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## FORSAKEN

Jesus Christ endured His awful death alone, completely cut off from God. Why? The answer should sober all of us.

Thick black clouds swept across the Jerusalem sky. The Jews, preparing themselves for the deeply emotional Passover service, groped around in the gathering gloom and wondered where the light had gone. It was not even 3 o'clock in the afternoon! The high priest, in the midst of the confusion, was trying to organize the people assisting him with the last minute arrangements needed for the annual ritual.

In the murky darkness, on a hill just outside the city, the ultimate High Priest was about to perform the most meaningful sacrifice of all. And for the first time

in His life, Jesus experienced what it was like to be alone.

Only several hours before, as the mob came to arrest Him in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had told His disciples, "*Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*" (Matt. 26:53). Now it seemed that Jesus was no longer able to count on that help. At the end of His human life, when the pain and anguish reached their peak, Jesus Christ could not rely on the strength that had seen Him through the trials of the previous 33 1/2 years. Why, in His greatest hour of need, was He left alone?

When Jesus Christ cried out, "*Eli, Eli,*"  
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## What Are You Thinking?

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he, says God's Word (Proverbs 23:7).

Here God reveals a fundamental law by which our minds work. We are, in essence, the sum total of what our thoughts make us. What we allow ourselves to think and believe is extremely important, because our thoughts are the building blocks from which all our ideas, imaginations, habits and ultimate character are formed. Our actions are always preceded by our thoughts.

Man has always followed after his own thoughts and beliefs. God said the people of ancient Israel walked "*after their own thoughts*" (Isaiah 65:2). In the time of Israel's judges, "*every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 21:25).

In short, man reacts to and performs the thoughts he believes in. It makes no difference whether the thought is right or wrong. We are able to choose the thoughts we wish to believe in and act on. And therein lies the cause of every evil from which this world suffers.

Man, a mortal being with a physical existence, can receive physical knowledge only. Man receives this knowledge through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. But man's problems are spiritual! He needs to know how to have proper relationships with

both God and his fellowman, and those areas are spiritual.

Man is made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). God gave man a spirit that imparts the powers of intellect and reason, the element that raises man above the level of animals to the God plane, the element that makes him like God (Job 32:8). But man is incomplete. To understand and deal with spiritual things, man's mind must have imparted to it, God's Holy Spirit, the mind, motivation and attitude of God.

The first humans (*Adam and Eve*) had the chance to receive the Holy Spirit, but rejected the opportunity. God then shut off the Holy Spirit from man, except those God would call for special purposes during the first 6,000 years of a 7,000-year plan.

And that is the state in which man finds himself now! His mind cannot choose right from wrong without God's Spirit, and thus he finds himself constantly in trouble because of his thoughts, his motivations, his conflicts with other people and his inability to have a right relationship with God. We in God's Church, who have God's Holy Spirit, are to be learning to judge properly between right and wrong, and to choose the right. And that means learning to control our thoughts, from which our actions spring.

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***What we allow ourselves to think will eventually determine whether we enter God's Kingdom! How familiar are you with your thoughts and how they affect your life?***

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Everyone,

Many of you reading this *Newsletter* are new to some of the information you are receiving. You may have a background in one of the Protestant organizations. You may be observing one of the primary “Holy” Days of the Protestant faith—Easter. If you continue to read the materials promulgated by *The Church of God New World Ministries* you will find that our teachings are diametrically opposite from what you may have been taught. For instance, you will notice that our focus in this issue is Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Why is that you may ask? Let me explain.

If you will take a *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* and look the word Easter up you will not be able to find it in the *Bible*. You may stop me there and point to Acts 12 verse 4. It says, “*And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people.*” And, you would be correct. The word Easter is in the *King James Version* of the *Bible*. However, if you look the word Easter up in the *Concordance* you will find the Greek word is *Pascha* which means Passover. So, I stand by my statement, the Word Easter cannot be found in the *Bible* in its proper translation. Why? Why would one of the world’s “holiest” days not be found in the scriptures?

The answer is obvious if one is willing to accept the TRUTH. Jesus Christ outlined through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the Holy Days He intended for mankind to observe. These days are found in Leviticus the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter. (*If you would like to know more about God’s Holy Days send for our FREE article, “God’s Master Plan of Salvation.”*) There is ample proof in the *Bible* that Christ, Himself, observed all these days. Did He not say man “*should live by every word of God?*” (Mat. 4:4). Is Leviticus not a part of the word of God? Absolutely!

