

## **Overwhelmed with Joy and Love**

(Copyright) by Eddie Hyatt  
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**PAGE 2 Article**

### **The War in Afghanistan and American Complacency**

(Copyright) by Richard Markland  
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**PAGE 3 Article**

### **Differentiating Spiritual Power and Soul Power**

(Copyright) by Zac Poonen  
(Bangalore, India)

**PAGE 4 Article**

### **Wandering the Wilderness in Faith**

(Copyright) by John W. Ritenbaugh  
(Lancaster, South Carolina)

**PAGE 5 Article**

### **'Don't weep for the dead; weep for the living.' - Jeremiah**

(Copyright) by Curtis Dahlgren  
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**PAGE 10 Article**

#### **Prayer Requests**

11 --- James Steinle

#### **Iron Sharpening Iron**

12 --- Black Citizens of America by Ray Daly – Comments by RH

12 --- Black Citizens of America by Ray Daly – Comments by Ray Daly

13 --- Black Citizens of America by Ray Daly – Comments by Laura Lee

#### **Announcements**

14 --- Website Upgrades from Craig White

14 --- Messages from Zac Poonen

#### **Ads**

15 --- Journey to Mount Sinai from Creation Ministries International

#### **Other Items**

16 --- Common Sense – Sent by Rich Traver

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

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## Articles

### Overwhelmed with Joy and Love (Copyright) by Eddie Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)



Sarah Pierpont Edwards attended the Congregational Church in Northampton MA, which was pastored by her husband, Jonathan Edwards. Women were supposed to remain silent in the Puritan/Congregational churches, but a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit was occurring (the Great Awakening), and she could hardly contain herself at times.

"I could scarcely refrain from leaping with transports of joy," she exclaimed. One day she was so overwhelmed by God's presence that she could no longer stand but sank to the floor. It happened as she listened to a visiting minister lament that God's children should be so cold and lifeless in their faith. She said,

I felt such a sense of the deep ingratitude manifested by the children of God, in such coldness and deadness, that my strength was immediately taken away, and I sunk down on the spot. Those who were near raised me, and placed me in a chair; and, from the fullness of my heart, I expressed to them, in a very earnest manner, the deep sense I had of the wonderful grace of Christ towards me, of the assurance I had of his having saved me from hell, of my

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

happiness running parallel with eternity, of the duty of giving up all to God, and of the peace and joy inspired by an entire dependence on his mercy and grace.

The church in Northampton had no choir, no worship team, and no orchestra. Jonathan Edwards wrote out his sermons in advance and read them in a monotone voice without ever moving from behind the pulpit. Yet, Northampton was the center in New England for the Great Awakening that transformed Colonial America.

Sarah and many others were overwhelmed by the presence of God, which is characteristic of real revival. Edwards, in fact, said, "The town seemed to be full of the presence of God."

Although lacking the modern accoutrements that we consider necessary for revival, they had the essence of what it really takes. In the words of Sarah, it is "giving up all to God" and "an entire dependence on His mercy and grace."

This is an excerpt from the book, *America's Revival Heritage*

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## **The War in Afghanistan and American Complacency**

**(Copyright) by Richard Markland (London, Ohio)**

Ask any given American what has been their view of the country's involvement in Afghanistan, and most people will say it was time for America's presence to end. It's a generic and shallow response without consideration for the complexities of both the short and long term consequences involved.

What objective has been successfully achieved when witnessing the Taliban retake territory, it once held? What justifiable pride is there when looking at the thousands of American lives that have been sacrificed, and lifelong injuries, both physically and emotionally for those who were sent thousands of miles away? America's failure is a glaring testimony to the American people and the world that once again the United States has failed to successfully finish what it started. This war will go down in history as the greatest blunder in the nation's history.

### **An American Retreat or a Withdraw?**

The words "American Withdraw" are politically correct, and a way for the country to save face, when in all actuality American forces have retreated in what is a miserably failed mission impossible. The United States has not been able to defeat the Taliban, yet no one in Washington is able to openly admit the obvious. Lies are giftwrapped due to the complete lack of true leadership in Washington without the political will required, and an American public that isn't outraged by a war that deserves condemnation and anger. Because complacency is a moral rot eating away at the heart and soul of the country, America's retreat is viewed with an attitude of resignation. It's disgraceful, deeply disturbing, and a sad commentary of what we are as a nation of people.

According to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary Tenth Edition: Retreat: (1) An act or process of withdrawing from what is a difficult, dangerous, or disagreeable situation (2) A forced withdrawal of troops from an enemy or from an advanced position.

The word "retreat" is not included in the national vocabulary when facing what has not only happened in Afghanistan, but Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq. America is a superpower when it comes to starting wars, but since 1945, there has not been a single flag of victory flown on foreign soil drenched in American blood.

