

PROPHECY FLASH!

A magazine of insight and understanding of Biblical truth and prophecy for our time.

Vol.29, No.5. Triumph Prophetic Ministries PO Box 842, Omak WA 98841 Nov.-Dec. 2015

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What Do You Really Mean, “The Law of Moses”?



**The Omak Wildfires – God’s
Amazing Deliverance!**

Prophecy Flash! (USPS 18-324) is published bi-monthly by Triumph Prophetic Ministries (Church of God) at 141 Johnson Creek Road, Omak, WA 98841. Periodicals Postage paid at Omak, WA and additional mailing offices. Telephone: (509) 826-7997. Email: triumphpro@aol.com
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Triumph, Box 842, Omak WA 98841.

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A Voice in the Wilderness

God tells His servants in His Word, “Cry aloud, spare not. Lift up your voice like a trumpet and declare to My people their transgression and to the house of Jacob their sins!” (Isa.58:1, Parallel Amplified Bible).

God also declares: “Comfort, comfort My people, says your God. Speak tenderly to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry to her that her time of service and her warfare are ended, that [her punishment is accepted and] her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received [punishment] from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

We are living in a world gone berserk with anger and rage. “Why do the nations rage?” (Psalm 2:1). Answer – because they don’t know the true God, and are in rebellion against His laws and teachings and the true way of life and peace!

Isaiah wrote: “A voice of one who cries: *Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord* [clear away the obstacles]; make straight and smooth a highway for our God. . . . And the glory (majesty and splendor) of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it” (Isaiah 40:3-5).

The Messiah is coming very SOON! Its time to prepare to MEET Him! “Surely the Lord will do nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). The purpose of this magazine is to warn the world of what lies ahead, and to help prepare people to get ready to meet the Messiah, when He returns to restore all things (Acts 3:19-21), put an end to wars, and usher in the Kingdom of God! The prophet Amos declared, “*Prepare to meet your God, O Israel*” (Amos 4:12). No matter is more urgent, today!

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What Do You *Really* Mean, “The Law of Moses”?

Moses was a great man of God whom He used to deliver His law and commandments to the children of Israel. But many Christians believe that God’s law, which Moses delivered, is abolished, today – it was just for the ancient Jews – and was nailed to the cross! Is this true? Was the “law of Moses” really Moses’ law – or was it divine in origin and ordained for ALL MANKIND?

What about the sacrifices, washings, and rituals of the law? What about the Levitical priesthood, and the Temple? What relevance do they have for the world at large and all mankind?

Does God’s grace do away with His Law? Was the “Law of Moses” just a temporary law? Can salvation come through the Law, or is more required?

It is high time we clear up the mystery of law and grace and come to fully understand God’s great Plan for all mankind!

-- William F. Dankenbring

What Is the “Law of Moses”?

Why is the Law of God sometimes called “the Law of Moses”? What was the “Law of Moses”? Is it applicable and relevant to Christians today? What is our relationship to the “Law of Moses”? God inspired the prophet Malachi to write, “Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded to him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments” (Mal.4:4). Is that a commandment for all of God’s people, today, in this end-time generation?

William F. Dankenbring

Christ Himself declared to a young nobleman, “If you want to enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matt.19:17). He went on to show which “Law” of commandments He was talking about – the Ten Commandments and the Torah – the Law of God (verses 18-21).

Christ also declared, plainly, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Do not think that I have come to do away with or undo the Law or the Prophets For truly I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish, not one smallest letter nor one little hook [identifying certain Hebrew letters] will pass from the Law until all things . . . are accomplished” (Matt.5:17-18).

Christ taught obedience to God’s Law. Paul said he imitated Christ, and taught the same gospel which he received from Christ – therefore he taught obedience to God’s Law as well. And Christ said “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). Paul said, “ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Tim.3:16). It cannot therefore contradict itself!

Therefore, what is the truth about God’s Law? What is the definition of the “Law of Moses”? Are they one and the same? Are they different? What is our relationship to the “Law of Moses”, today?

A New Look at God’s Law

First, then, remember that God’s Law – the Ten Commandments and all those commandments based on them – did not start with Moses! The Law of God *long anteceded* the time of Moses! In fact, God’s spiritual Law has been in effect since creation!

Hard to believe? Notice!

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's instruction, and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they sinned. What is "sin"?

Very few people know the Bible definition of sin. Here it is, given by the apostle John: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for *SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW*" (I John 3:4). There it is! Sin is breaking God's Law. Adam and Eve sinned. Therefore they broke God's Law! They stole what was not theirs and broke the eighth commandment. God's Law was then in existence! They "transgressed" against God. But, we read in Romans, ". . . where no law is, there is *no transgression*" (Romans 4.15).

Isn't that plain? So there was a Law long before Moses!

Adam and Eve broke God's Commandments. As we have already seen they dishonored their only Parent – God – and thereby broke the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12). They stole something which wasn't theirs (Exodus 20:15). They coveted something which did not belong to them (Exodus 20:17). Three of God's basic Ten Commandments already broken!

The apostle Paul said, "Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin. . ." (Romans 5:12). Death is the penalty of sin (Romans 6:23). Adam *sinned*. And yet, Paul added, ". . . sin is not imputed where there is no law" (Romans 5:13). But sin was imputed. Adam therefore broke God's Law! And he died – and so have his children. "Nevertheless, death reigned from *Adam* to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression [Adam knew better], who is the figure of him [Christ] that was to come" (verse 14).

Sin was now in the world.

Sin is the transgression of God's law! Death is the penalty of sin, and death reigned from Adam to Moses – for sin is not imputed where there is no law. That's Paul's teaching. Those are the plain words of the New Testament.

God's law was in effect from Adam to Moses! Nothing could be clearer!

But then, exactly what did Moses bring?

The Book of Galatians

In the book of Galatians, the apostle Paul makes it plain that a true Christian is not justified by "works of the law," or made righteous in God's sight by them. Paul declared, "Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the *works of the law*, or by the hearing of faith" (Gal.3:5).

Paul went on, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the CURSE: for it is written, Cursed is every one who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them” (Gal.3:10). What are these “works of the law”? What was Paul talking about?

Most so-called Christian ministers, preachers, and teachers claim that these “works” refer to the commandments of the law of Moses – the entire Law of God given to Israel at Mount Sinai – including the Ten Commandments, statutes, judgments, as well as the Temple rituals and ceremonies of the Law.

But is this assumption true? Just what teaching is the apostle Paul countering in the letter to the Galatians? Who was the enemy? What were they teaching? Was Paul condemning those who taught the laws of God, the Ten Commandments, should be obeyed?

The Church Council of Acts 15

The Law which the legalistic Pharisees tried to bind on the brethren was called “the Law of Moses.” We read that a great controversy arose in the New Testament Church which involved the “law of Moses” and the matter of “circumcision.” Luke wrote in Acts, chapter 15, “But some of the *sect of the Pharisees* who believed rose up” – these were Pharisees who believed Jesus was the Messiah – “saying, ‘It is necessary to *circumcise them [Gentiles], and to command them to keep the law of Moses*’” (Acts 15:5). What was the real problem here?

In verse 6 we read, “Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.” After much discussion, the apostles ruled that God had given the Holy Spirit to Gentiles who believed on Christ, “and made no distinction between us and them [Jews and Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a YOKE on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they” (Acts 15:5-11).

Let's understand this! These Pharisees were arguing that Gentiles, in order to be saved, had to be physically circumcised, and to “*convert*” to *Judaism*! They claimed that Gentiles had to become “physical Jews” by undergoing the rite of circumcision, as well as baptism, and come under the obligation to obey all Jewish religious law – the whole “law of Moses,” which, in that day, included the observation of all the Jewish “halachah” – the rules and restrictions added by generations of Rabbis from the time of Ezra down to the very day of the apostles! This included all the minutiae, and detailed 39 laws of “Sabbath” restrictions, and washings and the “traditions of the elders” – things which were a “YOKE,” in the words of the apostle Peter! (Acts 15:10). Paul speaks of it as a “yoke of bondage” in Galatians 5:1.

In other words, the Pharisee believers were teaching that Gentiles had to become “Jews” first, before they could become “Christians”! They had to *first convert to*

Judaism, and only then could they become acknowledged as believers in Christ! They had to obey ALL the Jewish legal requirements established by generations of Rabbis, and their interpretations of the fine points of the Torah, and Jewish tradition!

But Christ Himself had already ruled on these points, in actuality. The Pharisees accused His disciples of breaking the law of Moses by transgressing the “traditions of the elders” (Matt.15:1-2). However, Jesus hurled their accusation back into their own teeth, saying, “Why do you also transgress the law of God *by your tradition?*” (verse 3). He went on to say, “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect *by your tradition*” (v.6).

In other words, the Jews over time had added so many “halachic” principles and rules, in their legislation, in interpreting the Law of Moses, that they had strayed from the very Law itself and had developed a legal system which, in reality, was contrary to and in violation of the spirit of the original Torah, or law of God!

The argument, then, was not over the law of God itself – called the “law of Moses” in the Scriptures, because it was first codified and laid out in full during the time of Moses, and through the revelation God gave to His servant Moses (see Ezra 7:6, 10). It was over the “traditions” the Pharisees added to the Law, and their perversions of the Law!

Now, let us continue the story in Acts 15. After considering this matter fully, the apostles decided that the Pharisaical believers were *dead wrong!* Conversion to Judaism, indicated by requiring Gentile believers to be circumcised and keep the entire law of Moses (including the traditions of the elders), was NOT necessary for salvation!

But notice. After making this fundamental, paramount decision, the apostles then decided to write a general letter to the Gentile believers throughout the Roman Empire, a very pointed epistle. James, the brother of Christ, and the apostle over the Jerusalem church, declared, “Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. *For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, BEING READ IN THE SYNAGOGUES EVERY SABBATH DAY*” (Acts 15:19-21).

What is this? Why did James stress only these commandments? Was he ignoring or neglecting the laws against murder, stealing, taking God’s name in vain, coveting, bearing false witness, Sabbath breaking – many of the very Ten Commandments? Of course not! When we read this entire passage IN CONTEXT, we see that first of all, James is singling out *specific issues which Gentile brethren would be confronted with in their local communities!* In Gentile society, in those days, idolatrous pollutions were rampant, sexual immorality and promiscuity were also very commonplace, and meats containing blood – improperly killed – were the norm. God forbids His people to get involved in any sort of idol worship, sexual promiscuity, and His dietary laws were the first thing He stressed to ancient Israel as to how they were to be “different” from Gentile

nations – how they were to be “holy” and set apart as a holy nation unto God (Lev.7:27; 11:1-47). Since these things were so common in Gentile society, James felt it advisable to give special prominence to warning the Gentile brethren to avoid these sorts of contaminations and spiritual pollutions.

But notice, now! James went on to explain WHY it was unnecessary to mention all the other laws of God, which also should be observed, because, as he said, *these other laws were already being preached EVERY SABBATH DAY, in the synagogues throughout the Empires, which both converted Jews and Gentiles were then attending!*

James literally said that the law of Moses – that is, the law of God – was being “read in the synagogue every sabbath day” (Acts 15:21). Why would he even bring this up, unless the point he is making is that the Gentile brethren would be HEARING this instruction from the rest of the law of God *every Sabbath day, in the synagogue?*

The Galatians’ Problem

This same problem of some believers insisting Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep all the requirements of Judaism, surfaced also in the province of Galatia. The apostle Paul was deeply concerned about this “Judaizing” problem, this “yoke of bondage” being forced upon Gentile believers by false brethren from the Pharisee party (Gal.5:1). He lamented to the Galatians, saying “there be some that trouble you, and would *pervert* the gospel of Christ” (Gal.1:7).

What was Paul talking about?

Notice! Paul points out to them that 14 years after his own conversion and calling (Gal.2:1), he had to go up to Jerusalem, as Paul put it, “because false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, *that they might bring us into bondage*).” These Pharisees said the new converts had to be circumcised, and to keep all the halachic principles of Rabbinic teaching, and their legalistic interpretations of the Law of God! (Gal.2:4). Paul did not put up with this nonsense for one minute (verse 5).

The Galatians, unfortunately, had been subjected to this false teaching of salvation through physical circumcision and the keeping of the law, and were in danger of falling away from the truth of God. Therefore, Paul felt constrained to write to them about the problem, and in doing so, he explained the TRUTH about the “Law” and its place in our lives. Notice!

The apostle Paul wrote: “And this I say, that the Law, *which was 430 years later*, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect” (Gal.3:17).

Paul was here speaking clearly of some aspect of the law of Moses. What was this which was “added”?

The Law of Moses

Let's go back into the days of Moses, for a moment, and see.

Moses, you will remember, was the one whom God used to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. He was a type of Christ, who delivered us from sin. After crossing the Red Sea in awesome glory, the Israelites came to the Arabian desert, and the hot sweltering sun. They began to murmur and complain, bellyache and grumble. It was not long before men openly began complaining and plotting rebellion against Moses, and against God (Exo.16:2-8). They were riled up, and in a flagrantly sinful attitude of mind!

What does God say? Notice!

“And the Lord said unto Moses, How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?” (verse 28).

Notice! This was two whole weeks BEFORE they came to Mount Sinai! Yet, already, plainly, God's laws were in force – and the Israelites were found breaking the Sabbath commandment, and being disobedient and rebellious.

Consequently, God did two things. He reiterated the basic spiritual Laws He had given mankind – the Ten Commandments, and statutes and judgments (Gen.26:5). Then He added an entirely NEW Law – a law involving the Levitical Priesthood, which He brought into service, and laws concerning rituals, sacrifices, washings, and ordinances involving the Sanctuary or Temple. This law was added because of DISOBEDIENCE to God's spiritual Law – it was added to TEACH them the habit of OBEDIENCE, and LESSONS regarding the enormity of sin, and its forgiveness.

The entire body of Law was called “the Law of Moses,” because God used Moses as His mediator with Israel. The whole body or corpus of Law came through Moses. However, it was divided into two distinct parts – one consisting of statutes and civil laws for the community, based on the Ten Commandments. The other was the ceremonial laws involving the Levitical priesthood, sacrifices, offerings, and rituals. Thus there were TWO PARTS to the Law given at Mount Sinai – the Ethical Law, or Moral Law, governing man's relationship with God and his neighbor – and an “ADDED” part of the Law – the part relating to rituals and sacrifices!

The sacrificial part of the law consisted of ceremonial washings, various laws of sin offerings and sacrifices, and carnal, physical ordinances enjoined upon the people and the Levitical Priesthood. It was not a spiritual law. It could save no one. Speaking of it, the apostle Paul declared in the book of Hebrews, “It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience – concerned only with foods and drinks [offerings], various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed UNTIL the time of reformation” (Hebrews 9:9-10, NKJV).

That part of the Law was a temporary law, imposed until the “time of reformation.” So why was it given to ancient Israel? Let the apostle Paul give us the answer! [What purpose did the ritual law serve?] “It was *added because of transgressions*, till the seed [Christ] should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19).

Did you catch that? That Law which was added – the Levitical Priesthood with all the sacrifices and rituals – was added – “BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS”!

For one law to be “added” because of “transgressions,” then means that there had to be another Law which was *being transgressed*, being broken, by the Israelites! What Law?

Remember, God had said, “How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?” (Exodus 16:28). They had been breaking God’s eternal spiritual law, the Ten Commandments – as well as all those Laws which are based on and derived from the Ten Commandments! Specifically, they broke the SABBATH commandment (Exo.16:23-27).