The TRUTH is that Easter is nothing more than the slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian goddess, Ishtar. It was pronounced by the Assyrians exactly as we pronounce “*Easter*” today. The story of how this pagan holiday was assimilated into the Christian religion is fascinating. Almost unbelievable. Time does not permit me here to explain. However, if you have access to the internet you can go to our website [www.cognwm.org](http://www.cognwm.org) and go to the RESOURCES section and click on the Articles Section. Look up the article titled, “*Easter, Lent, Ashes, Rabbits and Eggs – What’s It All About?*” to learn the amazing TRUTH about this fascinating story.

If you are still not convinced that you should not observe Easter you may ask yourself this question. Christ said he would remain in the heart of the earth for three (3) days and three (3) nights. (Mat. 12:40). That is the only sign He gave as proof of His Messiah ship. That event had to have taken place or Jesus Christ is not our Saviour, He is a liar and we have no hope in Him. Now, if Christ died on “*good Friday*,” how could He have fulfilled that scripture, even if He was resurrected on Sunday morning? Don’t take my word for it, count it for yourself. Again, go to our website and read the article, “*Three Days and Three Nights*,” for a full explanation.

No, my friends, Jesus Christ left no doubt about which days He intended for mankind to observe. Turn to I Corinthians chapter 11 and read verses 23-28. When Christ said, “*This do, in remembrance of me*,” He meant it. The observance of Passover is so important Christ said those who refused to do it would not inherit Eternal Life. Read it in your own *Bible*. Those words are found in John 6:48-58.

We have dedicated this issue to this ceremony as well as the Days of Unleavened Bread which follow the Passover. It is our sincere desire and prayer that the messages contained in this issue will help you prepare for this most important ceremony.

Those of you who are on our DVD monthly mailing list will be receiving a DVD with the Passover ceremony on it. You will also receive special DVD’s with messages for the first and last Days of Unleavened Bread. Let us observe the days God ordained rather than the Traditional Days of man.



**FORSAKEN...***Continued from page 1*

*lama sabachthani," that is to say, "My God my God why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46) he was not merely mouthing empty, emotional words. He knew that, hanging there on a stake, He was now totally alone, totally cut off from His heavenly Father. That is the condition most of the world finds itself in today! And most of the world is totally unaware of it. This condition is brought about by sin. Isaiah was inspired to make it plain: "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).*

When sin is present in our lives we are cut off from contact with God. Sin and God are totally incompatible. The two just can't exist together. Therefore, unless the penalty of our sin -*death*- is paid, we cannot ever regain the contact with God that is necessary for eternal life. And that, of course, is where Jesus Christ enters the picture.

As the Creator of all mankind, His life was worth more than the sum total of humanity. His death paid the penalty for every sin committed on this planet. But in paying this penalty, He had to take all these sins on His shoulders: *"For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor.5:21).* And again: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).*

As the clouds overhead darkened and the pain in His body became almost unbearable, Jesus Christ knew He bore the sins of the world. And He knew He was bearing them alone.

Earlier when He had been in mental agony, His Father had sent an angel to strengthen and encourage Him (Luke 22:43). Time after time in the humiliation of His scourging Jesus had drawn on the strength of His Father. The burden of responsibility, knowing that to fail in His mission, weighed heavily on His mind and He constantly renewed His resolve through prayer to God in heaven. Now, in the hour of Christ's greatest need, there was nothing. Even if He were forced to abandon His own beloved Son, God the Father was not willing to compromise with sin.

That's the way it had always been; *"I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them. And I will surely hide my face in that day for all evils which they shall have wrought" (Deut. 31:17-18).* *"At that time he (God) will hide his face from them, because of the evil they have done" (Micah 3:4).* God, therefore, was left with no alternative. If Jesus had become *"sin"* for us, then God had to forsake Him. He would have to face the final minutes alone.

Jesus, at last, could really comprehend what it meant to be cut off from God. He had come to this sick planet, not just to give His life for all mankind, but also to experience the human experience. By doing so He

would be able to intercede to the Father on our behalf with far more meaning and fervor. *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).* And so it was, on that fateful spring day, Jesus Christ knew what it was like to be completely alone in the world.

As He hung there in torment, the words penned by King David became vivid in His mind. *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent" (Ps. 22:1-2).* Read all of *Psalm 22* and try to put yourself in Christ's position. Try to imagine being cut off from the strength and encouragement we in God's Church can have from the Eternal.

This episode at the very end of Jesus' earthly life contains several important lessons we need to consider carefully.

It should reinforce in our minds that sin, any transgression of God's spiritual law, will result in an estrangement from our heavenly Father. The fact that even Jesus Christ Himself had to experience that separation shows without a shadow of a doubt that God will not compromise with sin. And every time we sin we become responsible for the brutal torture and suffering Christ has to endure. This knowledge should move us to live the most perfect lives we can.

This episode should also increase our faith. God says He does not compromise with sin, and we can believe what God has written in His Word. Not only should that encourage us, it should also make us aware that God means business when He emphasizes the punishment intended for those who willingly persist in wrongdoing.