### **An Out of Sight, Out of Mind Mentality**

America's so-called withdraw from Afghanistan will forever be remembered as another failed foreign conflict without a resolution. The nation's leaders and the American people are living in a fantasy world of their own making. Americans

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**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

who have sacrificed their lives in foreign conflicts are honored on Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July is an open display of pride and patriotism. The American people, however, are woefully oblivious to the fact that both observances are only worthy of being observed if commemorating World Wars I and II, when true victory over the nation's enemies was declared. What is the reason we falsely take pride in celebrating nothing but failure after 1945? As a nation we should be ashamed, embarrassed, and angry, but when suffering from complacency, and not willing to face reality, the nation's leaders and people are blind to the nation's tragic condition.

### **An Ominous Future for Afghanistan**

The Taliban will take over Afghanistan. Unlike America, they will finish what they have started. The Afghan government will collapse, government officials will be executed, and the Afghan people will be severely oppressed. When this happens, what will be the reaction of the American people and its Leaders? In all likelihood, the response will be a sigh of resignation, and a simple shrug. Why? Because America is a nation that has completely lost its way and doesn't have a clue of how morally and spiritually bankrupt it is individually and collectively. If there is a sense of pride in the Afghanistan debacle, it is a warped perspective due to refusing to see and admit America is not the country far too many Americans believe it is.

### **America's Pride is Broken**

The Bible is one-third prophecy and states many times what will happen to the United States, the British descended peoples, and the Jewish people, who will all face the same fate. Disobedience to God results in consequences, and people can deny all they want what the Bible states will happen to the United States for its Blatant disregard for what the Bible says. Cynics and scoffers will be silenced. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are two of the most pivotal chapters in the Bible that explains in detail what lies ahead.

Why has America failed to win victories in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and now Afghanistan? Leviticus 26:14-15, 19-"But if you will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; (15) And if you shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that you will not do all my commandments, but that you break my covenant (19) And I will break the pride of your power (militarily, economically, and politically), and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass (extreme drought)."

America doesn't have to face problems without solution, but changes made must be on God's terms. Deuteronomy 28:1-2-"And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe and do all his commandments which I command you this day, that the Lord your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth (America would have declared victory in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan). (2) And all these blessings (listed in verses 3 thru 14) shall come on you, and overtake you, if you will hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God."

Ominous clouds are building, and each person must decide whether to obey God on his terms or continue to live contrary to him. Jeremiah 2:8- "And unto this people you shall say, Thus says the Lord; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death."

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## **Differentiating Spiritual Power and Soul Power**

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In 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15, we read of "*the natural (soulish) man*" and "*he who is spiritual*". There is a vast difference between a *soulish* Christian and a *spiritual* Christian. Human cleverness cannot understand this, as it says there: "*A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.*"

The mind and the spirit are as different as the eye and the ear. And just as it is possible for someone to have good hearing and yet be blind, it is also possible for someone to have a brilliant intellect and a '*dead*' spirit - or vice versa. For our work in this world, we need a good *mind*. But when it comes to the things of God, it is the state of our *spirit* that matters. To understand the things of God we need revelation from the Holy Spirit, and that is given only to the humble ("*infants*" who have a spirit of humility - *Matt. 11:25*), and not to the clever (unless they are also humble).

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

*"To understand the things of God we need revelation from the Holy Spirit, and that is given only to the humble."*

It is difficult for a clever man to be humble, although it is not impossible. That is just like it being difficult for a self-righteous Pharisee to acknowledge that he is a sinner, although not impossible. It is easier for prostitutes and thieves to acknowledge that they are sinners. So also, in the matter of Divine revelation: It is easier for an unlearned man to acknowledge that he is not clever - and so he can receive Divine revelation quicker. That was why Jesus spent most of His time with three unlearned fishermen - Peter, James, and John - because He found them to be the most responsive to spiritual things. And this was also why the Pharisees found it so difficult to accept Christ - because their pride in their intellects hindered them from acknowledging that they were spiritually foolish. This is something that you must bear in mind when constantly mingling with those who are intellectual and clever.

Human cleverness has no value before God. It is as unimportant to God as the color of our skin - for both of these are what people are born with, and whatever people are born with, gives them no advantage before God. Cleverness, like human righteousness, is like filthy rags in God's sight (*Isa.64:6*). Christ has become not only our *righteousness*, but also our *wisdom* (See *1 Cor.1:30*).

We are encouraged however, by the fact that a man like Paul, who was both a self-righteous Pharisee and a brilliant intellectual (both handicaps), could not only be saved, but also become a great apostle of Christ. But that was because he humbled himself constantly. When speaking to the Corinthians, he says he feared lest he would depend on his intellectual ability, and that was why he was "*in fear and trembling among them*" (*1 Cor.2:3*). He feared lest he preach to them with the power of his mind (soul) rather than in the power of God's Spirit (*1 Cor.2:4*). We must all have that fear whenever we speak. This is why we must pray constantly for the power of the Holy Spirit - for we need this continuously.