Because Israel had been breaking God’s Law, He *added another special law* – the laws involving the whole Levitical Priesthood, sacrifices and offerings! WHY? – to teach them the *lesson of repentance and of obedience!* To teach them to acknowledge their sins, He gave them certain ceremonial washings, sin and other offerings, and commanded sacrifices, and carnal ordinances, as a *foreshadow* of things to come. What things? The coming of the true sacrifice for our sins, Christ Jesus Himself! And the Holy Spirit which cleans us up spiritually within. These duties, sacrifices, washings, taught them their need for a coming Savior and God’s Holy Spirit.

As Paul tells us in Hebrews, this new law “stood only in meats and drinks [meal and drink offerings], and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION” (Hebrews 9:10, KJV). These rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices were “a FIGURE for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience” (Heb.9:9).

Paul also wrote of this sacrificial law, “For the law having a *SHADOW* of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not cease to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. *For in those sacrifices there is a REMEMBRANCE again made of SINS every year*” (Hebrews 10:1-3).

The sacrificial law did not atone for sin – but it REMINDED THE PEOPLE of their sins, and their need for proper, true atonement!

Paul goes on: “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*” (Heb.10:4). Rather, the sacrifices of the law pointed to the one supreme sacrifice – the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself, the “Lamb of God”! (Heb.10:5-13).

What about the “Schoolmaster” or “Tutor”?

Paul goes on, in Galatians, saying, “But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.”

“Therefore the law was our tutor (KJV, “*schoolmaster*”) to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are *no longer under a tutor (schoolmaster)*” (Galatians 3:24-25, NKJV). The Greek word for “schoolmaster” or “tutor” here is *paidagogos*, meaning a “boy leader”, i.e. a servant whose office it was to take the children to school. By implication, a “tutor,” “instructor,” “schoolmaster” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, #3807). The NKJV translates the word as “tutor.”

Says Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon, “a leader, a tutor, i.e. a guide and guardian of boys. Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood.”

Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words says of *paidagogos*: “ ‘a guide’ or ‘guardian’ or ‘trainer of boys,’ lit., ‘a child-leader’ (*pais*, ‘a boy, or child,’ *ago*, ‘to lead’), ‘a tutor,’ is translated ‘instructors’ in I Cor.4:15, KJV (RV, ‘tutors’).”

So the “Law” Paul said was a “tutor,” “instructor,” or “teacher” – a “guide” for the children of Israel. It “showed the way” to go. It was a “protector,” and “guardian” to save them from troubles, danger, or perils.

Therefore, the “Law” was like a tutor or guardian for ancient Israel, to guard and protect them from danger, to safeguard their moral conduct, to teach them proper conduct and the enormity of sin and its severe penalty. In this respect, we are speaking of the entire “Law” of Moses, including the rituals, washings, and sacrifices.

Now that Christ has come, we are no longer guided by the precepts of the Law alone – we are NOW guided by Christ Himself, and by the Holy Spirit of God!

That is the meaning here. This does not mean the Law of God is done away with – but now, added to it, is CHRIST – the Saviour and Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit – which God sends upon those who accept and believe in Christ (Acts 5:32).

The Paidagogos Mystery

Interestingly, the term *paidagogos* is also used in the Jewish Targums, ancient

commentaries on the Scriptures. Targum fragments from the Dead Sea Scrolls show the usage of written targums in pre-Christian times. In the Targums, God Himself is referred to as our *paidagogos*! Likewise, so are Moses, Aaron and Miriam. To the Hebrews, the term *paidagogos* carried the meaning of loving, caring, nursing father, as well as “teacher.” The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret the word for “nursing father” in Numbers 11:12, by “pedagogue” (derived from *paidagogos*, obviously).

The New King James has this, “as a GUARDIAN carries a nursing child.” In the Torah in Numbers 11:12, the term translated “father” is *chathan*, #2859, and means, “contract affinity by marriage, join in affinity, father in law,” thus a relative in marriage. Says *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, “to give one’s daughter in marriage, hence, a father-in-law, the wife’s father,” also, “he who takes one’s daughter in marriage,” a bridegroom [see Psalm 19:6, Isaiah 62:5],” etc.

Moses says to God, “Have I conceived all this people? Have I brought them forth, that You should say to me, Carry them in your bosom, as a nursing father [*paidagogos*] carries a sucking child . . .?” (Num.11:12, Amplified Parallel Bible).

In Old Testament times, Israel did not KNOW the Messiah; He had not yet come. But they had the LAW of God as their teacher, tutor, guide and guardian. And it would have performed that function, IF THEY HAD KEPT, OBEYED, AND OBSERVED IT FAITHFULLY!

However, they did not – therefore, as a further “teacher,” “guide,” and “guardian,” God gave them the Levitical Priesthood, and the law of sacrifices, rituals, and diverse washings.

What Paul is saying here is that we are no longer under the sole jurisdiction of the LAW itself being our instructor, guide and tutor – NOW WE HAVE CHRIST! He is our instructor, guide and tutor! Also, now that He has come, we no longer need the “types” and rituals of the Levitical priesthood, which were a GUIDE, and a Lesson Plan, teaching the people the need for forgiveness of sin, the need for a Mediator, and the coming Messiah, who Himself would fulfill many of these “types” and “figures,” reconciling us to God through His own sacrifice of Himself as our Passover Lamb and as an offering for sin (I Cor.5:7; II Cor.5:21).

Paul is not here saying the Law is done away, or is no longer a tutor, or instructive. He is saying we now have a new supreme tutor, guide and instructor – Christ Himself.

Galatians 3:25 poses an interesting problem. In the New King James, it says, “But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” It is translated as a declarative sentence. As such, however, the statement would be untrue – for Christ and the Holy Spirit are our tutors! Yeshua declared, in fact, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will TEACH you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you” (John 14:26). And He also said,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will GUIDE you into all truth” (John 16:13).

Christ and the Holy Spirit are now our tutors, and THEY explain and expound to us the LAW of God itself, so we can understand it, and THEY enable us also to OBEY it (Rom.7:24-25; 8:1-2; verse 9).

We are all still considered as “children.” We still need “instruction” and “tutors.” Peter says, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (I Pet.2:2). Paul says in Galatians 3:26, “For you are all *sons* of God through faith in Jesus Christ.”. Consequently, we STILL need instruction!

Therefore, taking a new look at Galatians 3:25, it becomes evident that this verse SHOULD be translated as a QUESTION – that is, “But after faith has come, *are we no longer under a tutor?*”

The Original Law

The Law of Moses did not originally contain laws of sacrifice. God said to Jeremiah the prophet, “For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning BURNT OFFERINGS OR SACRIFICES. But this is what I commanded them, saying, OBEY MY VOICE, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And WALK in all the ways that I have COMMANDED you, that it may be well with you” (Jeremiah 7:22-23).

The sacrifices were added later, because of disobedience! Over time, the Jewish rabbis added MUCH MORE to the original commandments, in the form of many added halachic rules and decrees made by the Rabbis, which became a veritable “yoke of bondage” upon the people, by the time of Christ and Paul. Originally these sacrificial laws had been put upon the ancient Israelites, because they refused to keep God’s spiritual laws and commandments! They were to teach the people by physical means the lessons of sin, forgiveness, repentance, and importance of obedience.

But by the time of Christ, the Pharisees had added so many additional Sabbath laws, and washings, and laws affecting every aspect of life, that they had created a Monster in itself of TRADITION and Rabbinic RULINGS, which the people were commanded to obey!

Are Christians, today, required to keep the sacrificial, ritualistic aspects of the “law of Moses”?

No – clearly, we are not expected to do sacrifices, or rituals, or those things which were “temporary” and not a part of God’s eternal spiritual Law. As Paul said, “. . . we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

Paul also wrote, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should

take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). “But in those sacrifices there is a *remembrance* [a recalling, not a forgiving] again *made of sins every year*” (verse 3).

These animal sacrifices, washings and such were hard physical work. They could be considered as some of the “works of the law” that couldn’t save anyone. But besides them, there were as well the added “traditions” and Jewish, Rabbinical halachic laws and rules which were added to the Law of Moses by men and handed down by the Pharisees. These were a “yoke of bondage” to the people (Galatians 2:16; 5:1).

The rituals and sacrifices, of course, are not obligatory on true Christians, today. They clearly were types – typifying the coming of the supreme sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. They were but a type of the spiritual, and were given to a carnal, fleshly people, to help them understand. They are not necessary for salvation!

The sacrifices of the Old Testament times could never take away sins (Hebrews 10:11). “But this man” – Jesus Christ – “after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (verse 12).

“The PERFECT LAW”

The apostle James, the brother of Christ, made it about as plain as a person could make it. He proclaimed, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. *Do what it says*. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the PERFECT LAW that gives freedom [God’s true Law, which guarantees everybody’s freedom from slavery and bondage!], and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but DOING it –he will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25).

Isn’t this plain speaking? But James goes even further. He wrote: “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the WHOLE LAW and yet *stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking ALL of it*. For he who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become A LAWBREAKER. Speak and act as those who are going to be JUDGED by the law that gives freedom” (James 2:8-12).

Clearly, God’s Law is eternal. David the prophet and king of Israel wrote in the Psalms, “The works of his hands are verity and judgment; *all his commandments are sure*. They stand fast FOR EVER AND EVER, and are done in truth and uprightness” (Psalm 111:7-8).

Any who come to you and claim that “God’s Law is done away with,” is merely repeating that age-old lie of Satan the devil when he told Eve in the Garden of Eden, in effect, “Salvation is a free gift. No ‘works’ are involved at all. Just eat the fruit of the

nice-looking tree of knowledge of good and evil. It will make you wise like God, and you will easily and quickly become as God is. See how simple it is? Here, have a taste of this delicious, beautiful, delectable fruit!”

But the tree Satan manipulated and seduced Eve to eat of was the tree of the “knowledge [i.e., “experience”] of good *and evil*” – a mixture of good and evil, good mixed with lethal poison – in other words, the tree of DEATH!

And Eve fell for his sucker line of super-salesmanship -- she listened to the snake -- just like generations of mankind have done ever since!

A New Look at the “Works of the Law”

The title of an obscure Dead Sea Scroll is MMT, which stands for *Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah*. This phrase was originally translated “Some of the Precepts of the Torah,” by Dead Sea Scholars Strugnell and Qimron. However, the word *miqsat* does not just mean “some.” The same word is used in Genesis 47:2 where Joseph presents five of his brothers before Pharaoh – where the word could be translated as most important, select, or choice brothers.

More importantly, however, is the rest of the phrase – *ma-ase ha-Torah*. Strugnell and Qimron translated this as “precepts of Torah.” However, the most common GREEK word for *ma-ase* is *ergon* – which in the New Testament is usually translated “works.” The Hebrew word Torah is usually translated as *nomos*, which in the New Testament is generally translated “law.” Thus the expression *ma-ase ha-Torah* then simply means “works of the law.” This would be a very excellent translation. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament leaves no doubt – it translated the Hebrew expression *ma-ase ha-Torah* by the Greek *ergon nomou*. This Greek expression is commonly translated in the New Testament as “works of the law.” This expression is found in Romans 3:20,28, and Galatians 2:16, 3:2,5, and 10.

Interestingly, when the British Bible Society translated the New Testament into modern Hebrew in 1976, when the text of the MMT Dead Sea Scroll was known only to a few scholars, they translated the Greek *ergon nomou* (works of the law) as *ma-ase ha-Torah*.

Says Martin Abegg, author of an article entitled “Paul, ‘Works of the Law’ and MMT,” in the November-December 1994 *Biblical Archaeological Review*,

“In short, *ma-ase ha-torah* is equivalent to what we know in English from Paul’s letters as ‘works of the law.’ This Dead Sea scroll and Paul use the very same phrase. The connection is emphasized by the fact that this phrase appears *nowhere* in rabbinic literature of the first and second centuries A.D. – *only* in Paul and in MMT.

“The works of the law that the Qumran text refers to are obviously typified by the 20 or so religious precepts (*halakkah*) detailed in the body of the text.

For the first time we can really understand what Paul is writing about. Here is a document detailing works of the law” (p.53, *BAR*, 11-12/94 issue).

Finally, then we can put to rest the question, just what are the “works of the law” that Paul wrote about! Finally, an argument which has raged for centuries, and still rages today, can be settled by clear evidence from the first century!

Let’s take a look at this mysterious document MMT, and see what it is all about.

The Dead Sea Scroll MMT

The MMT scroll records the remains of nearly two dozen legal issues. Perhaps another dozen issues perished. The scroll calls attention to the subject of boundaries between what was to be considered pure and impure. The phrase *rohorat haquodesh*, “purity of the holy,” sums up the contents of the scroll and its purpose. Says Abegg, this means, “Do not allow the holy to be profaned by what is impure.” The issues, says Abegg, were:

“The issues include bringing Gentile corn into the Temple, the presentation of Gentile offerings, and the cooking of sacrificial meat in unfit (impure) vessels. Other rulings concern cleansing of lepers, admitting the blind and the deaf into the Temple; and permitting intermarriage with Ammonite and Moabite converts, long forbidden to enter the congregation of Israel (Deuteronomy 23:3). Other issues involve the transmission of impurity by a flow of water (*musaq*), the intermixture of wool and linen (*sha-atnez*) and perhaps the climax of the discussion: the intermarriage of priests with the common people.

“Most of the rulings espoused by the author of MMT are based directly upon Biblical law (for example, the prohibition against plowing with unlike animals in Deuteronomy 22:10). *A few others are interpretations or amplifications of Mosaic prescriptions* (for example, bans on Gentile offerings and dogs in the Temple). The list clearly reflects a conservative reaction against a relaxation of Torah precepts” (*ibid.*, p.53-54).

Notice! These “rulings” or “works of the law” included “INTERPRETATIONS OR AMPLIFICATIONS OF MOSAIC PRESCRIPTIONS.”

The Qumran sect spurned the “rabbinic extensions called *Talmud*, which effectively built a fence around the Torah, successive layers of which have become codified in the rabbinic works of the Mishnah and the two Talmuds.”

Notice again! The “RABBINIC EXTENSIONS” reflected in the Talmud – that corpus of Jewish religious and rabbinic literature accumulated over the centuries, known as the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds – was spurned by the writers of the MMT Dead Sea Scroll. They developed their own interpretations, expansions, and halakkah. But both systems came under the over-all description of “works of the law” – both included various rabbinic-style interpretations, amplifications, and extensions of the Law

of Moses as it was applied to Jewish life during the first century.

The expression *miqsat ma-ase ha-torah* – “pertinent works of the law” – nowhere appears in rabbinic literature. However, clearly the Qumranites, like the apostle Paul, were against the rabbinic “works of the law,” though from a different point of view. They were against them because they were espousing their own version of the “works of the law.”

Paul, very clearly, condemns in no uncertain terms ALL these human-devised “works of the law” in the books of Romans and Galatians!

Writes Abegg:

“Looking at Galatians and Romans in the light of MMT, it seems clear that Paul, using the same terminology, is rebutting the theology of documents such as MMT. I do not mean to suggest that Paul knew of MMT or of the zealous members of the Qumran community, but simply that Paul was reacting to the kind of theology espoused by MMT, perhaps even by some Christian converts who were committed to the kind of thinking reflecting in MMT.”