Jesus Christ died for our sins. His suffering, especially His mental agony when He knew He was totally alone in the ordeal, should make us consider what will happen to us if we refuse to repent of transgressing God's law. There can be no reasoning around the situation. God did not compromise with His Son, nor will He when it comes to the rest of us!

*"For dogs have surrounded Me;  
The assembly of the wicked has enclosed Me.  
They pierced My hands and My feet;  
I can count all My bones.  
They look and stare at Me.  
They divide My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots."*

*Psalm 22:16-18*

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING...continued from page 1

In short, God has called us to learn to think, feel, say and act as He does – to develop His thoughts, emotions, character and mind. Christ said, “*Become ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*” (Matthew 5:48). Paul said “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 2:5).

The loving mind, thoughts and ways of God are found in print in the Bible. The Bible was designed to guide us in building the kind of mind God has. Our job requires that we become experts at recognizing and rejecting all that is not Godlike in our thinking.

Every thought we think is either oriented toward God’s loving way of thinking or Satan’s selfish way. God’s thoughts are always positive and motivated by outgoing concern. Satan’s thoughts are negative, though they may seem positive. Consider, for instance, the “*pull yourself up by your own bootstraps*” philosophy based on vanity and self-exaltation.

All satanic thoughts are based upon selfish motives and produce nothing but vanity, heartache and foolishness. God’s Word says, “*The thought of foolishness is sin*” (Proverbs 24:9). So all thoughts motivated out of selfishness are foolishness and therefore sinful!

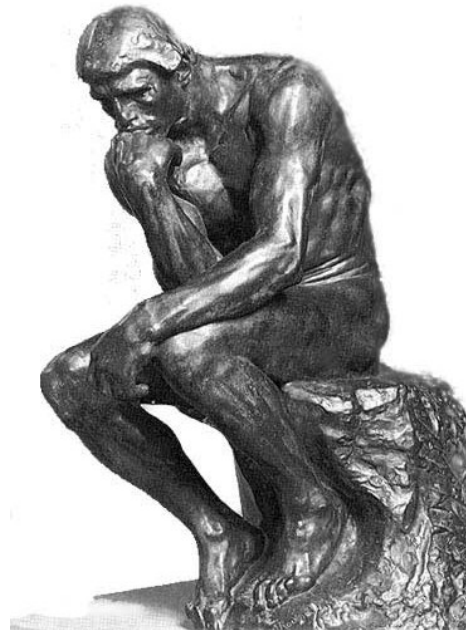
How many of us are robbing ourselves of spiritual growth, health and happiness by allowing our minds to indulge in foolish ways of thinking each day? Foolish thoughts come from within and without. Those from without come from Satan and his world. “*The prince of the power of the air*” (Ephesians 2:2) saturates the world with his selfish attitude.

Some prime vehicles through which Satan disseminates his ways of thinking are radio, television, movies and the printed media; we need to be selective in how we use these media. Even our friends and relatives can be used to introduce foolish thoughts into our minds. We must not allow the world’s satanic ways to be poured, unchallenged and unabated, into our minds.

Foolish thoughts may also come from within. Daydreaming can, for instance, waste valuable time. To escape reality, many squander their time indulging in useless, selfish fantasies or by wishing things in the past or present were different.

Our fleshly desires can also affect our thoughts. Wrongly manifested, our desires provoke thoughts of “*adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness: and every other wrong, self-serving lust of man*” (Galatians 5:19). Many allow material desires to rise above godly desires.

Some consume their time and thoughts with the foolish misuse of their emotions. Fear, worry, doubt, anger, hate and other powerful emotions are good only if they produce



something worthwhile in our lives. For instance, if we worry, we should worry about whether we are pleasing God. If we hate, our hatred should be directed toward sin. Otherwise such emotions may be vain, foolish and sinful.

How, then, may we rid ourselves of wrong thoughts and develop God’s mind and way of thinking? Following are three steps. In English, they all begin with an “R”.

The first “R” is to “*Recognize*” our wrong thoughts. Just as we find it easier to see the “*mote*” lodged in someone else’s eye than the “*beam*” in our own (Matthew 7:3), it is often easier to see our misdeeds than it is to see our ways of thinking that caused them.

Recognizing our improper thinking is the most difficult part in overcoming our problems, but we will not be able to overcome our problems until we do. We need to deeply study God’s

Word and begin to think as God thinks, and begin to see as wrong what God sees as wrong. When we do, half the battle is won.

Next we must “*Repent*”, (the second “R”) of wrong thinking, however it may be manifested in our emotions or habits, each and every time we recognize it. Peter told Simon Magus to “*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*” (Acts 8:22).