So, we must not mistake a clever *intellectual* presentation of Biblical truth for a spiritual one. Neither must we mistake a very *emotional* message for a spiritual one. Both the intellect and the emotions are parts of our soul. These are good servants but bad masters. The Holy Spirit alone must be Lord in our lives. Ultimately, the way to become spiritual lies in the three secrets of the Christian life that I have often mentioned: *Humility, Humility and Humility!* If you have that, you will be all right.

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## **Wandering the Wilderness in Faith**

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By the time the children of Israel reached the banks of the Jordan River, the older generation whom God had freed from slavery in Egypt had died in the wilderness. The story of their journey through the wilderness shows that they never overcame their slave mentality, the mindset they brought with them from Egypt. Their thinking—and thus their attitudes and conduct—constantly reverted to the way their bondage in Egypt had molded it. Despite witnessing awesome miracles, enduring terrible plagues that demonstrated God's mercy on them and His punishment of the Egyptians, living "under the cloud," and having their daily needs supplied directly by God, the Israelites found the wilderness to be nothing more than a huge cemetery in which they had wandered for forty years.

The warning is clear to those of us "on whom the ends of the ages have come" (I Corinthians 10:11). In this type of our spiritual journey, Canaan, the Promised Land, represents the Kingdom of God. But those older Israelites never made it there! They fell short of the goal because a carnal mind, shaped and hardened by this world into inordinate self-concern, so dominated their choices that they dropped like so many flies.

In graphic language, the apostle Paul writes in Hebrews 3:17, "Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?" The last phrase indicates a scattering of dismembered bodies as if they had been left unburied. These "corpses" were the same people who came out of Egypt with great joy, exulting

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

in their newfound liberty. They yearned for a settled and free life in their own land. But, instead of knowing the joy and plenty of the Promised Land, they chose to sentence themselves to live a life of homeless wandering in a barren land and to die and perhaps be buried in an unmarked grave. Chosen to be the beneficiaries of God's great blessings in a rich land, they instead lived poor and hungry in the wilderness, discontented and often at war because of their sins. Their example ought to be a sobering warning.



In Hebrews 3:19, Paul puts his finger on the source of their problem, why their heart could not be changed, why they consistently and persistently sinned and rebelled: "So we see that they could not enter in *because of unbelief*" (emphasis ours throughout). Paul later turns this thought into an admonition for us:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, *not being mixed with faith* in those who heard it. (Hebrews 4:1-2)

Not only did Israel have the witness of numerous demonstrations of God's presence and power among them to provide a foundation for faith, but they were also given the Word of God by His servant, Moses and Aaron. In addition, they had living examples of faith in Moses, Aaron (most of the time), Joshua, Caleb, and others. God supplied these men with gifts by His Spirit as a testimony that should have provided more incentive for the Israelites to believe Him. But Hebrews 3:17 says He was angry with them forty years! If ever a people almost drove God to the point of exasperation, it was Israel in the wilderness.

We must not allow such a powerful lesson to pass by unheeded. Paul agrees, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

The lesson is clear. Those who believe God reveal their faith by obeying Him. Those who do not believe Him disobey. Hebrews 3:12 warns, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." Unbelief is evidence of an evil heart, and an evil heart departs from God. Like Hebrews 3:16-4:2, this verse equates unbelief with disobedience.

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**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

### **Living By Faith**

How important is faith? "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now *the just shall live by faith*; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:37-38). "The just shall live by faith" is both a statement of fact about the basis of a Christian's life and a command. It is so important that it appears once in the Old Testament and three times in the New (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11). In each case, the context is somewhat different, but its importance to a Christian's salvation is not lost.

The concept is not difficult to understand. Paul further clarifies it in II Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, and not by sight." A simple definition of *faith* in *Webster's New World Dictionary* is "complete trust, confidence, or reliance." At the end of the definitions, "belief" is listed as a synonym. *Belief* means "faith, esp. religious faith; trust or confidence." The dictionary definitions show that the two words are virtually synonymous. However, in the Bible and in practical application, a very wide difference separates merely believing and living by faith.

The practical application of faith is more than simply acknowledging the reality of God. Living by faith involves qualities that are better expressed by the word "trust." This kind of faith produces loyalty or faithfulness expressed in the Christian's life by works of obedience.

Do we think even for a moment that the Israelites in the wilderness disbelieved that God existed? Some few may have argued that the miracles they had experienced from the arrival of Moses in Egypt until they died in the wilderness were nothing more than natural phenomena. There are always some doubters and scoffers of that sort (II Peter 3:3-7).

