

MESSENGER

FULFILL YOUR DESTINY

October 2020

Fall Festival Edition

MESSENGER Magazine

Issue No. 15 | October 2020

God has a wonderful plan for mankind of which, unfortunately, most people are unaware. Why? Partly because the festivals God designed and intended to be observed have been ignored and rejected. God intended Israel to observe them, but not only Israel. Scripture tells us that in the future, all nations will keep the Feast of Tabernacles, which in part, pictures his Kingdom. In this issue we explore the Feast of Trumpets, another of God's fall festivals. Subjects of our other articles in this issue relate to the meaning embedded in the festivals of God which help us understand how he is working out his plan for mankind.

Featured Articles

The Feast of Trumpets: Beginning a New Age | 1

What Kind of King Would You Be? | 6

Have We Entered Our Rest? | 9

The Coronation of Joash | 12

The Economy of God's Kingdom | 15

Messenger Magazine is published by the
Messenger Church of God.

Editor: Rod Reynolds

This publication is distributed free of charge. In his instructions associated with preaching the gospel, Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give."

This publication is not to be sold. No part of this publication may be reproduced except in its entirety, other than brief quotes used for reference.

Entire contents copyrighted 2020 by Messenger Church of God (and/or authors of individual articles).

Unless otherwise noted, Scriptures are referenced from the New King James Version™
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.
(see <https://creativecommons.org/> for details).

This work is supported by the freely given tithes and offerings of the members of the Messenger Church of God, its co-workers and supporters. There is no obligation associated with receiving or subscribing to the magazine, although voluntary contributions are gratefully received.

You may subscribe to the magazine by sending your request to:

subscribem@cogmessenger.org
(be sure to include your name and mailing address)
or subscribe online at www.cogmessenger.org/messenger-magazine

Or

Messenger Magazine
PO Box 542
Peculiar, MO 64078

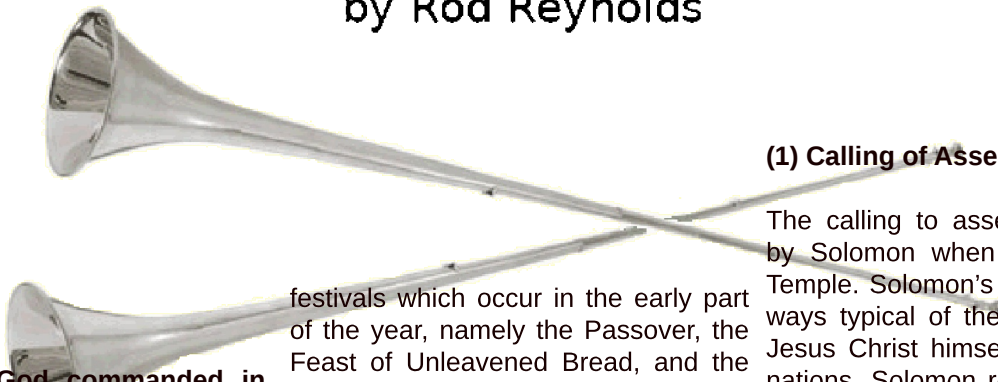
or by telephone: 573-722-4253

Donations may be sent to the same address or may be made online. See our website for details:
www.cogmessenger.org

For further encouragement, insight, and instruction from the perspective of the Bible, its doctrines, history, and prophecies, and commentary on current affairs and healthful living, visit our website:
www.cogmessenger.org

The Feast of Trumpets: Beginning a New Age

by Rod Reynolds



The festivals God commanded in the Bible and his Sabbaths have prophetic implications which form an outline of God's plan for mankind, as we've discussed in previous chapters.

"Then do not let anyone judge you in eating, or in drinking, or in respect of a feast, or the new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of coming things, but the body *is* of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17, Green's Literal Translation).

The word "*is*" is in italics, because the Greek has no word for "*is*" in verse 17. It should read, "which are a shadow of coming things [or things to come – KJV], but **the body of Christ**" (his Church, of which he is the head; Colossians 1:18, 24).

"Shadow," is translated from the Greek, *skia*, shadow, sketch, outline. Notice the Sabbaths "Are," [not were], *estin*, present indicative. This implies continuing action. The Sabbaths, and the feasts of God, are now and continue to be a shadow of things to come. In other words, they have prophetic significance.

In previous chapters we discussed the weekly Sabbath along with the

festivals which occur in the early part of the year, namely the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Pentecost.

Now we will proceed to the fall festival season, beginning with the Feast of Trumpets.

The new moon of the seventh month, is also a festival and a Sabbath, called the Feast of Trumpets. This feast has particular prophetic significance associated with the blowing of trumpets.

In Numbers 10 God gave instructions to Moses concerning silver trumpets that he was to make. Also were given instructions on how they were to be used and for what purposes.

There are seven specific purposes listed for the blowing of the silver trumpets: They are (1) Calling an assembly; (2) signaling and directing a journey; (3) signaling war; (4) rejoicing; (5) marking holy days; (6) marking new moons; (7) at the giving of sacrifices. All have literal, symbolic, and prophetic application and significance. And all of them relate to the spiritual and prophetic significance of the Feast of Trumpets. In this article let's explore the prophetic significance of three of the occasions for blowing the trumpets.

(1) Calling of Assembly.

The calling to assembly was typified by Solomon when he dedicated the Temple. Solomon's reign was in many ways typical of the Millennium, when Jesus Christ himself will rule over all nations. Solomon refers to himself as "Preacher" in Ecclesiastes 1:1, etc. From Hebrew *kohleleth* (from *kahal* = to call), assembler, hence preacher.

After Solomon had finished the work of building the temple: "Now Solomon **assembled** the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord up from the City of David, which is Zion. Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast, which was in the seventh month. So all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up" (2 Chronicles 5:2-5).

On that occasion, "the glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (2 Chronicles 5:14).

It's prophesied that God also in a future time shall come to his temple: "'Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In

whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' Says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:1).

This was fulfilled in part when Jesus Christ came to the temple in Jerusalem during his earthly ministry. But the Bible tells us that the Church is the spiritual temple of God. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

In the book of Revelation we read beginning in chapter five of seven "seals." These seals symbolize events leading up to the end of the age. While there may be a dual significance to the earlier seals, as with many prophecies in the Bible, the primary fulfillment is at the end of this age.

"Seven trumpets" constitute the seventh seal. All of these "trumpet" prophecies relate to the Feast of Trumpets, but especially the seventh and final trumpet, which signifies the return of Jesus Christ, the pouring out of the seven last plagues in judgment on God's enemies, the resurrection of the just, and the commencement of Christ's reign on the earth. "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Revelation 11:15).

It is at the time of this seventh trumpet that Jesus Christ returns to the earth to establish his rule over it. In conjunction with that will be the first resurrection, when those who have been and remained faithful in times previous to his second coming will be resurrected from the dead. And those faithful at that time will be changed into the likeness of Christ.

Christ is at that time coming to his temple, the Church of God. "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and **with the trumpet of God**. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet**. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Those resurrected or changed at that time will be assembled, so to speak, as they meet Christ in the air, and will proceed with him to Jerusalem, from whence he will begin his reign on the earth. "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives..." (Zechariah 14:4).

"Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You [or "with him," as some Hebrew manuscripts and Bible translations read]" (Zechariah 14:5).

The coming of Christ will set the stage for the **whole earth to be filled with God's glory!** "And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory" (Psalm 72:19, a prophecy of the Messiah's reign).

The **nations of the earth will be called to assemble** as well. "... It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory" (Isaiah 66:18).

The nations will have been assembled in armies to fight Jesus Christ at the time of his coming. The final battle will occur in the environs of

Jerusalem, and the enemy armies fighting Christ will be defeated.

Then we read: "... those among them who escape I will send to the nations... who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren [Israelites who had been in captivity] for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,' says the Lord, 'as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord'" (Isaiah 66:19-20).