In order to eradicate our foolish thoughts, we must recognize them for the sins they are and repent of them on the spot, praying to God for forgiveness. And we must do so every time the sinful thought occurs, be it once or 500 times a day.

Isaiah said, “*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord*” (Isaiah 55:7). Once we have recognized and repented of our evil thoughts, then we must turn to God and allow Him to give us the right thoughts we should think.

The third “R” is that we “*Replace*” our sinful thoughts with God’s righteous thoughts. God made our minds to actually become what we think about all day long. That is why God told Joshua: “*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night (why?) That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein*” (Joshua 1:8).

King David also knew the importance of filling his mind with the Word of God. He said: “*O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day*” (Psalm 119:97). The way to get rid of the wrong is to replace it with the right.

Even after we have replaced the wrong thoughts with the right ones, the battle is not over. Satan will strive to inject wrong thoughts back into your minds. Bad thoughts, emotions or habits occur, they will have less and less of an effect on our lives, and until one day they will be gone.

In short, we must learn to develop God’s way of thinking, growing toward, “*a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:13), which is our God-intended destiny!

## HOW TO KEEP PASSOVER AT HOME



Sometimes, due to distance, travel costs, age, or illness, it is not possible to attend Passover services with a church congregation. It becomes necessary to observe the Passover at home. If that be the case with you, here is the procedure to follow for observing the Passover at home.

The Passover service is a solemn occasion. It is solemn because it depicts the death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for us. Paul was inspired to write, "...*Christ, OUR PASSOVER, is sacrificed for us.*" (I Corinthians 5:7). Through Christ's death we can be justified of our sins that are past, and reconciled back to God, having the death penalty removed from us.

The Passover, sometimes called The Lord's Supper, begins on the evening of the 14th of Nisan or Abib. The corresponding date on man's calendar varies from year to year. (If you are not sure when the Passover will be observed this year, send for one of our Holy Day calendars or call our office at 865-774-8485 for information).

When the evening comes, after sunset, the person conducting services should have prepared in advance the necessary water, basins and towels for the foot-washing ceremony. And, should have obtained, and prepared, the necessary amount of wine (not grape juice) and unleavened bread. A non-fortified red wine, such as Burgundy, Beaujolais, or Merlot is usually preferred. Alcohol content should be between 10-13%.

Matzos or perhaps home-made unleavened bread should be laid out on a platter or plate, and small cups for pouring the wine. Cover the bread and wine with white cloths, if possible. In larger groups the wine is poured into small cups in advance.

The person conducting services should begin with prayer. Then, turn to, and read John 13 verses 1 through 17. Following the words, "*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,*" announce the foot-washing ceremony. Men and women should be separated; perhaps using a different room, if available, or, if impossible, simply place the chairs in the opposite direction in the interest of modesty. Make sure everyone washes someone else's feet. If you are alone, simply wash your own feet.

Next, turn to, and read I Corinthians 11:23, 24. If you wish, you may also turn to, and read Matthew 26:26, or Luke 22:19. They say basically the same thing.

After reading the scriptures, bow your heads in prayer, and ask God's blessing on the unleavened bread. Then, solemnly break the bread into small wafer-size bits, and each person present eats a piece of the bread, meditating on the fact that Christ said He is the "*bread of life*" which came down from heaven; that the bread you are eating will become a part of you even as Christ dwells in us by the Holy Spirit.

Next, turn to and read I Corinthians 11:25-29. Parallel scriptures to these are in Matthew 26:28, 29, and Luke 22:20. Once again, bow your heads and the individual conducting services asks God's blessing over the small cup of wine, acknowledging the deep significance of the shed blood of the "*Lamb of God,*" Jesus Christ for us. Thank God for His merciful forgiveness; for His grace and pardon toward us, and for His daily intervention in our lives. Then, solemnly drink the wine.

Following this, you may select passages from chapters 14-17 in the book of John to read. You may select certain scriptures for brevity sake, or you may read them all.

Following the reading from the book of John, conclude the services by standing and singing a song (psalm) from your hymnal. (Matthew 26:30). Upon completion of the song, the person conducting services should make any necessary announcements regarding the first day of unleavened bread, and, then, indicate that services are over. Everyone should disperse and return to their respective homes.

The person in charge should dispose of any remaining bread and wine that was prayed over (blessed) during services.

