

Don't Let Your Bible Bleed!



If you are a Bible student, you mark your Bible. Students habitually mark their favorite books. However, many pens bleed through thin paper contained in most Bibles. For years, I have recommended BIC Accountant's Fine Point ink pens for Bible marking. An alternative is the Micron Pigma Fadeproof Bible Pen, which comes in black, red, blue, and green. These are ideal for writing in the margin of your Bible. The ink is permanent and pens will not clog or dry out like most mechanical pens. Even through the thinnest paper, pigma ink will not easily feather or bleed. It is water-based and quick drying, fade resistant, waterproof, and chemical resistant. The black Micron pen is .20mm, and the other colors are .25mm. Giving & Sharing will order you a set of four pens (black, red, blue, and green), for \$15 postpaid to North America, \$20 International.

Children of Carthage

In ancient Carthage, children were treated very badly. In 300 B.C., Carthage was the center of a rich trading empire, Rome's rival. Its citizens were wealthy, cultured, and educated, yet remarkably callous about taking human life. Unwanted orphans and widows were killed "to reduce the amount of poverty and suffering in the city" (*When Nations Die*, Jim Nelson Black, p. 164). Carthaginians burned thousands of their own children to appease their patron goddess, Tanet.

Frequent public sacrifices "took place in front of a bronze statue of the god, with arms outstretched over a blazing fire; the child slid down over the arms and fell" into the flames (*Phoenicians and the West*, Aubet, p. 211). The necropolis at Carthage contains more than 20,000 urns with charred remains of infants and children.

Jim Nelson Black says, "Isn't the rite of abortion our culture's sacrifice to the gods of materialism and greed? The Phoenicians killed many thousands of children . . . But in the entire history of Carthage or of Rome, they never killed 30 million in the name of 'a woman's right to control her own body,'" (Black, p. 166). Carthage continued its barbaric practice of murdering children until the day it was destroyed by Rome in 146 B.C. Will our society today, which permits far greater evil, follow suit?

— by Douglas S. Winnail, condensed from the March-April 2005 *Tomorrow's World*, by Living Church of God, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010.

Evolution: Fact . . . or Fallacy?

What is the theory of evolution? What do scientists and experts say about the "big-bang" theory? How did our universe get here? Where did we come from? Does it matter? Lloyd W. Cary's article, "**Evolution: Fact . . . or Fallacy?**" quotes many scientists who support Special Creation. The fossil record, our only documentation of whether evolution actually occurred, lacks any transitional forms, and all types appear *fully-formed* when first present. Recent DNA research has confirmed that the chances that useful DNA molecules could develop without a Designer are apparently zero.

The Bible affirms that God is the Creator, and He did not use macro evolution to produce today's myriad of life. Cary's quotes from scientists, plus his comprehensive list of Scriptures showing God is the Creator make this article an essential part of your library. "Evolution: Fact . . . or Fallacy?" 20 pages, is available for a donation of \$2 postpaid from Giving & Sharing. Or, see our website at www.giveshare.org/evolution.

Keeping Your Mind Alert

It is easy to let your mind vegetate: just watch lots of dumb television shows, don't read books, listen to dull sermons, and you will become a cabbage head. Some believe that exposure to lots of aluminum contributes to the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease.

But if you want to keep your mind alert, word puzzles, the television game show "Jeopardy," and the card game "Quiddler" may help you exercise your cranial muscles. You have never heard of "Quiddler"? Let me introduce you to our favorite moderate mental exercise game.

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Our present era has so evolved that there is possibly no position held by a man, that a woman could not now occupy. This is a reality even within Christianity. The Church of God, however, does not conform to this ideology. We teach that the role of a pastor is exclusively a male position. Understandably, one would ask, why? If men and women are equal, and the Bible does teach that, why are our women not allowed to be pastors? This presentation will answer such a question. It will demonstrate men and women's equality, but show that the woman is functionally subordinate to the man and that such a position was a creation ordination. It will also demonstrate that God's people in the Old and New Testament conformed to this principle, and that such a principle transcends time and culture, and is therefore still relevant in Church organization.

I shall begin my case for the Church of God in the book of Genesis. However, before I do so, let me say from the outset that the premise of pro-women ordainers is that the principle of male headship invalidates men and women's equality, and is illustrative of male superiority and female inferiority. Like the Bereans, I have examined the scriptures to determine whether these things are so, and brethren, it is not so.

Genesis 1:26, 27 are two important verses. They affirm that the man and the woman were created in God's image and likeness, thus denoting their equality in nature. They also affirm that both were to have authority over the earth; but what the verses make significantly clear is the sexual differentiation between the two.

Genesis 2 is a greater indicator of the male headship and female submissive roles. Bacchiochi in his article, "Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry," states that there are four elements in the narrative of **Genesis 2** that suggest the headship role of the man and the helper role of the woman. The first element is the priority of the man's creation within the God kind. In scripture, this priority of being firstborn was understood as typifying the leadership role the man was to assume. Paul in **Colossians 1:15-18** used this firstborn typology to refer to the headship and authority of Christ. The same Paul, who in **I Timothy 2**, stated his reason for not allowing a woman to teach nor usurp authority over the man, referred to the fact that Adam was formed first. The use of this firstborn typology to express the headship and authority of Christ suggests that Paul attached the same meaning to Adam being formed first.

The second element Bacchiochi considers is the manner of the woman's creation out of the man. Paul, in **I Corinthians 11:8**, gives credence to this view. He called on women to respect the headship role of the man because the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. His third element is the creation of the woman to be the man's helper. Paul's writings again support Bacchiochi's view. In **I Corinthians 11:9**, Paul writes that women should respect the headship of the man because the woman was created for the man and not the other way around. Bacchiochi's final element is the naming of the woman by the man before, and after the fall. In the Bible, name giving is a sign of authority. God signified his authority over Abraham and Jacob by giving them new names. God gave Adam the responsibility to name all the animals, and in a move that illustrated his authority over the woman, Adam named her both before, and after the fall.

I now proceed to examine some circumstances concerning the fall, because pro-women ordainers claim that male headship and female subordination came into existence as a result of the fall, and was against God's ideal model of equal partnership. Their supporting text is **Genesis 3:16** ". . . your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you." However, a serious analysis of the punitive measures pronounced on the man and the woman brings out an interesting point. Bacchiochi, quoting George W. Knight, points out that **Genesis 3** presumes the reality of childbearing in which the woman will now experience the effects of the fall and sin. It presumes the reality of work in which the man will now experience the effects of the fall and sin. And it presumes the reality of

male headship and female submission, which will now experience the effects of the fall and sin. So just as childbearing and work, were established before the fall and were corrupted by it, so this relationship existed before the fall and was corrupted by it. The corruption being that the man would take advantage of his God-given authority over the woman by being oppressive, hence the words “he shall rule over you.”

Leaving the creation story behind, I go a little farther into the Old Testament. Pro-women ordainers claim that there were women in the Old Testament in headship positions. They cite as examples three prophetesses, Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah. But the prophet or prophetess does not have a headship role. Their role was to communicate messages from God to leaders who were in headship positions. They did not even have the power to ensure that God’s instructions were carried out. The priest, on the other hand, was the spiritual leader of Israel. The priest was appointed to act as the representative of the people to God and the representative of God to the people. It is noteworthy that there are over 700 references to priests in the Old Testament and not one reference to a priestess. Pro-women ordainers say that there were no women priestesses in the Old Testament because there were periods when a woman was ceremonially unclean. But I refer you to **Leviticus 15**, where it states that a man is unclean whenever he has a running issue out of his flesh. So, if ceremonial uncleanness disqualifies women from the priesthood, then it should also disqualify men.

I now go into the New Testament to determine if the arguments of pro-women ordainers have a chance of surviving. Well, they say that Jesus has now come so a new priesthood has been unfolded in the New Testament, that is, the priesthood of all believers, **I Peter 2:5, 9-12**. They say this idea no longer poses roadblocks to women serving in any ministry. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, in his article, “Are Those Things So?” points out that the priesthood of all believers was not about particular Church functions of men and women. Christians are a part of the priesthood because every believer has direct access to God through Christ, without any need for further intermediaries. Furthermore, the principle of the priesthood of all believers was not unique to the New Testament, but

was based on an Old Testament concept, **Exodus 19:5-6**.

Another popular scripture used by pro-women ordainers is **Galatians 3:28**, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, free or bond, male or female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Similarly, this passage was not about Church organization, but about salvation in Christ. Essentially, the text is saying, irrespective of the status or gender of the Christian, he or she is of Abraham’s seed and they are therefore heirs according to the promise.

Now, it is critical that we examine Jesus’ ministry and how women participated in it. It may be true that in Jesus’ time, women were under-appreciated and underutilized. Even so, there is substantial evidence in scripture of Jesus’ favorable disposition towards them, which went beyond the socially acceptable standards of that time. Jesus also had a great number of women followers, yet He never chose a woman to be one of His twelve Apostles. Pro-women ordainers say this was done because Jesus did not want such a radical move to impede the progress of His ministry. This reasoning however sounds inane in light of the fact that Jesus fearlessly broke with many rabbinical traditions. Plus, had this been His reason, Jesus would have been guilty of insensitivity or false accommodation to the injustice suffered by women in his day. Pro-women ordainers also say if we follow Jesus’ example of not ordaining women, then by the same logic, Gentiles should be excluded from Apostleship because Jesus ordained no Gentiles. But the reason for no Gentile Apostles was that the Church was all Jewish at its beginning, **John 4:22**, “salvation is of the Jews.” There were no Gentile leaders in the church in Christ’s day, but there were qualified, spiritual Jewish women and none was chosen to be among His Apostles. I put forward therefore that Jesus ordained no female Apostle because He understood the importance of God’s order and calling and acted in obedience to it.