But the vast majority of Israelites could not deny to themselves God's mighty acts on their behalf. They had heard the voice of God at Mount Sinai, had seen a wind from God part the Red Sea, and had escaped death on Passover while the Egyptian firstborn had died. But when God required a higher level of obedience to follow His cloud across the wilderness and depend on Him to supply their every need, the record shows they did not trust Him. Their loyalty dissolved, and they rebelled! They did not have it within them to live—or walk—by faith.

"Walk" is frequently used in the Bible to indicate movement through life. When used figuratively, the context shows the manner or condition of the "walk." For example, "walk honestly" (Romans 13:13, KJV), "walk worthy of the calling" (Ephesians 4:1), and "no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind" (verse 17) are examples of a manner of living. "Walk by faith" (II Corinthians 5:7), "walk in the flesh" (II Corinthians 10:3), and "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4) are examples of living in a certain state or condition.

The Israelites of the Exodus definitely lived according to the flesh, fulfilling the desires of their bodies and minds. They conducted their lives as if God did not exist, as though they would never have to answer to Him or anybody else. They lived seemingly without regard for what He said and with little or no concern about consequences to themselves or their posterity. They simply moved in the direction their carnal impulses drove them.

Somewhere along the way, they lost the vision of entering the promised homeland. They forgot about settling on their own property and living free under God's government and laws. Yes, that older generation literally *walked* in following the cloud as it moved toward the Promised Land, but their manner of life under the cloud corresponded to living in darkness. So, they never made it to Canaan.

### **The Right Kind of Faith**

We can tell whether we have the right kind of faith. Hebrews 11:1 provides a definition: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." *Hupostasis*, the word translated as "substance," means "that which underlies the apparent; that which is the basis of something, hence, assurance, guarantee and confidence" (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, p. 1426). The English "substance" is built from a prefix and a root that together mean "that which stands under." *Webster's* defines it as "the real or essential part or element of anything; essence, reality, or basic matter." It is very similar in meaning to *hupostasis*.

Paul is saying that, for Christians, faith underlies what is seen externally in the conduct of their lives. Underlying a building is its foundation, and in most buildings, the foundation is rarely seen. If it is seen at all, usually only a small portion is visible, but it is there. If no foundation exists, the building soon becomes crooked and warped. In most cases, it will collapse and be completely unusable.

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**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

Since Paul says, "We walk by faith, not by sight," we understand that underlying the conduct of a Christian's life is not merely believing that God is, but a constant and abiding trust in Him. Since it is impossible for God to lie, we trust that what God has recorded for us to live by is absolute and must be obeyed and that it will work in our lives regardless of what may be apparent to the senses.

How much of what we do is motivated by an implicit trust in God's Word? The answer to this question is how we can tell whether we are living by faith. We must be honest in our evaluation though. We find it very easy to shade the truth through self-deception. We justify disobedience by rationalizing around God's clear commands or examples, saying that our circumstance is special because . . . (fill in the blank).

If we are honest, we also have to admit that Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego, Paul, Christ, and a whole host of others could also have rationalized that surely their circumstances were special. But in their cases, faith undergirded how they lived even when the going really became rough.

We like to think of ourselves as rising to the occasion when a time of great crisis arises. We all hope to emulate what the heroes of faith did. But as great as they were, Jesus says in John 15:13-14, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

It is easy to think of the sacrifice implied in "lay[ing] down one's life" as dying for another in one moment of time. Though that may occasionally occur, the context shows this sacrifice within the framework of friendship. Friendship occurs over months and years, not just in one moment in time.

In true friendships, because we are eager to help, we willingly spend ourselves ungrudgingly, without tallying the cost. Friends open their hearts and minds to each other without secrecy, which one would not do for a mere acquaintance. True friends allow the other to see right in and know them as they really are. Friends share what they have learned. Finally, and most importantly for this article, a friend trusts the one who believes in him and risks that the other will never doubt his loyalty but look on him with proven confidence.

Though the principle given by Christ is applicable to all friendships, He has one specific friendship as His primary focus: ours with Him, or more generally, ours with God. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." That friend is Jesus of Nazareth. He makes it very clear that if we are His friends, we will show it in our obedience to His commands. Before we can obey, however, we must trust Him.

We need to take a moment to evaluate ourselves. Are we as open and frank with Him as He is with us through His Word? Often our prayers are stiff and formal, not truly honest. Besides that, sometimes we become bored in His presence and soon have nothing to say to Him. Is it not true that we do not trust Him as fully as we should? That we are often quick to doubt Him? That we easily grow suspicious of Him? That we lose heart or fear that He has forgotten us? That He is not really trying or is unequal to the task of shepherding us into His Kingdom? Though He has *never* failed us, we are so quick to suspect and blame Him!

Israel did all of these things in the wilderness because they did not believe God. Much to our dismay, we do them now, in our time of salvation!

