

# infuse

SUMMER 2006

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The ancient Greek philosopher, Protagoras said, “man is the measure of all things.” In other words, each person’s own will is the standard for what is right or wrong. The morally right thing for me to do (even if it is cruel and hateful) may be right for me but it may not

be right for you and vice versa. In the 1960’s the slogan was “do your own thing” and today we have t-shirts stating “No Rules.”

Because God knows us better than we know ourselves in His infinite wisdom He gave man rules to live by. Meditate for just a moment on the chaos that would take place if everyone did as he pleased. There would certainly be devastating results.

The Ten Commandments are the moral law of God, which are as applicable today as when they were given. While the ceremonial and civil laws no longer apply to our daily lives the principles of worshipping and loving a holy God certainly do. There is a purpose and a reason behind the law of God. Jesus said Himself that He did not come to abolish the Law (Matthew 5:17-18). Trusting in the words and example of Jesus Christ sets us free. He is the source of truth; the perfect standard of what is right.

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- **How You Can Contribute to the Fall 2006 Issue of *infuse*** ●
- We’re looking for articles, short stories, artwork, poetry, essays, personal experiences and reviews from you. ●
- **GUIDELINES:** Articles should be approximately 750-1,000 words. Only electronic versions are accepted. Submissions should be centered on the next issue’s theme of **Building Character.** ●
- **DEADLINE:** All submissions must be received by **August 1, 2006.** ●
- If you are interested in contributing to the next issue of **infuse**, contact Noni McVey by writing to [infuse@cgi.org](mailto:infuse@cgi.org) or call 831-625-0231. ●
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The only way to true happiness in this world is to be obedient to God and stay true to His laws. Psalm 119 is the longest psalm and chapter in the Bible. There are twenty-two sections and one of my favorites is Psalm 119:97-104. I would encourage everyone to take the time to read each section, pray and meditate upon what you have read. If you do, you will have more understanding than the ancients of old because you will have dwelled on His law.

*Noni*  
 Noni McVey  
 Editor in Chief

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# THE Law of God



By Mike James

**M**any churches today teach that Christians are to live by faith rather than the law. Some of these same Christians teach that the law was for the nation of Israel. They believe that today's Christians don't need to observe God's law because we are saved by God's grace. I agree that we are saved by God's grace and our faith, but the law we read about in the Old Testament is still active and valid for the modern day Christian. Here's why I say this.

If God's law was merely for the nation of Israel then why do we have evidence that God's law was in force before Moses ever received the law from God? Some believe that God only gave his law to Israel after they left Egypt with Moses. But it is easy to see that God's law existed before the time of Moses. Notice Genesis 4:1-12. Here we read that Cain killed his brother Abel and that this was sinful to do (verse 7). In I John 3:4 we read sin is the transgression of the law. So God's law must have been around prior to Moses. In Genesis 18:20 we learn the sinfulness of the city of Sodom was very great. Once again this is evidence of the fact God's law was around before the time of Moses.

Another example of the law in force before Moses can be found in Genesis 39:1-9. Notice especially verse 9 where Joseph tells Potiphar's wife it would be a sin for him to go to bed with her since she was married. Abraham was said to keep God's commandments, statutes and judgments and he also predates Moses. I think it is easy to see that God's law was in place long before Moses received the law on Sinai to teach Israel.

Another interesting point to make in this discussion is even though God was working specifically with Israel the nation in the Old Testament, He still wanted other nations to follow His law. One interesting scripture in this regard is Deuteronomy 4:5-6. If Israel would have obeyed God's laws faithfully, the nations around them may have taken notice of the wisdom and understanding those laws portrayed. Exodus 20:10 also tells us God wanted any aliens who lived within

the nation of Israel to follow Israel's law too. The rulers of the earth mentioned in Psalm 2:10-12 does not refer only to Israel. These rulers are told to serve the Lord. This would entail keeping His law.

There are also many scriptures in the New Testament that make it clear that Christians today should be keeping God's laws. One of the most compelling is in Matthew 5:17-19. Here Jesus tells us that God's law will not pass away until heaven and earth pass away. It also says that anyone (all people) who does not keep the law of God will be in a worse situation than those who do keep God's law. Some other scriptures that promote the law in the New Testament are in the book of Romans.

In Romans 2:13 we are told we must not only hear the law but we should do the law. Notice Romans 7:12, this tells us the law is holy, just and good. Now if the law is all that why would we not want to keep the law or why would the law be only for Jews? Also read Romans 8:4. Here it says the laws requirements are righteous. Once again why would we not want to follow something that is righteous? Also remember, Paul wrote this letter to the Romans who probably had a number of believers in there group who were not Jewish.

It is also imperative to remember the law shows us what sin is and God wants us to keep away from sin. In order to stay away from sin we would need to understand the law. In the book of Romans we read in chapter 4:15 that where there is no law there is no transgression. Also in Romans 5:13 it says there is no sin without law. In other words there is no way we can't have the law because the law helps us understand how God wants us to live.

The prophet Isaiah provides us some insight on this subject. In Isaiah 2:2-3 we read about what will be happening during the Kingdom of God on earth. So the context of this scripture is in the future. Notice it states the law will go out from Zion. This could only be referring to God's law. It also says many peoples will come and learn of God's ways which would include His laws. Here we see even in the future God's law will continue to be taught to all people, not just physical Jews.

One final point to make in this discussion is the New Testament teaches us Christians are now spiritual Israel. Romans 2:28-29 teaches that being a Jew is not about your physical nature anymore, but your spiritual nature. In other words, if you are a follower of Christ, you are now a spiritual Jew and part of that new covenant with God. God's law is still part of His new covenant (Hebrews 10:16) with mankind.

# LEGALISM

## A path to right, but not to righteousness

By Tyler Barnett

According to Dictionary.com, legalism is a “strict, literal adherence to the law or to a particular code, as of religion or morality.” Legalism provides social guidelines that are applicable to everyday life and religion. Its principles teach us to keep our elbows off the table and to love our neighbor as ourself. A legalist may know and follow every law there is to know and by definition strive to do so because it is “right.” These laws, however right, moral, or Holy, do not provide for a means of salvation because “no one is justified before God by the law” (Galatians 3:11).

God commands His followers to do many things: love one another, be baptized, keep His Holy Days, etc. However, He does not give these commandments as requirements for salvation. The formula for salvation is fairly simple: Jesus. The additional laws, particularly in the Old Testament as well as the Bible as a whole, are guidelines for a successful walk with Christ. But the formula does not end there. One must know the importance of Laws and the absolute importance of Christ. In order to grow and be a fruitful Christian, the Bible gives Laws and examples on how to live. A follower of Christ will have a desire to do what is right by the Laws of the Old Testament as well as by Christ.

The beauty of the Bible is that they never contradict each other. Biblical Laws

can be easy to understand - “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13), while others seem to go against human nature - “Love your enemy” (Matthew 5:43). Whether the rules make sense to man or not, we are commissioned to follow them. Legalists take this commission to the next level and claim in them can be found salvation.

The belief that salvation can be found in the Law is a fallacy. In the third chapter of the book of Galatians, Paul scolds the Galatians for their legalism. He asks with zeal, “Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard?” The Spirit was obviously at work in their community and had been shown in many miracles; however, the Galatians continued to argue the absolute necessity of the Law. Paul warns the Galatians and goes as far as to say, “All who rely in observing the law are under a curse” (Galatians 3:10). He gives an Old Testament reference, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” This sharp point must have proven his case against the illusions of legalism but Paul continues with an example of Abraham to pierce their layers of arguments.