I will now examine Paul’s statements regarding male and female roles in the Church. In **I Corinthians 11**, Paul discusses head coverings as a symbol of role distinction men and women were to preserve in the Church. **Verse 3** states “that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” The Greek word for head is *kephale*, which can be used literally or figuratively. In this passage,

head is used figuratively. I contend that the figurative meaning of head in this passage is *authority* or *ruler*. Gilbert Bilezekian, in his book, *Beyond Sex Roles*, has an opposing view. He writes that the best expression of head is *derivation* or *lifesource*. But, if we use Mr. Bilezekian's interpretation of head, we would violate a very fundamental principle in scripture. We would be saying that Christ is a derivative God-being when the Bible states that He is very God, and self-existent as the Father is. Undoubtedly then the only possible meaning of head here is *authority* or *ruler*. **Ephesians 5:22-32** essentially uses head in a similar way to describe the relationship among Christ, husbands, and wives. The analysis therefore confirms the man's authority over the woman.

But pro-women ordainers on the rebound would say that in these scriptures, the Greek words for man (*aner*) and woman (*gune*), when used together, specifically refer to wives and husbands, and not men and women in general. They say this means that the authority of the man over the woman is limited to the husband-and-wife relationship. There are two reasons why we cannot accept this. Firstly, **Ephesians 5** refers to wives' submission to their husbands, but Paul states in **verse 32** that he speaks concerning the Church. Secondly, in scripture, the Church is seen as an extended spiritual family patterned after the natural family (**I Timothy 3:15; Galatians 4:5-6; Romans 12:1**). Therefore, any reference to the wife and husband relationship can be applied to relationships or roles between men and women within the Church.

In a bid to maintain their views, pro-women ordainers claim that **I Corinthians 14:34-35** and **I Timothy 2:9-15** are texts that make harsh, belittling statements about women. They claim the views expressed by these texts do not fit into their respective chapters and were inserted by uninspired, Judaizing men. They also referred specifically to **I Corinthians 14:34** where it says women are to be silent in the Church, stating that it contradicts **I Corinthians 11** which reports that women could prophesy. I will show that these things are not so and that both texts support the principle of male headship. I begin with **I Corinthians 14**. In this chapter, Paul discusses speaking in the assembly. The Greek word for "speak" is *laleo*, which means "to utter sounds with the voice or talk." The narrative of **Chapter 14** shows that the

manner in which speaking was done in the assembly was confusing. The issue Paul was discussing was confusion, versus order (**verse 33**, "for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace"). Now, **verse 34** states that women are to be silent in the Churches. It is not permissible for them to speak. The Greek word for silence is *sigao*, which means "to keep silent by holding one's peace, inferentially, out of respect." Note that the other Greek word for silent, *siopao*, meaning "absolutely mute," was not used in this verse. Jack Lane, in his article, "The Role of Women in the Church," paraphrases **verses 34 and 35** in this way, "Let your wives be at peace and in control of themselves in the assembly, for it is not permitted for them to be continuously speaking out and causing a disturbance. They are to be subordinate to their husbands as we are instructed in the scriptures. If they want to learn more about what is being discussed, they should ask their husbands later, for it is totally inappropriate for wives to speak out and disturb the edification process in the assembly." What is evident from these verses is that women were speaking out in a manner that undermined their husband's headship and disturbed the learning process, thus the need for Paul's statements. Significantly, Paul appealed to the law as support for the views he expressed. This is an indication that the principle of headship was not cultural but universal.

I will now look at **I Timothy 2**. The background of the chapter is the beginning of the Jewish wars with Rome in A.D. 66. Paul wrote to Timothy reminding him that all Christians should pray to the end that the Gospel be preached in a peaceful setting. Timothy was to teach men to pray everywhere without wrath or doubting. Women were to pray also, but in a different manner. They were to do so in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. Paul's discourse in this chapter was the preaching of the Gospel. In **verse 11**, Paul instructed that women should learn in silence with all subjection. The Greek word for silence is *hesuchia*, meaning tranquility of spirit. The Greek word for subjection is *hupotage*, meaning to place in proper order, that is, the natural order God established between husband and wife. So it is within this context that women were to learn the Gospel.

Verse 12 states that women were not to teach nor usurp authority over the man. In **verse 13**, the Greek word *gar*, meaning

“because,” indicates that Paul is giving a reason for this, and that reason was a reference to the man’s priority in creation. Now the phrase in **verse 15**, “Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing,” does not mean that women’s sole purpose in life is to have children. The words, “in childbearing” are a mistranslation of the Greek here, which are best translated “through the childbearing.” **Genesis 3:16** corroborates the point. The two texts therefore fit perfectly into their contexts. Paul was not trying to belittle or trash women, but instruct them on appropriate behavior according to the order that was ordained by God.

Pro-women ordainers would also like us to believe that there were women in the New Testament in headship positions. For the sake of brevity, I will look at only one of these women, Junia. **Romans 16:7** says “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me.” Samuel Koranteng-Pipim notes that the ending of Junia in the Greek is of a form for both men and women’s names. There is uncertainty therefore as to whether Junia was a female. But let us assume Junia was a female. The phrase “among the Apostles” is interpreted by the NIV in the sense that Andronicus and Junia were numbered among the Apostles, while the KJV interprets it, as their reputations were well known among the Apostles. Since either interpretation is possible in the Greek, further analysis needs to be done. The Greek word for “among” is *en*. The same Greek word is used in **II Peter 2:6-8**. The text is about Lot dwelling among the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah. “For that righteous man dwelling among them” Note that Lot dwelt among the wicked, but was not himself wicked.

Similarly, Junia was well-known among the Apostles but was not an Apostle. We can therefore conclude that Junia was not in a

position of headship.

It is conclusive therefore that male headship and female subordination were ordained at creation and were upheld throughout the Bible. Both the Old and New Testaments illustrate that women had held positions of authority, but they were never appointed or ordained to serve in a capacity where they would exercise leadership over God’s people. The view that equality embodies functional subordination is not a ludicrous one. The very concept is actualized in the God family. Jesus stated in **John 10:30** that He and the Father are one, denoting their equality, yet the scriptures show that Jesus is functionally subordinate to the Father. **John 6:38** says, “For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.” The fact that Jesus was sent by the Father to carry out His will is an indicator of the Father’s authority over Him. **I Corinthians 15:28** says “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him [Christ], then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him” Likewise, men and women are equal, but women are functionally subordinate to men.

The Church of God has always maintained that pastorship is a God-given right belonging to men. We abide by this rule because we see no evidence in the scriptures of women being ordained in roles of leadership. In addition, the crucial symbolism of the man and woman is not lost on us. Christ, the Head of the Church, is the bridegroom. The Church, symbolized by the woman, is the bride, whom Christ will marry upon His return to the earth. The leaders of the Churches therefore, who present Christ’s teachings to the Church cannot be accurately represented by women. In closing, let me say that we should never interpret the Bible to fit our own desires and agendas, but rather let our attitudes and actions fit the revelation of the word of God.

— by Sandra-Mae Robinson Ω

Additional Reading

Women in the Church, A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church, by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, 320 pp., \$15 plus postage, from **Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849**.

“There is none righteous, no, not one . . . all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” **Romans 3:10, 23**. “. . . every man at his best state is altogether vanity,” **Psalms 39:5**. Red, yellow, black, or white, no matter what your skin color, you are a mortal human being who has sinned and is in need of redemption. Nevertheless, the Almighty, who has a plan for each one of us, deals with two unique groups of humanity, which have distinctively different characteristics. These two groups of mankind are symbolically referred to as the natural olive tree, and the wild olive tree. Let us see what the Bible says about olive trees.

Olives are not an insignificant Bible topic. In Bible times, the olive tree and its oil was held in great esteem. Today, health experts have regained the knowledge of the benefits of olive oil. Please see our article, “Holy Anointing Olive Oil,” study no. 180.

In **Romans 11**, the Apostle Paul discusses the differences between the wild olive tree (Gentiles) and the good (natural) olive tree (Israel). We see many other scriptures which illustrate the difference between these two classes of people. As Messianic believers, understanding this difference is vital as we take the Gospel of the Kingdom to the entire world.

The Natural Olive Tree

The olive branch is symbolic of *peace and safety*. When the dove that Noah sent out came back with an olive leaf in her mouth, Noah knew that the waters were abated off the earth, **Genesis 8:11**. To offer someone an olive branch is a way of saying you are making peace.

Also, the dove with the olive leaf gave witness to the abating of the waters. The two witnesses, represented by olive trees, **Zechariah 4:3, 11, 14**, are prophesied to “stand by the Lord of the whole earth,” as a witness to the entire earth.

Regarding the seventh year land rest, we are instructed in the seventh-year to let the poor eat the olives, **Exodus 23:11**. Good olive trees provide nourishment for the poor. Here, the olive tree is pictured as a means for *helping the poor*. That is a characteristic of a



good, natural, olive tree. **Deuteronomy 24:20** adds that one is not to harvest every olive, but leave some for the poor. The reason for this statute is that we are to remember that we were bondmen in Egypt, and now we are free, **verse 22**. Following God and being a natural olive tree stands in stark *opposition to slavery and oppression* (wild olive

tree).