All flesh will learn to worship before God each Sabbath (Isaiah 66:23).

Note that Malachi 3:1 says a messenger [or messengers] precedes the coming of God to prepare the way. Preaching the gospel is the initial step in assembling Israel and the nations before God.

Like Isaiah, the servants God sends are to lift up their voices like a trumpet. "Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1)

God is now calling many through the preaching of the gospel to the millennial assembly, but Israel, and the world, is rejecting his call, for the most part.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about

it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city" (Matthew 22:2-7).

The final verse we read describes the pouring out of God's wrath that will accompany the return of Jesus Christ, of which we will speak more later.

As Jesus said in verse 2, the wedding feast referred to in this parable is a metaphor of the Kingdom of Heaven, and especially applies to the thousand year period that will begin with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4-6).

(2) The Trumpets were blown to signal and direct the journeying of Israel.

After Christ returns at the blowing of the trumpet of God, Israel will begin a journey out of captivity and to the vicinity of Jerusalem.

In Luke 14 is another parable similar to the wedding supper parable. When those invited refuse to come at the urging of the host's servant: "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the

servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled'" (Luke 14:21-23).

Note that the lame, blind, etc. are compelled to come to the supper. The supper, like the Feast of Tabernacles, is a metaphor for God's Kingdom, especially the millennial rule of Jesus Christ. The remnant of Israel, lame, blind, near death's door due to the cruel treatment they will have been subjected to, will be gathered out of captivity and led to the land of their inheritance.

"Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; **I will save the lame, And gather those who were driven out**; I will appoint them for praise and fame In every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will bring you back, Even at the time I gather you..." (Zephaniah 3:19-20).

"In that day," says the Lord, 'I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast And those whom I have afflicted; I will make the **lame a remnant**, And the outcast a strong nation; So the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on, even forever'" (Micah 4:6-7).

"So it shall be in that day: **The great trumpet will be blown**; They will come, **who are about to perish** in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah 27:13).

"Are You not the One who dried up the sea, The waters of the great deep; That made the depths of the sea a road For the redeemed to cross over? **So the ransomed of the Lord shall return**, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 51:10-11).

"As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered

sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And **I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land**; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,' says the Lord God. 'I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment'" (Ezekiel 34:12-16).

"Behold, **I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth**, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with child, together; **A great throng shall return there**. They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, 'He who scattered Israel **will gather him**, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.' For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, Streaming to the goodness of the Lord -- For wheat and new wine and oil, For the young of the flock and the herd; Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall sorrow no more at all" (Jeremiah 31:8-12).

(3) The trumpets were blown to signal war.

The gospel is an invitation, as we discussed earlier, but it's also a

command. "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but **now commands all men everywhere to repent**, because He has appointed a day on which **He will judge the world in righteousness** by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

The day of judgment spoken of is pictured by the feast of Trumpets.

Besides being an invitation and a command, the preaching of the gospel is also a warning "Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.' So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and **warn them for Me**" (Ezekiel 33:1-7).

People can now hear or refuse to hear the message, but the day is coming when Christ will recompense his enemies, and he will be heard. "He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to

their deeds, accordingly He will repay, Fury to His adversaries, Recompense to His enemies; The coastlands He will fully repay. So shall they fear The name of the Lord from the west, And His glory from the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. 'The Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob' Says the Lord" (Isaiah 59:16-20).

Christ will put down his enemies so that his rule of righteousness and peace can be established.

The fifth seal mentioned in the Book of Revelation chapter six pictures the great tribulation, which in its final fulfillment will last a total of three and a half years, if you include in the calculation the final year, which technically, is the "day of the Lord." However it's calculated, the peoples of Israel and the Church of God will endure persecution and tribulation for three and a half years.

A prophecy God gave to Daniel tells of the the leader of the "beast" power at the time of the end. "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time" (Daniel 7:25).

A time, times and half a time is a period of three and a half years.

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed" (Revelation 6:9-11).

"Therefore when you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (whoever reads, let him understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened'" (Matthew 24:15-22).

This time is referred to as "Jacob's trouble," because the greatest tribulation of that period will be upon Israel, and the Church of God. "Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7).

The sixth seal consists of the heavenly signs which introduce the "day of the Lord."

"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the **great day of His wrath** has come, and who is able to stand?'" (Revelation 6:12-17).

"Immediately **after the tribulation** of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will **see the Son of Man coming** on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29-31). The darkening of the sun and moon will not be due to ordinary solar or lunar eclipses, as some imagine, but portend events far more catastrophic than any ordinary eclipse.

The seventh seal is the day of God's wrath. "Seven trumpets" constitute the seventh seal, which, as you can read in chapters 8 and 9 represent catastrophic events on the earth as God pours out judgment on mankind. The seventh trumpet signifies the return of Jesus Christ, the pouring out of the seven last plagues, in judgment on God's enemies, the resurrection of the just, and the commencement of Christ's reign on the earth.

Christ will execute judgment on those who destroy the earth. "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!' And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: 'We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth'" (Revelation 11:15-18).

"Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete" (Revelation 15:1).

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand: A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations" (Joel 2:1-2).

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls" (Joel 2:30-32).

"For behold, in those days and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And **I will enter into judgment with them** there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. They have cast lots for My people, Have given a boy as payment for a harlot, And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink. Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head; Because you have taken My silver and My gold, And have carried into your temples My prized possessions. Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem You have sold to the

Greeks, That you may remove them far from their borders" (Joel 3:1-6).

"Proclaim this among the nations: 'Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, Let all the men of war draw near, Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am strong."' Assemble and come, all you nations, And gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Lord. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow-- For their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. The Lord also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the Lord will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel. So you shall know that I am the Lord your God, Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, And no aliens shall ever pass through her again" (Joel 3:9-17).

The feast of trumpets has deep meaning -- reflected in part by the prophetic significance of the trumpets blown in ancient Israel under the Levitical priesthood. The trumpet blast that marks the return of Jesus Christ marks a turning point in history when God finally takes full control and begins to rule the nations of the earth. It signals an ushering in of a time when war is brought to an end, peace breaks out, healing begins, the nations will be unified and bound together in peace under Jesus Christ. It's this theme, these events prophesied beforehand that we need to meditate on, and come to clearly and deeply understand.

What Kind of King Would You Be?

by Rod Reynolds

The Fall Festival season pictures the Kingdom of God being established on earth. That means a new government will be established to rule all the nations of the earth! (Revelation 11:15; Daniel 7:14).

Why is a new government necessary? Because government in the hands of man has failed miserably. The record of history is one of war, oppression, poverty, disease, all too often famine, and every other evil imaginable, often caused by government, or at other times not prevented by man's governments. Historically, government has often been man's greatest enemy. Yet, effective and genuinely beneficent government is essential to the well being of man. A new and much better government is needed to replace current governments with their failures, inadequacies and evils.

A big part of the responsibility of government is to regulate relations between people. God's government, through his law, regulates our relationships with God and with one another. In

God's Kingdom, a big part of the job of those who administer the government will be to teach individuals and nations how to relate to one another and to God so as to produce peace and joy, happy and abundant lives on a universal scale. Scripture tells us that the resurrected saints will be given authority under Jesus Christ in his millennial Kingdom to help him rule over the nations of the earth (Daniel 7:27; Revelation 2:26-27; 5:9-10).

If you were made a "king" today, what kind of king would you be? What kind of rulers does the world need? If you were made "king" or "prince" or "princess" of your town or your county, province, etc., today, how would you be a different or a better ruler than its present rulers? Or would you be a better ruler than those presently in authority?

There are many attributes that a good ruler must have. But for now let's focus on one essential prerequisite to rulership in God's Kingdom in the World Tomorrow. It's a character trait

that every ruler in God's Kingdom must have. Yet it's a trait that almost no one associates with being a king. When people think of rule they may think of such things as great authority, power, control over others, splendor, wealth. But how many rulers or kings can you think of that you would describe as humble?