Abraham was accepted as a righteous man; however, the laws of Moses, which the Galatians kept religiously, had not been recorded until 430 years later. How could Abraham be righteous if he was not following the Mosaic Laws? Paul explains

# THE LAW OF LOVE

By Margie Marang

the covenant God created with Abraham, that "The righteous will live by faith," was fulfilled not only through Moses but also in Christ. Abraham was righteous because he believed; we too are righteous because we believe, not because we follow Laws. On the other hand, this is not an excuse to discard God's Laws completely. One might say, "If I am cursed for following the Laws, I won't follow any at all (or maybe just those that make sense to me)." The scripture says, "All who RELY in observing the law.." It is obvious the Galatians were missing a crucial element. They were following God's Laws and living according to the principles of the Old Testament, but they did not acknowledge the importance of Christ. One might then say, "Well I have Jesus, I don't need all of these rules." This is true in essence, but empty in principle.

If someone truly believes Christ died for his sins and has been baptized, it is my interpretation of the scriptures and strong belief that it does not end here. On the contrary, this is where it begins! I believe once someone has the Holy Spirit, they will have a desire to follow all of God's Commandments. Salvation is not necessarily a completion of all of God's Laws, but with Salvation comes a desire to know and follow His Laws.

One must be careful, however, not to judge others. It is not Man's responsibility to say, "You don't follow these certain rules, Christians are supposed to keep these rules, you're not a Christian." Man's perception of a follower of Christ has become tragically skewed by legalism. Although we know there are certain characteristics of someone who knows the truth, the absence of a few of these characteristics does not allow us to make judgments on the faith of these people. We must continually remind ourselves where the heart of salvation is kept.

The Laws of the Bible are direct commandments to each and every one of us. Those who choose to follow them exhibit a character that can be found in a Christian. Be weary of legalism and the path it follows. One must find a balance in his life, following the Laws of God without forgetting the essential ingredient of Christ's sacrifice. **i**

*"Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him and saying 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all you mind; This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets'" (Matthew 22:35-40).*

**W**e can see the law consists of Love. Love God, Love your fellow man. What's your reason for keeping the Law of God? Is it just to be justified? Do you think that makes you right with God?

Read Romans 3:20-24 and Galatians 2:16.

The Bible tells us what sin is. Jesus said, "If you love me, "Keep my Commandments" (John 14:15). Just keeping the physical commandments will gain nothing with God. The reason one keeps the law is it gives direction for living a holy life. Keeping the law shows respect for God and for fellowman. Keeping His law gains one everything.

What do little children like to do? Little children like to please their fathers. "Then Jesus called a little child to Him. Set him in the midst of them, and said," Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:2-3).

Before conversion one isn't trying to please your Heavenly Father. After conversion and baptism and the receiving of God's Holy Spirit you will become like the little child and you'll want to please your Heavenly Father. Because we are His children, God loves us so much He doesn't want a one of us to miss out on eternal life. So He gives us to Jesus Christ to take care of us.

Read Hebrews 2:11-13, John 17:1-2 and 1 John 3:1-3.

Who sanctifies? *Jesus Christ.*  
Who's being sanctified? *That's us.*

God loves us so much He gives us to Jesus to take care of us, so we won't loose out on Eternal life. "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day" (John 6:37-39).

God doesn't even think we sin because of what Jesus Christ has done. "Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him" (1 John 3:6). "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13). So let us be sure we keep those two great commandments in mind.

Love God with all your heart, your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself. If we do this there is no way we can miss out on the Kingdom of God. **i**

# Are We Galatians?

By Jeff Reed

A few years ago I was invited to teach a Bible study to a group of people in a Sunday keeping church. The topic I presented was the Sabbath. I talked about the biblical and historical origins of the Sabbath and God's commands requiring its observance. I went over numerous New Testament scriptures that support Sabbath keeping by Christians today. The group I presented the scriptures too seemed very polite and listened carefully to everything I covered. After I was finished they began asking me several questions. All of their questions were related to their belief that God's Law was done away with. They used several passages from Galatians to support their position, such as:

"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse" (Galatians 3:10).

"Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Galatians 3:11).

"But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles?" (Galatians 4:9).

"You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

Taken out of context these passages and others seem to support the view that the Law is done away with and that by keeping it you are displeasing God.

The group that I had the Bible

study with was not persuaded by my presentation. Their actual agenda was to try to persuade me. They believed I was wrong and a modern day Galatian.

## THEY CALL US GALATIANS!

The vast majority of professing Christians believe the apostle Paul taught in his letter to the Galatians that either the entire the law was done away with or that certain parts of the law, such as the Sabbath, Holy Day observance, and dietary laws were done away with for Christians. In researching for this article I found that every commentary, dictionary, or encyclopedia article on Galatians supported these views. There are many books written by Christian apologists that label our Church as a cult, a modern day Galatianized Church, because we keep God's Law. But just because the majority of people believe something does not make it the truth! A careful reading of Galatians not only dismisses the belief of God's Law being done away with, but it reinforces the fact that it is necessary to be kept.

## THE TRUE STORY OF GALATIANS

Galatia was a Roman province in Asia Minor that included several churches mostly comprised of non-Jewish converts to Christianity. These Galatians had been baptized according to the command in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." They received the Holy Spirit and entered into the New Covenant with God. The terms of this Covenant is if one repents, is baptized, and lives a life of faith then Jesus will place him into His Kingdom when He returns. It includes a

life of overcoming in which God's Law is internalized and goes beyond physical observance to include attitude and intent.

These Spirit filled Christians in Galatia were encountering false Jewish teachers who were teaching them they had too be circumcised to be saved. This wasn't logical since these Galatians had already been given the Holy Spirit. Gentile converts had to be circumcised to enter into the Old Covenant (Exodus 12:48), but entrance into the New Covenant for everyone is baptism and the laying on of hands, which is figuratively a circumcision of the heart. These false teachers were teaching the Galatians should be circumcised, and that salvation only comes through a strict physical observance of God's Law.

Paul writes:

"Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law. Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith.' The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, 'The man who does these things will live by them.' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3: 10-14).

It is impossible for a physical human being to keep the law perfectly. So the premise of these false teachers

was wrong. Because we all fail we are all under the “Curse” of the law that is the death penalty. No amount of strict observance or physical works can remove that penalty. Only through faith in Christ and His sacrifice can we be forgiven and made just. But just because we are forgiven, we shouldn’t turn back and break the law, that wouldn’t make sense.

**PURPOSE OF THE LAW**

Paul writes, “What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come” (Galatians 3:19).

The law was added because of transgressions. The best way I can explain this is through something I once noticed in a classroom. I was in a classroom for elementary age children and I saw a sign hanging

on the wall that reads, “Rules of The Classroom.” Underneath the heading were several rules such as “No Hitting,” “No Running,” “No Gum Chewing,” and “No Hair Pulling.” I imagine there was a time when the teacher of that classroom had not yet posted these rules. I also imagine that before this time there were several kids hitting, running, gum chewing, and hair pulling. Before these rules or “laws” were posted these actions were inherently wrong behavior. I can further imagine the teacher got fed up with all of this misbehavior to the point she had to post these rules. These rules then served to identify to these children their actions were wrong and probably included a penalty to enforce them. In the same way God’s Law serves to point out our sins.