Pure olive oil was used for light in the continually burning lamp in the tabernacle of the congregation, **Exodus 27:20-21; Leviticus 24:2**. Natural olive trees produce pure oil which provides light. And *light*, as we know, is symbolic of *spirit of truth*, **Psalms 43:3, 119:105; John 1:9; I John 5:6**. The five foolish virgins did not have enough oil in their lamps, **Matthew 25:8**. God’s Word is like a fire, **Jeremiah 23:19**, and must be continually kindled (stirred up, refreshed) or the fire will go out. Where on this earth would you go to obtain the light of God’s Truth? Why, to the natural olive tree, not to a wild olive tree.

Olive trees are symbolic of *physical wealth*. In **Deuteronomy 6:10-12**, olive trees growing in the Promised Land would be filling food for the Israelites. Natural olive trees provide food, and are a source of wealth. Besides being a land of milk and honey, the Promised Land was “a land of oil olive [margin: of olive tree of oil],” **Deuteronomy 8:7-8**. See also **Joshua 24:13** and **Nehemiah 9:25**. Kings manage olive trees, **I Samuel 8:1; I Chronicles 27:28**.

God used Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites. When the men of Israel tried

to make Gideon king, he refused, saying, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you," **Judges 8:22-23**. Gideon (also known as Jerubbaal) had 70 sons, including Abimelech. Abimelech wanted to be a king over Israel. He schemed and slew all his brothers except Jotham, and made himself a king. Jotham prophesied from Mount Gerizim, giving a parable about trees, comparing Gideon to an olive tree (and perhaps also a fig tree, **verses 8, 10**) and Abimelech to a bramble (thistle), **Judges 9**. Thus, an olive tree is symbolic of *godly rule*, as opposed to selfish despotic tyranny.

Olive branches were used in building booths for the Feast of Tabernacles, **Nehemiah 8:14-15**. Now, olive branches are not very leafy, and putting olive branches on the roof of one's booth will not totally protect one against the sun or the rain. Why do you suppose the Almighty enjoined olive branches as booth-building material? Because the booth is designed to teach us the brevity and frailty of our temporary physical life, and our need to totally depend upon the Almighty. The natural olive tree teaches us to *depend on the Almighty*, trusting Him to provide for our safety and protection. David wrote, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever," **Psalms 52:8**.

In this discussion about olive trees, perhaps you are thinking, "I don't like this analogy of righteous people to natural olive trees, and unrighteous people to wild olive trees." Well, God likes this analogy, and He uses it frequently in the Bible. David wrote that the man who delights in God's Law "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper," **Psalms 1:3**. See also **Jeremiah 17:7-8**. The righteous, those whom God plants, shall flourish like the palm tree, **Isaiah 65:22**; **Psalms 92:12-15**. We are to be like such a tree!

Notice that the righteous is like a *planted* tree, not a wild tree. God plants us, and takes care of us, pruning and caring for our spiritual growth. "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up," **Matthew 15:13**. The wild trees, not planted by God, will be rooted up. The trees planted by God shall be tended and cared for by our Heavenly Father.

When you go to any public place today,

you are likely to encounter unruly children, virtual wild hellions whose parents do not restrain them. Our permissive society frowns on corporal punishment, thinking it might damage their self-esteem. When I was in the seventh grade, I had my first male teacher. He was late getting back to the room one day after recess. I was raising cane and he caught me red-handed. He grabbed his paddle and had me go to the front of the class, bend over, and grab my ankles. My teacher reared back and gave me the first spat. Pow! The noise was deafening. It sounded much worse than it hurt. My face immediately became beet red. He gave me one more for good measure. I quietly returned to my seat. How embarrassing to be punished in front of the entire class. But I deserved it. For a long time after that episode, I was a good boy!

In **Psalms 128:3**, the blessings of every one that fears the Lord are said to be a wife like a fruitful vine, and children like olive plants round about thy table. Olive plants are symbolic of being *obedient to God, respectful to one's parents*. What's around your table: olive plants, or hellions?

Charles H. Spurgeon, in his classic book, *The Treasury of David*, comments on this verse: "Hundreds of times I have seen young olive plants springing up around the parent stem, and it always makes me think of this verse. The psalmist never intended to suggest olive plants around a table but young people springing up around their parents, just as olive plants surround a fine, well rooted tree. The figure is striking It is beautiful to see the gnarled olive tree bearing abundant fruit and surrounded with a little band of sturdy successors. Should the central olive tree be blown down or removed, any successors could take its place," page 1328.

Olive wood figured prominently in Solomon's Temple. Two cherubims, each ten cubits high, were made of olive tree wood, **I Kings 6:23** in the inner house, the holy of holies where the ark was, **verse 19**. The entrance to this inner room had doors made from an olive tree, as well as the door posts, **verses 31-33**. This olive wood signified the *entrance into God's presence*. Considering all the significance of Biblical references to the olive tree, we see that no other wood could be the gateway to entering God's presence than olive wood.

In **Zechariah 4**, we see a prophetic vision of a golden candlestick, and two olive trees by it. Zechariah couldn't figure out what this

meant, so the angel explained, “These are the two anointed ones [margin: sons of oil] that stand by the Lord of the whole earth,” **verse 14**. The two olive trees empty out of themselves into seven pipes into the golden candlestick. The symbolism is very important: the Eternal’s golden candlestick lights the world. The two olive trees supply the oil for God’s golden candlestick. “Stand by the Lord” means to be His servant, representing Him before a dark world (see also **Zechariah 3:4, 6:5**).

Revelation 11:3-4 describes the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy: “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” The tremendous power evidenced by the two witnesses, **verses 5-6**, indicates that God will not choose just any one, but those who are not corrupted by power. They will tell the world their sins, and as a result be hated and eventually killed, **verses 7-8**. They will be incorruptible. The two witnesses, as two olive trees, will stand before (by) the Lord of the whole earth.

The Wild Olive Tree

Then there is the other kind of olive tree, a wild olive tree. Not planted by God (**Psalms 1:3**), the wild olive tree signifies all that is by nature opposed to the Creator.

Paul explains the two contrasting kinds of trees in **Romans 11**. Even though Israel has largely departed from God, He has not cast away His people. As it was in the days of Elijah, “I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal,” **verse 4**. In Paul’s day, and even today, “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace,” **verse 5**. The majority of Israel, then and now, is blinded, **verse 7**. The falling away of Israel has resulted in salvation coming unto the Gentiles, **verse 11**.

Most of Israel has departed from God, being broken off, “And if some of the branches [Israel] be broken off, and thou [Gentiles], being a *wild olive tree*, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee [salvation is of the Jews (Israel), not

of the Gentiles]. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the *natural branches*, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee [Gentiles who have accepted Christ], goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off. And they [renegade Israelites] also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the *olive tree which is wild by nature*, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a *good olive tree*: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?” **verses 17-23**.

Here we see clearly that Israel is likened to a natural, good, olive tree. Gentiles are likened to a wild olive tree. The very natures of these two kinds of people are distinct. God calls Gentiles a “wild olive tree,” and Israelites a “good olive tree.”

Throughout their history, Israelites have been stiff-necked and rebellious against their calling to be a good olive tree. But God does not give up on them. He chastened them with captivity and hardship, the goodness of God leading them to repentance, **Romans 2:4**.

In spite of their sordid history, the very fundamental, underlying nature of Israelites is like a good olive tree, which we have seen, is typified by peace, helping the poor, **opposition** to slavery and oppression, providers of light and truth, possessors of physical wealth (blessings of Abraham), rule under God’s Law instead of despotic tyranny, dependence upon the Almighty, planted and nourished by God, at times obedient to God and respectful to one’s parents, the gateway into God’s presence, standing by Him.

When God’s people reject Him, and become wild olive trees, He causes their olive trees to cast their fruit, **Deuteronomy 28:40**. Jacob loses his glory and becomes thin and lean, like the shaking of an olive tree, **Isaiah 17:4, 6, 24:13**. It will get so bad that we should not pray for Israel, for He will not hear their prayers, **Jeremiah 11:14**. In the days of King Manasseh of Judah, the Jews severely departed from the Lord. “So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of

Israel," **II Chronicles 33:9**.

In the past, they were a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit, but now He is going to kindle a fire under it, and break its branches, **Jeremiah 11:15-17**. Yet in all this punishment, the Eternal will heal their backslidings, love them freely, and Israel shall grow as the lily, and his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon, **Hosea 14:4-6**.

Cleanness of teeth (famine) is going to come as God's wrath against His sinning, rebellious, people, and their olive trees shall be devoured by the palmerworm, **Amos 4:6-9**, and others will anoint themselves with their oil, **Micah 6:15**. See also **Habakkuk 3:17**.

In all times, there has been a mixed multitude within Israel, who have not spiritually surrendered to God. Often, they are the majority of Israel. But always, God has a remnant people. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel . . . That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God," **Romans 9:6, 8**.

Is Israel better than Gentiles? "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one," **Romans 3:9-10**. What is the advantage to being a good olive tree, an Israelite (Jew is sometimes used in the Bible to represent the entire House of Israel)? "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?" **verse 1**. Many Gentiles, even in the Church of God today, would answer that there is no value to being an Israelite, no value to being circumcised. Paul did not believe this: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God," **verse 2**. Spiritual instruction then, and now, comes from Israelites, the good olive tree. Even today, Gentiles resent the way God chooses to deal with mankind through His people Israel.