Some, perhaps, but such are all too rare. When there's talk of kings and queens of the past you hear names like William the Conqueror, Ivan the Terrible, Bloody Mary, Peter the Great. But how many kings were known as the humble, the meek, the contrite?

Humility A Requirement

Lack of godly humility is one of the main reasons the governments of this world have failed. It is a requirement for rulers of Tomorrow's World that forms a basis for all other essential characteristics.

Why? Because without humility you can't have wisdom, good judgment, or even love. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning

of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). Fearing God or having a proper reverence for him implies humbling yourself before him, and that is the beginning of true knowledge. Godly wisdom goes hand in hand with meekness or humility. "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13).

David wrote, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalms 25:9, KJV). "...love does not parade itself, is not puffed up," Paul reminds us (1 Corinthians 13:4). Wisdom, judgment, love – these basic attributes of godly character are predicated on humility.

Because of the failures of human government, including even at times government in the Church, many conclude that government is the problem, and the solution is to get rid of government. But the root of the problem is not so much government, as the attitudes and behavior of those entrusted with authority. Where humility is lacking, along with other essential attributes of godly character necessary for the proper exercise of authority, the results are inevitably less than ideal and not infrequently catastrophic.

Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mat-

thew 18:3-4). A child like humility is required of us if we are even to be in God's Kingdom. We can conclude then that those who lack humility certainly won't rule in Tomorrow's World.

God Exemplifies Humility

God requires humility on the part of those who rule under him because he himself is humble. In fact, of all beings who exist, God is the greatest in humility. For us to understand why, we need first to begin to comprehend how great, mighty and glorious God is. God created the vast universe, spreading it out as a tent to dwell in. To him the inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers, and all the nations put together are as nothing (Revelation 4:11; Isaiah 40:15-17, 22).

What is man then that God should consider us? For God to be mindful of us shows his great humility. God, "...humbles Himself to behold The things that are in the heavens and in the earth" (Psalm 113:6). He delivers the poor and needy (verse 7). God even takes notice of the plight of sparrows, and he takes care to know more about us than we know about ourselves (Matthew 10:29-31). God's humility is revealed in his deep concern for his creation.

God Hates Pride

God, who inhabits eternity, says that those who will dwell with him are the humble (Isaiah 57:15). God hates pride and arrogance (Proverbs 6:16-17;

8:13). The proud in heart are an abomination to him (Proverbs 16:5). God hates pride in a ruler because pride leads to oppression and engenders strife (Psalm 12:3-5; 73:6-8; 119:122; Proverbs 13:10; 28:25).

God is going to destroy the proud and all oppressors from the earth (Job 40:11-13; Psalm 10:16-18; 72:4; Isaiah 16:4-5). His government is to be a liberating, not an oppressive, government (Exodus 20:2; Leviticus 25:10; Isaiah 61:1). And it will be a government of peace (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Satan was originally known as Lucifer, meaning shining one, morning star, or light bringer. He was one of the covering Cherubim associated with God's throne (Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14). But he became lifted up with pride and rebelled against God, and was cast down to the earth (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:17; Luke 10:18). Yet God has allowed Satan to continue as god of this world, ruler of the present age on earth, and he has ruled it with violence and oppression (John 16:11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Isaiah 14:4-6; Ezekiel 28:16). The character of his rule is summed up in one of the names applied to him – namely Apollyon, or destroyer (Revelation 9:11). But he will ultimately be cast out as an abominable branch (Isaiah 14:19; Revelation 20:10).

Pride will ultimately destroy the person who allows himself to be filled with it (Proverbs 16:18-19; 18:12; 29:23). Pride is in-

ward and selfish, the opposite of love, which implies outgoing concern for others.

God wants those he chooses for leadership to be humble, as Moses was (Numbers 12:3). Meekness is not weakness. Exactly what is godly humility?

What Is Godly Humility?

When you study the subject in God's word you'll find it includes a deep reverence for God. A humble person has a deep respect for God and stands in awe of him, gratefully acknowledging his utter dependence on God as creator and sustainer of all that exists. Humility is the opposite of pride and vanity – of thinking of yourself more highly than you should. It means realizing that apart from God you are nothing but dust, your life like a vapor being dissipated in the wind (Psalm 39:5-6, 11).

Humility includes contriteness of heart and a willingness to submit yourself totally to God and obey his word (Isaiah 66:2). The saints in the World Tomorrow will rule under Jesus Christ's authority. To do so they must willingly be guided and directed by Jesus Christ and those he places in higher positions of authority, as long as they are also faithful to Christ. Humility means showing respect and concern for others including the weak, the poor, the helpless. It includes esteeming others better than one's self – in other words, having the attitude of a servant (Romans 12:3-16).

Jesus himself is "gentle [or humble] and lowly in heart," and admonishes us to learn from him (Matthew 11:28-30; cf. Matthew 21:5; Zechariah 9:9). Paul sought to imitate the "meekness and gentleness of Christ," and was not seeking glory, but was gentle and affectionate among those he served (2 Corinthians 10:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7). He instructed Timothy that ministers must be gentle, patient and meek even when dealing with difficult individuals (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

To God, a meek (humble) spirit is of great value (1 Peter 3:4). In the sermon on the mount Jesus discusses qualities of mind and character consistent with humility, and he mentions rewards and blessings God reserves for the humble, including the inheritance of God's kingdom. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:3-5).

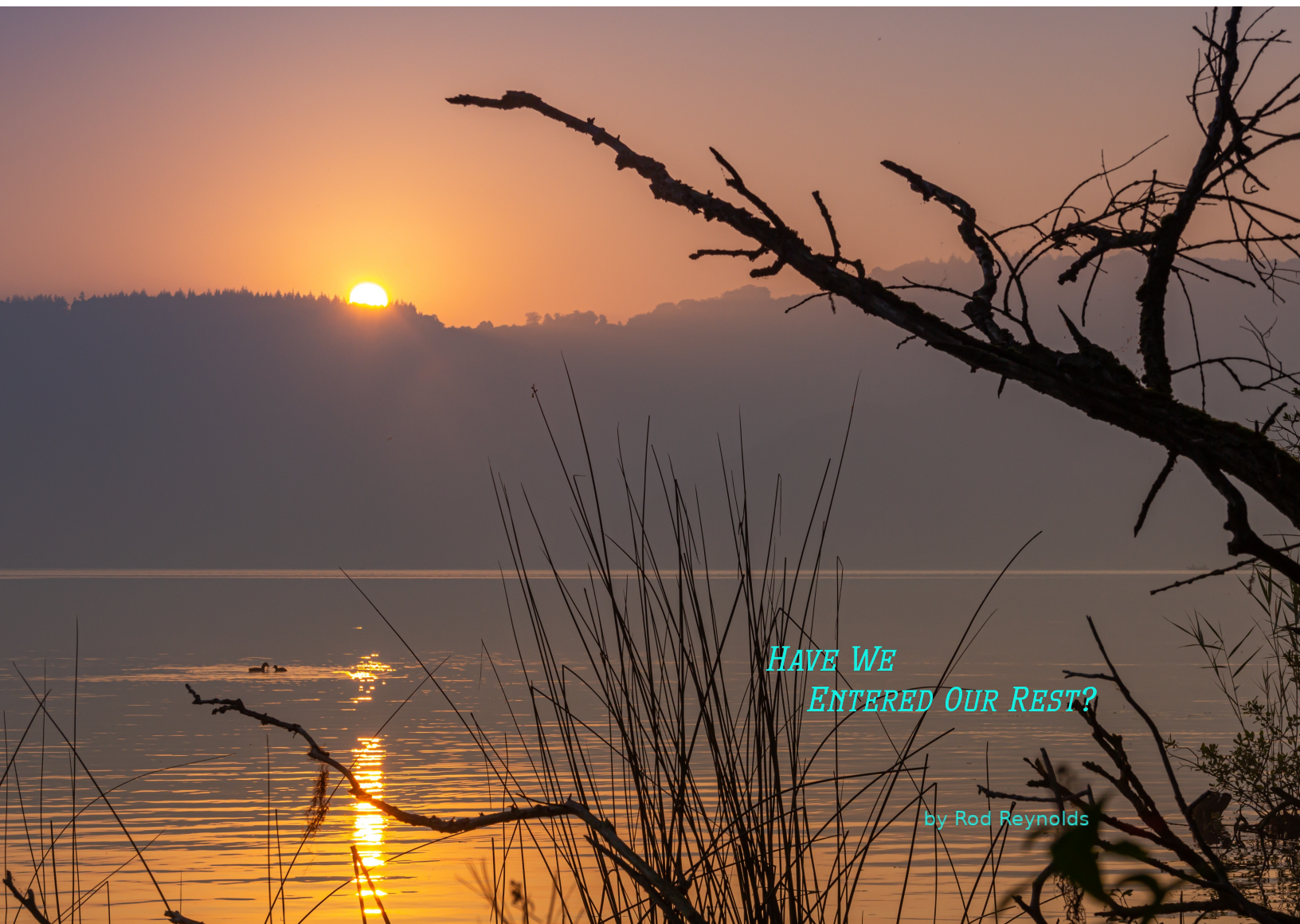
We need to have God's concept of rulership, characterized by humility, indelibly imprinted in our minds, instilled in our character. We need to seek to develop with God's help an ever deeper spirit of godly humility. We should be practicing humility daily. Only with humility will we be considered fit to rule with Christ.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:10)