Clearly, even in Paul’s day, the Jewish scribes and Pharisees and various groups, and even supposed Christian “converts,” were building “fences” around the law of God, and making it into a burden – a “yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1). Paul warned of “false brethren SECRETLY BROUGHT IN”, who entered the church “BY STEALTH to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into BONDAGE” (Gal.2:4). He warned the Galatians that we are not justified before God by such “works of law” (Gal.2:16).

Paul was clearly very upset, disturbed, about the reports he had received concerning such ministers and teachers. He wrote, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” (Gal.3:1). He asked them, “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by *the works of law*, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal.3:2-3).

Paul urged the Galatians not to become entangled in the “works of the law” – the deeds and decisions and rulings of rabbinic Judaism or its offshoots. He wrote, “Stand fast therefore in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the *yoke of bondage*” (Gal.5:1).

Writes Martin Abegg in *Biblical Archaeology Review*:

“Some scholars have suggested that Paul misunderstood the Jewish teaching of his day or, at the very least, that he created a straw man to bolster his own teaching regarding faith versus law. In the past, this view was supported by the fact that the phrase ‘works of the law’ nowhere appears in the foundational

books of rabbinic Judaism. MMT, however, provides the ‘smoking gun’ for which students have been searching for generations, not from the pages of rabbinic literature, but from the sectarian teachings of Qumran. MMT demonstrates that Paul was not jousting with windmills, but was indeed squared off in a dramatic duel – not with mainstream Judaism but with a sectarian theology – that ultimately defined Christianity. If I have understood rightly, the importance of MMT for New Testament research is nothing short of revolutionary” (*ibid.*, p.55).

Clearly, in Romans and Galatians Paul taught against all types of “legalism” and legalistic, authoritarian “additions” to the Law of God!

This principle doesn’t just refer to Jewish or Rabbinical “additions.” On the other hand, we also need to be careful not to come under the “bondage” to the “oral law” or “decrees” of various Christian-professing churches, who create their own rules, regulations, prescriptions, and dogmas – traditions of “men” which Jesus clearly rejected – which violate the written Word and Law of God.

It is interesting that those churches which seem to object the strongest against the Jewish “oral law” themselves create their own “oral law,” although they do not call it that. Historically, even the Sadducees, who rejected the “oral law” preserved by the Pharisees, found it necessary to create their own “oral tradition,” in order to exercise their own authority over the church members! However, any “tradition” or “church custom” which contradicts the Word of God – Torah, or divine Revelation of the Scriptures – must itself be rejected and avoided.

The bottom line, therefore, is that Christ Himself has the last word – He is the Prophet like unto Moses, who has FINAL AUTHORITY to interpret the Mosaic Law -- and provide a true and full interpretation of the Law (see Matthew 5-7). He came to “fill full” the Law, and make it complete (Matt.5:17-19) – to MAGNIFY it (Isaiah 42:21)..

To really understand God’s Law, therefore, and its application to Christians, and the New Covenant, we need to search the Scriptures, and the words of Christ. We need to avoid all the “works of the law,” or man-made religious taboos and constraints, which men have added from time to time, for one reason or another, to the Scriptures, leading into a yoke of heavy-handed authoritarian bondage and spiritual slavery.

The “works of the law” that Christ and Paul condemned were the human additions to God’s Law which made it a system of bondage and misery.

Laws of God Vs. Traditions of Men

We know that the Pharisees were hypocrites, and false teachers, in Christ’s time (see Matthew 23:13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33). They, as a whole, had become a “generation of vipers.”

We know that they added many human “do’s and don’t’s” to the law of God, and

human traditions, making the law of God of no effect – such as the “washing of cups, pitchers and kettles” (Mark 7.4). We know that Christ declared, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt.16:6; Luke 12:1).

Jesus rebuked them powerfully, saying, “And in VAIN they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of MEN. For laying ASIDE the commandments of God, you hold the *tradition of men* – the washing of pitchers and cups:, and many other such things you do. He said to them, *All too well you REJECT the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition*” (Mark 7:7-9).

These “traditions” – called “halacha” by the Rabbis – were “added” to the laws of God, as a sort of “fence” to prevent the laws being trampled. But the FENCE often replaced the Law itself, becoming an even more important LAW!

Their “traditions of men,” therefore, were not binding upon the people. God never gave the scribes and Pharisees authority to ADD TO His law – merely to explain and interpret it correctly!

Jesus rebuked them severely for this excess and abuse and over-stepping of their God-given authority. He castigated them for sometimes supplanting their own traditions of men for the commandments of God (Matt.5, 15; Mark 7).

In other words, the Pharisees were guilty of SIN – breaking God’s Law (I John 3:4) – because they ADDED to God’s Laws their OWN legal requirements as hedges around the Law of God, and many other additional laws and regulations, which were a heavy and grievous YOKE of bondage over the people! They violated God’s commandment in Deuteronomy, where He said plainly: “*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may KEEP the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you*” (Deut.4:2, NKJV).

This principle is SO important, that God said it TWICE! He declared in chapter 12 of Deuteronomy, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe IT; *you shall not ADD TO it nor take away from it*” (Deut.12:32).

The Pharisees were guilty of BOTH! They not only added many self-righteous regulations to the simple Sabbath commandment to REST on that day, they proceeded to enumerate many technical, different kinds of “work” which was, according to them, prohibited. As Jesus Christ said, they were, “Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel” (Matt.23:24).

But not only did they ADD their own rigorous requirements and legal absurdities, the Pharisees also abrogated and rescinded parts of God’s Law. Jesus Himself pointed out how they in effect rescinded the commandment “Honor thy father and thy mother” by their interpretations concerning gifts their children might give to the priests, nullifying their responsibilities to their parents.

A famous example of a nullification of God's Law perpetrated by the Pharisees was a commandment of God which was rescinded by the famous Pharisee leader Hillel, who is highly admired by all Orthodox Jews. Hillel in the decades before Christ, saw that the people were not obeying God's law to lend to the poor, especially as the Jubilee year of debt "release" approached (see Lev.25:14-17). Hillel therefore abrogated the Divine commandment, thinking that if the debts would not be forgiven in the 50th year, then lenders would be more apt to lend to the poor!

Another LAW Added

The Bible does, very plainly, mention a problem which arose in the early church. We read that a great controversy arose in the New Testament Church which involved the law of Moses and the matter of circumcision. Luke wrote in Acts, chapter 15, "But there rose up certain of the *sect of the Pharisees*, which believed" -- these were Pharisees who believed Jesus was the Messiah -- "saying, That it was needful to *circumcise them [Gentiles]*, and to *command them to keep the law of Moses*" (Acts 15:5). What was the real problem here?

In verse 6 we read, "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." After much discussion, the apostles ruled that God had given the Holy Spirit to Gentiles who believed on Christ, "and put no difference between us and them [Jews and Gentiles], purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a YOKE upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15:5-11).

Let's understand this! These Pharisees were arguing that Gentiles, in order to be saved, had to be physically circumcised, and to "*convert*" to *Judaism*! They claimed that Gentiles had to become "physical Jews" by undergoing the rite of circumcision, as well as baptism, and come under the obligation to obey all Jewish religious law -- the whole law of Moses, which, in that day, included the observation of all the Jewish halachah -- the rules and restrictions added by generations of Rabbis from the time of Ezra down to the very day of the apostles! This included all the minutiae, and detailed 39 laws of Sabbath restrictions, and washings and the "traditions of the elders" -- things which were a YOKE, in the words of the apostle Peter! (Acts 15:10). Paul speaks of it as a "yoke of bondage" in Galatians 5:1.

In other words, the Pharisee believers were teaching that Gentiles had to become Jews first, before they could become Christians! They had to *first convert to Judaism*, and only then could they become acknowledged as believers in Christ! They had to obey ALL the Jewish legal requirements established by generations of Rabbis, and their interpretations of the fine points of the Torah, and Jewish tradition!

But Christ Himself had already ruled on these points, in actuality. He told the Pharisees, who accused His disciples of breaking the law of Moses by transgressing the "traditions of the elders" (Matt.15:1-2). However, Jesus hurled their accusation back into

their own teeth, saying, "Why do ye also transgress the law of God *by your tradition?*" (verse 3). He went on to say, "Thus have ye made the law of God of none effect *by your tradition*" (v.6). In other words, the Jews over time had added so many halachic principles and rules, in their legislation, in interpreting the Law of Moses, that they had strayed from the very Law itself and had developed a legal system which, in reality, was contrary to and in violation of the spirit of the original Torah, or law of God!

The argument, then, was not over the law of God itself – called the "law of Moses" in the Scriptures, because it was first codified and laid out in full during the time of Moses, and through the revelation God gave to His servant Moses (see Ezra 7:6, 10). It was over the "traditions" the Pharisees added to the Law, and their perversions of the Law!

Now, let us continue the story in Acts 15. After considering this matter fully, the apostles decided that the Pharisaical believers were *dead wrong!* Conversion to Judaism, indicated by requiring Gentile believers to be circumcised and keep the entire law of Moses (including the traditions of the elders, by direct implication), was NOT necessary for salvation!

But notice. After making this fundamental, paramount decision, the apostles then decided to write a general letter to the Gentile believers throughout the Roman Empire, a very pointed epistle. James, the brother of Christ, and the apostle over the Jerusalem church, declared, "Wherefore my sentence is . . . that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. *For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, BEING READ IN THE SYNAGOGUES EVERY SABBATH DAY*" (Acts 15:19-21).

What is this? Why did James stress only these commandments? Was he ignoring or neglecting the laws against murder, stealing, taking God's name in vain, coveting, bearing false witness, Sabbath breaking -- many of the very Ten Commandments? Of course not! When we read this entire passage IN CONTEXT, we see that first of all, James is singling out *specific issues which Gentile brethren would be confronted with in their local communities!* In Gentile society, in those days, idolatrous pollutions were rampant, sexual immorality and promiscuity were also very commonplace, and meats containing blood -- improperly killed -- were the norm. God forbids His people to get involved in any sort of idol worship, sexual promiscuity, and His dietary laws were the first thing He stressed to ancient Israel as to how they were to be different from Gentile nations – how they were to be holy and set apart as a holy nation unto God (Lev.7:27; 11:1-47). Since these things were so common in Gentile society, James felt it advisable to give special prominence to warning the Gentile brethren to avoid these sorts of contaminations and spiritual pollutions.

But notice, now! James went on to explain WHY it was unnecessary to mention all the other laws of God, which also should be observed, because, as he said, *these other laws were already being preached EVERY SABBATH DAY, in the synagogues throughout the Empires, which both converted Jews and Gentiles were then attending!*

James literally said that the law of Moses – that is, the law of God – was being “read in the synagogue every sabbath day” (Acts 15:21). Why would he even bring this up, unless the point he is making is that the Gentile brethren would be HEARING this instruction from the rest of the law of God *every Sabbath day, in the synagogue?*

Rabbinic Changes in the Law

This same problem of some believers insisting Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep all the requirements of Judaism, surfaced also in the province of Galatia. The apostle Paul was deeply concerned about this “Judaizing” problem, this “yoke of bondage” being forced upon Gentile believers by false brethren from the Pharisee party (Gal.5:1). He lamented to the Galatians, saying “there be some that trouble you, and would *pervert* the gospel of Christ” (Gal.1:7).

What was Paul talking about?

Notice! Paul points out to them that 14 years after his own conversion and calling (Gal.2:1), he had to go up to Jerusalem, as Paul put it, “because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily [secretly] to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, *that they might bring us into bondage*” – that is, to be circumcised, and to keep all the halachic principles of Rabbinic teaching, and their legalistic interpretations of the Law of God! (Gal.2:4). Paul did not put up with this nonsense for one minute (verse 5).

The Galatians, unfortunately, had been subjected to this false teaching of salvation through physical circumcision and the keeping of the law, and were in danger of falling away from the truth of God. Therefore, Paul felt constrained to write to them about the problem, and in doing so, he explained the TRUTH about the law and its place in our lives. Notice!

The apostle Paul wrote: “And this I say, that the covenant [of promise] that was confirmed before of God in Christ, *the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul*, that it could make the promise of none effect” (Gal.3:17).

Paul was here speaking clearly of some aspect of the law of Moses. What was this which was “added”?

The Law of Sacrifices and Rituals

Let's go back into the days of Moses, for a moment, and see. Moses, you will remember, was the one whom God used to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. He was a type of Christ, who delivered us from sin. After crossing the Red Sea in awesome glory, the Israelites came to the Arabian desert, and the hot sweltering sun. They began to murmur and complain, bellyache and grumble. It was not long before men

openly began complaining and plotting rebellion against Moses, and against God (Exo.16:2-8). They were riled up, and in a flagrantly sinful attitude of mind!

What does God say? Notice!

“And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?” (verse 28).

Notice! This was weeks before they came to Mount Sinai! This was almost immediately after they crossed the Red Sea! Yet, already, plainly, God's laws were in force -- and the Israelites were found disobedient and rebellious.

Consequently, God did two things. He reiterated the basic spiritual Laws He had given mankind – the Ten Commandments, and statutes and judgments (Gen.26:5). Then He added an entirely NEW Law – a law involving the Levitical Priesthood, which He brought into service, and laws concerning rituals, sacrifices, washings, and ordinances involving the Sanctuary or Temple. This law was added because of DISOBEDIENCE to God's spiritual Law – it was added to TEACH them the habit of OBEDIENCE, and LESSONS regarding the enormity of sin, and its forgiveness.

The entire body of Law was called “the Law of Moses,” because God used Moses as His mediator with Israel. The whole body or corpus of Law came through Moses. However, it was divided into two distinct parts – one consisting of statutes and civil laws for the community, based on the Ten Commandments. The other was the ceremonial laws involving the Levitical priesthood, sacrifices, offerings, and rituals. Thus there were TWO LAWS given at Mount Sinai – the Ethical Law, or Moral Law, governing man's relationship with God and his neighbor – and the Sacrificial Law!

The sacrificial law consisted of ceremonial washings, various laws of offerings and sacrifices, and carnal, physical ordinances enjoined upon the people and the Levitical Priesthood. It was not a spiritual law. It could save no one.

Then why was it given to ancient Israel?

Let the apostle Paul give us the answer! [What purpose did the ritual law serve?] “It was *added because of transgressions*, till the seed [Christ] should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19).

Did you catch that? The law that was added – the Levitical Priesthood with all the sacrifices and rituals – was added – why? “BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS”!

For one law to be added because of transgressions, then there had to be another Law which was *being transgressed*, broken, by the Israelites! What Law?

Remember, God had said, “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and

my laws?” (Exodus 16.28). They had been breaking God's eternal spiritual law, the Ten Commandments – as well as all those Laws which are based on and derived from the Ten Commandments!

Because Israel had been breaking God's Law, He *added another special law* – the laws involving the whole Levitical Priesthood, sacrifices and offerings! WHY? – to teach them the *lesson of repentance and of obedience!* To teach them to acknowledge their sins, He gave them certain ceremonial washings, offerings, and commanded sacrifices, and carnal ordinances, as a *foreshadow* of things to come. What things? The coming of the true sacrifice for our sins, Christ Jesus Himself! And the Holy Spirit which cleans us up spiritually within. These duties, sacrifices, washings, taught them their need for a coming Savior and God's Holy Spirit.