Referring to his physical heritage of being of the tribe of Benjamin, Paul noted, "We who are Jews by nature, and not **sinners of the Gentiles** . . . if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid," **Galatians 2:15, 17**.

Addressing Gentiles at Ephesus, Paul spoke of their condition before conversion: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of

promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ," **Ephesians 2:12-13**.

Converted Gentiles become part of spiritual Israel, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," **Galatians 3:29**. Truly converted Gentiles accept God's laws which they formerly rejected. They respect and honor Israel, their spiritual elder brothers.

Characteristics of Wild Olive Trees

Cain was the first wild olive tree. Unrestrained in his jealousy against his brother Abel, Cain committed the first murder. Lamech followed suite, and after the Flood destroyed the line of Cain, Nimrod rose to preeminence, **Genesis 10:8-9**. The Gentile hierarchial form of government, despotic centralized control, has been the hallmark of Gentile philosophy ever since.

In **Romans 1:21-32**, Paul lists the sins of the Gentiles, including their homosexuality. It is a sad list of wild olive tree traits. Paul was not a racist, but he vividly describes the inherent nature of wild olive trees, Gentiles. Israel at times absorbs these traits and sometimes becomes even worse, as previously noted in the reign of King Manasseh.

It is evident from the Bible, that the Old Testament Church became corrupted by picking up the sins of the Gentiles. As a result, they were sent into captivity, and eventually the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. It is also evident from Church History that the New Testament Church fell away from the Truth by Gentiles coming into the Church, but not getting rid of their wild olive tree nature. Instead, Gentiles brought their pagan customs and practices which corrupted the New Testament Church.

Today, the characteristic traits of natural good olive trees and wild olive trees are plainly evident. In small town America, you can still not worry about locking your house and car. But in major cities, increasingly dominated by Gentile influences, there are iron bars on businesses, and sophisticated security systems on cars, and still theft is rampant. A few years back when we visited El Salvador, I was amazed to see nearly all houses barricaded with iron gates, and razor wire around the roofs, a sign that theft and violence is common. Even at Salvadorean grocery stores, armed guards with menacing

rifles stand guard. As America becomes more dominated by wild olive trees, this will be the pattern here as well.

The most convincing proof that some Jews are not Israelites is not Arthur Koestler's book, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, but the filth coming from Hollywood. Reading the credits to movies and television shows gives you a clue with the many Jewish names. Truly, purveyors of media depravity are of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, **Revelation 3:9**.

Certain leaders have a grand vision of spreading "freedom" to the entire world, starting in the Middle East. Arab Moslems epitomize the nature of the wild olive tree. God said that Ishmael's nature would be wild: "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren [be a terrorist in their midst]," **Genesis 16:12**. Freedom cannot exist without God's law in our hearts and minds. The nature of Ishmael and his Edomite cousins, even today, has not changed. They are wild olive trees, and only God can change them. Foolish Israelites think that they can have peace with the Palestinians, not realizing that a wild olive tree can only become tame by being grafted into the natural olive tree by the hand of God.

Traits of wild olive trees are in the Church of God today. For one, a Gentile form of government, centralized and controlled by a hierarchy, is characteristic of wild olive trees. Gentiles like to be protected by a great leader, which attitude became prevalent since the time of Nimrod, who herded his followers into cities. For the Church of God to blindly follow a great leader is to exhibit the traits of a wild olive tree.

Also, some in the Church of God believe that the government has the responsibility to care for the poor: the civil government or the Church government. Both of these ideas are wrong. The Bible shows that we as individuals are to personally care for the poor.

Gentiles in the Church of God today sometimes have the wrong idea that circum-

cision is of no value (in contrast to **Romans 3:1-2**). Some continue to justify lying, stealing, committing adultery, and other Gentile (wild olive) sins. Likewise, they have a hostile attitude toward some of the other Laws of God. If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and have a natural affinity toward all of God's Laws.

In **Isaiah 5:1-7**, God likens His people to a vineyard, which, like an olive grove, needs to be pruned. Instead of bringing forth good grapes, it brought forth wild grapes. As a result, He is going to lay it waste. Why? **verse 24**, "because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." God had planted Israel as a noble vine, yet she turned into a degenerate vine, **Jeremiah 2:21**.

It is interesting that the Almighty uses the illustration of various wild beasts to describe the successive stages of Gentile world-ruling governments, **Daniel 7:1-8**. At the end time, there will be the culmination of these wild, beastly kingdoms, with the rule of the Beast and the False Prophet, **Revelation 13**.



Trees of Righteousness

In the Millennium, the nature of wild beasts will be changed, **Isaiah 11:6-9, 65:25; Hosea 2:18; Ezekiel 34:25-26**. This is a type of the spiritual transformation that will occur as wild olive trees become natural olive trees. People

inclined to do evil will be transformed into righteous, peace loving, kind people.

The seemingly peaceful bison (American buffalo) in Yellowstone National Park is actually dangerous. You can stop the car and view them. Some tourists have walked up to a buffalo, put their arms around him, and posed for a photo. On one occasion, the beast gored the tourist with his massive horns.

God's natural olive trees, with plenty of grafted-in Gentiles, will "be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified," **Isaiah 61:3**. "Thy people also shall be all righteous [every one of them!]: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified," **Isaiah 60:21**.

Learn the Lesson of the Fig Tree

The olive tree is the predominant symbolic tree type that the Eternal uses in scripture. However, the fig tree is also used for illustration purposes.

The fig tree and the vine represent peace and prosperity, **I Kings 4:25**, a type of the millennium, **Micah 4:4**, “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.” See also **Zechariah 3:10**.

The fig tree represents the elect, the called and chosen. Jesus saw Nanthaniel (Matthew) under the fig tree, **John 1:48-51**. Likewise, the Messiah sees us before He calls us; He knows us inside and out.

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? In **Matthew 21:19-22**, we see that when Jesus was on His way from Bethany back to Jerusalem, that He was hungry, and saw a fig tree in the way. He found nothing on it, and exclaimed, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away,” **verse 19**. Beside being a lesson of faith, this episode teaches us that our Savior insists that His elect produce fruit. If we do not produce fruit, we will wither away. The context of these verses is just after Jesus cast out the moneychangers the second time, **verses 12-13**. Here we see a complete illustration. Jesus purges His Church, and still they do not produce fruit, so they will wither away. What a serious admonition for the Church today!

In **Matthew 24:32-33**, Jesus says, “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [He, the return of the Messiah] is near, even at the doors.”

The fig tree is thus a prophetic indicator. Since the fig tree represents Israel, the Church, you can predict prophetic conditions by the condition of the Church. Jesus purges His Church, but there comes a time when they do not receive His correction, **Ezekiel 24:13**, and **Hosea 9:10**.

In **Jeremiah 24**, we see the type of the good and bad figs, again two types of people. One basket had very good figs, ripe and good to eat. Another basket had “very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad,” **verse 2**. The good figs will be returned from captivity, replanted in the land, and

given a heart to know the Eternal, because they shall return unto God with their whole heart. The bad, evil, figs will be consumed in captivity by the sword, famine, and pestilence, and will not be returned to the land God gave to their fathers. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil,” **Jeremiah 29:17**.

“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes,” **Luke 6:43-44**.

“He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down,” **Luke 13:6-9**

“Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh,” **James 3:12**.

“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth [meteors], even as a fig tree casteth her untimely [green, unripe] figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind,” **Revelation 6:13** (see also **Isaiah 34:4**).

Be Like a Natural, Good Olive Tree

Olive trees are an amazing evergreen. They don't produce rings, but scientists estimate that some have lived for 2,000 years. Pruning keeps them from skipping a bearing season. Olive trees are tougher than most trees, and will sprout back even when chopped to the ground. In the Garden of Gethsemane today, there are ancient olive trees which may be 1,000 or even 2,000 years old. It is unlikely that these trees were here in the time of Christ because of the report that the Romans cut down all the trees in the area in their siege of Jerusalem in A.D 70.

Clearly, the lesson of the good olive (and fig) tree is that we are to be planted by the Lord, and produce fruit for Him. May we all be good olive trees!

— by Richard C. Nickels Ω

We think of the term “a favorite son” as a political term meaning an up-and-coming local leader who shows potential for national office. In a more familial sense, Jacob and Esau were “favorite sons,” but one was the father’s favorite and the other was the mother’s, which led to sad consequences. It seems we often wish to manipulate and control, rather than accept God’s plan.

Let’s take a short trip in our “imaginarium.”

- **Imagine** living in the time of Christ in the Roman Empire, seeing the temple, the Coliseum, the Parthenon, soldiers, ox-drawn carts, the Agora (marketplace), and the Appian Way. The Romans had a penchant for building roads to celebrate their victories. The Appian Way was the most famous of these. The Appii Forum, mentioned in **Acts 28:15**, was about forty-three miles southeast of Rome and was located on this road. It was renowned for its unscrupulous innkeepers.

- **Imagine** being in Jerusalem, a disciple, hearing Jesus speak, observing the Pharisees and Sadducees, keeping the Festivals, and seeing the sacrifices.

- **Imagine** being an Apostle, hearing, seeing, even performing miracles, walking with the Master and observing the Feasts, even the last supper with Him.