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure. (Psalms 101:5)

I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. (Zephaniah 3:12)



HAVE WE ENTERED OUR REST?

by Rod Reynolds

The Bible speaks of a rest for the people of God. What is that rest? Have Christians already entered into the rest?

One of the reasons it's important that we understand the correct answers to these questions is a false teaching that we, if we profess faith in Christ, have **already entered** the rest of which the Bible speaks. It's alleged that "Christ is our rest." Then it's further reasoned that since we've already entered the rest, typified by the weekly Sabbath, that we no longer need to keep the Sabbath, because what it typifies has already been fulfilled. I want to show you that the premise of that teaching is false.

Nowhere does the Bible say Christ is our rest, or Jesus is our rest. The Bible does say, in the context of pa-

tiently waiting on God's deliverance from evil doers, "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass" (Psalm 37:7). The context shows clearly that those who wait patiently on God, in faithful obedience to him, will ultimately be rewarded, while the wicked are punished. It says, "The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever" (Psalm 37:29). Of the righteous it says, "The **law** of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31). The message is that we must continue in faith while awaiting our future reward: "Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it" (Psalm 37:34).

If Christ is our rest, it is in the sense that he will lead us into the rest that he has promised. Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-29). It's interesting that this statement of Jesus is found in the context of a controversy over how (not whether) the Sabbath is to be kept. The Pharisees found fault with Jesus' disciples for plucking a few heads of grain to satisfy their hunger as they walked through a field on the Sabbath. But as Alfred Edersheim, an authority on Jewish practices at the time of Christ, admits, "...it was clearly not a breach of the Biblical, but of the Rabbinic Law" (*The Life and Times of Jesus*

the Messiah, 2:56).

The Pharisees had added many contradictory and burdensome rules to God's commandment regarding the Sabbath. Jesus rebuked the scribes for imposing these burdensome requirements when he said, "they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move [or remove] them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4). According to Edersheim, these rules of men "could be laid on, or moved away, according to the varying judgment or severity of a Rabbinic College" (*ibid.*, 1.103).

Obedience to the holy law of God, however, as opposed to manmade tradition, is not grievously burdensome. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3, ASV). In walking faithfully in Christ's footsteps, obeying the law of God as he did, we can experience a certain tranquility and peace even in this age. "Great **peace** have those who love Your **law**, And nothing causes them to stumble" (Psalm 119:165). And "Blessed is the man whom You instruct, O LORD, And teach out of Your **law**, That you may give him **rest** from the days of adversity, Until the pit is dug for the wicked" (Psalm 94:12-13). But the Scriptures make clear that the ultimate "rest" of which Jesus and the prophets and apostles spoke must await the return of the Messiah and his reign of righteousness.

In the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were under God's direct rule he gave them work to do (Genesis 2:15). But their work was not a bondage of heavy toil, it was not a struggle for survival, they were not enduring affliction. Only after they sinned, things changed: "Then to Adam He said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil [KJV: "sorrow"; Hebrew: *וְעָבַד* (*'itstsâbôn*) , pain, labor, hardship, sorrow, toil] you shall eat of it all the

days of your life; Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; And you shall eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken: For dust you are, And to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

Life in this world under Satan's oppressive and harsh rule is typified by the bondage endured by the Israelites in Egypt. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor [margin: harshness], And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage -- in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor" (Exodus 1:13-14). But God called them out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness, a type of our calling and our struggle towards the "rest" which awaits us in God's Kingdom. Paul wrote of this in the book of Hebrews.

The Sabbath is throughout Scripture connected with the idea of a rest, a ceasing from one's own work or related ideas. In fact the Hebrew word for Sabbath comes from *shabath*, which means *to rest* in a wide variety of senses. Paul understood that the Sabbath and the other Holy Days are typical of God's plan of Salvation. As he wrote in Colossians 2:16-17 they are [*not were*] a shadow, or figure, of *things to come*. The Sabbath is a living type of entering the promised spiritual inheritance of God.

While Israel was trekking through the wilderness they had not, of course, entered the rest -- the promised inheritance. At best they could only look forward to the prospect of entering the land of promise. But after they entered and took possession of the promised land it is said in the book of Joshua that God had given them rest (Joshua 1:13-15; 21:43-45). They had entered into rest only upon having received the promised inheritance.

What occurred with the Israelites is only a physical type of a greater, more meaningful, spiritual promise pertaining to the Church, spiritual Israel. But

as most of the Israelites who came out of Egypt died in the wilderness, not having received the promised inheritance because of faithlessness and disobedience, Paul warns in the book of Hebrews, chapters three and four, that we too could fall short. Paul is discussing our subject throughout chapter 3 and at least most of chapter 4. To get the full understanding of what he is saying one needs to read both chapters.

Some key verses that help us understand when and under what conditions we enter the rest promised to us are as follows: Hebrews 3:6 -- we are ultimately and finally concluded members of God's family only if we hold fast *to the end*. Hebrews 3:14 -- "For we have become partakers of Christ **if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end....**" "Confidence" -- *hypostasis* -- means in this context our firm trust in whom and in what we have believed. We must hold firm in that trust *to the end* to have then become partakers of Christ fully.

Hebrews 4:3 -- "For we who have believed do enter that rest...." "Do enter" in the Greek [*eisérchomai*] is in the present tense; the meaning is we "are entering." It implies a *process*. Israel was in the process of entering the physical "rest" in the promised land as they journeyed through the wilderness. And we are involved in a process now to be concluded when our entrance into the promised rest of God's Kingdom has been fully accomplished. Hebrews 4:10 -- "Let us therefore be **diligent** [labor -- KJV] to enter that rest, **lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.**" We must **labor** (Greek: *spoudazo*, "to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence" -- *Thayer's*) to enter (compare Luke 13:24; Philippians 3:12; Hebrews 10:36). If we had already entered we would not be laboring, in the sense it's meant, we'd be resting. These verses, and Paul's analogy taken as a whole, shows clearly that we have not entered the rest, but that it **yet remains** for us to enter it.

The rest Paul speaks of, the promise to which we look forward, is God's Kingdom, both the literal rule of God's Kingdom on earth as prophesied and the spiritual inheritance we'll enjoy as members of the divine family. There are many Scriptures that show this but for illustration I want to quote one from the Old Testament and one more from the New Testament. "Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places..." (Isaiah 32:16-18). The millennial rest begins after Christ returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. After he has put down his enemies and established peace under his rule Israel and the world will have rest, as described in the Scripture quoted.