As Paul tells us in Hebrews, this new law “stood only in meats and drinks [meal and drink offerings], and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION” (Hebrews 9:10). These rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices were “a FIGURE for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience” (Heb.9:9).

Paul also wrote of this sacrificial law, “For the law having a *shadow* of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not cease to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. *For in those sacrifices there is a REMEMBRANCE again made of SINS every year*” (Hebrews 10:1-3).

The sacrificial law did not atone for sin – but it REMINDED THE PEOPLE of their sins, and their need for proper, true atonement!

Paul goes on: “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*” (Heb.10:4). Rather, the sacrifices of the law pointed to the one supreme sacrifice – the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself, the Lamb of God! (Heb.10:5-13).

The Sacrificial, Ritual Law

Do you see?

Paul goes on, in Galatians, discussing the sacrificial, ritualistic part of the Law of Moses, saying, “Wherefore the law was our *schoolmaster* to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are *no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Galatians 3:24-25).

That is, we no longer need the types and rituals of the Law, which were a GUIDE, and a Lesson Plan, teaching the people the need for forgiveness of sin, the need for a Mediator, and the coming Messiah, who Himself would fulfill many of these types and

figures, reconciling us to God through His own sacrifice of Himself as our Passover Lamb an offering for sin (I Cor.5:7; II Cor.5:21).

The law of Moses, with its constant round of sacrifices and washings, and the many added Halachic rules and decrees made by the Rabbis, had become a veritable “yoke of bondage” upon the people, by the time of Christ and Paul. Originally these laws had been put upon the ancient Israelites, because they refused to keep God's spiritual laws and commandments! They were to teach the people by physical means the lessons of sin, forgiveness, repentance, and obedience.

But by the time of Christ, the Pharisees had added so many additional Sabbath laws, and washings, and laws affecting every aspect of life, that they had created a Monster in itself of TRADITION and Rabbinic RULINGS, which the people were commanded to obey!

Are Christians, today, required to keep the sacrificial, ritualistic aspects of the God's Law?

Clearly, we are not expected to do sacrifices, or rituals, or those things which were temporary and not a part of God's eternal spiritual Law. As Paul said, “. . . we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” As Peter said, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” (Acts 15:10).

Paul also wrote, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). “But in those sacrifices there is a *remembrance* [a recalling, not a forgiving] again *made of sins every year*” (verse 3).

Speaking of the sacrificial and ceremonial aspect of the law of Moses, a law of physical works, Paul wrote: “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks [that is, meal and drink offerings], and divers washings, and carnal ordinances [Greek, “rites and ceremonies”], *imposed* on them *UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION*” (Hebrews 9:9-10).

These animal sacrifices, washings, as well as the traditions and halachic laws and rules handed down by the Pharisees were a yoke of bondage to the people (Galatians 2:16).

What Do You Mean, “the Law of Moses”?

Just what is meant by the expression, “the law of Moses”? Is that a law that Moses brought or originated? Is that just the sacrificial, ceremonial part of God’s Law given to ancient Israel? Why was Ezra called a “scribe of the law of Moses”?

William F. Dankenbring

There is much misunderstanding regarding the term “the law of Moses” as it is used in the Bible, leading to a great deal of confusion, ignorance, incorrect and false teaching, and potentially loss of salvation for those deceived on this fundamental, pivotal issue. It’s time we get this straight, and understand it once and for all!

In the first five books of the Bible, called the Torah, the expression “law of Moses” is never used. These five books were compiled and written by Moses, the great teacher of Israel. But the laws announced in these books were not called “the law of Moses” at all. They were all called “the law of God”!

The first time the word “law” is used, it refers to all Israel and the foreigners dwelling among them. God said, “One law shall be for the native born and for the stranger who dwells among you” (Exo.12:49). In the next instance, God says to Moses concerning the feast of unleavened bread, “it shall be as a sign to you . . . that the Lord’s law may be in your mouth. . . You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year” (Exo.13:9-10).

The Book of Exodus

In the book of Exodus, where the law of God is first mentioned, it involves the weekly Sabbath day. God says to Moses that He is going to rain down bread from heaven for the people, a certain quota every day, “that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not” (Exo.16:4). Some of the people failed the test by going out on the Sabbath day to gather manna, causing God to exclaim, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?” (Exo.16:28). Notice! They are called God’s commandments and God’s laws – not Moses’ law!

This is what we find throughout the Pentateuch. The laws God gives Israel – all of them – are called God’s Laws and are never referred to as “Moses’ law”!

God gives His laws to Israel. They are His laws – all of them. They did not originate with Moses. Moses was merely the “go between” – the mediator – but the laws were all given by God Himself. He was the Originator – the Law-giver!

The Words of Deuteronomy

Moses explained this relationship to Israel when he said to them, “Therefore know this day and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments *which I command you today*, that it may go well with you” (Deut.4:39-40). The law came from God; Moses was merely the messenger who conveyed God’s words and law to Israel.

“So it was when Moses had completed writing the words of the law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, ‘Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may be there as a witness against you; for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck’” (Deut.31:24-27). This was a reference to the book of Deuteronomy, the final book of the law which Moses wrote.

Moses himself wrote, “The LORD came to them from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand came a fiery law for them” (Deut.33:2).

The law came from God. It was all His law. None of it came by the mind of Moses. When then did the law of God begin to be called “the law of Moses”?

The Book of Joshua

The first time the expression “law of Moses” is used in Scripture is in the book of Joshua, written by Moses’ successor, who led Israel into the Promised Land. Joshua built an altar to the Lord, at Mount Ebal, “as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses” (Joshua 8:31). There “he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written” (v.32).

Before his death, Joshua commanded all Israel, “Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left” (Josh.23:6).

David’s Charge to Solomon

The next time the law of Moses is mentioned as such in Scripture is when king David charged his son Solomon, “And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is *written in the law of Moses*, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn” (I Kings 2:3). Notice! David declared that God’s statutes,

commandments, judgments and testimonies were written “in the *law of Moses*” – so again, it was GOD’s law – but transcribed through Moses.

Technically, Moses was not the Law-giver, God was – but He used Moses as His instrument and intermediary.

In the Days of Josiah

King Josiah of Judah was a righteous king in whose day the priests found a copy of the “Book of the Law in the house of the LORD” (II Kings 22:8). They read it to the king. “Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes” (v.11). This was probably a copy of the book of Deuteronomy, which lists the punishments which would come upon Israel for idolatry and disobedience.

Josiah even banished those who consulted mediums and spiritists, and all the idols and abominations in the land of Judah, “that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book” found in the house of God. The chronicler says, “Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to *all the Law of Moses*” (II Kings 23:25).

Ezra the Scribe

Because Israel did turn from God, the disasters prophesied in the Law came upon them. All Judah was led into captivity by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. But after suffering for seventy years, God began to restore them to their homeland, in the days of king Cyrus of Persia. Some fifty years later, in the reign of king Artaxerxes, Ezra came up from Babylon – “and he was a skilled scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given” (Ezra 7:6).

A skilled scribe does not mean just a ready writer or excellent penman. It is one who is eminently skillful in expounding the Law. In this sense, the word “scribe” is repeatedly used in the New Testament. The Syriac gives the sense of the word by translating it as “a wise scribe” or “expounder.”

Ezra was a doctor, a rabbi, “learned in the Mosaic Law and in all that related to the civil and ecclesiastical polity and customs of the Hebrew people. Scribes of this description possessed great authority and influence (Matthew 23:25; Mark 12:28” (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Critical, Experimental and Practical Commentary on Ezra 7:6*).

This was an amazing time in Israel and the world. At the end of Ezra chapter six, the rebuilt Temple is finished and put into operation, in 515 B.C. Chapter seven opens with the story of Ezra who returned to Jerusalem in 457 B.C. – some fifty years later.

Much was happening in the world during this time. Between the dedication of the Temple and the journey of Ezra, a number of stirring events occurred on the world scene.

The expeditions of Xerxes into Greece, the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis occurred, with the deeds of Miltiades, and Leonidas and Cimon, which brought such humiliating disasters upon the Persian Empire. After Xerxes' humiliating return from Greece, there was the episode of Esther, the plot of Haman to eradicate the Jews from the Empire, and the deliverance of celebrated by Purim and the exaltation of Mordecai, Esther's uncle, to Prime Minister of Persia.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus says of Ezra, "Moreover there was in Babylon a righteous man, and one that enjoyed a great reputation among the multitude; he was the principal priest of the people, and his name was Ezra (Esdras). He was very skillful in the law of Moses, and was well acquainted with king Xerxes" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 11 5, 1).

Notice that Ezra was skilled in the law of Moses, "which the LORD God of Israel had given" (Ezra 7:6). Ezra had "prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD and do it" (v.10).

"The Law of Moses" Revealed

Did you get that? Here we read plainly that "the law of Moses" was the same Law as the "Law of the LORD" – the whole Law God gave to Israel through Moses! This was not really the "Law of Moses," as if originating from him, but it was GIVEN BY THE GOD OF ISRAEL! Ezra was an expert in the ENTIRE MOSAIC LEGISLATION – the laws, statutes, and judgments of God! Thus "the law of Moses" is not a separate law, but it is part and parcel of *God's* Law – not some secondary law given by Moses, in addition to the laws of GOD!

The account continues, "for Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). Thus Ezra became known as "Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel" v.11).

What was Ezra expert in? All the laws of God, also known as "the law of Moses" the man of God, and all the statutes and commandments of the LORD given through Moses to Israel!

Let's understand this!

Unger's Bible Dictionary points out that "the law of Moses" is a term that simply "signifies the whole body of Mosaic legislation (I Kings 2:3; II Kings 23:25; Ezra 3:2); called with reference to its divine origin *the law of Jehovah* (Psalm 19:8; 37:31; Isa.5:24; 39:9). In the latter sense it is called by way of eminence, *the Law* (Heb. *Hatorah*, Deut.1:5; 4:8, 44; 17:18, 19; 27:3, 8). The law is especially embodied in the last four books of the Pentateuch." ("Law of Moses," p.647).

Some think that the “law of Moses” is just that part of the law which was “added because of transgressions.” They think that the New Testament expression “the works of the law” refers to this “added” law of sacrifices, rituals, and offerings – the laws involving the Temple and the Levitical priesthood. Nothing could be further from the truth!

The “law of Moses” IS the “Law of God”!

In I Kings 2:3 David said to his son Solomon, “Keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES.” Clearly, the laws of God are all incorporated in THE LAW OF MOSES, as this verse shows!

The “Added” Law

The “law of Moses” was not an “added law.” It was the WHOLE LAW OF GOD! Of course, there was an “added law” – the law of the Temple, rituals, sacrifices and priesthood – but it was merely PART OF THE LAW of Moses!

It was added, the apostle Paul says, “because of transgressions” – because the people disobeyed God’s commandments and statutes (Gal.3:19). It was added till Christ should come, as a guard, guideline, and tutor or teacher (Gal.3:23-25). Now that Christ has come, we no longer need the tutor of the sacrifices, and Temple rituals. They are all fulfilled in Christ.

Paul speaks of this added law when he writes of the Temple service, “the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—concerned only with food and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed on them *until the time of reformation*” (Heb.9:6-10).

The sacrificial, ritualistic part of the law of Moses is not obligatory upon Christians. However, do not make the mistake that the sacrificial law was the “law of Moses” and not the law of God – it was ALL the Law of God, which He imposed on Israel according to His own will and purpose.

The expression “the law of Moses” then refers to ALL GOD’S LAW revealed in the Scriptures that came through Moses – through the five books of the Torah – Genesis through Deuteronomy. This includes the moral law, the civil law, the Ten Commandments, the judgments, statutes, holy days, law of clean and unclean meats and the whole corpus of law revealed and explained in the first five books of Moses.

Christians and the “Law of Moses”

The Law of Moses, then, is completely relevant for Christians, today. All the statutes, judgments, penalties for disobedience, and violation of the law, are IN FORCE and OPERATING in the cosmos, today, for they are ETERNAL PRINCIPLES of righteous conduct.

In the book of Nehemiah we read that the people told Ezra the scribe to bring “the book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding . . . Then he read from it . . . from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law” (Nehemiah 8:1-3).

“The Levites helped the people to understand the law . . . So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading” (verses 7-8).

“And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for one fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshipped the LORD their God” (Nehemiah 9:3).

It is a very dangerous thing to suppose that the Law of Moses – including the punishments and curses for disobedience and rebellion – are not relevant or operative, today. It would be a mistake of the greatest magnitude! Disaster came upon ancient Israel and Judah because they forsook and violated the “Law of Moses.” Daniel the prophet declared, “As it is written in the Law of Moses, *all this disaster has come upon us*; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might TURN FROM OUR INIQUITIES and understand Your truth” (Dan.9:13).

There are SERIOUS PENALTIES for disobedience (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, for example).

Those penalties are just as applicable and relevant today as they ever were! For the Law of God, the Law of Moses, apart from the “added” law of Temple rituals and sacrifices, applies to ALL MANKIND, Jews and Gentiles alike!

David’s Attitude toward the Law

As David wrote, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Psalm 19:7-9).

David also declared, “The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure, THEY STAND FAST FOREVER AND EVER, and are done in truth and uprightness” (Psalm 111:7-8).

May God help us to have the attitude of David toward God’s Law – the Law called “the Law of Moses.”

David said of this Law, “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

“Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (119:18). “Indignation has taken hold of me because of the wicked who forsake Your law” (119:53).

“I made haste and did not delay to keep Your commandments” (119:60). “I delight in Your law” (119:70).

“I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law” (119:113).

“Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law” (119:136).

“I hate and abhor lying but I love Your law” (119:163).

“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (119:165).

God’s Final Warning

God’s final word of warning to us of this end-time age and generation is spelled out by the prophecy of Malachi, in the final book of the Old Testament. God declares to His people:

“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse [that is, marginal reading, with utter destruction]” (Malachi 4:4-6).

Will we get the message? Will we understand it? Will we fear God, and return to His commandments, His Torah, and the Law of Moses?

The stakes are very high. Remember the Law – or face utter destruction!

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Prophecy Briefs

Are We Living in the Last Days?

Could it be possible that we are living in the period of time that the Bible refers to as “the last days”? And if so, what does that mean for our future? As we approach the final months of 2015, it seems like more people are talking about apocalyptic scenarios than ever before. The mainstream media is doing articles on “end of the world fears“, and it is being reported that 41 percent of all Americans believe that “we are living in what the Bible calls the last days.”

For those that believe, the signs are everywhere – geopolitical instability, moral decay, steadily increasing numbers of natural disasters and a global financial system that could fall apart at any moment. Others mock the idea that we could be living in “the last days”, and many of them point to the amazing technological progress that humanity is making and the unprecedented prosperity that we have been enjoying in recent times.

If things are actually “getting better”, they argue, then how could we possibly be living in the end times described in the Bible? And of course atheists are convinced that God doesn’t exist at all, and that all of this apocalyptic talk is just a bunch of religious nonsense. So what is the truth?

This is a very controversial area of discussion, and I certainly recognize that there are a wide variety of opinions on this. I am going to share with you what I think, and you can take it for what you think that it is worth. Personally, I always like to start with certain preconditions that had to have been met before the last days as described in the Bible could begin.

In particular, the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948 was an extremely significant event. The events described in the book of Revelation and elsewhere in the Bible regarding the last days assume that the nation of Israel exists and that it controls the city of Jerusalem. Well, when the book of Revelation was written the nation of Israel had already ceased to exist.