- **Imagine** yourself being the one person (Apostle) with a special relationship, closest friend, teacher’s pet, the one with inside track, loved of Jesus, the favorite son of the Master.

Now I think you know where this is leading, but keep in mind, you are to imagine yourself in this position. Peter, James, and John seemed to be the three “pillars.” All the apostles were in the Garden, but only three advanced to pray with Him.

The Way They Were

At the Last Supper: “When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot,

the son of Simon,” **John 13:21-26**.

It is curious that Jesus and John were both within earshot of Peter; yet Peter asked John to ask Jesus “of whom He spake.” John had the “inside track,” not in a pretentious or self-seeking way, at least not now. But, was it always that way?

Peter and the others were a jealous bunch. They were carnal, bad-mouthed fishermen and men of the world. And, John fit right in. Peter and Andrew called first, then James and John. They were the sons of Zebedee, called Boanerges — sons of thunder. We might look at them as typical brick and mortar men, tough, irreverent, cursing, backslapping men of the laboring class (although I believe that style permeates all segments of society today).

An example of their character is in **John 21:20-23**: “Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

Jesus had to tighten the reigns, a paraphrase might read: “mind your own business; you take care of Peter.”

Reminds me of the story of the bucket of crabs. Crabs are trapped when you put them in a bucket. When one tries to get out, the others will reach up and pull him back down. People are a lot like that. Somehow, that gives me a picture of some of us. I see a bucket full of saints; and I ask, factiously, if that is where the saying “Holy buckets” comes from.

Matthew 20:20-26 says: “Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her,

What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy Kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able.”

Notice their macho, cocksure attitude.

Verse 23 “And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.”

We see jealousy arising, instigated by — dear, sweet, mom. The character of John (and others) was impulsive, intolerant (he wanted to call fire upon the Samaritans), power seeking, ambitious, with a volatile temper. This was John — in early years.

A Change in the Heart

Those qualities can be good or at least tolerable if channeled correctly. At least part of the key to John’s change of character was listening to correction, and learning to control and direct emotions. Did John learn and change? Yes, and not only from personal reprimands from Jesus, but the reprimands for others. I believe the door to his change was his awareness.

Now we come to a strange passage that has always intrigued me. **John 19:25-27** says: “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

Why did Jesus address His mother and tell her to behold John as her son? Perhaps it was because John was as a brother to Jesus. So much so that Jesus felt Mary, His mother, was John’s mother also. **Proverbs 18:24**, “there is

a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

Back to the Imaginarium

Is it hard to imagine yourself as a favorite son? A few years before her death, my mom sent me a letter saying all sorts of nice things about me and concluded with the intimation that I was the favorite son. I immediately had a flashback to the story of Joseph, and, if I told my brothers, I would be sold into slavery. But, knowing mom, I presumed she had sent my other brothers the same letter.

We cannot enjoy the close personal, physical relationship John did, but how close could we be to Jesus as a spiritual brother?

1. We are called to be sons of God. And brothers with Christ. **John 1:12**, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

2. We are His friend if we do whatever He commands. **John 15:9-10**: “As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”

3. We are to learn the same lessons John did. It helps to know we have the same Teacher. It’s a matter of how well we learn.

4. We shall do greater things than the Apostles (by His Spirit and power). **John 14:12**, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.”

5. We have received the same gifts as John and will receive the same reward of Eternal life.

Comparisons

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the rest of the writers of the Bible think and write like I and maybe you, logical, clinical, methodical, factual. Not to say that that is bad, but John takes this relationship thing to a whole new level, love. The books of James, Peter, and John speak of faith, hope, and love in that order. The greatest of these is love (**I Corinthians 13:13**). We are reminded of the love and kinship of David and Jonathon.

Why was John a favorite son? I think because he learned it and he earned it? We can learn it and earn it too — from the example of John.

— by Steven J. Kieler Ω

Proof of Celtic Sabbath-keeping is easy to find. The curious thing is why Church of God missionaries do not return to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and thunder the Gospel message of repentance, calling on today's Celtic peoples to return to the faith of their fathers.

Henry Charles Lea, the foremost authority on the Papal Inquisitions, records in the period of the commencement of persecution involving judicial capital punishment for heresy, that at the time of the execution of Priscillian with six of his followers in 385 AD., that "others were banished to a barbarous island beyond Britain," *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, New York: Harper & Brothers 1887, p. 213.

What was this barbarous island? Most likely, it would appear to be Ireland. Britain and Ireland were favorite places for banishment and the marketing of slaves in those days. If indeed, many faithful "heretics" were banished to Ireland for centuries, it could not but have had a profound effect on that island, which became a great center of light under Patrick (5th century), Columba (521-597), and Columbanus (c. 540-615) as the darkness of papal tyranny descended over the continent. Missionaries went forth from Ireland to Switzerland, Bohemia, and Kiev. Ireland was one of the most difficult areas for Rome to subjugate, and this explains why such unending efforts have been made for over 1200 years to completely subjugate this island.

The Celtic Church which occupied Ireland, Scotland, and Britain, had the Syriac (Byzantine) scriptures instead of the Latin vulgate of Rome. The Celtic Church, with the Waldenses and the Eastern empire, kept the seventh-day Sabbath.

When Queen Margaret fled to Scotland with her father Edward Atheling, a pretender to the English throne, she wrote "to her English cousins expressing astonishment at the religious practices of the Scots. Among the 'peculiarities' of the Scots was that 'they work on Sunday, but keep Saturday in a sabbatical manner.' To another correspondent she complained, 'They are accustomed also to neglect reverence for the Lord's days (Sundays); and thus to continue upon them as upon other days all the labours of earthly work.'"

David Marshall tells us, "The observance

of the Saturday Sabbath by most Scots went hand in hand with their refusal to 'recognize the overlordship of the Pope in matters spiritual.' Despite the best efforts of King Nectan centuries earlier, Scottish Christianity was still of the 'Columban' or 'Celtic,' not the 'Roman,' variety.

"The most popular narrative history of Scotland — *Scotland: A Concise History* by P. Hume Brown (Langsyne) — confirms that at Margaret's accession, 'the people worked on Sundays and observed Saturday as the Sabbath day.' Peter Berresford Ellis in *Celtic Inheritance* (Constable, 1992) page 45 writes: 'When Rome began to take a particular interest in the Celtic Church towards the end of the sixth century A.D., there were several differences between them The Celtic Sabbath was celebrated on a Saturday.' Ellis's comment covers the Celtic Church in Wales, Ireland, Cornwall and Gaul, as well as Scotland. Romanism was, apparently, coming into Scotland but had no strength north of the Forth.

"This gave Queen Margaret her crusade (and her route to canonization): 'Margaret did all she could to make the Scottish clergy do and believe exactly what the Church of Rome commanded.' This involved the enforcement of Sunday-keeping, a policy continued by her son, King David I. Nevertheless, on the eve of the Reformation, there were still many communities in the Scottish Highland loyal to the seventh-day Sabbath, as opposed to 'the Papal Sunday.'

"Two books published in 1963 — to commemorate Columba's landing at Iona in 563 — concerned themselves with the 'Celtic distinctives' and counted among them the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Dr. W.D. Simpson published *The Historical St. Columba* in Edinburgh. He confirms that Columba and his companions kept 'the day of the Sabbath' and in case there should be any doubt adds in a footnote 'Saturday, of course' F.W. Fawcett was commissioned to write his *Columba — Pilgrim for Christ* by the Lord Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. His book

was published in Londonderry and printed by the *Derry Standard* in connection with the Irish commemoration of Columba's mission. Fawcett outlines eight Celtic distinctives. Among these that the Celts had a married priesthood and that they observed the seventh day as the Sabbath." — David Marshall, *The Celtic Connection*. England: Stanborough Press, 1994, pp. 29, 30.

"The reason why Pope Gregory I had perceived the Celtic Church as such a major threat and why he and his successors expended such efforts in destroying the distinctive 'Irish customs' became massively evident.

"A.O. and M.O. Anderson, in the Introduction to their *Adomnan's Life of Columba* (Thomas Nelson 1961), shed light, not only on Columba's seventh day Sabbath-keeping practice, but on the gradual 'adjustment' of manuscripts by generations of Roman copyists, in an attempt to provide an impression that the Celtic saints held Sunday sacred.

"Adomnan's use of *sabbatum* for Saturday, the seventh day of the week, is clear indication from 'Columba's mouth' that 'Sabbath was not Sunday.' Sunday, the first day of the week is 'Lord's day.' Adomnan's attitude to Sunday is important, because he wrote at a time when there was controversy over the question whether the ritual of the Biblical Sabbath was to be transferred to the Christians' Lord's-day." — A.O. and M.O. Anderson (editors) *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, Thomas Nelson's Medieval Texts, 1961, pages 25-26.

"The Old Testament required seventh-day Sabbath observance and, reason Adomnan's editors, since the New Testament nowhere repealed the fourth commandment, the seventh-day was observed by all early Christians. The evidence they adduce suggests that no actual confusion between Sunday and 'the Sabbath' occurred until the early sixth century, and then in the writings of the rather obscure Caesarius of Arles. (Ibid., page 26.)