"...it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled **rest** with us **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven** with His mighty angels..." (2 Thessalonians 1:4-7). Our rest will begin **when** Jesus Christ returns, and, as other Scriptures show, we are born, as it were, into the Kingdom of God, sharing fully in the nature of the Father and Jesus Christ and partaking of their glory.

Every week as we keep the Sabbath we should be reminded of the promises God has made and be looking forward to them (See "Why Christians Should Keep the Sabbath"). And we should be reminded that the condition of our entering into God's rest is that we **remain steadfast** to the end. To those who think they've already entered the rest, and need not keep the Sabbath, the lesson is lost. Let's not let the lesson be lost to us.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. (Genesis 2:2)

For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, When your fathers tested Me; They tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, And said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' " (Psalms 95:7-11)

It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased! The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers; He who struck the people in

wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing. (Isaiah 14:3-7)

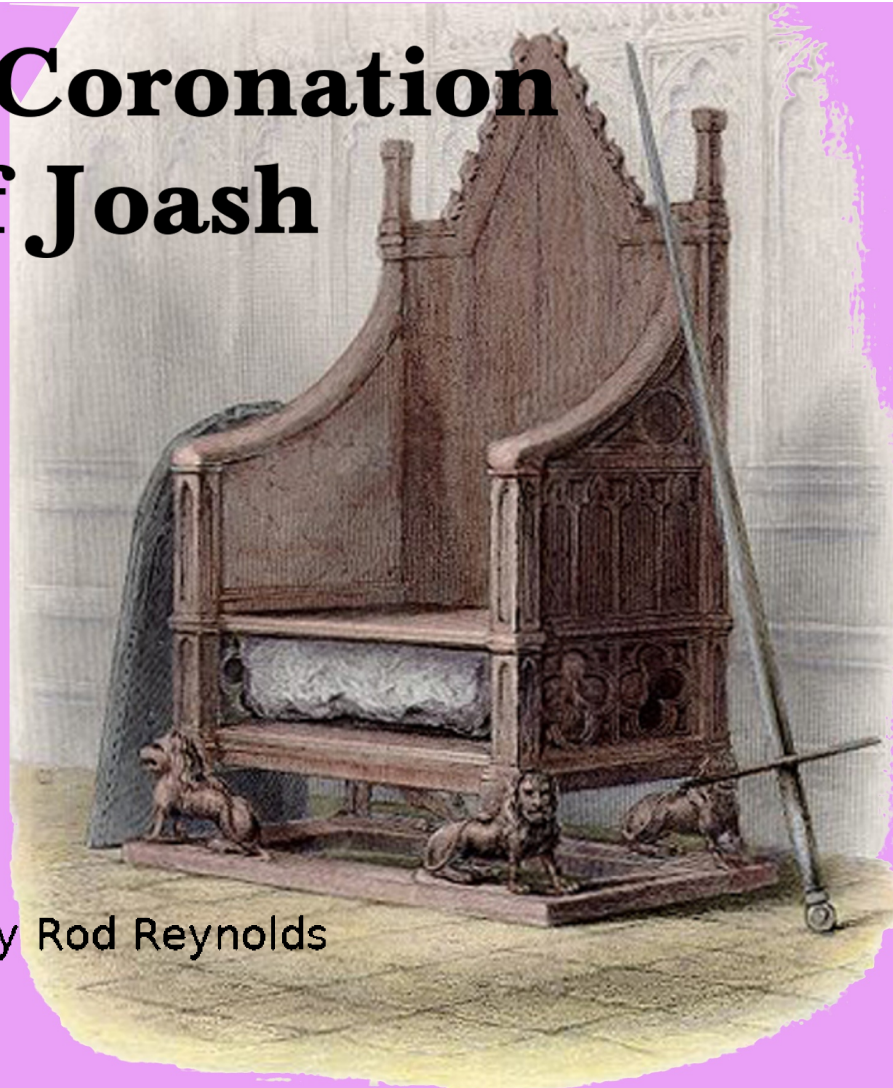
'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the Lord, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid.' (Jeremiah 30:10)

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. (Isaiah 32:16-18)

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:11)

The Coronation of Joash

by Rod Reynolds



When Jesus Christ returns to the earth that will in certain respects be perhaps the greatest single event in history, at least since the creation of man. It will be a pivotal point in man's history and in the working out of God's plan for mankind (Acts 3:19-21).

As we study various parts of the Bible dealing with this great event and the times immediately preceding it, we discover that it will occur to the accompaniment of a veritable chorus of sounding trumpets.

This great event which signals, among other things, the restoration of genuine peace, prosperity and joy to a suffering humanity, is prophesied and prefigured in the Bible in many different places. That this event is so prominent should not surprise us, be-

cause it is the very focal point of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which is in various ways the theme of the Bible from one end to the other.

Among a variety of historical events which prefigure events relating to the return of Jesus Christ and the restoration of God's government to the earth is a particular one I want to discuss in this article. Specifically I want to discuss the coronation of King Joash of Judah, and circumstances associated with it, and show you how Joash's coronation prefigures the coming of Jesus Christ.

A Living Picture of Future Events

A very minor and insignificant episode in world history -- that's what most historians would no doubt consider the events leading to the ascendancy

of Joash as king of Judah, if they believed it at all. Perhaps many of us have read over this episode without giving a second thought to its deeper meaning. Actually, the survival of Joash was crucial to the fulfillment of God's plan, and what finally emerged, etched in the pages of history and preserved in your Bible, is a living picture of some key highlights of God's plan in microcosm.

We'll see that the coronation of Joash as king of Judah was accompanied by the sound of trumpets, just as Jesus Christ's coming to take the reigns of government over the whole earth will be. But first, let's take a look at the preceding events.

Athaliah was the wife of Jehoram (or Joram), a king of Judah. She was also the daughter of Ahab, king of the

northern ten tribes, the kingdom of Israel. Athaliah's mother was Jezebel, Ahab's wife, and daughter of a Zidonian king. Ahab and Jezebel were the wicked pair who became the very symbols of evil in Israel (1 Kings 21:25-26). Among their sins were the murders of many of the prophets and worshipers of God in Israel (2 Kings 9:7).

Athaliah lived according to the wicked and treacherous example of her parents, and when her husband, Jehoram died, his youngest son, Ahaziah, became king of Judah. Athaliah was the mother of king Ahaziah, and was his counselor to do wickedly (2 Chronicles 22:2-3).

Jehu had been anointed by God's command to annihilate the men of the house of Ahab who were in Israel, as divine retribution for their crimes (2 Kings 9:6-8). In so doing he killed the sons of the king of Israel, and the other remaining members of the house of Ahab in Israel (2 Kings 10).

Jehu also killed Ahaziah, Athaliah's son, who was king of Judah. King Ahaziah of Judah had been in Israel visiting with King Joram of Israel, a son of Ahab, at the time when Jehu had come to Jezreel to kill him (2 Kings 9:27). Jehu also killed other male relatives of Ahaziah, King of Judah, when he discovered them in Israel on their way to visit the sons of the King of Israel (2 Kings 10:13-14). So Jehu fulfilled God's command to destroy the male descendants of Ahab in Israel (2 Kings 9:8; 10:11; 17, 30). Jehu was used as an instrument of God's vengeance, but his own bloodlust was later avenged as Jehu's dynasty came to an end (Hosea 1:4).

Athaliah Murders the Royal Seed

Athaliah, upon seeing that her son the king was dead, saw an opportunity to seize the throne of Judah for herself outright. Only standing in her way were the rightful heirs, the remaining royal seed of the house of Judah, including her own grandchildren. So she proceeded to murder all the remaining legitimate male heirs of the

throne of Judah (2 Kings 11:1).