**PAUL UPHOLDS LAW KEEPING**

Once we enter into the New Covenant we must avoid sinning by applying God’s law to how we live. “If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God” (Galatians 2:17-19). God empowers us with His Spirit to go beyond keeping the mere letter of the law. He transforms our character and makes His Law become part of our nature. Paul in his letter to the Galatians confirms this. He explains that to be led by the Spirit of God is the only way to truly keep the law. “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Galatians 5:16). i

**The Law of God is like Guardrails on a Road**

By Dale Dupont

Sometimes it is easier to understand a subject if we liken it to something we know and then compare it with other things we understand. Many times understanding a physical idea helps us better understand a spiritual idea.

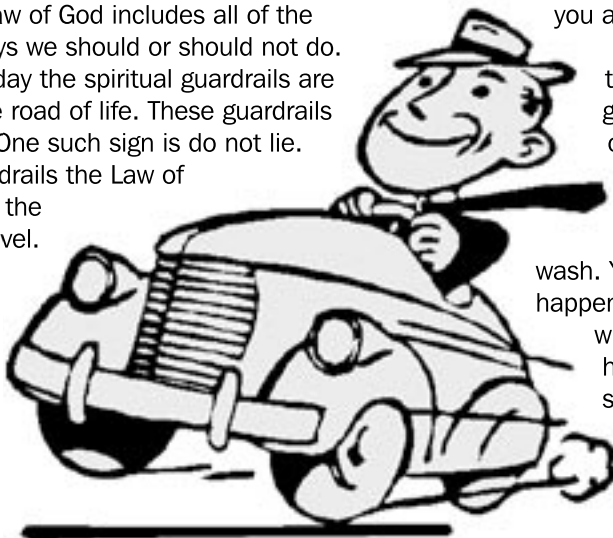
So let’s say your life is like a car, and the road you are traveling on is, “The Way of Life.” There are no off road vehicles. You are moving forward toward the Kingdom of God. The engine in your car is faith. The fuel in your tank is grace. In this analogy then the Law of God is the guardrails alongside the road. The Law of God includes all of the things in the Bible God says we should or should not do. Unlike the road we see today the spiritual guardrails are alongside every part of the road of life. These guardrails also have signs on them. One such sign is do not lie.

Just like physical guardrails the Law of God marks out the side of the road where it is safe to travel. If we run into or break the guardrails we incur damage to our cars and to our lives. Our minds and hearts and bodies get all bent out of proper shape and don’t run well. The more we travel on the wrong side of the

guardrails the more damage we do to our selves. Also, the less joy we will have experienced if we would have stayed on the right side of the guardrails.

When we are off the road of life the guardrails with their signs points us back to the right way. We need to Passover the guardrails right away to the road of life. The sign might read, stop lying, speak the true and be honest. (Col 3:9, Ex 20:16). When we are on the road of life the signs on the guardrails say continue in the truth and be honest. Do not lie because it only causes harm to you and others.

On a physical road it is very clear at times, if we cross over the guardrail and get off road we would damage our cars. At other times we don’t see a big guardrail stopping us. It does not seem that bad, it might even be fun and inviting. After all you can just wash off the dirt in a car wash. Yet spiritually no matter what we think is happening, even if it seems fun, being on the wrong side of the guardrails, always does harm to our life. The Law of God is our spiritual guardrail defining the boundary of the road of life. If we are wise we follow Jesus because he never broke the Law of God. i



# Jesus: My Everything and My All

By Zion Hezekiah

He is the Alpha & the Omega, which is the beginning and the end  
He is the Horn of Salvation and He is my best friend  
He is the Light of the world, He is The Chief Cornerstone  
The earth is His footstool and heaven is His Throne  
He is The truth, The way, The Eternal Bread of Life  
He is my rod and my staff, my armament against strife

He is The author and the finisher of my faith  
His words, they are sweeter than honey  
His promises are unconditionally assured  
His love, it can never ever fail

He is the Head of the Church, and the Lord of the Sabbath  
He is my rose in a garden of thorns  
He is my lily in the valley of the shadow of death  
He Himself gives man life and the divine gift of breath

He is the same yesterday, today and forevermore  
He can never fail. He said the gates of Hell, they shall not prevail  
So I stand firm on the promises of our soon coming king  
As I cling to His words and take shelter under His wings

By the words of His mouth were all things created  
His return to the earth has my heart keenly elated

To green pastures and springs of living water  
My Good Shepherd leads me tenderly along;  
His righteousness abounds, my soul is fed and content,  
His Holy Spirit, it allows me to circumvent sin,  
Which is the transgression of His law

Like a quenching tongue that thirsts in the midst of the spring  
My soul aches for the love of my Savior and King.  
His love is eternal it can never wane or die  
I will always keep Him as the apple of my eye.

In the highest valley, and the deepest sea, He was always there for me  
My shelter in a time of storm, the refuge amongst mine enemies  
The light in my dark world, He led me to freedom  
In the world I have distress, but in Him I have rest  
For He has overcome the world  
So be not dismayed for He is our Eternal aid  
The king of kings, the prince of peace  
In the Lamb of God, our sins released  
In Adam all die  
We were all dead in sin  
Until the King in His glory, with His grace came in  
In to the world not to condemn  
But to save  
In Him I am no longer a slave of sin  
But I am free to win  
The battle in this life  
There is no more strife  
But peace in His kingdom  
Peace in You Jesus  
Peace in You  
Peace



# MOM AND DAD

By Brian Christensen

The fifth Commandment from God states, “Honor your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12). Without respect and discipline, society would be total anarchy. Basic respect for leadership, elders, law enforcement, rules, etc., is necessary for survival of a human culture. God designed us and knows the foundation for His plan begins with our parents. They biologically create the being, which develops into us. Our parents care for our needs, raise us in a way they believe is correct, and prepare us for our human life. How we choose to live our life will ultimately help or hurt our judgment into the Kingdom of God.

God did not have to command parents to honor their children because it is instinctive. Children however, will tend to “break free” of their parents at some point in time. As we begin to grow and mature, there is a natural need to be independent. God understands this need and the importance of our love and respect for our parents. It must last as long as our parents love for us, which is forever.

Jesus shows us this respect in His treatment of His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. Even though Jesus is our Savior, when He was here on earth, He needed Mary and Joseph to raise Him as a child. They provided Him with a solid Torah based home and family. They all kept the Sabbaths and the Feasts together. As Jesus grew, He became more mature and independent to fulfill His mission. Jesus loved and respected His parents during His entire life on earth.

## SHOULD WE HATE OUR PARENTS?

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). When Jesus tells us to “hate” our mother and father, the message for us is to place God first in our lives. This statement also warns parents not to love their children more than God. Paul also states, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother” (Ephesians 6:1,2). Children are to obey while under their parents’ care, but the responsibility to honor parents is for life.

Children are not commanded to disobey God in obeying their parents. God must be the most important person in our life, above all else. If our family situations are not perfect, we should focus on God. We can have extended blessings from God on behalf of our parents or a family member, however, at some point in our life, we must accept God’s way and stand firmly on our belief in Him. Our parents cannot save us.