### **The Faith That Saves**

Faith's importance to salvation is accentuated by Ephesians 2:8, where Paul writes, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Faith plays a role in the entire process until we enter the Kingdom of God. It is the sum of what God is doing in our lives: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent'" (John 6:29). In his wonderfully "meaty" fourth and fifth chapters of Romans, Paul mentions faith a dozen times, almost all concerning justification, being made righteous, or having access to grace, and thus, having the hope of the glory of God.

The faith that saves has its beginning when God, on His own initiative, calls us (John 6:44) and leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). He does this by His Spirit guiding us into all truth (John 16:7-14). Stirring up our minds to knowledge, His Spirit enables us to perceive from a perspective we never before seriously considered. Combined with

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**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

the confrontation that occurs with the carnal mind when we are forced to choose what to do with this precious truth, this enabling gives birth to a living faith, a faith that works, a faith that walks in godliness.

This would never occur if God did not first do His part. We would never find the true God on our own or understand His gospel of the Kingdom of God. We would never be able to choose the real Jesus, our Savior, and Elder Brother, from the mass of false christs created in the minds of men. Not knowing what to repent of or toward, we would never repent.

As miraculous and powerful as God's liberation of Israel from bondage was, even more so and of greater importance is the breaking of our bondage to Satan, this world, and human nature. This is why Ephesians 2:8 says the faith that saves is "the gift of God." Israel's release from Egypt was God's gift too. Regardless of how much they cried out to Him, the Israelites would never have left Egypt without Him. If God had not been merciful and faithful, if He had not been trustworthy, they would never have been freed.

What did God lead us to that sparked this saving faith in us? He led us to His Word. We can glean a measure of faith from observing God's creation, but this faith cannot save us because it does not reveal His purpose. It gives us no direction or outlet for the soaring thoughts and creative energies of the God-given gift of a mind trained in His image. But do we find God's purpose and His revelation of Himself in His Word? "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Of course, this does not mean that all who hear the message will understand and accept it. Without the message, however, there would be nothing to believe in, nothing that one could trust to lead him to salvation. In practical application, this means that one should always most carefully evaluate *the message* being preached rather than the man or the corporate body he represents. *It is essential that we put our trust in the right teachings.* Most of the people who claim to be "Christian" are living by false gospels.

The Bible shows this principle from beginning to end. Adam and Eve put their trust in Satan's message rather than God's (Genesis 3:1-6). The children of Israel listened to Korah, Dathan, and the two-hundred-fifty leaders (Numbers 16:1-3), and later they succumbed to the Moabites' appeal to sexual license (Numbers 25:1-3). In each case, many died as a witness to us. After Solomon's reign, Israel followed Jeroboam's false message. Christ prophesied that many would proclaim that He (Jesus) is the Christ yet deceive many.

### **We Must Choose to Live by Faith**

We must learn the valuable lessons of faith shown in the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness because they directly apply to us (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). The people knew the history of their ancestors with whom God had worked, yet they chose to forget His graciousness to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. God demonstrated His presence to them, but the Israelites chose to disregard Him. They had the gospel preached to them, and they chose not to believe it. They had among them the godly witness of men of faith, men in whom the Spirit of God dwelled, and the rebellious children of Israel chose not to follow them.

God does not ask us to believe His message without evidence. He presents us with an overwhelming body of proof that He does exist and is working out a great purpose that now includes us. We would not even be in a position to read this had He not personally acted to stir our minds to understand things of His Spirit. He has given us His Spirit so that we might know the things of God.

When we have faith, we trust God that what He has said and promised is true. Though we may at times feel all alone in the midst of a trial, we can take comfort that so did all those others of the faithful who went before us. The very nature of faith demands that such a feeling of "going out on a limb" occur. If we had what we desire, we would not need faith (see Hebrews 11:13).

Now the weight of responsibility for making choices grounded on trust in God's Word has fallen upon us. It is awesome to think of ourselves as baptized into the history of the same spiritual company of those greats of the past, men and women of faith whose names are emblazoned in our memories. We must forget neither their standing with God because of their faith nor Israel's failure in the wilderness because they did not trust Him.

Remember the warning and advice God gave to Israel in the days before they entered the Promised Land:

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

For this commandment which I command you today, it is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven that you should say, "Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" Nor is it beyond the sea that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" *But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.*

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose life*, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them. (Deuteronomy 30:11-20)

The choice is ours.

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**‘Don’t weep for the dead; weep for the living.’ - Jeremiah**  
**(Copyright) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)**

**"THE Lord used more ink on the trials of Job than the glories of Solomon," someone said.**

IN OTHER WORDS, we need to understand why we are living at such a time as this, why things happen, or, what's the root cause of all the grief. Joe Biden is a symptom, not the original sin. I hate to be the one to point out the obvious, but there are some challenging times ahead of us. Ignorance of the near future is the worst ignorance of all. In 1860, the Rebs down south overran their headlights because the future was unknown to them. They actually began the great Rebellion while Buchanan was President.