May we never forget the deep, personal meaning of this very special ceremony. For Christ said, "*unless you eat of my flesh, and drink of my blood, you have no life in you.*"

# Prove All Things: Hold Fast That Which Is Good

*I Thessalonians 5:21*

*How well do you know the Bible? Answer the following questions and find out.*

1. Which Bible patriarch did Peter use as an example to show we do not go to heaven when we die? (List the scriptures to prove this).
2. Which Holy Day was Paul referring to when he said, "let us keep the feast"? (Hint: I Corinthians).
3. After John was put in prison Christ came to Galilee. What was Christ doing? (Prove this from the Bible).
4. Who is the Rock mentioned in the Bible? (Prove this from scripture).
5. What is the only sign that Christ gave proving He was the Messiah? (Prove this from scripture.)
6. What do the ten toes of the image in Daniel 2:40-44 represent? (Hint: Revelation).
7. What does the Lamb in Exodus 12:3-7, 13-14 represent? (Prove it from the Bible).
8. Why did the soldiers NOT break the bones in Christ's legs? (Prove this by scripture).
9. Christ said in John 6:53, "...Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood ye have no life in you." What ceremony was He referring to? (Prove it).
10. In Acts the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter verses 1-15 Peter saw a vision in which a sheet came down from heaven with all manner of creatures on it. He was told to eat the creatures. They were obviously unclean creatures by Peter's answer. A voice told Peter the second time to eat because what God has cleansed, that call you not common. Was God referring to cleansing unclean meat so we could eat it? (Prove it from the Bible).



ANSWERS FOUND ON PAGE 10

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."  
II Timothy 2:15

<b>LOCAL CHURCH CONTACTS</b>			
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	Paintsville	Bobby Whitaker	(606) 884-8705
	Royalton	Bobby Whitaker Blaine Riley	(606) 884-8705 (606) 358-4284
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Ohio	Cincinnati	Brian & Marty Tinkler	(513) 893-2042
Tennessee	Knoxville	John Shelton	(865) 523-2159
Virginia	Winchester	Joe & Loretta Shuster	(540) 662-4241
West Virginia	Bluefield	Shelby Nichols	(304) 589-5676
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## WHY GOD HATES GOSSIP!

***Do you know what scourge victimizes more people every year than all the sicknesses and accidents in the world? It is the deadly poison of gossip.***

The Bible reveals that Satan the devil is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). But how does he accuse us? By spreading rumors and causing gossip.

Satan introduced gossip into the world shortly after the creation of Adam and Eve when he spread rumors about God. Satan told Adam and Eve that God lied to them. He made them suspect God's loving concern and wonderful plan for all mankind to inherit eternal life.

God told man, after putting him in the Garden of Eden: *"Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die"* (Genesis 2:16-17).

God's command was clear. But Satan put doubts in the first couple's minds. He made them question why God had forbidden them to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He made them feel that God was keeping from them something that was good for them.

Notice how Eve answered Satan (*who appeared to her as a whispering enchanter*), when she repeated God's order. Eve told Satan: *"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die"* (Genesis 3:2-3). Why did Eve add the last part of that sentence? Where did she hear it? God didn't forbid her to touch the tree. He told them not to eat of it.

Yes, but in Eve's mind, twisting God's order was necessary to express her feelings toward what she believed to be unfair. Can you imagine? God wouldn't allow them to touch the fruit of the tree! Satan

had already influenced her mind and she began to shade what God had said.

She obviously also thought the penalty God imposed was too severe. The clear statement, *"Thou shalt surely die,"* became, in her words, *"lest ye die."* Quite possibly, the more Eve reasoned in her own mind, the more she believed she was right. She became convinced that she was telling the truth. The woman now *"knew"* that God was really harsh and unjust.

Just think, If you repeat something enough times, you end up believing it. And in this case, that's just



what Satan wanted Eve to do, believe God was unjust, so he could seduce her. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by taking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The carnal mind always seeks its own way, its own aggrandizement. It wants to be right. Self-justification is one way to achieve that goal. Accusation is another. Both help to shield our own mistakes. The carnal mind likes to be exalted. It will distort facts or twist statements to preserve its own presumed integrity.

Do you realize that often, during conversations, you only hear what you want to hear, and not necessarily what was said? Likewise, when you repeat what you want to hear, you present the information in such a way that you end up appearing innocent of any errors.

But God commands, *"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"* (Exodus 20:16). Do you grasp the depth of this commandment? Bearing false witness against

someone can not only involve lying, but also accusing, gossiping and spreading rumors.

If you are truly a Christian, you should never take part in any of these activities. You should not accuse others, whether it is to defend yourself, to cover your mistakes or merely to make yourself look good in the eyes of others. In other words, the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment forbids lies, accusation, gossip and spreading rumors. That's what bearing false witness is!

As a true Christian, you are to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39). But how can you love your neighbor if you accuse him or gossip about him? How can you love him if you have a part in breaking up his family, or his home, or in making him lose his friends?