"In England, the question of Sunday may have been among the 'other ecclesiastical matters' discussed by the Synod of Whitby in 664, reason the Andersons, in addition to the date of Easter which could not have caused

such a rift. A *weekly*, not just a *yearly* observance separated the Celts from the Romans. But the Romans had the task of writing the history of the Church and of copying the writings of Church fathers. While those who copied the Scriptures appear to have been constrained by the Scriptural injunction not to add or take away from the words of the Book and, in the main, to have done a conscientious job, the same scruples did not apply when they copied out the writings of the Church fathers. As the centuries progressed the writings of the Celtic saints, including Patrick were 'amended' to convey the impression that the saints held Sunday sacred, whereas, in the earliest versions of their manuscripts, it is clear that they observed the seventh-day Sabbath. (Ibid., pages 26-28).

The Roman 'movement' to supersede the Celtic Sabbath with Sunday 'culminated in the production of an (apocryphal) 'Letter of Jesus', or 'Letter of Lord's day', alleged to have been found on the altar of Peter in Rome; and is said in the annals to have been brought to Ireland by a pilgrim (c. 886). Upon this basis laws were promulgated, imposing heavy penalties for those that violated on Sunday certain regulations derived from Jewish prohibitions for Sabbath. . . . There is in fact no historical evidence that Ninian, or Patrick, or Columba, or any of their contemporaries in Ireland, kept Sunday as a Sabbath.' (Ibid., page 28.)

"The seventh-day Sabbath, enjoined by the fourth of the Ten Commandments, had been observed by Jesus and nowhere in Scripture had its sacredness been diminished or transferred to another day . . .

"An early version of *The Rule of Columba* is reproduced in *Columba — Pilgrim for Christ* by F.W. Fawcett, MA. Fawcett is a Church of Ireland clergyman. He was commissioned by the Lord Bishop of Derry and Raphoe to produce this book as part of the celebrations in 1963 of the departure of Columba for Iona in AD 563." — Marshall, *The Celtic Connection*, 46.

The fifth rule of the Celtic Church listed in *The Rule of Columba* is "The Seventh Day was observed as the Sabbath."

— from *Cherith Chronicle*, April-June 1998, pp. 46-47. Ω

We recommend: *The Celtic Church in Britain*, by Leslie Hardinge, 265 pages, \$9.00 plus postage from Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849.

Tithing is perhaps the most disliked doctrine of the Bible. Many in the Church of God have a disgruntled or bitter attitude toward tithing. They have been burned because they formerly tithed to a church organization which wasted tithes, even as the church leadership of that organization lived lavishly. The membership gave tithes freely, but those funds were squandered as the Church changed its doctrines and slid back into Protestantism.

Those who have never tithed may think tithing is promoted only by ministers who receive the tithes. But when I speak of tithing, I can do so with a clear conscience, for even though I am a Church elder, I have chosen not to live off the tithes. For more than twenty-five years of serving God's people through Giving & Sharing, I have not received remuneration. So, when I encourage others to follow the Bible Laws of Tithing, I do not stand to gain if others heed what I tell them.

We have managed our tithes and the tithes and offerings of others, and to the best of our ability, judiciously spent them on literature and other materials to edify the Church of God, not to pay for our personal expenses. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been donated to Giving & Sharing, and I take seriously the responsibility of seeing that funds are utilized efficiently, to the glory of God.

Tithing Fallacies

There are a number of commonly believed fallacies about tithing.

(1) The first common fallacy is: *tithing is only for church people*. This is not so! Unbelievers who tithe can be blessed as well as committed Christians who tithe. Herbert Armstrong relates the unforgettable story of well-driller Ed Smith, who began tithing when he had only \$10. The blessings Smith experienced by tithing led him to conversion (see, "The Man Who Couldn't Afford to Tithe," on the www.giveshare.org/tithing website, or condensed later in this article).

(2) *Tithing is only on agricultural produce*. If this idea was true, to avoid tithing, you would just need to not be a farmer and therefore you would be free from God's Laws of Tithing. In Genesis, tithing, like the distinction between clean and unclean meats, is *an ongoing practice*. Abraham tithed on the spoils of his God-given victory in battle,

Genesis 14:18-20. Jacob vowed to tithe all to God, **Genesis 28:22**. There is no mention here of tithing only on agricultural produce.

In **Numbers 18:21**, we read, "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." There is no mention here of agricultural produce.

If tithing was only on agricultural produce, then only farmers would be obligated to attend the annual pilgrimage festivals (Feast of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles), and only farmers would be obligated to donate a specific amount to help the poor. Fishermen, for example, would be exempt from these obligations. But, there is to be only one law for all, **Exodus 12:49**.

The fact is, most Israelites of old were farmers. Nearly everybody grew produce. So, the tithing laws given in Leviticus and Deuteronomy naturally emphasize tithing from an agricultural perspective.

(3) *Tithing was like a tax; our government taxes us now, and thus we are excused from the tithing law because we pay our taxes*. Those who believe this fallacy have fallen victim to left-wing socialism. Governments forcefully take taxes; God's tithing law is voluntary, and not enforced by tithing police. Governments generally do not ask you how to spend the taxes they collect; under God's Tithing Law, the individual has the responsibility in every aspect of his or her tithes. You are not responsible for government wasting of taxes; under God's Tithing Laws, you are responsible for proper use of the tithes. Taxes are impersonal; tithes are personal. Any similarity between taxes and tithes is purely coincidental. Samuel warned Israel of the financial consequences of asking for a king, **I Samuel 8:10-22**. Notice that their king would take a tenth of their seed, and a tenth of their sheep. Would be that governments today took so little! We are still suffering these evil effects from turning from

the government of God to a government of men. In no way can the government fulfill your responsibility to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom, observe the Eternal's Feasts, and help the poor. The government cannot fulfill our obligation to care for the poor, and to teach our children. The idea of government welfare programs, and government schools is contrary to the Bible. When we abdicate our God-given responsibilities to the government, we automatically suffer evil consequences.

(4) *There is only one tithe.* Anyone who believes this is willingly ignorant. Do you understand the meaning of the word "all"? **Numbers 18:21**, "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi *all* the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." The Hebrew word for "all" is *kohl*, meaning the whole amount. The same word is used in **Deuteronomy 14:22** regarding the festival (second) tithe: "Thou shalt truly tithe *all* the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year, And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the tithe" Also, the same word, *kohl*, is used in **Deuteronomy 14:28-29**, "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth *all* the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest." *Kohl* is also used in **Leviticus 27:30**, "And *all* the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord."

We see here clearly that there are three tithes. You cannot give ALL the tithe to the Levite, ALL the tithe to eat at the annual feasts, and every third year give ALL the tithe to the poor, and this be the same tithe. Also, the third year tithe cannot substitute for the other tithes, because that would mean that in the third year you would not go to the Festival! The second (festival) tithe is done "year by year," meaning every year, whereas the third year tithe is only in the third year. Do the math! There is no other conclusion possible. There is more than one tithe.

(5) *Tithing is always on gross income.* It is easy to prove this statement wrong. Just move to New Zealand, where I understand

that the tax rate is about 55% of gross income. If you earn \$1000, you would pay \$550 in taxes, which leaves you \$450. If you pay tithes on the gross, your first and second tithes would equal \$200, leaving you \$250. If it is your third tithe year, another \$100 of third tithe would leave you \$150. Taxes and tithes would have left you with only 15% of your gross income. On the other hand, if you tithed on the net (\$450), and paid three tithes, you would have \$315 left over.

There is also a Biblical proof that tithing is not on the gross. If you were a rancher and your herd had nine baby calves, what would be your tithe on the increase of your cattle herd? The answer is that you would owe no tithe. **Leviticus 27:32**, "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." Here, the tithe is not the *first* tenth, but the *last* tenth!

(6) *Your responsibility is only to give the tithe, not see that it is used properly.* *Corrupt ministers deserve the tithe.* This is a common false belief, as it is comforting to believe that your only responsibility is to pay, not see that the tithes are used properly. This commonly believed fallacy supposedly gets us off the hook. However, this argument breaks down by simple logic. In the case of the second tithe, it is your responsibility to spend the tithe properly on festival observance. In the case of the third tithe, it is your responsibility to take care of the deserving poor. Since the individual has personal responsibility for spending properly the second and third tithes, would it be reasonable that he has no responsibility for proper usage of the first tithe?

During the days of Elisha, a man from Baal-shalisha brought the man of God (Elisha) twenty loaves of bread of the firstfruits of barley, which fed an hundred men at the school of the prophets, **II Kings 4:42-44**. Elisha is not mentioned as being a Levite (**I Kings 19:16, 19**; also note that Elisha's home town, Abel-meholah, was not one of the forty-eight Levitical cities, **Joshua 21**). There is no indication that the hundred men at the school of the prophets were all Levites either. The firstfruits, part of the tithing law, were brought to the house of God for the priests, **Exodus 34:26** and **Leviticus 23:10**. Why didn't the man from Baal-shalisha bring his firstfruits to the priests? Probably because they were corrupt. God raised up other servants because the Levites were not doing their job.

(7) This example illustrates that corrupt ministers are not to be supported, and also debunks a related fallacy: *tithing is only to Levites*. Elisha was apparently not a Levite. Before Levi, Abraham and Jacob tithed to Melchizedek (the One who became the Messiah). The New Testament shows that the law of tithing has been transferred from Levi back to Melchizedek, **Hebrews 7:12**.