In 70 AD, the Romans absolutely flattened the city of Jerusalem and dispersed the Jewish people. For almost two thousand years, the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem were controlled by foreign powers. But then that all changed in 1948.

Never before in human history had a nation that had been wiped off the face of the map for nearly two thousand years come back into existence. But in 1948 it happened just like the Bible said that it would. And then in 1967 the Jewish people recaptured the city of Jerusalem just like the Bible said that they would.

But that does not necessarily mean that we are in “the last days”. Even though certain preconditions have been met, the return of Jesus Christ could still potentially be a way off.

In Matthew chapter 24, Jesus describes some other things that we should look for just prior to His return...

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Certainly so much of that is now coming to pass, and on my website I regularly write about the increase in natural disasters that we have already seen in recent years and about the great natural disasters that are coming.

But in this article I want to focus on the phrase “iniquity shall abound”.

For decades, the United States and much of the rest of the world has been in moral decline. For this country in particular, I would refer you to an article that I did entitled “100 Facts About The Moral Collapse Of America That Are Almost Too Crazy To Believe“. Our nation has become a cesspool of wickedness, filth and corruption, and it is getting worse with each passing day.

It has been said that if God does not judge the United States that He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. Prominent Christian ministers all over America believe that we stand right at the precipice of major judgment, and this includes Billy Graham’s own son...

Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, says the “defining moment” for America and humanity has arrived.

“As a nation we have arrogantly turned our back on God, and I believe God’s judgment will come against our country,” Graham says.

I agree with Franklin Graham.

In fact, I believe that America is being shown exactly why judgment is coming.

For example, I believe that all of these undercover Planned Parenthood videos have come out at this specific time so that the entire nation can be confronted with our nightmarish crimes against humanity.

Virtually everyone in America now knows that Planned Parenthood viciously murders babies,

harvests their body parts, and sells them off to the highest bidder.

And the U.S. government is funding this.

So where is the outcry?

Where is the national repentance?

There should be Nuremburg-style trials for what is going on, and yet the silence is deafening!

The sad truth is that we can’t even get Planned Parenthood defunded, and some of our politicians actually intend to go after the organization that made the undercover videos exposing these practices.

Today, most churches and most Christians don’t even want to utter the word “abortion” because it might “offend” someone. Plus, many Christians are so busy ripping each other to pieces that they don’t even have time to address the things that really matter.

For decades, God has been pleading with America to repent, but there has been no repentance.

So now God is going to have to use judgment to try to wake us up. And we should be very thankful for this, because I believe that without the shaking that is coming there would be no repentance at all. (Michael Snyder, End of the American Dream Blog, Sept.11, 2015).

Is 7-Year Tribulation about to Start?

Millions of investors concerned about the Shemitah cycle are watching stock markets and economies in these dark days of September.

Will the Dow crash, they wonder, like it did in the past two Shemitah years, 2001 and 2008, or will the dollar collapse and take the U.S. economy down with it?

Not Mark Biltz. The founder and pastor of El Shaddai Ministries is watching for something much bigger. The start of the Tribulation.

Biltz, author of “*Blood Moons: Decoding the Imminent Heavenly Signs*,” is not predicting that the Tribulation will start with the beginning of a new seven-year cycle at sundown on Sunday, Sept.

13. But if it doesn't start, then he says it likely won't for at least another seven years.

That's because God operates according to seasons that follow the biblical Old Testament feast days, he said.

"The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is trying to get the attention of the entire world, and His people in particular, of the need to get on His calendar cycle.

One of the ways He does that is through signs in the heavens, including lunar and solar eclipses, which of course have to do with calendars. A total lunar eclipse or "blood moon" occurs on Sept. 28, which is the Feast of Tabernacles. It's the last of four blood moons, all falling on Jewish feast days, over the past 18 months, a rare "tetrad" of lunar eclipses.

And it's not like one has to search very long for signs that the Tribulation could be about to commence. Christians are being slaughtered across the world while the historically Christian nations of Europe and America ignore their cries, jumping instead to take in Muslim migrants and thousands of potential jihadist enemies.

"The Muslims, Hindus, Chinese, Christians ... all have created their own calendar system, but God is putting the world on notice that His is the one that really matters," Biltz told Charisma magazine.

The religious leaders in Jesus' day were rebuked for "not understanding the signs of the times," Biltz said. "God is again using the signs in the heavens to get our attention that we need to get connected to the Shemitah cycle to properly understand prophecy."

Biltz believes the prophet Daniel's "70 weeks" prophecy was based on the Shemitah cycle.

The one remaining "week," which is seven years according to Daniel's prophecy, is that period Christians refer to as the Tribulation, and Biltz believes it will be a Shemitah week.

"Therefore the Tribulation week has to begin at the beginning of a Shemitah cycle. The seven-year Tribulation cannot begin just anywhere. It will not begin in just a random year on our pagan calendar," Biltz said.

The Jewish new year, Rosh Hashanah, which starts at sundown Sunday, Sept. 13, begins a new seven-year cycle.

"If the Tribulation does not start this fall, then it cannot start for (at least) seven more years," Biltz said. "May the Lord give us at least one more Shemitah week or seven more years for the body of believers worldwide to come into this understanding of participating in the feasts that they may be ready."

The Shemitah was introduced to Moses at Mount Sinai as described in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. God prescribed an agricultural cycle that allowed the people work the land for six years, and then on the seventh year the land was to rest from all sowing and reaping, and all debts were to be forgiven at the end of the seventh year. The Shemitah was meant to be a blessing as grain would be stored up during the six years, allowing for provisions during the year of rest. But if the Israelites turned away from God the Shemitah would manifest as judgment.

Author Jonathan Cahn posited in his best-selling book, "The Mystery of the Shemitah," that the seven-year pattern has produced major turning points in history. He connected the pattern to numerous stock-market crashes, the regathering of the Jewish people in Israel, the reclaiming of Jerusalem in 1967, and the rise and fall of empires. (WorldNet Daily, Sept.10, 2015).

Holy Shemitah! Planet Earth aflame in hunt for Bible word

1 in 10 Google searches seek info on 7-year biblical cycle

With all the news coverage over the past year, especially in the Christian media, there are still many who are conflated about the looming climax of the biblical Sabbath year or "Shemitah," a phenomenon that could have wide-ranging effects on their finances.

Charisma magazine and the Times of India reported one in 10 Google searches is now for the word "Shemitah."

What they're finding is that the word "Shemitah" means "shaking," and it has done exactly that to global stock markets over the past month.

The current Shemitah year started in September 2014 and ends this weekend, as spelled out by author Jonathan Cahn in his blockbuster book, "The Mystery of the Shemitah," occurs on Elul 29 on the Hebrew calendar. That falls on Sunday, Sept. 13, on the Gregorian calendar.

On the following Monday, Sept. 14, some expect world markets to open with frantic selling. Others say it's no big deal, and nothing memorable is likely to happen.

Cahn himself has repeatedly said nothing could happen, because nobody knows the mind of God.

But the last two Shemitah years brought big news. Both September 2001 and September 2008 brought ruinous red ink to Wall Street while 2001 also brought the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers and Pentagon.

A 'desecration' at the White House

The record-breaking market collapses, according to Cahn's New York Times-bestseller, is indicative of God's judgment on an unrepentant America, which has openly defied God with legalized abortion leading to the deaths of 57 million unborn babies, removal of God from the public square and now, in the middle of the current Shemitah, the "desecration" of same-sex marriage and a White House lit up in the colors of the rainbow.

The rainbow, a symbol in the Bible of God's mercy and sheltering of his people from judgment, has been twisted by the radical LGBT lobby into a symbol of open defiance of God's created order, Cahn has said.

Roth weighs in on Shemitah

Sid Roth, host of the Christian television show "It's Supernatural!" said Tuesday he expects the "shaking" will not be as calamitous as many are expecting.

He said he believes the "shaking" of judgment will continue to occur, but it will be accompanied by a "great awakening."

"Here is my spin," Roth told Charisma. "Absolutely, God works in patterns. I mean that's seen throughout the Bible. However, it's my belief that there will be a 'shaking' as a result of the

Shemitah year, but it will not be as disastrous as people think. Also, I see a great awakening that has already started. I believe God is going to give us an awakening before the book of Revelation stuff starts happening."

Roth's remarks followed the release of an article in the Times of India noting that "Shemitah" was among the top trending terms on Google. A Google Trends search revealed one in 10 Google searches was for the word "Shemitah."

The Shemitah was the seventh year of the seven-year agricultural cycle mandated by God in Deuteronomy for the land of Israel. The current cycle ends Sunday, which is Elul 29, the last day of the year on the Hebrew calendar, followed the next day by the Feast of Trumpets, also called Rosh Hashanah or the Jewish New Year. The trumpet is symbolic of judgment throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

The fourth and final "blood moon" in a rare tetrad of lunar eclipses is also set for later this month, on Sept. 28, the biblical Feast of Tabernacles.

Carl Gallups, author of *"Final Warning: Understanding the Trumpet Days of Revelation,"* said the convergence of signs in the heavens with the end of the Shemitah year, the pope's visit to the U.S. and U.N. Sept. 23-25, and the U.S. getting ready to approve an Iranian nuclear deal seen as detrimental to Israel, should make all Christians watchful but not fearful.

"I don't know what will or will not happen as a result of this convergence," he said. "I liken the whole affair to hurricane season along the Gulf Coast, where I live and minister. It begins in June and goes through October and sometimes November. But, just because it is the 'season' does not mean that anything devastating will happen. Nevertheless, we keep watch anyway, because all the 'ingredients' are there for a hurricane to pop up. We get prepared and then we get on with life."

This is a similar scenario with the Shemitah, Gallups said. The world appears to be heading into a prophetic "hurricane season."

"All the ingredients are present for a prophetic happening, even an ominous one. I encourage the people of God to get prepared, and then get on with life," he said. "We are here to be the salt and

light, not to run and hide. But ultimately, it is all in the hands of the Lord.”

Kirkpatrick issues fiery warning

John Kirkpatrick this week joined the list of prophecy teachers warning Americans about the Shemitah.

“The Bible says there are four sins that God does not take lightly, and the (land) convulses every time we practice these sins,” he said in a video posted to YouTube, listing idolatry; sexual sins such as homosexuality, fornication and immorality; abortion; and breaking covenant with Israel.

“God said do not defile yourself in any of these ways. This is the Bible. You can reject it, or you can fear it. I fear it.

“Fifty-seven million babies have been aborted; blood has a language all its own,” Kirkpatrick continued. “And when they take a baby and massacre that baby and flush it down the commode, that blood goes into the rivers and that blood still has a voice and God hears it. Fifty-seven million babies, and the cup of God’s wrath is filling up. ... Don’t think God can’t get to the place where his wrath can’t wait any longer. America’s soul is hanging in the balance, and it possibly could be that these are the final waning hours of America. It could be that September is going to bring such swift judgment, I’m saying possibly, that these could be the final hours.”

Gallups said he is always hopeful for a spirit of national repentance and revival.

“It is the stuff of which a large part of my ministry is made. But such repentance would have to start in the majority of pulpits and pews across America and continue on to national leadership – especially in the White House and Congress,” Gallups said. “I am hopeful, but not confident, that it will happen. I am afraid we may have gone too far down the road of rebellion. Like God’s men of ages past, however, I will continue to blow the warning trumpet and sound the call for America to repent before the full judgment of God falls. ”

Shemitah meant to be a blessing

In his book, Cahn explained that the seven-year cycle was meant to be a blessing as long as Israel was following God, but it manifests as judgment when the nation turned away. It often strikes in the financial realm but can have an effect on more than just markets and economies. It can promote nations and pull down empires, he says. It can coincide with world wars and natural disasters.

And every seven Shemitahs, or 50 years, marks the biblical year of Jubilee, which has been uncannily at predicting major events for the state of Israel. The last two were in 1917, as Israel was rebirthed with Britain’s issuance of the Balfour Declaration, and in 1967, when Israel retook the city of Jerusalem in the Six Day War. The year of Jubilee as described in the Old Testament was when slaves were set free and any Israelites who lost his land had it restored.

The Shemitah has drawn particular interest amid global stock-market turmoil in recent weeks.

The U.S. stock market lost more than 2,000 points, or about 11 percent of its value, in August. So far, in September, it has been gyrating up and down like a yo-yo – up 200 to 300 points in one day, and down just as much the next. On Wednesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average headed for another down day, closing at 16,253, down 239 points, or 1.5 percent.

The Dow hit its record high of 18,312 just a few months ago on May 19.

“Everyone is looking at the last day of the Shemitah for when the stock market will crash,” said Roth, who interviewed Cahn on his show last week. “That’s not what (Cahn) said. That’s what they think. What he said is that there is something called the ‘wake of the Shemitah,’ and the judgments of the Shemitah year start very small and then end large.

“That’s what he said, which I don’t think anyone has heard. They have it locked in their minds that if something doesn’t happen on that date, they are going to toss the whole thing out.”

Roth, who believes the world is on the verge of a massive end-time revival, says he believes God is using Cahn’s warnings and those of other faith leaders and prophecy experts to awaken America and the world to its dire condition.

"I believe a shaking will occur," Roth said. "I'm not saying we are going to get out of this without anything happening, but what I'm saying is I believe God is not through with America, and I believe an awakening is coming to turn things around. I think God is going to have mercy and let everyone have one more chance."

Jonathan Bernis, the president of Phoenix, Arizona-based Jewish Voice Ministries, said he believes a financial collapse is inevitable.

"Whether a financial collapse does, in fact, hit us in the next few weeks or not, I believe financial upheaval is imminent. Whether it comes in two weeks, two months or two years from now, I believe it will come," Bernis told Charisma. "God is warning us to a multitude of ways to prepare for what is ahead." (WorldNetDaily, Sept.10, 2015).

America's Collapse Parallels Ancient Roman Empire's Fall

The fall of Rome was a culmination of several external and internal factors. Now it seems America is falling down the same path.

Great Wall of China

By 220 A.D., the Later Eastern Han Dynasty had extended sections of the Great Wall of China along its Mongolian border. This resulted in the Northern Huns attacking west instead of east. This caused a domino effect of tribes migrating west across Central Asia, and overrunning the Western Roman Empire.

Open borders

Illegal immigrants poured across the Roman borders: Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Franks, Anglos, Saxons, Alemanni, Thuringians, Rugians, Jutes, Picts, Burgundians, Lombards, Alans, Vandals as well as African Berbers and Arab raiders.

Will and Ariel Durant wrote in "The Story of Civilization" (Vol. 3 – Caesar and Christ, Simon & Schuster, 1944, p. 366): "If Rome had not engulfed so many men of alien blood in so brief a time, if she had passed all these newcomers through her schools instead of her slums, if she had treated them as men with a hundred potential excellences, if she had occasionally closed her gates to let assimilation catch up with infiltration, she might

have gained new racial and literary vitality from the infusion, and might have remained a Roman Rome, the voice and citadel of the West."

Loss of common language

At first immigrants assimilated and learned the Latin language. They worked as servants, with many rising to leadership. But then they came so fast they did not learn Latin, but instead created a mix of Latin with their own Germanic, Frankish and Anglo tribal tongues. The unity of the Roman Empire began to dissolve.

The welfare state

"Bread and the Circus!" Starting in 123 B.C., the immensely powerful Roman politician Gaius Gracchus began appeasing citizens with welfare, a monthly handout of a free dole (handout) of grain.

