, the Night to be Much Observed [before it is called that] began. It was the beginning of the night portion of the First Day of Unleavened Bread. As the 15th of Abib began, Abram fell into a deep coma-like trance as the Lord prophesied to him of things to befall his children (Genesis 15:12-16). Then, in the dark of night, the Lord gave Abram the sign he had requested:

Editor’s Note:

If you do a careful reading of Exodus, you will find that the “Night to be much observed”, was the Passover and not a separate night from the Passover. Laura Lee

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram.” (Genesis 15:17-18, Hebrews 6:13-14)

What Abraham saw was like a bright blast furnace – a brilliant shaft of light that passed through the sacrifice! Jesus Christ made a very emphatic point of passing through the pieces of the Sacrificial Covenant. This was an oath by God Himself—This was the Covenant Sacrifice. The smoking furnace, and a burning lamp – that was Jesus Christ – the God of the Old Testament passing between those pieces. God, Himself, passes between the pieces of the Sacrificial Covenant—that is, He made and entered into the unilateral Covenant that only He could bring to pass.

Jesus said in effect, “I will give my life to bring this covenant to fruition.” Jesus stood in the breach and said, “I will shed my blood and die, as these dead animals at my feet, to pay the price of the broken covenant.” Jesus, in passing between the pieces of the sacrifice, prophesied His own death – to bring all men to salvation. Jump ahead exactly four hundred and thirty years after that Covenant Sacrifice was witnessed by Abram:

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a Night to be Much Observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 12:40-42)

We, brethren, gained our victory over sin on the exact selfsame day – it marks our point of salvation – our victory over bondage and over death as Jesus was laid in the tomb just as The Night to be Much Observed began. The world cannot see how God intricately ties all of this together!

In today’s sermon, we will explore the rich meaning of the Days of Unleavened Bread and Christ’s Covenant Sacrifice. The Covenant Sacrifice required that the principal party making the Covenanting agreement must pass

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between the parts of the slain sacrifice – implying, that if the covenant were broken, He would be subject to the same death—not because He Himself was guilty, but because He would be bearing our sins.

In the Covenant Sacrifice, Jesus foretold that He would take our sins upon Himself – and the penalty of those sins – and die in our place. Abraham knew that only God Himself could fulfill the Covenant He was making – and bring His promises to fruition.

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SabbathCoG.org

Listen to Live Services at 2:00 PM Central Time on the Holy Days by calling the Free Conference Call dial-in number, (667) 770-1685 and entering the Participant access code: 696903# The playback number is (667) 770-1688. The playback Reference Number for the FDUB is 418#

We wish everyone a spiritually fulfilling First Day of Unleavened Bread.

Your brother in Christ,

Warren M. Zehrung

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Donor Letter – April 17, 2025
(Copyright 04-17-2025) by William P. Goff (Tuckerton, New Jersey)

Greetings Brethren,
Hope your Feast is going well? Your Kenyan Brethren send you their Highest Greetings. As you probably know, we have two sites this year. Sengera and Getionko. Pictured below are the children at the Getionko site sleeping. They are so happy and excited to be there at the Feast. But conditions are tough. We had no mattresses for them, so they're asleep on the dirt floor in the house.

Our orphans and widows in Kenya are use to suffering. They are the poor of this world, but thankfully rich in faith. We are doing our best to help them, but the need is great. Currently we are in need of additional help. We are challenged right now. With numerous expenses, including the main gate (entrance to Sengera House.) was extremely damaged by robbers last week. The gate is no longer usable, and the entrance is wide open.

We also just finished paying for all the school lessons that were required during the break. So currently our funds are totally depleted. The orphans are also soon to return back to school for the new term. So, school fees will be due. So again, we ask please continue helping if you can. And please continue trying to inform others of the dire needs. Our impoverished brethren need our help.

Also, please continue praying for our Heavenly Father to put and keep a hedge around our camp. Even the robbers that came last week during the night didn't get anything. They destroyed the gate (which was quite old and in need of

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replacement) but nothing was stolen, and no one was injured.