(8) *The New Testament did away with tithing*. Did the New Testament do away with tithing, the Sabbath, or any of God's Laws? A rule of understanding the Bible is that unless an Old Testament law is specifically voided or modified in the New Testament, that the law is still in effect. Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets (the Bible), **Matthew 5:17-19**. Jesus supported tithing, **Matthew 23:23**. The recipient of the (first) tithe has been *changed* from Levi back to Melchizedek, where it was from the beginning, **Hebrews 7:12**. The Greek word for "changed" here is *metatitheomi*, meaning "carried over, moved from one place to another." The same word is used in **Hebrews 11:5**, where Enoch was "translated," and in **Acts 7:15-16**, where the bones of Jacob were "carried over" to Palestine. The New Testament did not do away with tithing; on the contrary, the New Testament reinforces the Old Testament Law of Tithing.

(9) *In the New Testament, the tithe must be sent to a central headquarters*. There is not a shred of Biblical evidence to support this belief. At one time, there was a famine in Jerusalem, and the Apostle Paul gathered food together to send to Jerusalem to help the brethren, **Romans 15:25-27; I Corinthians 16:1-3**. This was assistance for the poor, not tithes for preaching the gospel.

Although in the Roman world it would have been entirely possible for all tithes to be sent to the Apostles in Jerusalem, and it would have been possible for the Church to have run an hierarchical Church government headquartered in Jerusalem, there is absolutely no indication from the New Testament that this was done.

(10) *Jesus did not tithe; Jesus did not receive tithes*. There is no record that Jesus tithed or received tithes. But we can know that He did. He supported tithing, **Matthew 23:23**, received tithes as Melchizedek. He did not come to destroy the law, **Matthew 5:17-20**. He was perfect, without sin, **Hebrews 4:15**. His disciple Judas carried the

(money) bag, **John 13:29**. Although there is no record of Jesus keeping the Day of Atonement, or the Day of Trumpets, we know that He did keep these Holy Days. To say that Jesus did not tithe or receive tithes is to charge Him with being a hypocrite.

Purposes of Tithing

Let's keep in mind the overall purpose of each of the three Biblical tithes.

The purpose of the first tithe is for worship, teaching, judging, i.e., preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Even in Old Testament times, the purpose of the Levites was not only to administer the sacrifices, but to teach God's Law to the people. **Leviticus 10:10-11** explains their primary role: "And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." The duty of the priest was to be a teacher, a minister of the Gospel. Levites were scattered throughout Israel in forty-eight cities, so that they could teach the Gospel and help every Israelite. It was the same gospel the Apostles preached, **Hebrews 4:2**. **Malachi 2:7** states, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." Sometimes, the ministry fails to perform their God-appointed role. However, **Nehemiah 8:2-9** is an example of faithful preaching and expounding the word of God. Supporting the preaching of the Word of God is the primary purpose of the first tithe. It is our individual responsibility to see that our first tithe goes toward this Godly purpose.

The purpose of the second tithe is to keep the annual feasts, both you, your household, and others that you are able to help, **Deuteronomy 14:22-27**. This is a personal responsibility.

The purpose of the third tithe is to help the poor, stranger, fatherless, widows, that are within your gates, where you can personally help them and know that the aid is going to people who are worthy of help, **Deuteronomy 14:28-29**. This is a personal responsibility.

Anti-Tithing Attitude

Because of misuse and abuse of tithes, many have a negative attitude toward tithing. Specifically, some believe that because the

ministry of their former organization corrupted God's Truth and lived lavishly, therefore tithing is bad. They fail to understand that corrupt implementation of God's Law does not do away with God's Law. A converted person knows that God's Law is holy, just, and good.

How have the tithes in the Church of God been corrupted? A book could be written on this subject, but here are a few examples.

First tithes have been corrupted in the past by Church leaders living lavishly, flying around the world in private jets, giving very expensive Steuben crystal to corrupt world leaders. The leader of my former affiliation had a personal G-2 jet, worth millions of dollars, which he flew around the world to give weak, "give and get" sermons in foreign countries. I work for the North American division of the world's largest mining company, which is headquartered in London, England. For years, our Rocky Mountain mining division had a corporate plane, a twin-propeller aircraft seating 6-8 people. Once when I was returning from a business trip in Utah on the Company plane to Wyoming, I sat next to the Company President and Chief Executive Officer. I asked him why our Company didn't have a corporate jet like a G-2. "Oh," he exclaimed, "we couldn't afford that, we have to cut costs!" It would be a misuse of stockholders' investment for Company executives to live so lavishly. Now, why couldn't the Churches of God learn the lesson that they need to be frugal with God's tithes, because after all, ethical behavior is more important with God than with human stockholders?

Some have bitterly pointed to such outlandish examples and become disgruntled at the wasting of God's tithes that they have turned against tithing in general. However, the finger often points back to them personally in the matter of second tithes.

Second tithes have been corrupted by individual members who lavishly blow thousands of dollars of second tithe on a purely materialistic Feast of Tabernacles. The Bible says there are three pilgrimage Feasts: Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles. However, most ignore the two spring festivals and excessively spend their second tithes on the fall festival. I knew one young man with an excellent job as a computer programmer for the Bonneville Power Administration. He owned a fine car, but had so much second tithe that he rented a

car just to drive to the Feast. Rather than helping others, he wasted his second tithe.

Third tithes have been corrupted in many ways as well. Third tithe is a personal responsibility to help the truly poor and needy, yet many years ago, the Church of God determined that their balance sheet would look better if they had members send their third tithes to headquarters. The Church Headquarters, rather than local deacons, became the administrators of the third tithe assistance to the poor. When I worked at the Church's Headquarters, I was an executive assistant in Church Administration. Being naturally curious, I happened one day to see a computer print out of "loans" (actually, they were not required to be repaid) of funds for the assistance of the poor, going to well-paid Church executives for drapes and carpets in their lavish Church homes. When for the first time the Church ever made even an attempt at accountability by publishing an Income Statement, I discovered what appeared to be a \$1 million discrepancy in the third tithe fund.

Let every man be a liar, yet God is still True. No matter what degenerate human beings have done to corrupt God's Tithes, the fact is still that the Bible commands tithing. And, the Almighty does not want us to support corrupt Church organizations.

Making Tithing Accountable

How then, should tithing be done? Use of tithes should be accountable. Detailed Financial Statements need to be issued regularly. There needs to be full disclosure of all salaries. Our local city government publishes in the local newspaper the amounts and vendors for every check it writes. Salaries of public officials are public information. Why then, don't the Churches of God likewise be totally open about their finances? I know of one rare organization that did publish salaries of its leaders. Its top leader's salary approached six figures, which seems to me to be excessive. In a sermon, he admitted that he was a hireling, and that if you were in trouble, you could not depend upon him to help you. Why should anyone support this popular Church of God minister? Disclosure of financial information is only one step toward accountability.

More participation in financial and other decisions would lead to better use and less abuse of God's tithes. If you are working for the Church (salaried or a volunteer), you have

a much better perspective on the use of the tithes. Church elders and leaders should encourage everyone working together to spread the Gospel message. An open, participatory, Church is the antidote to bad use of tithes.

Benefits of Tithing

Misuse of tithing pays! It pays the fat cats who live off the tithes. The “stay and pay” members are paid off with bitter fruit, and they share responsibility in this sorry return for their investment.

Proper use of tithing pays much better! The Church is fed, the Feasts are spiritual drinks of cold water on a hot dry day, and the poor are helped and encouraged.

Tithing properly makes one personally involved in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, celebrating God’s Feasts, and helping the poor. The Feasts, financed by Godly use of the second tithe, recharge our spiritual batteries. God says He will bless you as you give, **Acts 20:35**.

Tithing helps you budget and plan your finances, manage your financial affairs. Therefore, the remainder after tithes goes farther. This is similar to keeping the Sabbath.

Tithing builds your faith. You trust in God to provide, just like the farmer trusts God for rain for his crops, and trusts God he can harvest his crop without working on the Sabbath.

Tithing helps us grow in judgment, mercy, and faith. **Matthew 23:23** does not really contrast tithing with judgment, mercy, faith, because proper tithing should lead to these weightier matters of the law. We should judge to whom we should give tithes, or not give tithes. We should learn mercy for the poor (open wide our hands), mercy for the spiritually starving. Tithing thus will build up our faith.

Tithing teaches us that our money is not our own. The Sabbath teaches us that our time is not our own. Fasting teaches us that our bodies are not our own. God owns everything. “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein,” **Psalms 24:1**. We are totally dependent upon our Creator.

Tithing is a teaching tool. It reveals our attitude towards God. My father-in-law, in his North Carolina drawl, was known to say, “You don’t know the character of a man until

you fool with his pocketbook.” Do we give willingly, or grudgingly? **II Corinthians 9:6-7**.

Tithing helps us be generous. **Proverbs 11:25**, “The liberal soul shall be made fat.”

Where Do Your Tithes Go?

(1) Some bank their tithes, waiting to give their tithes to the end-time Elijah. Yet, the Parable of the Pounds (**Luke 19:11-27**) and Parable of the Talents (**Matthew 25:14-30**) seems to apply to them. God expects us to be doing.

(2) Others give tithes only to a specific church organization, but one that they really do not believe in or trust. But, “whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” **Romans 14:23**. God wants us to be wholehearted givers, not reluctant givers.

(3) Some spread their tithes around. They give to multiple organizations and groups in the hope that it does some good. They have a good attitude.