However, Ahaziah, the late king of Judah, had a sister named Jehosheba, a daughter of king Jehoram. Jehosheba was most likely only a half-sister of Ahaziah, having a different mother. Jehosheba was married to the High Priest. Jehosheba hid one of the Ahaziah's sons, Joash, in the Temple, so he was not killed (2 Kings 11:2-3). Interestingly, Jehosheba's name means "Yahweh [has] sworn" (cf. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* dictionary). God had sworn to David that his seed would remain forever (Psalm 89:3-4).

Now do you see how important the survival of Joash was to God's plan? Had he been killed there apparently would have remained no legitimate male heirs to carry on the line of descent from king David to the Messiah. But God, of course, was able to accomplish his purpose, and leave vital lessons for us in the process.

Joash Hidden for Six Years

Note that Joash was hidden in the Temple for six years (2 Kings 11:3). Could this be typical of the 6000 year period in which time the rightful King of the Earth has been hidden in heaven, as it were?

We're told in Scripture, "that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). The weekly Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, is a type of God's Kingdom (Hebrews 4:1, 4, 9; cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:7; James 2:5). "Rest" in Hebrews 4:9 is from *sabbatismós*, "Sabbath rest" or "Sabbath keeping." The New English Translation renders the verse: "Consequently a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God." The reign of God's kingdom prior to the second resurrection is a period of a thousand years (Revelation 20:2-7).

Could Athaliah be typical of the evil world ruling idolatrous political and religious system which has reigned supreme while God has constrained himself for 6000 years? Athaliah's

name means "the Eternal [Yah(weh)] constrained" (cf. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* dictionary).

During Athaliah's illegitimate reign, she promoted Baal worship and other evils, as her parents had done in Israel (2 Kings 11:18; 2 Chronicles 22:2-4, 17). The wicked typically lose sight of the fact that God is watching, and he knows what they are up to, though he may allow them to prosper in their way for a time (Psalm 44:20-21; 73:3-12; 94:3-7; Isaiah 29:15). The righteous, too, in such circumstances, might wonder, does God not see, does he not know what has become of us? (Psalm 44:22-24). But God sees and he knows (Psalm 94:8-10). Unbeknown to most, Jehoiada and his wife had hidden the rightful heir of David's throne through this dark period. Jehoiada's name means "Yahweh (the Eternal) knows."

The Rightful King Restored

It was at the beginning of the seventh year of Athaliah's illegitimate reign that the true king of Judah was revealed. Jehoiada, the High Priest, first showed Joash to the leaders among the priests and Levites, and also civil and probably military leaders. After seeing Joash and having the situation explained, they agreed to help execute a plan to restore the throne to its rightful heir (2 Kings 11:4). Then the remaining Levites and tribal leaders of Judah were gathered and they also entered into the covenant to restore the kingdom to the legitimate heir, Joash, the son of the late king (2 Chronicles 23:2-3).

On the Sabbath the king was brought forth (2 Chronicles 23:4-11), symbolic again of the seventh thousand year period in God's plan. The king was crowned and was accompanied by his armed servants, just as the servants of Jesus Christ will go forth to make war accompanied by his servants at the initial stage of his return (Psalm 149:5-9).

Could Joash be a type of Jesus Christ at his coming to take his rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords? A

likely meaning of the name Joash is "the Eternal [is] a flaming fire," or "The Eternal glorified" (cf. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* dictionary; Brown, Driver, Briggs *Lexicon* at נשׂי, Strong's 784). Jesus Christ will return in his glory, his face shining as the sun, and as a consuming fire (Psalm 24:7-10; 50:2-3; Isaiah 30:27, 30; 66:15-16; Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8; Hebrews 12:28-29).

The trumpets sound at the coronation of Joash (2 Chronicles 23:12-13). For his servants the trumpets were a sound of rejoicing, but for Athaliah they signaled alarm and doom. Compare Psalm 7:11-16; Isaiah 14:5; Revelation 11:15, 17-18. Athaliah cried treason, but she had usurped power, and having it was in a continuous state of rebellion against God.

After the king was coronated the usurper was slain (2 Chronicles 23:14-15), just as Christ will toss the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire at the commencement of his rule (Revelation 19:19-21), and Satan himself will be bound and cast into prison where he can do no harm (Revelation 20:1-3).

A New Covenant

A covenant was concluded where the people promised to be the people of God (2 Chronicles 23:16), just as Christ will establish the New Covenant with Israel and Judah at the time of his coming (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

The false religion spawned by Satan was destroyed, along with its temple (2 Kings 11:18). God had commanded the people of Israel to destroy the places of pagan worship with the idols and not use them in his worship (Deuteronomy 12:2-4). Leading up to the time of Christ's return God is going to intervene to destroy idolatry out of Israel (Ezekiel 6:2-10). After a relatively short time all false religion will be abolished and all flesh will worship the true God (Isaiah 66:23-24).

After the usurper and her false system was destroyed the city was in peace and quiet, and the people re-

joiced (2 Kings 11:19-20). Peace is possible only in the absence of evil. That's why only Christ can restore true and permanent peace to this earth (Psalm 37:9-11).

Joash reigned 40 years (2 Kings 12:1). Forty is a number often used in connection with judgment. Christ and the saints will judge the earth for 1000 years following his return (Revelation 20:6). Following that will come the white throne judgment, as it's called. Then for eternity the family of God will dwell in peace and joy (Revelation 22:3-5; Psalm 16:11).

I believe the incidents we read about in the life of Joash were more than coincidental. They reveal the hidden hand of God working to accomplish his purpose in the world. The outline of God's plan being here revealed so subtly yet dramatically is another powerful proof of the unity and divine inspiration of God's word.

We can take great encouragement from the prophetic implications of these events. As surely as Joash emerged from his six years of hiding to take the throne of Judah, so Jesus Christ will emerge in due time with a deafening trumpet blast to take his rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His reign will bring an end to evil and oppression, and produce a new age of universal peace, prosperity, abundance, happiness and joy to all the earth!

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation of John 11:15)

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. (Revelation 19:11)

I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:1-2)

I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. (Isaiah 65:19)

Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together; For I will turn their mourning to joy, Will comfort them, And make them rejoice rather than sorrow. (Jeremiah 31:13)

The Economy of God's Kingdom

by Rod Reynolds

In the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, it's stated: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

"Unalienable rights" implies rights that cannot be surrendered. But the fact is God can grant these rights, and he can take them away.

Adam and Eve surrendered the right to life through their sin, as has their progeny (cf. Romans 5:12). Most of humankind have been enslaved to sin since the time of Adam and Eve, through the choices they made and that their progeny have continued to make (cf. John 8:34). God liberated Israel from slavery in Egypt. But God removed them from their homeland and they were enslaved for a time by the Assyrians as a result of their unremitting sins (cf. 2 Kings 17).

It's been suggested that it would be better to state that we have the right to pursue peace, God's way. The Hebrew word often translated peace is not limited to an absence of war, but encompasses the idea of general welfare. "The Hebrew word [often translated peace] is shalom..., meaning, primarily, 'soundness,' 'health,' but coming also to signify 'prosperity,' well-being in general, all good in relation to both man and God." (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*,

"Peace").

We are to pursue peace. "Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace [*shalom*] and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). Under the rule of Jesus Christ, all nations will have a single government. There will be no war to destroy economies and impoverish nations. And there will be a single economic system based on God's laws.

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Note that the meaning of *shalom* includes prosperity, financial security, as well as other aspects of security.

What is the key to financial security, the key to prosperity, the key to a life of abundance?

The Bible reveals the answers to these questions, which we will explore, from the perspective of the economy, or economic system, of the Kingdom of God, which will be established when the Messiah, Jesus Christ, returns to the earth and establishes his direct rulership over it (Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 11:15).

It's not wrong to pursue prosperity, which is included in how the Bible defines "peace," in many instances. But we are to pursue it in accordance with God's word.

Some have claimed that the Bible advocates socialism as the ideal economic system. But is that true?

Socialism is a rather nebulous word which means different things to different people:

Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary:

1. any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods
2. a system of society or group living in which there is no private property.