Satan wants you to bear false witness. He would like to cause division between you and your brethren. He would like to destroy your home, and he would do anything to divide or destroy the Church. (*Has Satan been successful in dividing the Church?*)

When you gossip, you bear false witness against your neighbor, but God says, *"Thou shalt not bear false witness. (Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself)"* (Romans 13:9). Stop and ask yourself: How much of what you hear is the truth? And how much of what you say, or repeat is true? We all tend to repeat what we hear, or believe it without ever checking the facts. We take for granted what we hear or read.

But gossip is never the entire truth. It might be part of the truth, or a shaded truth, or a truth out of context, but it is never the whole truth. There is no such thing as *"half-truth."* A lie is a lie, whether white, black or shaded.

Here is a simple rule to remember: Before you say or repeat anything about your neighbor be sure

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WHY GOD HATES GOSSIP...*Continued from page 7*  
 you have all the facts (*and by definition the facts will be true*). Then ask yourself, “*am I loving my neighbor as myself when I repeat this*”? If not, you are breaking God’s commandment.

Sometimes you can be unintentionally guilty of gossip. You may not think you are doing any harm, but gossip always harms. Whether you justify yourself by distorting the facts or accuse someone because he is accusing you, gossip is always destructive. Ultimately, the penalty for gossip is death.

Consider what happened when Moses, who was talking with God, delayed his return from the mountain. The Israelites were concerned about him, but especially about themselves. What would they do if something had happened to Moses? Who would lead them? How would they survive in the wilderness?

They had no faith. In their fear they began to doubt God’s love for them, and decided to go after other gods. They told Aaron, “*Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him*” (Exodus 32:1).

The Israelites built a golden calf and began to worship it. They forgot the Almighty God, who with tremendous miracles brought them out of the land of Egypt. They forgot His loving promises. “*Go, get thee down,*” God instructed Moses, “*for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them*” (vs. 7-8).

Moses, returning hurriedly, saw what was taking place and was horrified. He could not believe his eyes. “*What did this people do unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?*” Moses demanded of his brother Aaron (v. 21). Aaron was in charge of the people in Moses’ absence. He was therefore responsible for their conduct and behavior. He could have and should have stopped the mak-

ing of the golden calf. But he was afraid of the people!

Did Aaron readily admit his guilt? Did he easily accept his share of responsibility or did he justify himself? He told Moses: “*Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him*” (vs. 22-23).

Notice how Aaron justified himself. He thought his task impossible, since he was dealing with a rebellious, stiff-necked people whose minds were set on evil. How could anyone reason with such a people? So what did Aaron do? He let them act as they pleased! And how did he explain the calf? Well, it just came into existence by itself, according to him! Aaron told Moses: “*And I said unto them, whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf*” (v. 24). Simple, isn’t it? All you have to do to produce a golden calf is to gather all the gold you can find and cast it into a fire, and out will come a golden calf!

Strange as it may sound, it is with reasoning like this that the human mind tries to justify itself. It puts the blame on others, rather than acknowledge its own share of guilt or responsibility. Aaron’s way of describing events is not much different from the way we would describe happenings in our own lives. We would, chances are, picture ourselves as blameless in a parallel situation.

Was Jesus Christ a drunkard? Of course not. But His persecutors claimed He was. They spread rumors about Him. Actually, people saw wrong in whatever Jesus did. When He drank wine, He became a drunkard in their eyes. When He ate with the publicans, He was classified as being one of them. Christ was accused no matter what He said or did. His enemies constantly spread rumors about Him.

As Jesus said: “*For John (the Baptist) came neither eating nor drink-*

*ing, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners*” (Matthew 11:18-19).

Strangely enough, many of the people who accused Jesus or spread rumors about Him had never seen Him. They only believed what they had heard and they had heard from His enemies that Jesus was a drunkard and a glutton. Even though Jesus Christ never broke God’s commandments, He was accused of breaking every last one of them. When He healed on the Sabbath, they said He broke the Sabbath. When He stated that those who did His Father’s will were like members of His own family, people said Christ did not love His mother, brothers or sisters. People did not even believe Christ was born of the Holy Spirit: rather, they called Him a bastard, one born of fornication.

To His false accusers, Christ said: “*If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it*” (John 8:42-44).

Indeed, Christ’s persecutors were unable to understand Christ. They had for their father the devil, who is a liar. They believed the lies and not the truth. As one old saying goes, if you do not want people to believe you, just tell them the truth!

But there is no excuse for us in God’s Church to behave like those who do not have God’s Spirit. We must always tell the truth. We must never say anything that could hurt or harm our neighbors, never gossip, never spread rumors.

*Continued on page 9*



WHY GOD HATES GOSSIP...Continued from page 8

It is hard to believe, but people even accused Jesus Christ of being possessed by a demon (v 48)!

Today the world still hates Jesus Christ, because it does not understand His teachings. People still spread false rumors about Him, His teachings and the message He brought from His Father. *"If ye were of the world,"* Jesus told His disciples, *"the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also"* (John 15:19-20).