Getionko Feast Site - Passover/Unleavened Bread 2025.

But we continue to need a financial boost, please help if you can. Please help our orphans and widows, they are so precious.

Your brother in Christ.
Bill Goff

Website: <https://khofh.com/>
E-mail: goffb50@aol.com
Donate: <https://khofh.com/support-us/>

Kenya Hands of Hope, a 5013c charity founded in 2006 by William P. Goff
Website: [KHOFH – Kenya Hands of Hope](#)

Send Donations to:
Kenya Hands of Hope, 334 E. Main Street, Bldg. B Unit A-3, Tuckerton, NJ 08087
PayPal Donations: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=GYQKRX264EMNW
Please consider donating monthly by PayPal or e-checks scheduled through your bank.

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For More Information:
Phone: (843) 447-0140
Email: goffb50@aol.com

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Donor Letter – April 18, 2025
(Copyright 04-18-2025) by William P. Goff (Tuckerton, New Jersey)

Greetings again Brethren,

We need your help, especially your prayers. Nehemiah has been arrested. Robbers came a week ago and broke through our front gate. They also damaged our electrical fuse box in order to disable our surveillance cameras. Now due to lack of funds we have not been able to replace the gate, so they arrested Nehemiah.

There are also a number of small repairs needed at the orphanage, including repairing the water drainage from the Kitchen. If we could begin any of these repairs, they will free Nehemiah. But currently our funds are totally dry.

We have also received the fee structure for the second term. Listed below are the school fees which are now due, and the proposal to replace the front gate:

Here is the structure for the Sengera House school kids for both grammar and secondary school:

School Fees: 430,827/= (\$3,330.00)
Shopping/books 68,000/= (\$525.00)
Total 498,827/= (\$3,855.00)

(There are three orphans who live with their widowed Grandparent who will also be returning to school. We have not received their fee total yet.)

Last term we had help from "LifeNets" Australia in paying the school fees. Currently we are waiting their reply concerning help in paying for the second term.

Front Gate replacement:
125,500/= (\$972.00)

Kitchen drainage repairs:
Cement 22,400/=
Stones 19,500/=
Sand 32,500/=
Labor 12,400
86,800/- Kenya Shiings total (\$670.00).

As I said in my previous Letter dated (yesterday) April 17, 2025, the orphanage needs a financial boost right now to continue moving forward. If the authorities see us begin working on these projects, they will free Nehemiah.

So, if you can help, please do so. And please pray for our Heavenly Father to send more laborers, because the need is great. (James 1:27) (1 John 3:17).

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Thank You,
Bill Goff

Website: <https://khofh.com/>
E-mail: goffb50@aol.com
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Kenya Hands of Hope, a 5013c charity founded in 2006 by William P. Goff
Website: [KHOFH – Kenya Hands of Hope](#)

Send Donations to:
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PayPal Donations: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=GYQKRX264EMNW
Please consider donating monthly by PayPal or e-checks scheduled through your bank.

For More Information:
Phone: (843) 447-0140
Email: goffb50@aol.com

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Requesting Bibles, Food & Clothing

(Copyright 06-02-2025) by Reuben Koech (Kenya, Africa)

5-10-2025

Please we are request bibles in the church of God message we are happy to inform Please visit us here in Kenya Africa please happy sabbath.

5-10-2025

Please we are Church of God Messenger ministry we are request helps of bibles and food and clothes education for children's orphans please consider us.

6-02-2025

We request to extend the gospel to rural areas in Africa please please!

Response:

We are primarily a newsletter, and we do not distribute food, clothes or bibles to anyone. We do not collect money from anyone and therefore we do not have any funds to do that kind of a ministry. We also do not make trips out of the country. If someone else wants to help you they can contact us and we will try to get them in touch with you. Laura Lee

Significance of the Passover

(Copyright 04-13-2025) by Rod Reynolds (Wentzville, Missouri)

In considering the Passover it's most important that we understand the spiritual lessons behind it. God has used history

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and religious symbolism to weave a pattern of spiritual instruction for us to learn. Learn about the Passover and some of its multi-faceted symbolism and spiritual lessons.