Someone said, "The further you can see into the past, the further you can see into the future." History doesn't repeat like a mirror image, but nothing that *does* happen should ever take people by surprise.

I read a book, a very interesting one, about pre-Civil War America and the 1860 census. The author is a family medical doctor of whose practice I have been a patient. The book:

**"Accounting For the Civil War; not your typical United States history book; see the past as rarely seen" by Dr. Vernetta Carlson, Stephenson, MI (Moonshine Cove pub.; 2012)**

**"A fascinating account of the American Civil War that uses a broad array of census data and other primary sources as a launching point."-David Voelker, PhD, Professor of History, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. After so many books have been written about the civil war, is there anything new left to say? Indeed, there is as author Vernetta Carlson proves in her new book. She provides a unique look at the critical antebellum and civil war years that is both original and fascinating. Using census data and other primary sources as her launch point, she examines the human, economic and resource factors that are so important in determining the outcome of a war . . . Was the outcome foreseen? Would the outcome have been different if the war had started in 1850 instead of 1860? Did immigration tip the balance of power between north and south? What effect did western expansion have on the war? The reader will learn the answers to these questions... "** – Amazon.com

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

The gist of the book is that the North, the Union, had most of the military age manpower, most of the iron, and most of the lead. And I might add, the South never made a bigger mistake than trying to force slavery on Kansas through fraudulent means.

This column isn't about the Civil War, but about 2022 looking ahead. This is an adaptation of my 9/01/2017 column – about the time today's "Rebs" began tearing down statues, and Robert E. Lee's statue in Charlottesville got covered up (what? haven't you ever seen a naked horse before?).

Lee made some serious mistakes in his life, but at least he knew when to repent and concede. The post-Gettysburg years could have been much worse, but that's another day's story (I speak as a "senior citizen"). When Longfellow was up in years, a friend asked how he kept so lively and kept writing so well. Pointing to an apple tree, he replied:

**"That apple tree is very old. But I never saw any prettier blossoms. The tree grows a little new wood every year, and it's out of that new wood that those blossoms come. Like the apple tree, I try to grow a little new wood every year."**

**The question is:** are today's young "Rebs" learning anything new since getting out of high school or college? Do they cling to their college opinions, as Thomas Jefferson warned most people do? How far into the past can they *really* see CLEARLY? Do they have any clue as to what awaits them up ahead. God have mercy!

**PS:** To paraphrase a poem from the 1960s:

"The mild idealists who start our social revolutions don't realize that when the executions start, the **first ones on the list are the Mild Idealists.**"

Take the French Revolution. PLEASE! Forty thousand "enemies of the Idealists" had their heads chopped off in Paris alone. The brains of anyone who *was* anyone (businessmen, farmers, clergymen) were thus lost in blood that flowed ankle-deep to nearly knee-deep in Paris. NO WONDER Germany had such an easy time conquering Paris twice in the 20th century. The Radicals of "Liberty, equality, fraternity" massacred as many as 300,000 of their own people in northwest France.

They started out by killing the king. Conditions didn't improve. They killed the rest of the royals. When things didn't improve, they closed the churches and killed priests and nuns. And all the other "scapegoats." Finally, the most-radical-of-them-all, Robespierre himself, ended upon the guillotine.

**PPS: We have our own "Jacobins" now. Is it too late to stand athwart history and yell "STOP!"??**

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<http://www.renewamerica.com/columns/dahlgren/220131>  
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## Prayer Requests

**Prayer Request (December 16, 2022)**

**Yay, keep praying for Jim Steinle for a full recovery.**

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**I made it home Friday at 4 pm. Home therapy will be coming next Wed. Major problem is left hand and arm and seems like a slow process but improving. My mind is ok and am able to get around by walking. Thanks for all the prayers. Very much appreciated.**

**Jim Steinle**  
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## **Iron Sharpening Iron**

**(Agree or Disagree with Something Printed)**  
**New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)**  
**As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.**

### **In regard to: Black Citizens of America**

**Article by Ray Daly**  
**Comments by RH (Unknown)**

I was reading this article by Ray Daly and was wondering if he has any information on the quote below about John the Baptist being the one who wrote the book of Revelation being scriptural. It's pretty clear this John was executed early in the ministry of Jesus/Yeshua and that "the other John" was exiled on the island of Patmos for preaching the Christian gospel message when he received the Revelation from Yeshua.

Ray also states that Mark, also known as John Mark, wrote the Book of John and his 3 letters of the New Testament. What evidence is there to support this idea?

I'm very curious to look into these statements or claims. I don't think I've ever run across these ideas.