Adam and Eve had a very unique situation, in which God was their biological and spiritual Father. We can learn about

God’s expectations of our relationship with our parents by His relationship with Adam and Eve. God became aware of disobedience very early and understood our perfection could only be achieved through the trials and tribulations of life. He could not make us perfect, we had to become perfect. The disobedience found in the Garden continued throughout Genesis until today. Parents can create and care for children, however, they cannot create our character. They can have tremendous influence on our character. The final outcome is developed by our independence and personal belief in God. As we mature, our spiritual bond transforms from our physical parents to our spiritual Father. God uses very strong words to emphasize this effect because of how important it is to our future and perfection. It is equally important that the love and respect for our parents does not erode beyond the spiritual attachment to God.

*continued on page 14*





THE  
EVIDENCE  
HEBREW 13:17

# Feast

Upon what evidence does one base his or her belief in God the Father and Jesus Christ? With the knowledge and insights given to us today, our ability to believe and see our Creator God and a risen Savior, is overwhelming. Never, as Paul and Barnabas taught, does God leave Himself without testimony. Are you ready to make the confession from the heart to commit to God? The evidence is abundant that He is at work in your life, community and world.

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# of Tabernacles

## Myrtle Beach, SC 2006

Join us in Myrtle Beach, SC for sermons and discussions directed to you—the young adult. Interact with other young adults who have the same faith as you, enjoy uplifting music and participate in activities of service.

### WHAT EXACTLY IS INFUSE?

Infuse 2006 Feast of Tabernacles is designed to show you how your faith commitments have an impact on your life. Infuse is a program created for you. Sermons will be on topics that are relevant to you. Plus, uplifting music, group discussions and activities.

### WHO IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

The sermons and discussions will be directed at young adults in their late teens, 20's and early 30's (both married and single). However, everyone is welcome.

### WILL INFUSE BE AT OTHER FEAST SITES?

No, Infuse will only be at Myrtle Beach, SC in 2006.

### WHERE WILL SERVICES BE HELD?

Infuse services will be held at a facility within walking distance of the main services. Main services will be at the Springmaid Beach Resort and Conference Center, 3200 South Ocean Boulevard, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577.

### FESTIVAL COORDINATOR:

Mike Nolen

### INFUSE MINISTER/COORDINATOR:

Mike James: (301) 916-6767

Tentative schedule. Subject to change.

<b>SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7TH</b>	
	No Infuse Service
1:00-2:15pm	Infuse Kick Off Lunch For young adults in their late teens, 20's and early 30's (both singles and married couples) and the ministry.
<b>SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8TH</b>	
9:00-9:30am	Infuse Morning Social
9:30am	Infuse Service The Evidence: Introduction by Mr. Mike James
2:00-5:00pm	Beach Party and Volleyball Tournament For the entire congregation, hosted by Infuse.
<b>MONDAY, OCTOBER 9TH</b>	
9:00-9:30am	Infuse Morning Social
9:30am	Infuse Service You are the Evidence
TBA	Community Service Project Street Reach Ministries
6:30pm	Infuse Dinner at Broadway at the Beach
<b>TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10TH</b>	
9:00-9:30am	Infuse Morning Social
9:30am	Infuse Service The Bible and Science is the Evidence by Mr. Jeff Reed
7:30-9:00pm	Church Service Project: Homework Center Young adults will offer tutoring to assist school-age children complete homework during the Bible Study.
<b>WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11TH</b>	
9:00-9:30am	Infuse Morning Social
9:30am	Infuse Service The Spirit is the Evidence
1:00-3:00pm	Women's Bible Study For all women. Hosted by Infuse.
<b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12TH</b>	
9:00-9:30am	Infuse Morning Social
9:30am	Infuse Service Personal Testimonies
8:00-9:00pm	Dance Lessons
9:00-11:00pm	Family Dance
<b>FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13TH</b>	
9:00-9:30am	Infuse Morning Social
9:30am	Infuse Service The Evidence: Conclusion
<b>SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14TH</b>	
	No Infuse Service

# TRINITY... WHERE?

By Loren M. Chamberlain

**M**any point to Matthew 28:19 as proof of the trinity simply because it mentions our Father, our Savior, and the Holy Spirit. However, it does not imply in any way that the Holy Spirit is a third person of the Godhead, and this is where the so-called Trinity doctrine goes wrong, Wrong, WRONG!

Matthew 28:19 says, "into the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The Greek word translated "in" is "eis," which is more correctly translated "into" (see Strong's Concordance, word number 1519, or Young's Greek Lexicon Section EIS). If the intention had been to render the passage as it is in the King James, the Greek word "en," meaning "in" would undoubtedly have been used.

We are then actually baptized *into* something. But what? A person, or a group of persons? No! We are baptized into the name of the Father, etc. What is His name? It is God. God has revealed there is a Divine Being referred to as "Father," and another as "Son." These are *family* names. We can become children of God, actual members of the Divine Family, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 6: 17-18). Hebrews 2:10 and Romans 8: 14-15 speak of many potential members of the God Family, not just two or three! Christ is already very God (Hebrews 1: 8-10), and our potential is to actually become God also, strange as it might seem (Compare John 10: 34; 1 John 3: 2; and Hebrews 2: 6-11, which explain man's destiny).

Therefore, we can see the emphasis of Matthew 28: 19 is actually to show *God is a growing family*\_not limited to any specific number of beings.

## HOLY SPIRIT OF CREATION

God is a spirit (John 4:24). God is **12**

Just where in the Bible is the Trinity mentioned? Even though we might search diligently for the word "trinity" in the Bible, it will not be found.

also Holy (1 Peter 1:16). Therefore, He is the personification of the Holy Spirit. Since Christ is also very God, He, too, is a "Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:17). While the Holy Spirit was used in the original creation, it is also something we need for salvation and to live a Christian life.

Matter can exist in various states, and have different uses or purposes in each state. Water for example, can be used differently when in the solid state as opposed to the liquid state. Spirit also has different "states." One of its states is the very composition of God. "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). The Father and the Son, though composed of spirit, each are separate and have definite form and shape. They look like men (or we should say we look like them, for it is we who have been created in the image and likeness of God), with eyes, ears, arms, head, and torso, etc. Many Bible passages confirm this (Genesis 1:26-27).

God's Spirit according to the scriptures permeates the entire universe much the same way the atmosphere permeates the earth's surface (Psalms 139:7-11). As energy can be used to change matter from a solid to a liquid, so God can send forth His Spirit to apparently create *ex nihilo*, something by human reckoning, out of nothing. God transformed this creative energy into the physical world we see around us. "When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth" (Psalms 104: 30).

Notice, in all of God's creative work, He never "*sent forth a person*" of the Godhead! "...And the Spirit of

God moved upon the face of the water" (Genesis 1:2).

This "Spirit" obviously was an energy source used in the creative work, as a tool by the member of the Godhead that actually did the creating.

The Scriptures clearly show in both the Old and New Testament that Jesus Christ is the actual personage who did the creating. He did it by "Speaking." He is called the "Word" who made all things (John 1:1,3). The Greek word translated "Word" in these verses is "Logos," and it literally means "Spokesman," or "one who speaks" (Colossians 1: 15-17; Revelation 4: 11; Hebrews 1: 2, 10). These Scriptures reveal Jesus Christ as the one who actually performed the work of creation;

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the reath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." (Psalms 33:6-9)

If the Spirit is a person as is commonly supposed, did the creating, why did it not speak for itself? And where then does Christ fit and enter into the creation picture. The only possible method or way to avoid a head on conflict in the above scriptures is to admit that the "Spirit" is the power

Christ used, the source of energy out of which the physical creation was brought into being.