Oxford Dictionary:

1. a political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the community as

a whole should own and control the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

The Collaborative International Dictionary of English:

A theory or system of social reform which contemplates a complete reconstruction of society, with a more just and equitable distribution of property and labor. In popular usage, the term is often employed to indicate any lawless, revolutionary social scheme.

From the standpoint of the most commonly accepted definitions of socialism, i.e., collective or government ownership of the means of production, or the elimination of private property, the economy of the Kingdom of God is NOT a socialist economy.

Someone might object, how then do you explain Acts 4:32, where it says they "had all things in common"? Answer: This was a special circumstance wherein a large number of people who had come to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Pentecost and had been converted to Christianity stayed on in Jerusalem for a time, and other brethren who had the means took care of their accommodations by selling some of their goods. It was not a permanent commune they were setting up, however, as other Scriptures make plain, some of which we will read as we proceed.

Ananias and Sapphira, whom we read of in connection with this episode, were rebuked not because they did not give all the money they had received for the sale of their property, but because they lied about the matter. Peter said to them, "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:4).

The property was theirs. They could have kept all of it, sold it and given some of the proceeds of the sale, or

given all of it. But they should not have lied about what they had done.

The fact is the economy of the Kingdom of God has more in common with the traditional economy of the United States than with socialist schemes. In the United States, traditionally, the right of private property has been honored, with some qualifications. And private ownership of the means of production has for the most part been the norm in the United States.

But there are significant differences between any of the world's economies or economic theories, and the economic system of God's Kingdom. Although there may be some similarities, in other ways the economy of God's Kingdom is unlike any of the world's economic systems.

So let's discuss the underlying principles and practices that will characterize the economy of God's kingdom.

God Centered

At the heart of the Kingdom's economic system is God, his character and his laws. God is a giving God, and giving is at the foundation of the Kingdom's economic system. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

God's blessing is the key to abundance. Without God's blessing there is no assurance of prosperity.

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. **I will give peace [shalom] in the land**" (Leviticus 26:3-6).

So the nations obeying God will be

blessed with abundance.

God is the owner of everything. "Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it" (Deuteronomy 10:14).

However, God gives ownership of property to whomever he pleases. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men" (Psalms 115:16).

"When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:8).

"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since **He gives to all life, breath, and all things**. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and **has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings**, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring'" (Acts 17:24-28).

So God has given the earth to mankind, and distributes the land on the earth among the nations as he sees fit.

What God has given to them is their property to own and manage. When God gave the land of promise to Israel, the land was divided according to the number of families in a tribe, each tribe being allotted an inheritance corresponding to the number of families included in the tribe. "And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben an inheritance according to their families" (Joshua

13:15). And similarly it was done with all the tribes, except Levi, whose inheritance was a tithe or tenth of all that was produced among the tribes of Israel, along with designated cities in which they were to dwell.

An inheritance was given to each family within a tribe, and the land was to remain within a tribe. "And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the relative closest him in his family, and he shall possess it'" (Numbers 27:8-11).

If an unmarried daughter wound up owning an inheritance, she must marry only within her own tribe, so that the inheritance would remain within the tribe.

This was the case with the daughters of Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh. The law was established as follows: "...every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of the family of her father's tribe, so that the children of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. Thus no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance" (Numbers 36:8-9).

Private Property

Private property rights undergird the system. Each family given a land inheritance owned the property. The right of private property is implicit in the eighth and tenth commandments, which forbid theft and covetousness.

Kings and princes in God's kingdom are to have their own property, and will not be permitted to arbitrarily take what belongs to others.

That God protects private property

rights is exemplified in 1 Kings 21. Ahab the king sought the property of a citizen named Naboth, who not willing to sell his inheritance. So Ahab's wife, Jezebel, conceived a plot to falsely accuse Naboth, and have him executed, so Ahab could claim his property. This was done:

"So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to **take possession of the vineyard of Naboth** the Jezreelite. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who lives in Samaria. There he is, in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. You shall speak to him, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Have you murdered and also taken possession?"' And you shall speak to him, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours'"' (1 Kings 21:16).

In the book of Ezekiel is a description of the future Israel, Jerusalem and temple following the second coming of Jesus Christ. The prince is to be allotted land of his own in the vicinity of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 45:7). "The land shall be his possession in Israel; and My princes shall no more oppress My people, but they shall **give the rest of the land to the house of Israel, according to their tribes**. Thus says the Lord God: 'Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people,' says the Lord God" (Ezekiel 45:8).

"Moreover the prince shall not take any of the people's inheritance by evicting them from their property; he shall provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so that none of My people may be scattered from his property" (Ezekiel 46:18).

Gentiles living among the Israelites upon their return to Israel will be provided for, with property of their own. "Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the

tribes of Israel. It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall be that in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance,' says the Lord God" (Ezekiel 47:21-23).

This apparently is in reference to the peoples of non-Israelite descent who will have dwelt among the children of Israel prior to their prophesied end time captivity, endured the tribulation, and become converted and returned with the remnant of the Israelites to the promised land (cf. Ezekiel 6:1-10; 11:13-20; Isaiah 10:21-22). They shall be given an inheritance among the Israelite tribes as specified in the above quotation.

Personal Responsibility

Property owners and citizens in general will prosper in accordance with their individual initiative and diligence, or lack thereof – and in accordance with God's blessing on their efforts.

"He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a wise son; He who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame" (Proverbs 10:4-5).

"Because of laziness the building decays, And through idleness of hands the house leaks" (Ecclesiastes 10:18).

Able bodied people who are able to work and simply refuse to do so will be accountable, and will not be given handouts. "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. For even when we were with you, we commanded you

this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:7-12).

Everyone who works will enjoy the fruits of his labor. It won't be confiscated and given to someone else. "They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:21-22).

Liberty, within the confines of God's law, is a key to the system. Jesus, in the synagogue in Nazareth, read from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To **proclaim liberty** to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To **set at liberty** those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

In God's kingdom people may profit, hire others and profit off of their labor. However, pursuing righteousness must always take precedence over the pursuit of profits or riches. "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also

called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:6-12).

And, as Paul instructs Timothy, we ought to put our trust in God, not in riches, "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

Wage Earners

There's no indication that artificial constraints will be placed on anyone's earnings. There are a number of men of faith recorded in the Bible who became very wealthy, including Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David, Solomon, and others. But dishonest gain is prohibited. Wages for laborers must be fair and paid promptly.

"You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you" (Deuteronomy 24:14).

This is speaking of a day laborer, who is hired for a day or a few days as needed, and is poor. But the principle of just and prompt payment of wages due applies to all hired workers, whatever the pay period may be.

God condemns riches gained through defrauding laborers of just wages. "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields,

which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth [Lord of Hosts]" (James 5:1-4).

"And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness ... Against those who exploit wage earners...' Says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:5).

In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 servants who made a profit for the master were praised and rewarded, but the unprofitable servant was cast out. This parable shows, among other things, that it is permissible to hire servants with the expectation that they will be profitable for the business.

Sabbatical Year

God decreed that the land must rest one year out of seven. This has an economic impact in healthier crops, animals and people, and a healthier environment. Continuous cultivation will eventually ruin the land. The land Sabbath and proper land management with natural fertilizers along with God's blessing will make the land productive and permit the elimination of harmful chemical fertilizers and pesticides which poison the soil, and produce crops of inferior nutritional value.

Although the crops were not to be planted or harvested in the Sabbatical year, what grew of itself could be taken by anyone, the owner of the land, workers, the poor, foreigners living among them, etc., for food.

"And the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. What grows of its own

accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land. And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, for your livestock and the beasts that are in your land – all its produce shall be for food” (Leviticus 25:1-7).

If brethren were impoverished, it was expected that they would be loaned or given sufficient for their needs. "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs" (Deuteronomy 15:7-8).

The Israelites were required to be generous in charitable giving to the poor and needy in the land. "You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land" (Deuteronomy 15:11).

It is expected of borrowers that they repay what has been borrowed. "The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives" (Psalm 37:21).