Today this prophecy is being fulfilled, much as it was in the days of the early Church. Not only unbelievers, but also those who once called themselves believers, are now persecuting the Church. *"It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!"* (Luke 17:1). We had better heed this strong warning.

Enemies even spread lies and rumors about Christ's resurrection. On several occasions, Jesus foretold that He would be persecuted, arrested and put to death, but that He would rise again after three days and three nights. Did His persecutors believe Him? NO! They thought he blasphemed God, and they did everything in their power to prove Him wrong.

After Christ's death the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate to ask him to prevent, by every possible means, the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy.

They told him: *"Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be*

*worse than the first"* (Matthew 27:63-64).

How curious! Not only did they not believe Christ, but they also suspected everyone else. They wanted definite action and assurance from the governor.

Pilate, as usual, found a way to shun his responsibilities. He turned the matter over to them and told them to do whatever they considered necessary. *"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch"* (v. 66).

What happened then? Christ rose from the dead, just as He had prophesied. The guards were powerless to stop the Lord's angel from rolling back the stone and opening the door. When they returned to the city and told the chief priests what had taken place, the chief priests advised the guards to deny the events and to spread new rumors. When the chief priests and the Pharisees *"were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you"* (Matthew 28:12-14). Thus was this complete heinous fabrication perpetuated (v. 15). Those who persecuted Christ stopped at nothing. They adopted every despicable means to cause division among the brethren and to stop the proclamation of the Gospel. Satan was their chief counselor. One way or the other, they let him lead them.

The same is true today. Satan still wants to divide the Church even more than it already is, the more divided we become the less power we have of spreading the true Gospel. Satan will do anything to stop the proclamation of the Gospel. Those who persecute the Church are once again led and influenced by Satan.

Remember, gossip's root cause may be self-justification, jealousy, a spirit of vengeance or simply vanity. But whatever the cause, gossip is sin. It breaks the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment. God hates gossip. *"These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an*

*abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren"* (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Practically every one of the seven things mentioned in these verses has something to do with lying, gossiping, spreading rumors and sowing discord among the brethren. God told His people: *"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the Lord. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord"* (Leviticus 19:16-18).

As God's people, His Church, it is high time we wake up and obey His commandments seriously and from the heart. It is high time brethren everywhere stop spreading rumors, seeking vengeance or bearing grudges against each other.

Has gossip become such an ingrained habit in your life that you don't know how to eradicate it? Do you really want to change? Since gossip is one of Satan's tools, you can only overcome it by using the tools of love God gives you through His Holy Spirit.

Satan will put evil thoughts into your mind. He will incite you to justify yourself, to blame others and accuse them. God wants you to recognize your mistakes and repent of your sins. God tells you not to justify yourself, not to judge others, not to accuse. God alone is the Judge, and vengeance is His.

Get down on your knees and ask God daily to help you examine your heart, to help you stop gossiping. Don't ever say anything that will

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WHY GOD HATES GOSSIP...continued from page 9

hurt your brother. Keep your mind constantly on God and His Gospel. The Gospel is good news, gossip is bad news. Idleness often produces gossip. Therefore, be so busy doing what is right in God's sight that you will not have time to be idle. Replace gossip with Gospel!

Paul, in his epistle to Titus, tells us how to overcome gossip, whatever our age or occupation. He tells the older men, "*Be sober, grave (serious), temperate, sound in faith, in charity (love), in patience*" (Titus 2:2). If older men would follow this advice, they would never have time to gossip.

To the older women, Paul writes: "*Likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*" (vs. 3-5). Those are not just words. They are commandments of God.

To the young people, Paul writes: "*Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing*

*thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you*" (vs. 6-8).

If we all show ourselves in all things, patterns of good works, there won't be any gossip in the Church of God. Do you want to have good friends? If so, then be a good friend yourself. Do you want other people to speak well of you? Speak well of them. If you want to be helped, first help others. If you want brethren in the Church to be better Christians, be a better Christian yourself. Simple, isn't it? The Truth is always simple, but the carnal mind makes it seem complicated.

Here are three simple rules that will help you stop gossiping:

(1) Before you repeat anything about anyone, ask yourself, "*Do I have all the facts?*" If not, what you say may not be true. You will be spreading rumors. God commands you to "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

(2) Before you repeat anything you have heard about anyone, ask yourself, "*Can I tell this thing in the presence of*

*the person involved?*" If you cannot, then you should not tell it in his or her absence. In other words, don't say anything about someone that you would not be willing to say to that person's face.

Christ said that only the merciful shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7). But how can you be merciful if you spread rumors about your neighbor? Christ also said that the peacemakers shall be called the sons of God (v. 9) A gossiper is not a peacemaker.