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Sermon Link: [Significance of the Passover | COGMessenger](#)

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<https://www.cogmessenger.org/>

Purity of Heart

(Copyright 04-14-2025) by Rod Reynolds (Wentzville, Missouri)

The pure of heart will see God ([Matthew 5:8](#)). But our hearts are by nature corrupted by the leaven of sin ([Romans 7:14; 8:7](#)). The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the removal of the spiritual leaven that corrupts us, so we can have pure hearts. How is that accomplished? How can you have a pure heart, so you can see God?

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Sermon Link: [Purity of Heart | COGMessenger](#)

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Geo-Engineering

(Copyright 04-17-2025) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

"if we don't stop the geo-engineering, there is not much time left" (for we humans) "There are only single digits of bees left - what is being put in the air deliberately"

Then after listening to the link down below, my mind went to these thoughts:

Our Savior said in Matthew 24:22 "And except those days should be shortened, *there should no flesh be saved*: [my emphasis] but for the elect's sake those days *shall* be shortened." He also said just a little after that in Matthew 26:41 **"Watch and pray**, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." i.e. *Watch our own self's especially*, that we are not going back into the world's ways, letting them rub off on us. Or, in losing hope! However...

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..watching and paying attention *also* to what is happening in the world *does help focus our attention* in realizing that time may be drawing closer than we may think in walking that narrow way that leads to life, *and*, in the short time left that we have, in being a witness to others to that narrow way! (Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the **way**, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” [we cannot use pagan days or ways as many churches do. Deut.12:29-32]: “Because strait is the gate, and **narrow** is the **way**, which leadeth unto life, and **few** there be that find it.”) How many of us ask ourselves, “*Why* is that the case?”

Re. The Subject line above. It isn't just worldwide war news that is impacting our lives. The link below to a video of a husband/wife team brings valuable information via interviews including this one, that shows how the terrific global life-threatening impact of technology is being used deliberately and wickedly to release nano particles into the air; *massively* killing bees, beetles and insects, which impact even our trees. I vividly remember decades ago the constant smack and smear of insects hitting my car windshield while driving at night. Very little or hardly any in more recent decades.

Time literally is short according to this expert.

But like I said, **there is hope**: John 3:15-16 “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten [only born] Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

And 1 John 2:1-6 “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁶ He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” That's why it's ‘the Way’! (John 14:6; Acts 9:2; 19:9; 22:4)

Now comes the link.

Something weird is falling from the skies across America... from Florida to the West Coast! What is the government hiding?

[@RealGeoEngWatch](#)

joins us to expose the truth behind the chemtrail chaos.

https://x.com/TheRedactedInc/status/1912468514516136072?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1912468514516136072%7Ctwgr%5E775e15e2fccc7442fb35b86f24e76056996a6a42%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fchoiceclips.whatfinger.com%2F2025%2F04%2F16%2Fsomething-weird-is-falling-from-the-skies-across-america%2F – 17:43 min.

The Brutal Truth

(Copyright 04-29-2025) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)

We live in a world of chaos and broken relationships. Why? How did the world get to a place where the possibility of destroying all life upon the earth by weapons of mass destruction become a real threat?

It all started in the Garden of Eden with the first couple, Adam and Eve, and the failure of their relationship. Primarily, Adam's failure to provide his God-ordained leadership in carrying out God's commandment.

Yes, Satan had a hand in their disobedience. Eve fell for Satan's lies and deception. But it was Adam who brought a curse upon the land and their expulsion from God's Garden. Why? Because Adam was the head of his family and the carrier of the seed of the rest of mankind. All of us have descended from his seed.

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Recall that when the sins of Israel on the Day of Atonement were put upon the scape goat, it was put upon its **head**.