It's likely there will be few who will be poor when the economy of the Kingdom is fully established, although there may be many poor at first.

Debts, as long as there are poor in the land, will be released, at the end of every seven years. "At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord's release. Of a foreigner you may require it; but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, except when there may be no poor among you; for the Lord will greatly bless you in the

land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance" (Deuteronomy 15:1-4).

"The law of the Sabbatical year acts also as a statute of limitation or a bankruptcy law for the poor debtor, in discharging his liability for debts contracted, and in enabling him to start life anew on an equal footing with his neighbor, without the fear that his future earnings will be seized by his former creditors" (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, "Sabbatical Year and Jubilee").

After a time there may be no more poor in Israel during the Millennium. But if there are any who have become indentured servants because of poverty, they are to be released during the Sabbatical year, in accordance with Deuteronomy 15. " If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today (Deuteronomy 15:12-15).

If a hired servant chooses to remain as a hired servant when he is eligible for release in the Sabbatical year, he is to be released and returned to his inheritance at the time of the Jubilee, discussed below.

Jubilee Year

The Jubilee year is described in Leviticus 25.

"And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. And then he shall depart from you – he and his children

with him – and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God" (Leviticus 25:39-43; cf. Deuteronomy 15:16-17, "forever," meaning until the Jubilee, in this case).

Most land inheritances may not be sold permanently, but the land would return to the family of the original owner at the beginning of the Jubilee year, occurring once every fifty years. Those Israelites who had been sold into bondage, and remained so as discussed earlier, are also to be released at the beginning of the Jubilee year.

When Jesus Christ is ruling as King over the earth, the government will be a theocracy. A tithe (tenth) of everything that is produced in the land, plus free-will offerings, will be paid in kind or in the form of money to honor God and support his government. The land will be blessed. There will be no need for harsh chemicals or pesticides to poison the land. "“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,’ Says the Lord of hosts; ‘And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,’ Says the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:10-12).

When God's Kingdom is established, the earth's topography and climate will be changed. "Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth" (Isaiah 40:4). There will be less desert land, if any, and more arable, agriculturally productive land. "For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places;

He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the Lord; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (Isaiah 51:3).

Lending, Debt

Interest on loans may be charged, except on the poor. There will be no predatory lending. In a parable of Jesus he spoke of servants being entrusted with money to manage as their lord left on a long journey. One hid his money and gained nothing during the master's absence. Speaking to the unprofitable servant, the lord said: "So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest" (Matthew 25:27). This implies a robust financial system involving capital, credit and risk taking.

The Bible does not place a strict prohibition on lending money for interest, but the poor were to be lent money or goods without interest to help them get on their feet.

"If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest" (Exodus 22:25).

"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit" (Leviticus 25:35-37).

The Bible does not encourage debt, as the borrower is servant to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). Debt is oppressive, or can be, if excessive. Since each family will have its own inheritance, there will be little need for personal debt or lending and the system will not be burdened with the kind of massive debt loads that can bankrupt entire nations.

Industry, Commerce

Truth will prevail in financial transactions. There will be just weights and measures. "You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume" (Leviticus 19:35).

"You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah [dry measure], and an honest bath [liquid measure]" (Ezekiel 45:10).

The Bible does not give us a lot of specific information about the nature of industry and commerce during the Millennial period, but we have clues in the prophecies concerning the tribes of Israel, and their fulfillment in the latter days prior to the end of this age (cf. *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, Herbert W. Armstrong, and *The 'Lost' Ten Tribes of Israel ... Found!*, Steven M. Collins). "And of Joseph he said: 'Blessed of the Lord is his land, With the precious things of heaven, with the dew, And the deep lying beneath, With the precious fruits of the sun, With the precious produce of the months, With the best things of the ancient mountains, With the precious things of the everlasting hills, With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come "on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers"' (Deuteronomy 33:13-16).

In this prophecy is implied not only favorable climate, and agricultural produce, but also mineral wealth, forests, and whatever additional wealth may be obtained from the earth's resources. Taking advantage of these resources will require industry and commerce. Likewise with promises involving other peoples descended from Israel. "For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas And of treasures hidden in the sand" (Deuteronomy 33:19). This implies wealth from commerce relating to the seas, and hidden mineral wealth, including petroleum. Also, "... let him dip his foot in oil. Your sandals shall be iron and bronze" (Deuteronomy 33:24-25).

Again this implies mineral wealth and the use of metals, which requires mining and manufacturing.

We also have the example of Solomon's kingdom, a type of the Millennial Kingdom. Solomon's building projects included the use of timber of various kinds, quarried stone, metals, precious stones, and organized labor. The kingdom also owned a fleet of ships for international commerce and trade (1 Kings 5-7; 9:10-28). With Jesus Christ guiding the world's commerce and industry, God's blessings on it, and universal, sustained peace, the possibilities of what may be achieved are beyond what we may presently imagine!

Bribery will be eliminated. "And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:8). Bribes, fraud, or corrupt dealing will not be permitted. In the current system in the United States, and no doubt other countries to a lesser or greater extent, bribery among politicians is commonplace. One way of circumventing laws against bribery in the United States is hiring family members of politicians on the boards of corporations or foundations. It's remarkable how people with little money enter public office and become very wealthy after a few years.

Needs of the Poor

The needs of widows, orphans, and others who cannot provide for themselves will be taken care of through charitable giving, and a tithe (tenth, in addition to other tithes) required two years out of seven exclusively for that purpose. "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do" (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

"When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow" (Deuteronomy 24:19-21).

The whole system will be based on sound laws, personal responsibility, righteous conduct, and giving, with God giving the most. But most everyone will be filled with that same spirit of moral uprightness and concern for others, that the entire society will prosper. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

Eventually, what is said of Jerusalem will extend to all the earth. "For thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river'" (Isaiah 66:12).



***The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.
It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
even with joy and singing.
(Isiah 35:1-2)***

The feasts of the Lord
These are My feasts
(Leviticus 23:2)

Weekly Sabbath points to creation, God's Kingdom Exodus 20, Hebrews 4
(Seventh day of the week)

Passover points to liberation, Messiah's crucifixion Exodus 12, 1 Corinthians 5
14th Nisan (March, April)

Unleavened Bread points to fleeing and forsaking sin Exodus 12, 1 Corinthians 5
15th - 21st Nisan (March, April)

Pentecost points to covenants, law, Holy Spirit Exodus 19-20, Acts 2

Fiftieth day after designated time for offering of wave sheaf, were it to be offered (May, June)

Trumpets points to Messiah's coming, resurrection Matthew 24, 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 11
Tishri 1 (September, October)

Atonement points to reconciliation, putting Satan away Leviticus 16, Colossians 1, 1 Thessalonians 4,
Revelation 20

Tishri 10 (September, October)

Tabernacles points to wilderness journey, God's Kingdom on earth Leviticus 23, Numbers 9, Numbers
29, Zechariah 14, John 14, Revelation 21

Tishri 15-21 (September, October)

Last Great Day points to second resurrection, white throne judgment Ezekiel 37, Revelation 20
Tishri 22 (September, October)

In this Issue

The Feast of Trumpets, Beginning a New Age – God commanded seven feasts to be kept annually. They are intended to teach lessons about his purpose and how it is to be fulfilled. The Feast of Trumpets has important lessons bearing on your future and the world's!

What Kind of King Would You Be? – The Bible prophesies that Jesus Christ will rule the world, assisted by the saints. How would you rule if you were a king?

Have We Entered Our Rest? – The Bible speaks of a “rest” for the people of God. What is that rest? Have Christians already entered into their rest?

The Coronation of Joash – How does the coronation of Joash, a king of Judah, relate to the future promised Messiah, destined to rule all nations?

The Economy of God's Kingdom – What kind of economic policies and principles will be implemented in God's Kingdom? And what will be the result?

Sermons and articles are available on these and many other subjects at **www.cogmessenger.org**!