(4) Others start their own work. They know where every dollar goes. An example is Lloyd Walker of Fairview, Missouri, who sends many Bibles to brethren in Africa. Do you have to be a church elder to do God’s Work? Philip was a “mere deacon,” yet he preached powerfully the Word of God, **Acts 6:5-6, 8:5-8, 26-40**. **Acts 8:1, 4** indicates that the entire Church, when scattered abroad due to persecution, went everywhere preaching the Word.

The downside to this approach is that small groups cannot do certain things that larger groups can, e.g., large radio and television programs, youth camps, large magazines.

Perhaps a balanced approach is a combination of (3) and (4).

Should You Take Tithes to Live On?

I have refused to live off the tithes, in spite of urging from some that I quit my job and live off the tithes. If I did this, it would likely change the nature of my service. I would need to say and do things to please men rather than please God. I might become a hireling.

Is it wrong for a Church pastor to receive a salary? No. **I Corinthians 9:9**. But, the nature and terms of this salary must not compromise him. His work ethic must be impeccable. He must be free to preach the

Truth as he understands it. He must truly be a workman. A paid Church pastor can do things that a self-supporting elder cannot do: regular travel on a preaching circuit; evangelistic meetings, television production, lots of time counseling. An ideal job for a part time paid pastor is farming, ranching, real estate sales, or insurance.

Tithing and Budgeting

Tithing should lead one to budgeting, just as observing the law of clean and unclean meats should lead to health consciousness. What is budgeting? It is planning for expenditures and saving funds for them. This takes discipline. You can do this on paper, but nowadays, computers make the job much easier. Microsoft Excel is the language of business, and is an excellent tool to help manage your finances. We use Excel to track our personal finances, as well as those of Giving & Sharing.

You make a list of all your major expense categories (about two dozen or so). Put your income in one or more of these categories, and subtract your expenditures from their proper category. The balance in expense category is the amount of money you have to spend in that category. For example, one of your largest expenditures may be your house or rent payment. If your house payment is once a month, and you get paid twice a month, then with each paycheck, you set aside $\frac{1}{2}$ of the monthly house payment in the "House Payment" category. When the time comes for the house payment, you should have the necessary funds to pay this large expenditure. You may make your home insurance payment once a year; if so, then set aside $\frac{1}{12}$ of the annual insurance payment each month. This big annual payment then is not a burden, because you have planned for it.

One of the most important categories is your tithes, first and second (and occasionally, third). DO NOT borrow from these categories!

Among the more important principles of financial planning is to avoid debt as much as possible. "The borrower is servant to the lender," **Proverbs 22:7**. Avoid credit card debt, because it is the dearest. Can you guess how long it would take to pay off a \$3,000 credit card debt, by only making the minimum payment? Thirty years! If you are purchasing your home with a loan, it is usually best to choose a 15-year loan rather

than a 30-year loan. The amount of interest on a shorter loan is vastly smaller, and the payment will not be greatly higher. They have a name for those who buy a house with an "interest only" loan: suckers! Pay off debts as soon as you can. Then, you will be on a stronger financial footing.

You do not need too much house, or too much car. A moderately priced sedan that gets good gas mileage is generally a better investment than a gas-wasting SUV costing \$35,000 or more. You can buy a good used car for around \$6,000, or a two or three-year-old car for much less than the new car price. The best car is not always the cheapest car. *Consumers Reports* car ratings help one determine the reliability and maintenance record of car models.

Since you are not buying much, if any, junk food, you can save on groceries. For example, whole grain rice is entirely different than gooey white rice, and much better for you. Lundberg organic whole grain rice can be delivered to your door directly from the grower in California. See our website for more health tips: www.giveshare.org/Health. We buy a half or quarter of a beef from a local rancher who does not use growth hormones and high chemicals. This meat is better and cheaper than store-bought beef, even with the cost of a freezer.

Young couples today do not need to start off with new furniture, a new car, and a new house. Likely, they will be starting with a college loan to pay off. Get it paid off as soon as possible, and avoid credit card debt like the plague, or your marriage might well be in jeopardy. A newly married couple starting off with big debts from college, house, multiple credit cards, etc., is headed for trouble, especially if both must work to make ends meet.

When you retire, the last thing you want is house or rent payments. When you are employed, your home may consume 25-30% of your income. When you retire, if you still have house or rent payments, 50% or more of your income is gone.

If we understand tithing, we know that our life does not consist of the material things we have. We will not worship the works of our hands. **Isaiah 2:6-9** and **James 5:1-3** describe those who do not understand tithing. Instead, let us lay up treasure in Heaven, **Matthew 6:19-21**.

Tithing should teach us to use resources wisely. God does not promise to make every

tither rich in material goods, but His Word says that the righteous will never be begging bread, **Psalm 37:25-26**. “Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right,” **Proverbs 16:8**.

The Man Who Couldn't Afford to Tithe

Herbert W. Armstrong wrote the true story of Ed Smith, who learned the lesson that tithing pays. In 1933 — the very depth of the great depression — well-driller Ed Smith had a hard time making a living.

Ed and his wife, Emma, attended services Armstrong was then holding in a one-room country schoolhouse twelve miles west of Eugene, Oregon. Ed made no profession of Christianity until later. But he attended services and went up and down the countryside discussing Bible doctrines with his professing Christian neighbors.

“You’ve got to pay tithes and obey God,” he insisted. “The Bible says so. It’s PLAIN!”

One of his neighbors became irritated.

“Look here, Ed,” the neighbor exploded, “why do you come around here trying to talk me into these things, when you don’t obey the Bible or pay tithes yourself?”

“Because,” came Ed’s quick and ready answer, “I don’t profess to be a Christian, and you do. Besides,” he added, “I can’t afford to tithe, anyway.”

Armstrong heard about the above conversation and preached a sermon on the question of whether the unconverted should obey the Ten Commandments and pay tithes, or whether, as Ed had reasoned, these things were only for Christians. Armstrong pointed out that God’s Law was put in motion for man’s good. It is the WAY of life that brings peace, happiness, prosperity; the full, abundant, interesting life; success, joy here and now, as well as eternal life through Christ for the saved.

Ed began to obey the Bible. At the very next service, Mrs. Smith smilingly handed Armstrong a one-dollar bill. “That’s Ed’s first tithe,” she said triumphantly. “We are now down to \$10, and Ed decided to start tithing with what we have on hand.”

The very next service she came to me with another happy smile.

“Here’s a five-dollar bill,” she said. “The very next day after Ed gave God’s Work a tenth of all he had, a customer who had owed him \$50 for a year came and paid up. So here’s the tithe of that \$50. After paying the

total \$6 tithe, we now have \$54 on hand instead of the \$10 we had the other day.”

It was beginning to pay — but only beginning. Soon, Ed received his first order in one or two years to drill a new well, for which he received cash payment. Before he finished that job, another one was contracted. Then, he had three or four jobs coming in at once and was forced to begin employing men to work for him.

Ed Smith was only one of many who learned by experience that one cannot afford not to pay God the tithe that belongs to Him!

Why did God ordain tithing? Was it to place increased burden and taxation upon us? It isn’t that God really needs your first tenth. He could have established some different system for carrying on His Work. But to have done so would have robbed us of the blessing that flows back to us if we are faithful in tithes and offerings!

The tither is invariably a prosperous man. not necessarily wealthy — but one whose actual needs are always supplied. Tithers, if faithful and obedient to the Eternal, are not often found in want. “Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account,” **Philippians 4:17**. God promises that His children will always have something to give, **Deuteronomy 16:16, 17**. It is only when they withhold and misappropriate tithes and offerings that He fails to prosper them. For through John He tells us, “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health,” **III John 2**.

“Honour the Lord [Eternal] with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine,” **Proverbs 3:9-10**. Try it! “Prove me now herewith,” challenges the Eternal to us, in a prophecy for our day, **Malachi 3:10**, “if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it” — financial blessings!

People are reluctant to accept their personal responsibility. It does no good to obey God’s tithing law half way, by giving tithes without knowing the tithes are doing the Work of God.

Do not support hirelings! Make your tithes count! The windows of heaven will be opened, and God’s blessings will flow upon you and others as you tithe to the Almighty’s glory and Kingdom.

— by Richard C. Nickels Ω

Worship Service Planning Cards

The Holy Spirit should guide us in everything we do, especially our Sabbath services in worship of the Almighty. But, does that mean that there should be no planning for the Sabbath School, no planning for the song service, no planning for the sermon? Are we to just arrive at whatever time we are “moved by the Spirit,” and discuss any topic that comes to mind? Human beings do not work that way. Schools cannot work that way. A certain amount of structure and planning is essential. Add to the planning, the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit, and the service works well.

In order to assist Church elders or Hosts in conducting Sabbath Services, we have prepared worship service planning cards. This is a handy planning tool to write down ahead of time, who is going to lead songs, which songs will be sung, who will give the opening prayer, sermonette, announcements, special music, sermon, closing hymn, and closing prayer. If you save the cards, you will have a history of what happened each Sabbath, and make sure that certain tasks (such as prayers) are spread around to different individuals.

Go to: www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/sabbath-service-plan.pdf, and print out a sheet of four cards. Make copies. Or, write Giving & Sharing for a free sheet.

— by Richard C. Nickels Ω

Date _____ Song Leader: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Sermonette: _____

4. _____

Announcements: _____

5. Special Music: _____

Sermon: _____

6. _____

Closing Prayer: _____

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In This Issue:

Women Should Not be Pastors

A Wild Olive Tree

Celtic Sabbath-Keeping

Importance of Tithing

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