"Then he [Aaron] is to lay both hands on the **head** of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and rebellious acts of the Israelites in regard to all their sins. He is to put them on the goat's **head** and **send it away into the wilderness**" (Leviticus 16:21).

Likewise, did not God send Adam and Eve **away into the wilderness**? See Genesis 3:22-23. I believe this expulsion of Adam and Eve took place on the 10th day of the seventh month which would later be called the Day of Atonement picturing a putting away of sin and a reconciliation between God and all mankind.

Editor's Note:

This would be the opinion of the author. The Bible gives no date for the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Laura Lee

Our own personal reconciliation with God was provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Passover for His Chosen Ones. However, a reconciliation of the entire world is pictured by the Day of Atonement which will then allow God to, once again, dwell with and rule over mankind.

Thus, it is imperative for men to know and practice the qualities and right characteristics of male leadership for building a lasting and strong bond with their wives. This is a necessary foundation for nurturing any offspring and bringing them to maturity.

The family is the basic unit of any society and civilization. Sadly, the traditional family unit today is under the same Satanic attack as experienced by Adam and Eve. We not only bear the image of the Godhead which is male and female, but we are to imitate and pursue the Divine family relationship.

Jordan Peterson, a well-known psychologist, has created a video expounding **The Brutal Truth** which every man needs to hear and then make a serious personal inventory of his own leadership strengths for a solid and lasting marriage.

The apostle Paul admonished men to "love their wives" (Ephesians 5:25). To better fulfill their leadership role of the family, men need to better understand a woman's psyche. Even more, men need to find themselves and their purpose. Jordan provides some very hard truths which will provide deep insight.

CALLING ALL MEN: Don't look for love, look for purpose. Knowing your purpose will help you to fulfill God's calling in your life and bless those who need your God-inspired leadership. Jesus Christ has set the ultimate example to Whom we give praise and honor!

Video links:

Peterson: Seven Secrets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HikIn9MjyXQ>

Heroes Never Die (music): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U1Brgpn_mw

Newsletters

(Copyright 04-16-2025) by Craig M. White (Australia)

1. Subscribe to 'Church of God News' newsletter

<https://friendsofsabbath.substack.com/>

The newsletter is published by the Friends of the Sabbath and is free for anyone to subscribe to. What the newsletter offers to subscribers:

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- A positive newsletter
- Short articles about various aspects of Church of God history such as personalities, groups over the centuries and doctrinal development
- The newsletter contains news about the Sabbatarian and Church of God groups including biographies and photos of early members and Feasts
- Links to new information, documents and research on our websites (Friends of the Sabbath, HWA Library, Giving & Sharing, Origin of Nations and my own papers, articles, charts and other research)
- News on major developments, books and seminars
- Updates on History Research Projects Foundation ongoing program to assist with those undertaking major and indepth research helpful to the Church of God
- Very important world news items where necessary
- The occasional Bible study.

2. Subscribe to ‘Origin of Nations’ newsletter

<https://originofnations.substack.com/>

With this newsletter, I relaunched the ‘Origin of Nations’ Magazine, which was discontinued in early 2000. The plan is to publish this newsletter 2-3 times per annum.

It is published to promote the true origin of peoples as listed in Genesis 10 and 49 and related world events.

A lot has been researched, written about, published and updated since that time, including three books:

- In Search of the Origin of Nations
- The Great German Nation
- The Millennial Reign of the Messiah

As well as dozens of papers and articles with more to come. These papers are uploaded to a website under two categories:

- Nations and Races (currently 15 papers)
- The ‘Lost’ Tribes of Israel (10 papers)

More papers will be added and the current ones updated over time.

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Holy Days 2025

Passover – April 13, 2025 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 13-19, 2025

Pentecost – June 2, 2025

Trumpets – September 23, 2025

Atonement – October 2, 2025

Tabernacles –October 7, 2025, to October 13, 2025

Last Great Day – October 14, 2025