The Book of Acts plainly shows the same creative power Christ used to create the Universe is the same power the apostles were endued with from on high. It shows this power to be the Holy Spirit that was made available to mankind in general for the first time on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 8; Acts 2).

**THE TRINITY AS A MYSTERY!**

Most religious leaders are very

vague when it comes to actually explaining, clearly and precisely, what the Holy Spirit is, and why they support the Trinity Doctrine. Often the term “mystery” crops up. What is a “mystery,” religiously speaking?

The Catholic Encyclopedia devotes an entire subsection to the subject of the “Trinity as a mystery” (Catholic Encyclopedia, Trinity, p52). Following are some quotes from that section;

“A mystery is a truth which we are not merely incapable of discovering apart from Divine Revelation, but which, even when revealed, remains

‘hidden by the veil of faith and enveloped, so to speak, by a kind of darkness.’”

“As regards the vindication of a mystery, the office of the natural reason is solely to show that it contains no intrinsic impossibility, that any objection urged against it on the score that it violates the laws of thought is invalid.”

“...the Christian Faith contains mysteries strictly so called. All theologians admit that the doctrine of the Trinity is of the number of these. Indeed, of all revealed

*continued on page 14*

By Sarah Hoeck

## *Important Enough*

**O**ne bright and sunny morning, you are just sitting at home, reading a fascinating novel, when your parents walk in. They look at you, and immediately in unison sit down. They start to tell you about a financial decision they have made concerning you. They are giving you everything they have. There’s only one catch. You see, if they give you everything in their possession, they would have nothing. They need to survive. One can’t survive on nothing. So, only under one condition will they give you all they own. You have to give them ten percent back. You would still take it, wouldn’t you?

Trying to count how many things Jesus has done for you would take forever and you still wouldn’t be done. There are simply too many to count. He has suffered so much for you. He went through terrifying ordeals so you could have eternal life!

No one knows pain like Jesus Christ our Lord. No one could even try to imagine what He had to go through so you could have everlasting life with God. Now, of course, everything He did for you is free. When He died on the stake for your sins, He didn’t expect you to pay Him for what He did. He bravely did this out of the kindness of His heart because it was a part of the plan. But, personally, I feel somewhat, if not completely, obligated to give Christ something back in return. I mean He did die for you and for me.

In the whole entire Bible, God doesn’t ask you to do much. No, He asks for just a few things: Try your best, be your best, make good decisions, and among others, give Him ten percent of what you have (as in possessions and money). Now, that last one doesn’t sound too hard. Why should it be? It actually sounds like it’s the easiest of the four listed. God gives you everything you own/have so ten percent is not that big of a deal. Right? And, please, understand you aren’t required to do these things. But,

let’s just say, it would be in your best interest if you did.

In Deuteronomy 6:16, God spoke to the Israelites through Moses. He said three times a year, a person shall go up to the Lord your God and “shall not appear before him empty-handed.” Did you know you’re stealing from God if you don’t give Him His ten percent back? It’s as if you’re in this faraway place where you can go into any bank and take as much money as you want without being arrested if you give ten percent back of the amount you took. But if you don’t give the right amount (or more) back then you will be charged with theft and will be put in prison forever.

When you steal from God, you aren’t just stealing from a bank. You’re robbing something much bigger, much greater, much more powerful. You won’t be put in a jail. And if you’re punished right away, it’s most likely not going to be severe. No, you will be punished much later. You’ll be punished after you die. You’ll be punished during the final judgment, when it really matters. And if you want to know what type of consequences you’ll receive, just read the book of Revelation.

So, truthfully, tell me what you think. Is it worth it to steal from God? Is it worth the consequences? Is the small amount of money that you save (which God actually gave to you in the first place) worth the punishment in the end? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you apparently want to hear the words no one should. “I never knew you.” Is that what you want? Is that ending better than the other? Is that the ending you truly want to receive after all you’ve been through, after all the suffering Jesus has been through for you? Because, personally, I would much rather hear the following: “Well done, my good and faithful servant. You may now enter into the Kingdom of God.” **■**

*continued from page 09*

We cannot seek or rely on our parents for salvation; however, we can learn so much about life from them and grow spiritually together as a true family. Unfortunately, this carnal world causes some situations to occur where this is not possible. Despite these situations, God comes first and the love for our parents must always remain. God feels so strongly about this, He made it a Commandment. A parent does not always mean “biological.” Anyone who raises children in the ways of God and shares wisdom, discipline, love towards their growth, is a parent. Joseph did not create Jesus biologically, but he was Jesus’ earthly father and loved Him dearly.

There are some basic functions of parenting that are common and universal. In addition, there are numerous other decisions that parents have to make which are unique to a specific situation. Parents must make these choices based on several criteria. Their choice is always what they feel is best. It may not be the same decision as other parents would make. We should not be envious of other families or friends. God tells us to be thankful for our parents and respectful of their decisions. Many times the choices our

parents make are not what we want or like. It is important to remember they are responsible for our well-being and through God’s guidance they are making the decisions they feel are best. God holds children in a very special place of His heart. He is very upset with anyone who does harm to a child. This would also include our parents and places a huge responsibility on them. Paul tells us “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

God is our Heavenly Father and Jesus is our Elder Brother. Through Jesus we can enter the Kingdom of our Father. The path begins here on earth where we must perfect ourselves in the ways of God. Our earthly parents nurture us through God’s spirit and care for us until we are able to stand firmly on our belief in Him. Then we must place God first in our life and follow His way. At times, life can seem overwhelming. Remember we have two sets of parents to help us. Place God above all others. Honor your mother and father. These actions will help forge the framework of our faith and prepare us for parenthood. **i**

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*continued from page 13*

truth, this is the most impenetrable to reason.”

“The true profession of the mystery of the Trinity is to own that *we do not comprehend it.*”

The [Catholic Encyclopedia](#) even makes this admission, “For nowhere in the Old Testament do we find any indication of a Third Person...” and “the Twofold personality (of Father and Son) is strenuously asserted by the prophets” (Catholic Encyclopedia, Trinity, p49).

There are numerous Encyclopedia articles that give ample evidence of the struggles for pure doctrine that occurred in the first three centuries after the death and resurrection of Christ. A list from the [Encyclopedia Americana](#), dealing with the great controversy over the trinity include articles entitled, “Arius,” “Arianism,” “Athanasius,” “Creeds and Confessions,” “Filioque,” “Nicaea, Councils of,” “Nicene Creed,” and “Trinity Doctrine.” This is only a partial list.

#### **WORDS OF THE APOSTLES**

Paul spoke about listening to such “philosophers” and their nonsensical views. “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

Before the New Testament canon was even complete, Jude, one of the half brothers of Jesus, made a plea that the church leaders in his day would “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). In the next few verses, he spoke of men who like Simon Magus,

had “crept in unawares” and corrupted the true doctrines even at that early date.

The apostle John affirmed this fact when he wrote, before one hundred A.D., “that many deceivers are entered into the world” (2 John 7).

The Bible, as one might expect, labels the source of this deception in plain language. The apostle John calls this false church “the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9). Further he goes on to call it “Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.” Her false doctrines have come down through the ages from their inception as part of the dogma of the Babylonian Mystery Religion. However they have been given Christian names to give them a façade of righteousness. All nations have been taken in and deceived by her abominable doctrines. As she has a name of “mystery,” so does she label her doctrines “mysteries.” The Trinity is so labeled.