Black Citizens of America  
by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

<https://church-of-god-bismarck.org/newsletter/black-citizens-of-america-ezp-558?chapter=903>

This is a quote from Ray Daly's article:

"..... Another report states that at the end of the first century AD, the Ethiopians (now Christians) received the new Canon directly from the hands of "Mark". Known also as John. It would have been this John Mark that wrote the book of John, and the three letters of John. This Canon was exactly the same as the New Testament books we have today. With the exception of the book of Revelation, which was not a part of said Canon. I won't cover it here, but it is Scripturally and historically supported that it was John the Baptist that wrote Revelation."

### **In regard to: Black Citizens of America**

**Article by Ray Daly**  
**Comments by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)**

Let's take it one at a time. Starting with who wrote the book of Revelation.

First, Jesus said of John the Baptist the following. Luke 16:16. "The law and the prophets were until John [speaking of the Baptist], since then the kingdom of God has been preached." Revelation is almost totally a book of prophecies. Thus, it basically had to be written by John the Baptist, or Jesus made a mistake.

The individual can do as many have, they can check out the material offered to them on the net or in books like so many others, including myself, have done. But I'll present only one point, that being the book of Revelation, and who wrote it.

First, Jesus said this about John the Baptist Luke 16:16. "The law and the PROPHETS were until John, since then the kingdom of God has been preached". Now the book of Revelation is almost all prophecy. Thus, was Jesus mistaken when he said the words above?

Secondly, the individual can search this out also. But history shows, especially the early Roman history, shows that the book of Revelation did not become a part of the New Testament until the latter 300' AD. Their reasoning was that it "had no apostolic support". They were basically forced to add it by Augustine, bishop of Hippo in Africa. He wanted it added

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

for the words of Rev. 22:18. He was having problems with a number of his "ministers" adding other non-Scriptural writings to the Canon. And the words of the above gave him power over what they taught.

Another historical point came about in the 1600's when a fellow from England went to Ethiopia, and while searching out their church records he found one where it said that the Ethiopian church (they were of Christ) received the New Testament Canon at the end of the first century directly "from the hands of Mark". And, it did not have Revelation. Again, Rome did not use "Mark", but used his second name "John", in order to make it look like the "apostle" had written it.

Even Martin Luther did not put Revelation in when he wrote his own version of the New Testament. But later he was apparently forced to add it.

Lastly, each of the twelve apostles went to their own nation and did not involve themselves with any Gentile nations. Though they would have reached the Gentiles amongst the Israelite population.

One last thing has to do with both Christ's and John the Baptist's Ministry's. Acts 15:14 supports God Almighty, through his son, "went first to the Gentiles". It says Jesus began his ministry at age 30, Scripture supports his already being in his 40's when he came to Judea. For example, the Pharisees knew exactly how old Jesus was, yet when they talked of him, they mentioned his "not being 50 years old". Why on earth would they say "50", if he was only in his 30's at that time?

If the individual has historical evidence, supported with Scripture showing the above to be wrong, then please let him present it.

In a second, if necessary, account, I will point out something regarding John the Baptist's ministry, which very much supports his being the one that was in prison on the island off of the coast of Ephesus.

**In regard to: Black Citizens of America**  
**Article by Ray Daly**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

I did contact Ray Daly in an attempt to get his proof for things he said in this article. I did receive an answer from Ray, but he did not provide any proof for what he said in this article. He provided three scriptures, no books, authors, or internet pages for what he said in this article.

The three scriptures he gave are as follows:

**Luk 16:16** The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. (KJV)

**Rev 22:18** For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (KJV)

**Act 15:14** Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. (KJV)

None of the above scriptures give us any proof or evidence as far as who wrote the book of Revelation, nor do they tell us that a Mark John instead of John the Apostle wrote the four books of John.

Then he also added to his answer another untruth stating the following:

"It says Jesus began his ministry at age 30, Scripture supports his already being in his 40's when he came to Judea. For example, the Pharisees knew exactly how old Jesus was, yet when they talked of him, they mentioned his "not being 50 years old". Why on earth would they say "50", if he was only in his 30's at that time?"

Again, we are given no scriptural support for what he has just said about Christ's age. Christ was crucified for our sins at

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

about the age of 33 and a half years old as most people agree. He didn't start his ministry until he was 30 years old, and his ministry ended approximately 3 years or so later with His crucifixion.

**It is very likely that the author of the book of John, John 1, John 2, John 3, and Revelation were all written by John the Apostle.**

**Author:** Tradition has long held that John the apostle, whom we have seen penned the Fourth Gospel and the three letters attributed to him, wrote the last book of Scripture. If so, John penned much of the New Testament, with only Paul and Luke writing more than him. While there were skeptics, even early on, about the authorship of the text (most likely due to the apocalyptic nature of the book), the general consensus was that John the apostle was the author. Four reasons exist as to why one should accept Johannine authorship of Revelation.

From the following website: <https://crossexamined.org/wrote-book-revelation/>

This particular website also goes on to give reasons why these books are most likely written by John the Apostle.