Roman poet Juvenal (circa 100 A.D.) described how Roman emperors controlled the masses by keeping them ignorant and obsessed with self-indulgence, so that they would be distracted and not throw them out of office, which they might do if they realized the true condition of the Empire: "Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions – everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses."

The Durants wrote in "The Lessons of History" (p. 92): "The concentration of population and poverty in great cities may compel a government to choose between enfeebling the economy with a dole or running the risk of riot and revolution."

Welfare and government jobs exploded, as recorded in "Great Ages of Man – Barbarian Europe" (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 39), one Roman commented: "Those who live at the expense of the public funds are more numerous than those who provide them."

Class warfare

City centers were abandoned by the upper class, who bought up farms from rural landowners and transformed them into palatial estates. The Durants wrote in "The Story of Civilization" (Vol. 3 – Caesar and Christ, Simon & Schuster, 1944, p.90): "The Roman landowner disappeared now that

ownership was concentrated in a few families, and a proletariat without stake in the country filled the slums of Rome.”

Inner cities were destabilized, being also plagued with lead poisoning, as water was brought in through lead pipes. (“Plumb” or “plumbing” is the Latin word for “lead.”)

The value of human life was low. Slavery and sex-trafficking abounded, especially of captured peoples from Eastern Europe. “Slavs,” which meant “glorious,” came to have the inglorious meaning of a permanent servant or “slave.” (“Great Ages,” p. 18)

Taxes

Taxes became unbearable, as “collectors became greedy functionaries in a bureaucracy so huge and corrupt.” Tax collectors were described by the historian Salvian as “more terrible than the enemy.” (“Great Ages,” p. 20).

Arther Ferrill wrote in “The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation” (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986): “The chief cause of the agricultural decline was high taxation on the marginal land, driving it out of cultivation.”

There was a loss of patriotism, wealth began to flee the empire, and with it, the spirit of liberty. President William Henry Harrison warned in his inaugural address, 1841: “It was the beautiful remark of a distinguished English writer that ‘in the Roman senate Octavius had a party and Antony a party, but the Commonwealth had none’ ... The spirit of liberty had fled, and, avoiding the abodes of civilized man, had sought protection in the wilds of Scythia or Scandinavia; and so under the operation of the same causes and influences it will fly from our Capitol and our forums.”

More recently, John F. Kennedy observed, Jan. 6, 1961: “Present tax laws may be stimulating in undue amounts the flow of American capital to industrial countries abroad.

Outsourcing

Rome’s economy stagnated from a large trade deficit, as grain production was outsourced to North Africa. Gerald Simons wrote in “Great Ages of Man – Barbarian Europe” (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 39): “As conquerors of North

Africa, the Vandals cut off the Empire’s grain supply at will. This created critical food shortages, which in turn curtailed Roman counterattacks.”

Debt preceded fall

Emperor Diocletian imposed wage and price controls and forbade people from changing professions. Choking taxes and personal debt caused many to abandon their mortgaged property and flee as ex-pats to live amongst the barbarians, renouncing their Roman citizenship. Diocletian responded by making it illegal to abandon one’s mortgaged property, thus permanently tying people to the land in what became the “feudal system” in the Middle Ages.

Enormous public debt and government bureaucracy crippled Rome’s economy. The Durants wrote in “The Lessons of History” (p. 92): “Huge bureaucratic machinery was unable to govern the empire effectively with the enormous, out-of-control debt.”

In “Great Ages of Man – Barbarian Europe” (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 20), Gerald Simons wrote: “The Western Roman economy, already undermined by falling production of the great Roman estates and an unfavorable balance of trade that siphoned off gold to the East, had now run out of money.”

The Durants wrote in “The Lessons of History” (p. 92): “The educated and skilled pursued business and financial success to the neglect of their involvement in politics.”

Richard A. Todd wrote in “The Fall of the Roman Empire” (Eerdman’s “Handbook to the History of Christianity,” Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdman Co., 1977, p. 184): “The church, while preaching against abuses, contributed to the decline by discouraging good Christians from holding public office.”

Violent entertainment

The Circus Maximus and Coliseum were packed with crowds of Romans engrossed with violent entertainment, games, chariot races, and until 404 A.D., gladiators fighting to the death.

Gerald Simons wrote in “Great Ages of Man – Barbarian Europe” (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 20): “In the causal brutality of its public

spectacles, in a rampant immorality that even Christianity could not check.”

Exposure of unwanted infants

Roman demographics changed as families had fewer children. Some would sell unwanted children into slavery or leave them outside exposed to the weather to die, as was the practice till 374 A.D.

The Durants wrote in “The Story of Civilization,” Vol. 3 – Caesar and Christ (Simon & Schuster, 1944, p. 134): “Children were now luxuries which only the poor could afford.”

Immorality

Rome was corrupted with court favoritism, the patronage system, injustice in the legal system, infidelity, perverted bathhouses, sexual immorality, gluttony and gymnasiums (“gym” being the Greek word for “naked”).

Fifth century historian Salvian wrote: “For all the lurid Roman tales of their atrocities ... the barbarians displayed ... a good deal more fidelity to their wives.” (“Great Ages,” p. 13.)

Salvian continued: “O Roman people be ashamed; be ashamed of your lives. Almost no cities are free of evil dens, are altogether free of impurities, except the cities in which the barbarians have begun to live. ... Let nobody think otherwise, the vices of our bad lives have alone conquered us. ... The Goths lie, but are chaste, the Franks lie, but are generous, the Saxons are savage in cruelty ... but are admirable in chastity. ... What hope can there be for the Romans when the barbarians are more pure than they?”

Samuel Adams wrote to John Scollay of Boston, April 30, 1776: “The diminution of public virtue is usually attended with that of public happiness, and the public liberty will not long survive the total extinction of morals. ‘The Roman Empire,’ says the historian, ‘must have sunk, though the Goths had not invaded it. Why? Because the Roman virtue was sunk.’”

Military cuts

Though militarily superior and marching on advanced road systems, the highly-trained Roman legions were strained fighting conflicts from the

Rhine River to the Sassanid Persian Empire. Roman borders were over-extended and the military defending them was cut back to dangerously low ranks.

The Durants wrote in “The Story of Civilization” (Vol. 3 – Caesar and Christ, Simon & Schuster, 1944, p.90): “The new generation, having inherited world mastery, had no time or inclination to defend it; that readiness for war which had characterized the Roman landowner disappeared.”

Terrorist attacks

Called the “Scourge of God,” Attila the Hun was thought to be the anti-Christ, as he devastated Europe with his half-million warriors.

Aquileia, one of the largest cities in the world at the time, was so completely destroyed that inhabitants ran into the ocean, hammered down logs and lived on platforms which grew into the city of Venice.

Ste. Genevieve called Paris to pray in 451 A.D., and for some reason Attila turned aside, sparing the city.

Pope Leo rode out to meet Attila in 452 A.D. and persuaded him not to sack Rome, delaying the city’s fall 24 more years.

Finally the barbarian Chieftain Odoacer attacked. Rome is considered to have officially fallen on Sept. 4, 476 A.D. (Bill Federer, WorldNetDaily, Sept.8, 2015).

Is the End Really Near?

The signs—the last of the four blood moons, the biblical Shemitah, rise of end-time “Babylon,” the Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage, the dangerous Iranian nuclear deal and a world drowning in debt and dangling on the edge of economic catastrophe—seem unmistakable now. While harbingers of the apocalypse have been gathering for decades, most of the world has

been largely oblivious to the gathering tempest and prophetic warnings.

This is changing with the sudden appearance of global instability—geopolitically, financially and culturally—as the world undergoes a remarkably ominous transformation.

Today, the world is facing moral and social chaos, spiritual deception, proliferation of the occult, a spate of historic natural disasters, worsening worldwide drought, record-breaking extreme weather and the growing risk of a nuclear conflagration.

Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, says the "defining moment" for America and humanity has arrived.

"As a nation we have arrogantly turned our back on God, and I believe God's judgment will come against our country," Graham says.

Now, as the world awaits whether the last of the four blood moons and the biblical Shemitah will bring economic collapse, war, other calamity or the fulfillment of prophecies related to Israel, Rabbi Jonathan Cahn says, "We are now witnessing what appears to be a perfect prophetic storm."

"For years, I have been warning that America was progressing down a course of apostasy and judgment," says Cahn, author of the New York Times best-selling books *The Harbinger* and *The Mystery of the Shemitah*. "The harbingers have all manifested, the national departure from God is accelerating almost exponentially, America's relationship with Israel is at an all-time low, and now with the striking down of the biblical definition of marriage, the very order of God, we have crossed a fateful line. It is all converging."

In interviews during the past nine months, several dozen highly respected Bible prophecy scholars told *Charisma* that they agree the world is now experiencing an unparalleled acceleration and convergence in end-time signs.

Dr. Tim LaHaye, Joel C. Rosenberg, Dr. Chuck Missler, Paul McGuire, Pastor Greg Laurie, Dr. Robert Jeffress, Sid Roth, Rabbi Jonathan Bernis, Dr. Thomas Ice, Dr. Ron Rhodes and others said that while they may disagree on the prophetic

significance of the blood moons and Shemitah prophecies, they overwhelmingly agree that the world is in the run-up to the end-time events predicted by the biblical prophets.

Dr. Jack Graham says there is little question now that "this very well could be the terminal generation."

"Everyone senses right now who's got their ear in Scripture and is listening to the Spirit of God that something great, something cataclysmic, something strategic, is going to happen in the world," says Dr. Graham, pastor of the 40,000-member Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, one of the largest and fastest-growing megachurches in America. "People are talking about it everywhere that something big is about to happen, and so this is just another element of awareness—the blood moons' phenomena—that we can't go on the way we're going."

A sizable portion of the public concurs. A recent poll commissioned by Rosenberg, a New York Times best-selling author of numerous prophecy books, found 41 percent of Americans believe events such as the rebirth of the nation of Israel, the growing threat of war in the Middle East, widespread national disasters and the serious threat of a global economic depression are evidence that "we are living in what the Bible calls the last days."

"The polls show the highest percentage of both Christians and the general public who recognize we may well be living in the very times our Lord and His prophets warned would exist just prior to the end times," says LaHaye, a renowned prophecy expert, minister and co-author of the *Left Behind* series of end-time novels that sold 80 million copies.

"Actually, we have many more signs of the coming end of this world than any generation before us. Israel being drawn back into the Holy Land ... is the most obvious. However, He gave several others, like the 'gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come' (Matt. 24:14). Thrilling reports from the Wycliffe Bible translators ... give us just cause for believing we could be living in the last days." (Troy Anderson, *Charisma Magazine*, Sept. 9, 2015).

The Omak Wildfire – and God’s Amazing *Deliverance!*

Tuesday, August 18, residents on Omak flats were warned to prepare for a level 2 evacuation. Wednesday evening about 7:30 p.m. my wife Cappy stepped outside to the back yard to care for our chickens and saw a large water tank plane flying very low, over our home. The air was very heavy with smoke and the sky to the northeast of the house was a deepening pink-orange reflection against the smoke filled sky.

We both got on our knees and began praying. While we were praying, I heard a loud banging on the north patio door to our home, and then a loud banging at the front door of our home, as red car lights flashed on vehicles parked along the road. The man at the door shouted, “Its stage 3 evacuation alert, you’ve got to GO, *NOW* – RIGHT *NOW* – the fire is already on the adjoining lot and coming this way fast!”

“GO, GO, GO!” He and other firemen urgently motioned for us to get in our automobiles and move out – immediately!

Backed with a 40 mph high wind the Concunully fire to the northwest and the Riverside fire had merged, crested the mountain tops behind us, burned rapidly crossing “the flats” toward us with a distance of less than a quarter mile away as we got into our vehicles. It was right across Grey Goose Road, adjoining our property on the north side, as we pulled out of the driveway. It was a level 3 mandatory evacuation order. We had to get in our cars immediately and leave.

Grabbing our luggage, we raced to our cars and headed out of the garage with two firemen at our car windows directing us out the driveway shouting “Move—go, go, go!” Cappy went first and I was right behind. She had put the parking lights on until she finally found the headlights switch about half-way down the road. In the right lane were the firefighters, fire-trucks and their equipment. Turning south, out of the driveway, Cappy noticed 20-30 foot flames which had already reached the row of poplar trees on the south edge our of our empty lot north of us with just a gravel road between the flames and our house.

Each of us drove south on Johnson Creek Road, toward downtown Omak. We were not to stop in Omak, but were told to drive to Okanogan (seven miles south of Omak), because the town of Omak was also in danger and under notice to prepare for evacuation as well.

Many people that were evacuated from the Okanogan Complex Fires areas were at the same Okanogan Motel where we stayed Wednesday and Thursday nights. Late Thursday p.m. we drove back to the flats to survey the damage to our area. It was appalling – devastating. We saw blackened field after field on both sides of Johnson Creek road as we approached our place. Then, in the distance we saw the green leaves of

the poplar trees and our house, orchard, barn and landscaping all intact, looking like a small oasis in the midst of blackened hell. Even our chickens were ok. The lots all along the north side of our property, on Grey Goose Road, were charcoal and cinders. There was no power, water or phone service. The pictures below are scenes of devastation around our home and property in Omak, Washington, due to the wildfires raging in the region in August 2015. The land around our property was scorched and burned to a cinder, but the raging inferno spared our home and trees, and land. Even our chickens survived!



View of the property line. "Thus far and no further," shall thy flames burn.



Behold the scorched and burned acreage to the north of our property. In the background is the Rainbow Trailer Court, which lost three mobile homes burned to the ground.

It looked like a scene from Mars – barren, lifeless landscape. A horror story of frightful and scary consequences.



This picture is looking toward the northwest from our home.



Here is the view from out sundeck looking southward. Even our grape vines and rose garden, in the foreground, and our fruit trees were spared. Even the poplar trees on the fence line survived the onslaught of wildfire.

It is wonderful to know that “The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations” – sore trials and evil circumstances – “and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment” (II Peter 2:9).

Praise God for His grace and mercy, and the legions of angels that protected us, like an oasis in the midst of total devastation and catastrophe.

Lessons Learned

What did we learn from this experience?

Lesson #1 – have faith in God. He loves His people and keeps His promises. He is the Great Deliverer.

Lesson #2 – take nothing for granted. Always be prepared – and ready to evacuate at a moment’s notice when peril threatens.

Lesson #3 – act with urgency. When it comes time to take action, move with speed and efficiency. Don’t dawdle or mope around. Move quickly and expeditiously. Time is of the essence!

Lesson #4 – always be thankful. Even in the midst of crisis, and tribulation, God’s mercy overflows, and we have much to be thankful for!

The day after the wildfire struck, we drove back to survey the damage to our area and saw blackened field after field on both sides of the road up to our place. Then, in the distance we saw the green leaves of the poplar trees and our house still intact. Our property was like a small oasis. Even the chickens were thriving, cackling, and rejoicing!

We drove to the end of Johnson Creek Road, and saw more devastation, with a few homes spared, others burned to the ground. We drove over to the Riverside Cut-off, and saw more devastation. All around us were signs of a fiery and desolate “apocalypse.”

On Friday, the next day, power was restored and we moved back into our home, very thankful to still have a home. We conduct God’s Work from our home, and the office, broadcasting room, libraries, and work areas, and storage areas for books and materials, are all located there. All was spared! Our hearts overflowed with gratitude.