The real truth is the truth of God is NOT a mystery. Paul tells us that we are not to be ignorant and lack understanding (Ephesians 4: 17-18). He also tells us we can understand everything we need to know about God, including His very nature and Godhead, by looking to the physical creation, for it is modeled after the spiritual, “since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:19-20). **i**

# The Da Vinci Code



**SYNOPSIS:** Esteemed American symbologist Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) and French cryptologist Sophie Neveu (Audrey Tautou) dodge an international manhunt in order to clear Langdon's name of murder, racing through history and art in the quest to uncover a secret that could destroy the Christian faith.

## GOSPEL FILTER:

The Da Vinci Code will undoubtedly start conversations—albeit ones you might rather avoid. First off, you must immediately tackle the numerous outright lies about Jesus and the Christian faith that the film promotes. Author Dan Brown flat out claims on the first page of his book that “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” This is an insidious, bold faced, easily disproved lie for anyone who takes two minutes to investigate. (Unfortunately, very few take those precious two minutes, choosing instead to completely ingest the Jesus fabrications.) Christ IS the divine Son of God. He DID die on the cross for our sins. Jesus DID NOT get married. He DID NOT institute goddess worship or set up Mary Magdalene as head of the church. Christianity (at least that preached by Jesus) DOES NOT oppress women and minorities. And on and on and on. There are literally dozens of books currently on the market as well as countless Web sites refuting Brown's ludicrous claims about Christianity and Christ, so there's not much sense in me going to detail here since the ground has already been adequately plowed. If you don't already have a Da Vinci-busting resource at hand, go to [www.jesusanddavinci.com](http://www.jesusanddavinci.com) for an excellent overview as well as links to in-depth information.

It's amazing to me that a fictional beach read could cast such serious doubts in the minds of millions concerning the historical accuracy of the Bible, the most studied and dissected text in history. God's inspired Word has remained unimpeachable despite numerous attempts by vehement critics to disprove and disparage its historical veracity. (The irony comes from the fact that Dan Brown's entire premise of the Priory of Sion being founded 1099 AD in Jerusalem by Jesus' blood relatives to protect their secret is based on fraudulent documents proven to be written in 1956.) Over 5,000 partial or complete copies of the New Testament exist, dating to as early as the third century. (In academia, that's as close as you get to actually sitting by the author while he writes when it comes to ancient texts.)

The Gospels especially stand above reproach.

## THINK ABOUT IT:

- What statements about Jesus or the church did the film make that you believe are false? Which ones do you believe to be true?
- Why might a person believe the movie's claims of truth over 2,000 years of history and scholarship concerning the Bible? How might the film's lies challenge a person's faith? prevent a seeker from investigating the claims of Christ?
- How can you engage someone in a productive conversation about the film?
- What did the film claim about the New Testament and the Gospels? What evidence is there to support such claims? What evidence supports the Gospels to be true?
- How much historical evidence exists concerning the writing and assembling of the Bible? Does this give you comfort? Why or why not?
- How have you experienced the teachings of Jesus to be true in your own life? What support do you have personally that he is the Son of God? How can you be assured Jesus truly is who the Bible claims him to be?

Written while eyewitnesses still lived to corroborate or correct the account, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have always been central to Christian faith and understanding. Their authenticity or accuracy was never debated, even when the apostles—actual participants in the events—were alive. To assert, as the film does, that these four books were chosen by Emperor Constantine in order to paint Jesus as supernatural and oppress women stands as patently false. Simply point out to your young people that two thousand years of academic scholarship have failed to debunk the Bible (and Gospels in particular). What makes them think a mediocre writer could do so with a single piece of pulp fiction?

The Catholic Church bears the brunt of this disgusting film's slander. That our brothers in Christ (who gave Protestants their Christian heritage, don't forget) could be so incredibly maligned stretches the imagination. Painted as murderous, deceitful, power hungry, and bent on the oppression of women, the Catholic Church suffers one of the most slanderous attacks in recent memory. Is there any proof to these allegations? Better yet, has any institution besides the Church done more good throughout history? Sure, there are some missteps and black marks, but we're only fallible humans. In the balance, God's instrument for change has done far more to make life on planet Earth better, bringing his kingdom closer to fruition, than any combination of manmade organizations. We must stand beside our fellow brother and sisters in Christ by pointing out these distortions and inaccuracies, challenging anyone who would impugn the church's reputation. ■

**Q** The Sabbath is not  
• mentioned in any of the  
• lists of evils or lists of virtues in the New Testament.  
**Doesn't this suggest that the Fourth Commandment is no longer in force?**

**A** It is a mistake to view the New Testament as a "systematic theology" or "statement of beliefs" or "creed" compiled by the apostles for the purpose of providing church members with an exposition on all the laws, commandments, and doctrines of the New Covenant. The church already had access to the Old Testament, and believed it to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

One reason the Sabbath is rarely mentioned in the epistles is that there was no conflict over which day to keep, or whether to keep it. At first, the church was entirely Jewish. Aside from the Samaritans, who were also Sabbathkeepers, the earliest non-Jewish Christians were people biblical historians describe as "God-fearers." They were gentiles who, though uncircumcised, worshiped the God of the Hebrews. Many of them first heard the gospel while in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (see Acts 13:14, 16, 17, 18; 14:1, 16:13, 14; 17:24; 18:4). Thus, the church, from its foundation, was a Sabbath-keeping church.

The silence of the New Testament epistles on the subject of the Sabbath, if anything, supports the Sabbathkeepers' position. Had the church with its Jewish leaders, thousands of Jewish converts, and growing number of God-fearing gentiles not been keeping the Sabbath, it is extremely doubtful that we would find such silence in the New Testament. Surely the Pharisaic believers who caused such a stir over circumcision (Acts 15) would have vigorously and loudly voiced their objection had the early Christians abandoned the Sabbath. Yet, no such objection is recorded in the New Testament. Large sections of the Old Testament make no mention of the Sabbath, though we know that the Sabbath was in full force and was being observed during the times those sections were written. Therefore, New Testament silence on this subject by no means indicates that the apostles and early Christians regarded the Fourth Commandment as obsolete.

# GOD'S GREAT & MAGNIFICENT PLAN

By Rory Ries

**H**ave you ever heard of the seven annual Holy Days? If you have, can you name all seven? God has given his children a beautiful blessing and the blessing is knowing about the Holy Days and being able to keep them each passing year. They start in the spring and they end in the fall. They are associated with harvests and there is much rejoicing and celebrating that takes place with each Holy Day. Each one is listed in your Bible and there are specific instructions from God when we are to keep them and what we are to do on each day.

We start with the weekly Sabbath (Leviticus 23:1-3). The weekly Sabbath is a delight and is considered a Feast day. It is not a day of do's and don'ts like the Pharisees's tried to turn it into during the time Christ walked on this earth. Christ set the example in many places how we are to view the weekly Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28, Mark 3:1-5, and Luke 6:1-5). The weekly Sabbath is a Holy Day in itself, and just think, we get 52 of them every year. We are also to go out into the world and proclaim the weekly Sabbath for the whole world to come and rejoice.

The seven annual Holy Days are listed throughout Leviticus 23:4-44. We are instructed to keep them at their appointed times which means you actually have an appointment with God. It's no different when you make an appointment to visit the doctor or dentist. You normally mark it down on a calendar so you don't forget. Then when the day comes you go to your appointment. God is the same. He is a loving Father and He has marked down on His calendar the days we are to meet with Him.