(3) After you have obtained all the facts and after you have ascertained, in all honesty, that you can repeat in the presence of the person involved what you have heard about him or her, ask yourself: "*Will saying this do any good? Will it help? Is it really beneficial?*" If the answer to any of these questions is no, don't repeat what you have heard!

Now, do you understand why God hates gossip? As we approach Passover let us think on these things. Let us prepare to partake of Christ, who never gossiped nor spread rumors. No guile was found in His mouth.

### Answers to "Prove All Things"

(FROM PAGE 6)

*These scriptures may not be the only proof texts. If you have a question, please call.*

1. David (Acts 2:29-34).
2. Unleavened Bread (I Corinthians 5:8)
3. Preaching the gospel (Mark 1:14-15).
4. Christ (I Corinthians 10:4).
5. Sign of the prophet Jonas (Jonah). (Matthew 12:39-40).
6. Ten kings (Revelation 17:12-14).
7. Christ (John 1:29; Revelation 5:5-9).
8. They had stabbed Him with a spear. He was already dead. (John 19: 31-34; Revelation 1:7).
9. Passover (I Corinthians 11:23-25; Matthew 26: 1-2; 17; 19-28; Leviticus 23:5).
10. Mankind (gentiles). (Acts 10:28; Galatians 3:26-29; Acts 15: 6-9; 19).



## NEWS FROM THE WEBSITE

Some GREAT news about the web site, and the audience that it reaches!

In January of 2009, we started using Google's advertising service to place the topics included in the new "*Traditional Christian Doctrines*" series on the top of Google search pages. Searches for "the fall of man", "the immortal soul", and "hell" are now showing a link on the right hand side inviting people to review and order the series.

Well, little did we know what an impact this would have on the web site! Ever since that day, the COGNWM web site has continued to set new records! We have gone from 65 new visitors, with 155 total visits per day to 125 new visitors with over 250 visits per day on average in just one month!

So far, in the first 20 days February, we have had over 2,534 unique visitors with 4,579 visits! There have even been some days with over 300 visits! One of the most encouraging things we have seen is how many people find the content on the web site valuable and add the web site to their bookmarks. This means that they add it to the list of their favorite sites – meaning they will most likely return to the site again. The percentage of people who are adding our site's content to their list of favorites has gone up from 29.7% to just over 46%! The articles, sermons, materials to order, healthy eating, and all the sections of the site are getting the message out about the Truth contained in the Bible.

### What's Next

We've talked about the "Ask A Minister" pages of the site in past newsletters. At this time we've decided to hold off on posting this feature until we get a couple of other things in order.

We are going to update the online ordering system, and allow more orders to be placed per month, as well as allow people who are on the mailing list to use their mailing list number (on the address label of the correspondences we mail to you) to fill in all the address fields on the order form. Additionally, you'll be able to use this number along with your zip code to see the status of any orders you have placed.

We have begun to update all of the duplicating equipment for the DVD's and CD's, and have given cameras to the ministers so we can get more sermons. You might even see video sermons, and possibly be able to tune into live video sermons on the web during this year's Feast of Tabernacles.

Again – it's your web site. All of us who are members of the church have a say in what gets on the web site, so let us know if you have any ideas, or can help in any way. We are ALWAYS looking for people to post new content so that every aspect of preaching the gospel and feeding the flock can be realized.

Thanks for your prayers and support!

### *On The Web Site There Are...*

- 231 articles that have been read just over 19,000 times, and printed just over 7m400 times!
- 74 Answers to biblical questions
- 36 difficult scriptures explained
- 25 current prayer requests from visitors to the site and church members
- An updated Holy Days calendar
- 221 different materials you can order
- A new personal study section that includes the new Traditional Christian Doctrines series
- The constitution and by-laws of the church
- Over 380 sermons you can listen to online!

## Church of God, New World Ministries

### Financial Statement

January 2007 through February 2009

	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Total Income		\$ 227,769.00
Operational Expenses	-\$ 28,873.22	
Business Expenses	-\$ 49,322.60	
Contract Services	-\$ 1,113.88	
Facilities and Equipment	-\$ 25,175.00	
Operations	-\$ 11,422.29	
Computer Equipment	-\$ 6,084.46	
Computer Software	-\$ 945.46	
Web Site	-\$ 461.70	
Misc. Expenses	-\$ 1,823.55	
Payroll Expenses	-\$ 21,800.00	
Travel and Meetings	-\$ 15,300.24	
Total Expenses	-	-\$162,322.40
<b>CURRENT BALANCE</b>		<b>\$ 65,446.60</b>

**PLEASE SEND ANY  
ANNOUNCEMENTS TO THE HOME  
OFFICE FOR THE NEXT NEW  
WORLD MINISTRIES NEWS.**

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