Satan struck – but God delivered! How many angels defended our property lines, I don’t know – I prayed for a legion or whatever was needed – and God sent them. Truly our God is a God who delivers His people.

Halleluia – praise God!

List of Articles and Booklets

These articles are sent FREE of charge, as Almighty God provides.

Take note: We can only send 7-10 articles or booklets at a single time. Do not request more than this amount.

Basic Doctrine

- __ Who Is the Messiah? Incredible Proof Yeshua is who He said He was!
- __ A New Look at the Historical Jesus
- __ How LONG Was Jesus in the Grave? Exposing the Good Friday and Wednesday Crucifixion Theories!
- __ The Pharisees, Hasidim and Early Nazarene Christians
- __ Which Is the True Biblical Calendar of God?
- __ What Is the 'New Moon'?
- __ When Was Christ Born?
- __ Where Was Yeshua Crucified?
- __ The Plain Truth about LAW AND GRACE!
- __ A New Look at Colossians
- __ A New Look at the Book of Galatians
- __ Galatians and the "Works of the Law"
- __ What Are the REAL Salvation Issues?
- __ Bible Health LAWS – Are Unclean Meats Still Unclean?
- __ The Keys to Robust Health
- __ The Power of Prayer
- __ The Bible – Science or Superstition?
- __ Bible Criticism – Intellectual Idolatry?
- __ How To Walk with God
- __ What is the True Gospel?
- __ What Is Real Repentance?
- __ All About Water Baptism
- __ The Truth about Laying on of Hands and Anointing
- __ How Should God's Ministers Be Ordained?
- __ The Power of Faith and Prayer
- __ A New Look at the "FRINGES" of the Law!
- __ The Truth about "Holy Garments"
- __ The Exodus – Myth or Reality?
- __ Who Was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?
- __ The Mystery of the Olive Tree
- __ Once Saved Always Saved?
- __ Life on Earth Before Adam?
- __ James' Ossuary Box – Incredible Proof of the Existence of Christ!
- __ Should We Observe the New Moons!
- __ Is Obedience to God Required for Salvation?
- __ What Is the 'Unpardonable Sin'?
- __ Why Did Jesus Curse the Fig Tree?
- __ The Passion of the Christ
- __ Is There LIFE After Death?
- __ What's All This about the Resurrection?
- __ The Spirit in Man Mystery
- __ What's All This about the Place Called "Hell"?
- __ Satan's Fate – Will the Devil be Tormented Forever?
- __ Saul and the Witch of Endor
- __ The Parable of the Ten Virgins
- __ What Is a Genuine Christian?
- __ The Mystery of the Book of Job
- __ God's Laws about Divorce and Marriage
- __ Is There Government I the Church of God
- __ A New Look at Moses' Seat
- __ The Plain Truth about Church Authority

The Holy Days of God

- __ The Annual Holy Days Reveal the Awesome Plan of God
- __ The Shocking Origin of Christmas!
- __ A New Look at Easter
- __ The Origin of Halloween
- __ What Days Should We Observe?
- __ Sabbath Versus Sunday – Which Day Should We Observe?
- __ PASSOVER – Its Hidden Meanings and Mysteries
- __ Yeshua's Last Week on Earth – a Day By Day Reconstruction
- __ When Should the Passover be Observed?
- __ What Do You Mean, "The Sixth Hour"? When Did Christ Appear Before Pilate?
- __ The Mystery of "Between the Two Evenings"

- __ Luke and the Passover Mystery
- __ The Incredible Passover Plot!
- __ What Is the “New Testament Passover”?
- __ A New Look at the Passover!
- __ Four Special Bible Correspondence Course Lessons on PASSOVER!
- __ Pentecost (Shavuot) – The Mystery and Significance Revealed
- __ Pentecost – the FINAL Analysis!
- __ Pentecost – Sunday or Sivan 6?
- __ The Incredible Truth about Pentecost!
- __ How Should we COUNT Pentecost?
- __ Luke 6 – New Testament Proof on Pentecost
- __ Counting the Omer – Its Incredible Meaning
- __ Sefirat Ha Omer – a Key to Overcoming!
- __ Sadducees Vs. Pharisees – Who Controlled Temple Worship in the Time of Christ?
- __ A New Look at the Sadducees and Pharisees
- __ Amazing New Revelation on the Feast of Trumpets
- __ Fascinating New Understanding on the Feast of Tabernacles
- __ Secrets of the Sukkah – New Insight on the Fall Festival
- __ A New Look at Yom Kippur and the Azazel Goat
- __ Shemini Atzeret – a New Look at the “Eighth Day”
- __ The Mystery of Hoshana Rabbah Revealed
- __ What’s All This about Tithing?
- __ The Sacred Names of God
- __ Dinosaurs in the Time of Adam?
- __ Angels, Women,, Giants, UFOs and the Occult – Return of the Nephilim
- __ Christian-Messianic Passover Hagaddah
- __ The Birth, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Christ
- __ Is HELL Eternal?
- __ Is the Cross Christian?
- __ What Was the Mark of Cain?
- __ Is the Star of David Pagan?

End-Time Apostasy

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- __ Where God’s Church Went Wrong!
- __ Prophetic Errors of Herbert W. Armstrong
- __ Back to Babylon
- __ How Are the Mighty Fallen!
- __ Joseph Tkach – Apostle or Apostate?
- __ Joseph Tkach – Saint or Monster?
- __ Gerald Flurry and the Philadelphia Church of God
- __ The House of Yahweh Exposed
- __ Apostasy in the End of Days
- __ Zechariah 11 and the End-Time Vultures

The Nature of GOD

- __ The Mystery of God – Who or What Was Christ Before His Human Birth?
- __ What Do You Mean, “The Only True God”?
- __ Was Jesus Christ “Created”?
- __ The Mystery of Lucifer and the Logos
- __ The Genesis Factor – Is God Reproducing Himself?
- __ The Pre-Existence of Christ – Fact or Fable?
- __ Is Jesus “God”?
- __ Is God a “Trinity”?
- __ The Origin of the Logos
- __ Did God Create a Devil?
- __ The Early Church Fathers and the Logos

Bible Prophecy

- __ Who Is the United States in Bible Prophecy?
- __ Israel in the Last Days – Is America Ephraim or Manasseh?
- __ Noah’s Universal Flood – a Warning to Our Generation?
- __ Coming: A Modern Roman Empire?
- __ Panorama of Prophecy
- __ What Is the “Mark” of the Beast?
- __ Will the Messiah Return in a “Jubilee Year”?
- __ China Taking Over Panama Canal & America in Prophecy
- __ Babylon the Great and the New World Order
- __ “END OF DAYS” – *Incredible New Insight* on End-Time Prophecy
- __ Where Are the Seven Churches of Revelation?
- __ The Last Days: Daniel 7 and the New World Order
- __ Daniel’s 2300 day Prophecy
- __ Daniel 8 and the End of Days
- __ Daniel 9 – Amazing PROOF Christ is the Promised Messiah!
- __ A New Look at Daniel 11
- __ Daniel 11 – FINAL Warning

- __ Daniel'2 1260, 1290, and 1335 Days
- __ The Book of Revelation Decoded
- __ God's Mysterious 6,000 Year Plan
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- __ Who Is the 144,000 of Revelation?
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- __ Sign of the Unicorn – Who is the Tribe of End-time Manasseh?
- __ Isaac Newton and the End-Time Prophecies of Daniel
- __ The Quartodeciman Passover Controversy and the Early Church\
- __ Was the “Lord’s Supper” Really the Passover?
- __ “How Can I Become a True Christian?”
- __ Countdown to the Messiah – How Much Longer?
- __ The 70 Years, Jubilee Cycles, Daniel’s 2300 Days, and Seven Times Prophecies
- __ How Many Times Did Peter Deny Christ?
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- __ The Tribe of Dan and the Antichrist\
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- __ Prophecy from the Zohar
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- __ Nimrod and the Tower of Babel Cataclysm
- __ Just Who Are the Modern Jewish People?
- __ The History of Apostasy and the Perfect Storm
- __ Origin of the 360 Day Year
- __ 40 Proofs on Counting Pentecost
- __ What Do You Mean, “Born Again”?
- __ Seven Proofs the Lord’s Supper Is NOT the Passover!
- __ Apollyon Rising, 2012 and the End of Time
- __ Should Christians Wear Make Up and Cosmetics?
- __ Hannukah and the Abomination of Desolation

New Articles

- __ As It Was in the Days of Noah -- The 120 Years Prophecy Revealed
- __ 2012, Quetzalcoatl, and the Wrath of Satan
- __ Is God Giving Us 15 Extra Years?
- __ The Stunning Future of America Revealed by the Isaiah 9:10 Effect
- __ Is the Antichrist Here Today?
- __ Who Will Win the White House -- Mitt Romney and the White Horse Prophecy
- __ Judgment Day – the 390 Day Prophecy
- __ Will the Antichrist be the Son of a Harlot?
- __ Traitors, Treason and the Enemy Within
- __ Should a Christian Vote?
- __ Is the Law of God Still in Force Today?
- __ Barack Obama’s Faustian Bargain with the Devil
- __ Cry for America, the Beloved Country!
- __ Daniel’s Image, the Four Beasts and the “King of Assyria”
- __ The Power of Living Faith
- __ Ancient Chronology and End-Time Prophecy
- __ A Voice in the Wilderness
- __ If John the Baptist Were Here Today
- __ “Elijah Shall Come and Restore All Things”
- __ The Astonishing Life of David
- __ Repentance and the Thirteen Attributes of God
- __ Signs of the Antichrist!
- __ God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays – Which?
- __ Mystery of the Shemitah and God’s Judgment on America in Heraldry and Prophecy
- __ The Muslim Invasion and the Growing Darkness
- __ Obama’s American Subversion – How Much Time Is Left?

Who Are America and Great Britain in END-TIME *Prophecy*?

Are the United States and Great Britain mentioned in the Bible? If so, under what names? What is the real evidence of our national heraldic emblems and symbols? Where do we *really* come from? Could we be totally ignored?

Millions have been mystified, and perplexed about our ancient pedigree. Who are we descended from? Believe it or not, the ancestors of the English speaking peoples of the world *are found throughout* the pages of Scripture. But our true IDENTITY has been SEALED – hidden from view until *NOW!* Who are we – really? How has this knowledge been lost through the centuries?

The United States and Britain are *often* mentioned in END-TIME Bible prophecies! But most people don't understand WHO IS WHO! The world has been in TOTAL ignorance of the amazing prophecies in the Bible about EPHRAIM! The whole book of Hosea the prophet seems to FOCUS on this people! But WHO ARE THEY? Ephraim now stands IDENTIFIED in the world today AS AMERICA! Great Britain stand identified as the people of "Manasseh"!

The evidence is overwhelming. Ephraim was prophesied to be much greater than his older brother Manasseh! Moses wrote of the "thousands of Manasseh, and the TEN THOUSANDS of Ephraim" (Deut.33:17). One of the "identifying marks" of Manasseh is the "unicorn," according to an ancient Jewish midrash. The "unicorn" is found on the Royal Seal of Great Britain, and is found everywhere through the British Isles, on pubs, public buildings! Correlating evidence from history, the Talmud, Jewish commentaries, the ancient study of heraldic emblems and the Biblical record, William F. Dankenbring sets forth the amazing CASE FOR EPHRAIM being the United States! The fact that the United States is descended from ancient Ephraim stands PROVEN by the Word of God!

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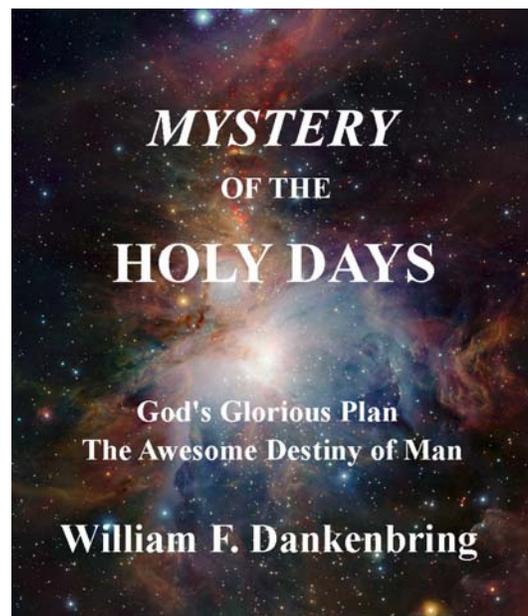
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The Mystery of God's Holy Days – *NOW REVEALED!*

The annual Festivals and Holy Days of God are revealed in the Scriptures – yet few Christians observe them and follow pagan holidays like Christmas and Easter and Halloween instead! Isn't this preposterous and nonsensical?

How did Christmas and Easter invade the early church? When did the church stop observing the Biblical holidays and replace them with PAGAN-ORIGIN institutions? What is the real MEANING behind the Holy Days of God, and what significance do they have for CHRISTIANS and JEWS alike?



The world has been utterly deceived by the machinations and scheming of Satan the devil, who masquerades his pagan holidays and proclaims them to be “Christian,” when nothing could be further from the truth!

Why did God create and command us to observe HIS Holy Days in the Scriptures? Why did He give them to us? Are there vital lessons hidden within the Holy Days that we ought to explore?

Christians and Jews alike need to revisit the annual Holy Days and study into this profound subject that unlocks the MYSTERY OF THE AGES. The awesome inspired meaning of each one of these days is spelled out in this fantastic new treasure trove of revelation on God's annual Holy Days. It unravels the secret CODE which has hidden

the meaning of the holy days from MILLIONS, including the Christians and even the Jewish people themselves!

The times are urgent. Never in history has this knowledge been more needed, more vital, more crying for attention. Turbulent times are rushing upon the earth, the last days of mankind are staring us in the face, and never before was the knowledge of the HOLY DAYS of God more meaningful and necessary!

God thunders, “My people are DESTROYED for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). How much do you understand about God’s annual Holy Days, when to observe them, their meaning and significance?

Chapters from this new book by William F. Dankenbring include –

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God’s Holy Days or Pagan Holidays – Which?

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Is a Sunday Pentecost Pagan in Origin?

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Letters from Readers

"I did an intensive study of every scripture regarding Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, and I can only conclude that you are correct about all of this. This now raises many questions about what Herbert W. Armstrong taught, and what all the other splinter groups still believe. One thing that puzzles me is why, in the 'Lord's Supper' accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke, both the disciples, and Jesus, refer to this night (Nisan 13, correct?) as the 'Passover', since the real Passover, on which Christ was crucified, was the NEXT evening, the evening of Nisan 14, as the sun was setting, correct? Was this intended to be a 'substitute Passover' for Jesus, since He couldn't observe it the following evening, the 14th, as I presume He had always observed it before?"

"In John, it is NOT referred to as the 'Passover', simply as 'supper', and later scriptures make it plain that the Passover was the twilight of the 14th, the end of the 14th. As you know, Herbert W. Armstrong taught that Jesus 'changed' the Passover symbols from the Passover Lamb to the bread and wine and, apparently also, the date of the Passover from the evening of the 14th to the evening of the 13th (or, perhaps, the beginning of the 14th, after sunset). Do I remember that correctly?"