God has given us His calendar and when the day that is marked arrives we prepare to worship Him on that day and we meet with those who think the same way. We have a Holy Convocation which is simply having a church service, the assembling of those who belong to Christ. As you may be aware of there is usually a lot of excitement and a lot of energy at these Holy Convocations, especially for the 8 days we spend at the Feast of the Tabernacles. Not only is it a time of great fun and excitement, it is a time where we can learn more about God and Jesus Christ.

God has a great plan and it is being worked out right now at this present time. Each Holy Day pictures a great event that has taken place or will take place in the near future (Colossians 2:16-17). Each Holy Day also points to Christ. It all starts with Passover which is in the spring and ends with the Last Great Day in the fall. Only those who have become baptized can partake of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. The



Last Great Day is for everyone and it pictures all of mankind having the opportunity to know who Christ is. God started this plan with a small number (Genesis 12:1) and it will grow into all of humanity when He has completed all things and all things will be reconciled to Him (Colossians 1:20).

Adam and Eve were given instructions to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28). God's name used there in Genesis actually means family (Genesis 1:1). God is the Father and we are His children. God is seeking godly offspring (Malachi 2:15). He is family oriented and His Holy Days are part of His plan. When we keep His Holy Days they are a reminder to us what He is going to do here. Isn't that awesome news? God is giving you everything you need to become a child of His.

Many have asked why then doesn't the world keep these Holy Days? We mentioned before how God is working with the few (1 Peter 2:9). He is not trying to save the whole world at this time. The world has been held captive and is being deceived (Revelation 12:9 and 2 Corinthians 4:3-4). The church is being judged today (1 Peter 4:17) while the world will be judged at another time (Revelation 20:11). The world has rejected the Holy Days and have incorporated heathen practices that have been going on for thousands of years.

Man has changed Passover to Easter. Instead of rejoicing before the Lord for eight days during the Feast of Tabernacles man decided to create Halloween and worship

the dead. If you really look close you can see how Satan has tried to counterfeit everything good God has created. God loves children and what does Satan do? Satan promotes abortion. God gave man the beautiful institution of marriage and Satan promotes divorce. God gives man and woman the blessing of marital sex and Satan promotes fornication and adultery. God's way produces beautiful fruit and Satan's lies produce misery and suffering.

Satan has even convinced the world these Holy Days have been nailed to the cross. Your sins, along with mine, were nailed to the cross and the sacrificial system that was set up for ancient Israel. All of the disciples kept the Holy Days long after Christ had died (1 Corinthians 11:23-28, 1 Corinthians 5:8, Acts 2:1, Acts 12:3, Acts 18:21, Acts 20:6, and Acts 27:9). The early Christian church did the same as they followed Christ. Christ's true church today is practicing the things Christ taught when he was here in the flesh and even today as he leads his followers.

Check out the Holy Days. If you already know about them that's great, then go out and proclaim them to the rest of the world so they can see what it is they are missing. Here is another opportunity our Heavenly Father has given us where we can use the time to get to know Him better and develop a lasting relationship with not only Him but our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That is something worth proclaiming and shouting out with great joy. **i**

**Q** I have read of the church keeping the feast days as well as the Sabbath days, and have accepted these teachings. However, after reading Galatians 4:9,10, I am having trouble with why we are to keep these days. Is Paul saying we are not to be bound by the festivals and Sabbaths set forth under the law if we are in Christ?

**A** Paul writes, "But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain" (Galatians 4:8-11).

Since the problem was that some of the Galatian believers were being persuaded to adopt some form of Judaism as a means of salvation or spiritual perfection, many have thought that the "days and months and seasons and years" were the Sabbaths, new moons, festivals, and sabbatical years described in the Law of Moses. But let's remember that Judaism is not precisely the same as the Law of Moses, or religion of the Old Testament. Some forms of Judaism revised the Law considerably, and picked up certain pagan elements along the way.

Daniel G. Reid states, "From Second Temple Judaism there comes ample evidence of speculation about the universe and how the heavenly bodies were related to angels. The Book of the Heavenly Luminaries in 1 Enoch 72-82, a work dating from perhaps the first century B.C., testifies to Jewish astrological ideas and the association of an angel, Uriel, with the stars. This is set within a context in which particular attention is paid to times and seasons" (Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, 1993, p. 231, emphasis added).

These astrological beliefs were probably held by some Jewish sects during the time of the apostles. In all likelihood, the astrological "times and seasons" are the "days and months and seasons and years" Paul has in mind in Galatians 4:10. The apostle warns these former pagans that those who were taking up astrological observances common to certain Jewish and pagan religious sects were returning to the base and worthless elements they had served before they became believers in Jesus Christ.

Paul fully recognized the Christological significance of the weekly Sabbath and annual holy days. By no means was he condemning the observance of these divinely ordained institutions.

# FOOD LAWS

By Mike James

One of the major differences between our beliefs and mainline Christians is our adherence to God's food law (Leviticus 11). A scripture often cited as proof Christians no longer need to observe the food laws is Mark 7. A close observation of Mark 7 and other New Testament scriptures will prove God's food laws are still enforced.

The context of Mark 7:1-23 addresses eating food with unwashed hands. The Jew's tradition was to not eat food unless they first washed their hands. The controversial verse is 19. In some Bible translations verse 19 states in parenthesis, "in saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean.'" Many Christians today believe because of this scripture the food laws are no longer binding on Christians. The only problem with this, is the part of the verse in parenthesis is not in the oldest texts of the Bible. Two sources that support my statement are Jay P. Green's Pocket Interlinear New Testament and Alfred Marshall's Greek English Interlinear New Testament. More evidence the statement in parenthesis was not in the original can be found by looking at Matthew 15:1-20. Matthew is giving the same account that we read in Mark 7. There is no mention in Matthew's account of Jesus declaring all food "clean." By reading the whole chapter of Mark 7 it is easy to see the point Jesus was making had to do with your heart defiling you, not dirt that you might ingest.

Another scripture that is often cited as evidence the food laws are done away is Acts 10. Here we read Peter had a vision of unclean food and a voice told him to kill and eat the food. Peter was confused by this vision because he stated he had never eaten anything unclean before. This is a very important point because this episode occurred after Christ's resurrection. It proves that Jesus never told the disciples to disobey God's food laws while He was alive. Peter was not yet sure what this vision meant. Later in the chapter (Acts 10:28) Peter realized the vision was for him to understand he should not consider Gentiles to be unclean. The Jews thought the Gentiles were unclean. God used something Peter was familiar with (food law) to help him see what he thought was an unclean thing (Gentiles) was not unclean. Peter reiterates the meaning of the vision

in Acts 11:1-18. It is important to note nowhere in any of these scriptures does it say the food was now clean.

Romans 14:14 is another controversial scripture. It states there is nothing unclean of itself. This might lead some to believe the food laws are no longer binding. But the Greek word used for unclean here is *koinos*, usually translated *common*. If this scripture is talking about the unclean of the food law, it would have used the Greek word *akathartos*. Reading Romans 14:1-23 we see Paul was most likely addressing vegetarians (verse 2), fasting (verse 5) and meat and wine sacrificed to idols (verse 21). In those days offerings of meats and wines were made to pagan gods. In other words, he was saying if some Christians don't want to eat meat, that is okay. If some want to fast more days than others, that is fine. And if others don't want to eat food or wine that was first offered to pagan gods, that is their prerogative.