If anyone else has anything in regard to this subject, let us know.

## Announcements

### **Announcement from Craig White (December 12, 2022)**

**Upgrades to websites completed**

The upgrades to the various websites are now completed. If, however, you encounter any issues (such as missing links), do let me know,

I think you will find your research and browsing experience 20x better with these upgrades:

- Friends of the Sabbath (constantly being added to with new additions constantly) <https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/home>
- HWA Library and Archives <https://www.hwalibrary.org/>
- Origin of Nations <https://www.originofnations.org/>
- My own papers, articles, Bible studies <https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/CW%20Articles,%20Notes,%20Charts/>
- Giving & Sharing (Richard Nickel's old website has been preserved and upgraded) <https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/G&S/www.giveshare.org/>

Here is a complete list of my websites:

[https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/iframe/Lists/list\\_of\\_history\\_research\\_project.html](https://www.friendsofsabbath.org/iframe/Lists/list_of_history_research_project.html)

Enjoy and spread the word!

Regards to all,  
Craig

### **Announcement from Zac Poonen (December 13, 2022)**

**MESSAGES**

**God's Word is a Torchlight That Shows You the Next Step**

<https://rlcf.church/media/sermons/gods-word-is-a-torchlight-shows-you-the-next-step>

**Hold Fast That Which Is Good (with Telugu translation)**

<https://cfcindia.com/sermon/hold-fast-that-which-is-good>

**Dividing Between Soul and Spirit**

<https://cfcindia.com/sermon/dividing-between-soul-and-spirit>

**The “New” Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

What It Means to Be Truly Spiritual (16 minutes)  
<https://cfcindia.com/sermon/what-it-means-to-be-truly-spiritual>

CFC Bangalore  
<https://cfcindia.com>

## Holy Days 2023

Passover – April 6, 2023 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Unleavened Bread – April 6-12, 2023

Pentecost – May 26, 2023

Trumpets - September 16, 2023

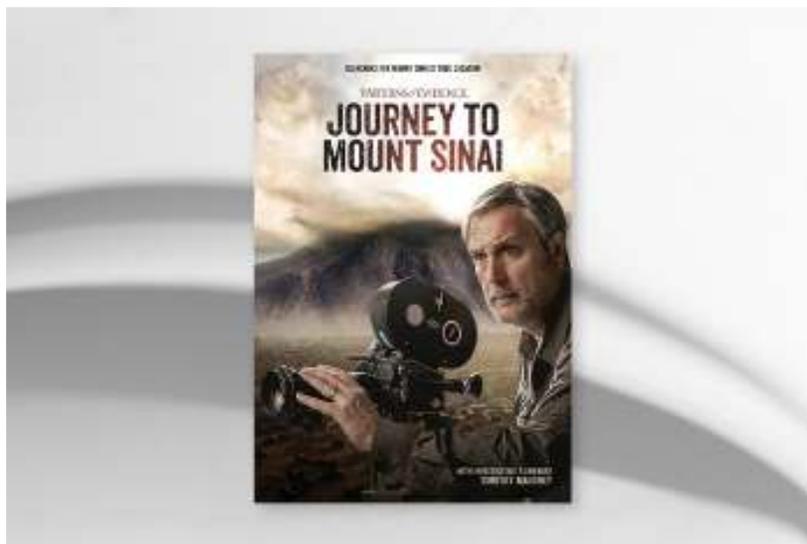
Atonement – September 25, 2023

Tabernacles –September 30, 2023 to October 6, 2023

Last Great Day – October 7, 2023

## Ads

**Ad from Creation Ministries International (December 14, 2022)**



*Patterns of Evidence: Journey to Mount Sinai (Part 1) Searching for Mount Sinai's true location*

by Timothy Mahoney

Can investigative filmmaker Timothy Mahoney find the mountain where Moses encountered the burning bush and where multitudes of Israelites camped for nearly a year?

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
**A Newsletter for the People of God**  
**December 24, 2022 --- Issue No. 99**

Mahoney uses the trusted Patterns-of-Evidence approach and the new Mount Sinai Scorecard to investigate six of the most popular locations proposed for Mount Sinai. Examining details for five major criteria in the biblical account compared to geographical and archaeological information, he sets out to pin-point the mountain's true location. *Journey to Mount Sinai* is a 2-part film series that picks up the exploration of the Exodus where the Red Sea Miracle films left off. Each film will examine three of the primary candidates.

**Only \$20!**

**BUY  
NOW**

## **Other Items**

(Poems, Jokes, Questions etc.)

## **Common Sense**

(Copyright) Sent by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)

### **Common sense**

Common sense is sound, practical judgment concerning everyday matters, or a basic ability to perceive, understand, and judge in a manner that is shared by nearly all people. The everyday understanding of common sense derives from historical philosophical discussion involving several European languages. [Wikipedia](#)

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