"Also, he taught, in his booklet 'How Often Should We Partake Of The Lord's Supper?', that the bread and wine ceremony is to be observed only ONCE a year, and on Nisan 13 at sunset, which now became the 'Passover'. But in I Cor. 10:16,17 and 11:17-34, it implies that the 'Lord's Supper' is something to be observed more often than simply once a year, is that not correct? Or am I wrong about this?"

"Mr. Armstrong taught that 'as OFTEN as you drink it' meant only ONCE a year. Is that really the truth? I used to believe that, along with lots of other things HWA taught, but now I'm not so sure. As I'm sure you remember HWA also taught that, in addition to the 'Passover' being on Nisan 13 at sunset, with a bread and wine, footwashing ceremony and 'hymn sing', the NEXT evening, Nisan 14, the 'Night To Be

Much Observed' was to be 'observed'. Passover was for 'baptized members only', but the 'Night To be Much Observed' was open to unbaptized persons also.

"While the 'Passover' was held at the Sabbath meeting hall, the Night To be Much Observed consisted of everybody going out to the restaurant of their choice for, I guess, a "special" dinner of some sort. Those who weren't married (like me), and other rag-tag folk who had no place special to go, would meet for dinner at some designated place, in Seattle it was the Jefferson House, a convalescent home. I always thought this was odd, why are we somehow observing the Passover TWICE, first on the WRONG night (Nisan 13 at sunset), and then 24 hours later, calling it The Night To Be Much Observed, which was the correct night but NOT a proper Passover ceremony.

"Of course, the term 'Night To Be Much Observed' does occur in scripture, but this is simply referring to the Passover itself (Nisan 14), is it not? Mr. Armstrong apparently thought this was an entirely separate 'observance', but he was wrong, wasn't he? Am I on target with all of this? You made a good point when you posed the question, if Passover had been on the night of the 13th, what did the Israelites do for the next twenty-four hours, sit around dilly-dallying? Apparently that question never occurred to HWA, right?"

"Regarding Pentecost, the scriptures in Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Joshua clearly indicate, as you said, that the count is to begin on the day after the First Day of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15, NOT the weekly Sabbath as HWA taught and almost everyone else still believes. The argument against Sivan 6 seems to be, if we know that Pentecost will be on the same day every year (Sivan 6), then why perform a count? But I don't see a problem with this, apparently God wanted Israel to perform the count the FIRST time to establish the day, but it would not be necessary after that, unless there is, perhaps, a spiritual aspect to the count. The number 7 is important to God, obviously, seven days in a

week, Land Sabbath and Remission of Debts every seven years, seven years times seven equals 49 years, add one year and you have the Year of Jubilee. I see a tie-in with all of this to the Pentecost count, is that possible?

“Mr. Armstrong taught that, of all God's Holy Days, Pentecost is the ONLY one that WE, ourselves, have to figure out every year on which day it occurs. Really? It seems to me that God is consistent with how He does things, and that makes no sense at all, when I finally started thinking about it. There is a scripture in Ezekiel, 45:21, a "prophetic" scripture indicating that at a future time, the Passover will be observed on Nisan 14 (at sunset), not the 13th at sunset, correct? After Jesus' crucifixion, I'm assuming that the disciples continued to observe the Passover on the 14th at sunset as they always had, correct? Please give me your thoughts on all of this.”

-- E mail

COMMENT: I suggest you read the following articles to answer your questions in full. The last supper was not really called "Passover" by the disciples or the Lord. The bread and wine ceremony is known as the "kiddush." It should be observed "often." Some observe it monthly at the "new moon," or at any festive meal of fellowship, or get together, as on the Sabbath or a Holy Day.

Pentecost had to be counted because it was to be 50 days after Passover and the months of the calendar could have either 29 or 30 days each. So it could fall on Sivan 5, 6, or 7, depending on the lengths of Nisan and Iyar, the first two months.

Articles:

“The Sacred Meal”

“Luke on the Passover”

“Should We Observe Both the Lord’s Supper and Passover?”

“The New Testament Passover”

“Keep the Passover Right – or Perish!”

“Pentecost – the Final Answer!”

“How to Count Pentecost”

“Pentecost – the Whole Story”

Isn't the truth wonderful?

* * *

“I’ve found what you’ve written on the threat of Islam and ISIS intriguing. It’s prompted a

personal Bible Study on the subject and will be on ongoing series that I’m finding is in agreement with what you’ve written.

“America’s enemies are growing. ISIS its flag will be draped in front of the White House. Such a claim has not been made by China, Russia, North Korea, and other known adversaries. Europe, who many Bible prophecy enthusiasts believe will invade the United States has yet to show itself as a viable threat. So how seriously should ISIS be taken and how great a threat is Islam?”

“ISIS is a growing cancer. The world’s largest and most dangerous terrorist organization has crawled out of the pits of hell. Americans for the most part do not see the threat for what it is. President Obama has called it the ‘JV team.’ Not only does he accommodate Islam, but he has openly praised it as part of America’s historical past. How many Americans are willing to believe we are being led by a Muslim commander-in-chief who loathes the country’s past, and is doing everything possible to hasten the decline and total collapse of the nation?”

“Because the nation’s leaders and people do not realize how great a threat Islam and ISIS are, the way is being paved for the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:49-50 – ‘the LORD shall bring [send] a nation against you from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue you shall not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young.’ These two verses speak volumes when realizing how rapidly Islam is spreading and the atrocities ISIS is committing against innocent men, women and children in the name of Allah. Acts of violence are now being committed on American soil, but few people see the Trojan horse within our gates.

“Understanding verse 49 and the fact God ‘shall bring a nation against’ America is Key. To bring means to send. It means the enemy has to be in ‘a particular state or condition in order for actions to be carried out,’ as defined by Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary eleventh edition. The belief system of ISIS members is why they are able to kill innocent men, women and children without a conscience. Pure Islam is on display in all its horror. Its goal is world domination and according to ISIS, the only way

it can be achieved is through Jihad, or a holy war.

“God will not stand in the way of ISIS until its purpose is served. He will make sure every obstacle standing in its way is removed. Conditions have been in its favor and will continue to be favorable. True Islam is violent, but President Obama and representatives of the Islamic faith continually reassure the American people that it is a religion of peace. Little is it realized that by appeasing this country’s greatest enemy, it will result in the slaughter of hundreds of millions of innocent men, women and children in America and the West.

“President Obama and his administration refuse to state the words – ‘radical Islam’ or ‘Islamic extremists,’ when attacks are committed upon Americans. As a nation we are being led by a commander-in-chief who refuses to acknowledge an enemy who is staring us in the face.

“Our punishment is inevitable. We are defying God at every turn. The approval of gay marriage by the U.S. Supreme Court was a blatant act of defiance and a display of our depraved state of mind.

“The enemy God is using to punish America for its sins has already arrived. ISIS will succeed. Its flag will be draped in front of the White House, but few people believe it will happen.

“Europe is etched in stone when it comes to the belief systems of not only many churches of God, but churches completely unassociated with them. It’s not difficult to disprove what’s been the status quo for decades as far as what’s taken for granted as true. This is not the same world that existed 60 to 70 years ago, yet because Herbert Armstrong is still placed on a pedestal no amount of proof to the contrary will be accepted by many.

“Without a doubt God is revealing knowledge to you and my prayers continue for you, Cappy and everyone involved in the Work you are doing.”
-- Richard Markham, Ohio

Omak Wildfires

“As I listened to the evening news and heard the wildfires were raging in your area, I began to pray and ask God to please if it be His will to spare you and all of your belongings, inside and

out – that you may continue to spread His Word abroad to all that will listen and take heed to what is coming on our nation! I felt a sense of relief after my prayers that He would spare you – and Thanks be to Him that heard and answered our prayers. With the final Feast Days coming, He made a way for them to be carried out as planned. . . .

“Thank you and may our loving God continue to bless and keep you in His care of your need till He (Christ) appears.”

-- Tennessee

“I’M SO HAPPY FOR YOU AND CAPPY, FOR YOUR MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM HISTORICAL OR RECORD WILDFIRE THERE IN WASHINGTON STATE, BY YAHOVAH, YEHOVAH, YAHVEH!!! INDEED, I AGREE TRIUMPH PROPHETIC MINISTRIES IS, YOU ARE THE ONES DOING THE ENDTIME WORK AT HEADQUARTERS IN OMAK!!!”

-- Jose Santos, Philippines

“What great Bible Studies you have given the last few weeks and what an amazing deliverance you had from the fires devastating Washington State. How inspiring for all of us to hear about how our Great God protected your property with all those books and equipment vital for the Work. God truly is great and awesome.”

-- Nick Wood, England

“So thankful for you in what has to have been a miracle from God, protecting your property, home, and office from the wildfires. He made sure His work, TPM, would not be hindered by such. Enforces our faith in His promise to never leave nor forsake His own.

“Love and blessings to Mrs. Dankenbring and you and all God’s people in the upcoming Holy Day season.”

-- Florida

“These are incredible pictures. I am very happy that you are both safe, and that your home and property have been spared from the fire. Hope that all is well now. Take care.”

-- Nathan

“Thank you for sharing the pictures of your property being saved from the fire. What a great and merciful God we serve! And what an inspiration to see His hand at work. Thanks for

all you do!!”

-- Peter Lipton

“Hallelujah! I am so very excited to have found (located, discovered) you at last. I’ve been hanging around the periphery of the Philadelphia, United and Living Churches of God and a plethora of Sacred Names groups because I’ve long discerned the appalling ignorance and Scriptural illiteracy of ‘mainstream’ Christianity – and I must admit that HWA and Flurry both had me ‘hoodwinked’ for some time – but now that a brother here has let me ‘sample’ a couple of issues of your ‘Prophecy Flash’ – I’m cutting my ties with all of them.

“Please note that I am, after 35 straight years in prison – arrived in 1980 at age 24 (and now I’m only 7 months shy of 60 years of age!) – not only broke but I’m in debt to the state for over \$200. Please be so kind as to send me any issue of PF from earlier this year, and I am herein requesting a copy of your masterpiece *America and Great Britain in Heraldry and Prophecy* – literally, and please sign me up for a subscription to *Prophecy Flash!* I’ll write again soon – too excited to be coherent. You have a Powerful Ministry of Divine Truth! – indeed! God Bless You All.”

- Florida

“The way things are looking at this time, things could go ballistic this September. The leaders of this country seem to be trying to back Russia and China into a corner so that they have to come out fighting.

“When Mr. Trump said that John McCain was no hero is so true and he should be in prison. The reason why is that he wet started a jet fighter that he was going to take on a mission. If you ever saw a jet as it is called a ‘wet start’ you will never forget it. Due to his stupid trick, several fighter aircraft were destroyed, several men were injured, several men were killed and the 82,000 ton Forrestal aircraft carrier was put out of commission for a while so that it could be repaired. Thanks to the navy and his admiral dad no charges were filed. I guess John McCain is another example of Yahweh giving us the basest of leaders because we deserve it.

“I think Mr. Trump is the best candidate so far for president of all that are running. He is not of the best moral character and even if he could win the presidency he would not be able to bring this

country back to the way it was in the ‘50s. I am afraid that if Mr. Trump gains too much in the polls he will end up similar to George Wallace when he ran for president.

“It appears to me that the United States is doing some sabotage work in Russia and China because of the strange explosions so close together. . . .

“With all the abortions, murders, queer marriage and the masses not showing any discussion shows how far down we have fallen.

“I think we have passed the point of no return and the only solution is for the Elohim to destroy this mess like in Noah’s flood and start over. I think that time is at hand.”

-- Charles Rearick, Ohio

“Of all the ministers I’ve met and heard, listened to since being baptized into WCG in 1974, you excel above them all. Your teachings go above and beyond all the others. You and your church are God’s chosen leaders for this end time era No one near me keeps the Sabbath or any of the Holy Days. The good Lord is beside me and with me. I am not alone during these special days.

“Keep up the good work, and may God richly bless you with good health and more of His knowledge till His soon coming return.”

-- Tennessee

“Please accept Aussie \$170 for your book *Mystery of the Holy Days and God’s Glorious Plan – the Awesome Destiny of Man*. The rest of the money can be for an offering in the Bank of Heaven.

“I’m glad that you are back to writing books again, just like it was back in the 1970’s and 1980’s when the Work was Triumph Publishing Company. Since that time, beginning in 1974 new truths have been revealed to you, and some other people.

“Remember, back in those days you were still a member of the Worldwide Church of God, and HWA left you alone. After Herbert’s death in January 1986, you were disfellowshipped out of WWCG, one year after HWA’s death. Not long after that this Work was renamed Triumph Prophetic Ministries (Church of God). I will end this epistle now.”

-- Laura Anderson, Australia

Triumph Prophetic Ministries
PO Box 842
Omak WA 98841

"I've read a few of your Prophecy Flash newsletters and would like to receive these personally. Thank you for your insight and sincere views on Bible prophecy and the oracles of God. Also, I'm so thankful you are *not* connected to Herbert Armstrong. I believe *he was wrong* on many things and has completely missed it on major themes of eschatology. Once again, thank you for the time you have devoted in putting this newsletter together."

-- Texas

"What miracle God has done by protecting you and the work from the fires!!! Angels were around your property to keep the flames from destroying your home and the work. Praise our Almighty God. I cannot express my feelings of great gratitude and keep thanking God for this miracle.

"As you said, it is so important to leave immediately when told to go. No turning around and worry about the things one has to leave behind. I keep wondering if when the time comes an angel could knock on my door and summon me to go, leave everything behind and follow. Would I really go, or linger around to fetch my coat or other items I think I might need? It does make me realize I need to be prepared spiritually to be obedient.

"Your Bible studies have been so inspiring these last months as always. As we enter into the most difficult times mankind has known we need to be fed the Truth in light of the world affairs and help us see the truth from error. Thank you for guiding us and leading us in the Truth in these trying times.

"I want to wish you and all the brethren with you a wonderful and blessed Feast of Tabernacles. Maybe our Great God inspire you during this Feast!"

-- Netherlands

"I am attempting to send this email to William F. Dankenbring, author of: 'The Mystery of Shemini Atzeret – The Eight Day' and I am

hoping I have the right email address. The website in which I found this paper <http://www.triumphpro.com/shemini-atzeret-eighth-day.htm> does not list any contact information, and I can only attribute that to your humility. Kudos.

"If you are the author of this article/paper I just want to express my appreciation for your perspicacious work. The paper blesses me immensely, and offers great insight into this prophetic, special day, the 8th Day.

"I also am blessed to have read your thoughts and exegetical commentary with scriptural authority and corroboration on the subject of 'a New Heaven and a New Earth.' The issue of marriage and procreation has been a subject that has fascinated me in scripture, and I have come to believe marriage is entirely possible. Jesus never said marriage would not exist, and after all, if God created it, we know he does not create junk, so why would he do away with something he blessed. What Jesus did say [if I get it right] is that the 'giving and taking' of marriage would not exist in heaven as it was practiced in biblical days, and abused in present days. That is a far cry from the abolishment of marriage.

"Not only that, how could the promise to Abraham be fulfilled, but for the veracity of God's promise in the fullness of time. I have always loved the verse you pointed out in Isaiah – 'of the **increase** of his government and peace there shall be no end.'

"Another supporting verse of this premise is **Jeremiah 33:22**. Praise God! Who can count the dust of Jacob?

" 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!' (Psalm 107:8).

"P.S. Hope to see you soon on the other side my brother!"

-- Email