I Corinthians 10:25 the issue relates to meat sacrificed to idols. After a sacrifice was presented to a pagan temple the remaining meat was sold in the marketplace. Some Christians thought they should not eat that meat. The book of Romans was probably written after I Corinthians so some feel the same idea is being addressed in Romans 14.

Colossians 2:16 is merely dealing with "eating and drinking." There were many cults at this time that practiced asceticism. The cults believed abstaining from food and drink could make you holier. Paul is telling the Colossians not to listen to those preaching cultic practices.

One final scripture to mention is I Timothy 4:1-5. Notice right at the beginning, the topic of discussion relates to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. There is no way this relates to God's food law. The warning here is likely related to Gnostic philosophy that taught the physical world was evil. The Gnostics had rules against eating certain foods. Paul emphasized that any food is okay to eat if it is sanctified by God's word (verse 5). Rather than do away with God's food law this scripture emphasizes it.

God's food laws are still important for Christian's today. Observing these laws can protect us against many diseases that come from food. The laws also constantly remind us of our relationship to God each and every time we eat something because we are conscious of whether or not the items we are ingesting are allowed by God. <sup>i</sup>

## LOOK 'EM UP

Mark 7:1-23  
Matthew 15:1-20  
Acts 10  
Acts 11:1-18  
Romans 14:1-23  
I Corinthians 10:25  
Colossians 2:16  
I Timothy 4:1-5



# Faith Works!

*What does James mean when he says, faith without works is dead? Is a person justified by his works or by his faith? What is justification?*

By Anika Sandy-Hanson

The book of James, though short, packs quite a punch. Throughout the book, faith is mentioned and expounded upon; leading a reader to believe faith is an important component of Christian life. Although many believers treat faith and “works” as opposed to one another, this is not the lesson taught by James. In fact, James 2:17 states, “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” Here, the NIV Bible uses the term “action” in place of works, but the meaning is still clear. Faith cannot exist on its own; a person with true faith would also act faithfully. What are some of the ways that we can act faithfully? The book of James answers this question as well.

First, James 2:14 asks, “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?” James questions whether a person can be saved with faith that is not substantiated by actions. The word save is translated from the Greek *sozo*, which means deliver or protect. Could James be asking if faith can gain us protection or deliverance from destruction? If that is the question, then verse 15-17 seems to answer the question. James 2:15-17, “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food, If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” Once again, James appears to hold faith without works in little regard. Imagine the hungry multitude coming to Jesus for food and rather than acting to miraculously feed them, Yashua instead sends them away stating that he hopes they find

food. We could not imagine the Savior exhibiting such empty faith because that is not the behavior He modeled for us. Jesus had the greatest faith exhibited; however, He also had the greatest actions ever known.

In concluding the chapter, James highlights the examples of Abraham and Rahab to show the regard God has for faith complimented by action. In fact, if there was any doubt as to faith/works debate. James makes a conclusive statement in 2:24, “You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.” In making this statement James is first saying faith is necessary for justification. “Not by faith alone” means faith is one ingredient, but is not sufficient in itself. Second, “a person is justified by what he does”; therefore, action/works are the second necessary ingredient for justification. Now that we have the formula, the next question may be, what is justification. The Greek, *dikaioo* (pronounced dik-ah-yo’-o), means to be free, just, innocent, or righteous. Thus, could James be telling us that one way to show our righteousness is to act rightly and to have faithful actions? Let’s explore that possibility. (*Delve into James 2: 1-13, the problem with believing justification by actions, the “law of freedom, and the importance of faith and how to grow our faith.”*)

James 2:18 says “But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” Thus, in Matthew 15:19-20 Jesus explained to the disciples that we are only as good as our thoughts and our motivations. The Pharisees attempted to accuse the Messiah for eating with unclean hands, a practice that even

today is known to allow impurities into our bodies. However, Jesus countered that these physical impurities would be removed through the natural cleansing process and would not remain to make us “defiled” or ceremonially unclean, preventing us from appearing before the Father. Rather, it is our heart, or in the Greek our *kardia* (thoughts or feelings) that need to be monitored. Yashua tells us that whatever we say is a manifestation of our mind and it is our mind that can make us unclean and keep us from the Father. Jesus places a value on our actions and by extension, our thoughts.

Later, in Matthew 15:22-28, a woman shows us what Jesus means about the speaking/thinking connection. When Jesus tests her faith by not immediately responding to her request for healing her daughter, the woman shows great humility, faith and wisdom in her answer. Clearly, her heart was in the right place. She followed up on her faith with actions, which led Jesus to commend her on her faith and to heal her daughter as she requested. In fact, we should note there was no one healed by Jesus who received a miracle by faith alone. Every recorded miracle came by the recipient acting through faith. In fact, contemporary Christians will rarely argue we are not required to abstain from lying, stealing, or committing adultery. Only one commandment, requiring us to keep a Sabbath rest, is ever questioned; yet, this commandment was set in place from the foundation of the world, Genesis 2:2-3. Rather than attempting to justify our human decision to break one commandment by misquoting James 2, we should praise God and ask him for greater levels of faith and greater constancy in our actions. **i**

# CAN GOD *Smile?*

By George James

I've been contemplating a question recently that I'd like to share with all of you. Can God smile? When almighty God looks down from heaven to earth does He ever see anything that brings a smile to His face—a deed, a word, an attitude or anything? One might think because God is so great and powerful why on earth would He place His smile upon you and me. The awesome and perfect creator of the universe finding joy in any fallible human being filled with so many sins and mistakes might seem strange. At first glance it may seem absurd or just very unimportant to ponder such a thing. Well, I'm the one that brought it up so I'll be the foolish one. It certainly is true our God is a great and magnificent being that we perhaps cannot truly understand in every way.

In Revelation chapter 1 God is described as powerfully ominous. Let's read verses 14-16 (NIV), "His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance." Wow! That sounds intimidating. Do you think a being depicted like this can waste His time to focus on His creation to see if He can find joy enough in it to smile? Doesn't He have to focus on world events and Bible prophecy? After all, this is the really important stuff. I do believe God almighty is concerned with Bible prophecy and the shaping of events in this world, yet on the other hand, there is always another perspective too.

In Genesis 1:26 we read about how we are created

in the image of God. What exactly does this mean? We are created with a body and God has a body—a spiritual body. But are there other similarities we share with Him that are more profound? One very important characteristic of human beings is the need and desire to establish meaningful relationships. Let's take this a little further. We see God as the father and the son—a family relationship. Jesus Christ the son lived on this earth to serve and glorify the father. John 8:29 tells us Jesus pleased the father. I think this is a hint to whether or not God smiles at us because He is pleased with us.

What would bring a smile to God's face? What did Jesus Christ do that no one else could do? He was sinless, and because He was sinless He and His father had the best relationship a father and son could have. Also, to be sinless Jesus Christ had to obey the holy righteous law of God. This law of His is all about having the best relationships possible with our holy Father, Jesus Christ our savior, and our fellow man and woman. God enlightened us with His holy law because he cares about us a great deal and He wishes the best life possible for us. He knows if we keep His law we will have the best, healthful, secure and most blessed life possible. God also knows the Christian life is more than merely being aware of Bible prophecy and current affairs. So build a strong relationship with God by obeying God's law. Meditate on His law like David did—a man after God's own heart. Study Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. This will please Him and He will cast His loving smile upon us as a loving parent always does to a child who behaves with integrity, wisdom, and discipline. **i**



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