

November 2023

THE
LANTERN



II Peter 1:19

OF THE SCATTERED FAITHFUL

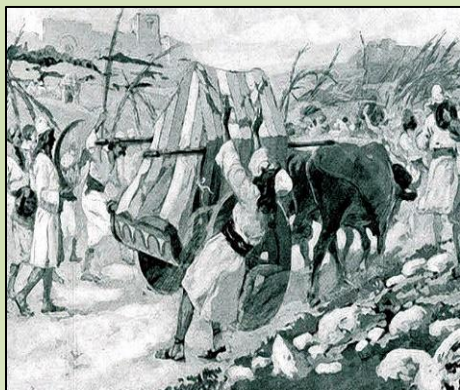
“So we regard the words of the prophets as confirmed beyond all doubt. You're doing well by paying attention to their words. Continue to pay attention as you would to a light that shines in a dark place as you wait for day to come and the morning star to rise in your hearts.”

(II Peter 1:19 - GW)



CONTENTS:

◆ Personal from the editor	1
◆ Cultivating Gratitude	2
◆ The Story of Uzzah	7
◆ Feast of Tabernacles 2023	10
◆ The Remedy for Spiritual Doubt	12
◆ Bible Study – How to Pray	16
◆ Excerpts From the Desk of Mr. Armstrong	17



**The Story of Uzzah:
A Lesson in Obedience**

(See page 7)

United States: Church of God, Scattered Faithful
P.O. Box 7480
Seminole, FL 33775

Treasurer:
Geary Whiting

Secretary:
Leonard Hatter

Editor:
Gary Liebold

Writers:
Gary Liebold
Geary Whiting

Erick Odhiambo
(Special Contributor)

**PUBLISHED BY THE
CHURCH OF GOD – SCATTERED
FAITHFUL**

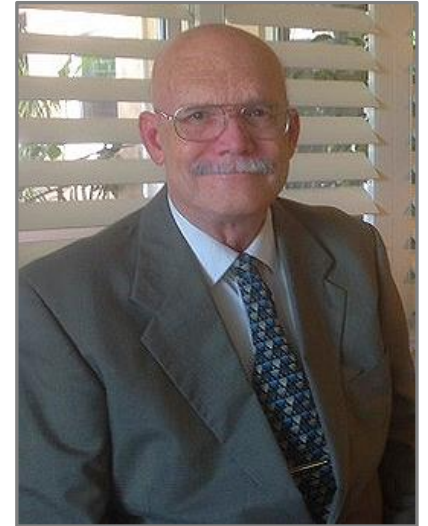
All scriptures used in *The LANTERN* magazine are from the New King James version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

Pictures courtesy of:
iStock & Public Domain
(Except for the “Personal”)

Request your **FREE** subscription to *The LANTERN* magazine by contacting us through our website (**cogsf.org**) or by writing to our mailing address.

The LANTERN has no subscription price. This magazine is provided free of charge by the Church of God, Scattered Faithful. It is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the Church membership, and others who have elected to support the Church.

Personal from the editor



A NATIONAL DAY OF THANKSGIVING

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

In a few weeks our nation will be observing a National Day of Thanksgiving. Sadly, far too many Americans think of Thanksgiving Day as being more of a day of parades, turkey dinners and football games, rather than a day of expressing gratitude toward God. God has truly bestowed MANY abundant (yet undeserved) blessings upon this nation, and God’s people should NEVER take those blessings for granted!

Mr. Armstrong wrote the following in the booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, concerning the blessings given to us as a nation (pages 156-157): **“How did we come into possession of all this vast wealth of the earth? Did we acquire it through our own human wisdom, foresight, energy, ability and power? Let Abraham Lincoln answer: “We find ourselves in the peaceful possession of the fairest portion of the earth, as regards fertility of soil, extent of territory, and salubrity of climate.... “We...find ourselves the legal inheritors of these fundamental blessings. We toiled not in the acquirement or the establishment of them.” Again, in his proclamation of April 30, 1863, for a nationwide day of fasting and prayer, this great President said: “It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God...and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.... We have been the recipients of the choicest blessings of heaven.” ... And we should face the facts today and know that we were given all this vast unprecedented material wealth because God *promised* it, unconditionally, to Abraham. And He promised it to Abraham because Abraham obeyed God, kept God's laws and commandments.”**

The blessings our nation have received were given by the GREAT God due to the promises made to Abraham through obedience. **“And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations”” (Genesis 17:2-4).**

I hope all of us are spending time in prayer, continually giving thanks to the GREAT God for the many blessings He mercifully pours out! As we see in **Philippians 4**, our prayers to God should express deep gratitude! It is God who has given us blessings. **What are you grateful for in your life?** The list should be a LONG one.

While it may be true that millions of Americans will not be thanking God for anything on the Day of Thanksgiving, or perhaps any other time either, we should always be grateful for everything we are given so abundantly. We have so MUCH to be thankful for!

Gary R. Liebold

CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

It's a pity that many, if not most people, do not know how to count their blessings, how to appreciate what they have, and how to be thankful and grateful. Do our minds dwell on all the things that we, as Christians, should be positive about, or do we have trouble thinking of things to be thankful for?

Gary Liebold



Every year, as my wife and I travel to the Feast of Tabernacles, we enjoy the experience of checking out the beautiful and diverse landscape of each state, city, or town we drive through. No matter if we are driving through flat locations, rolling hills, or mountainous areas, it is always a joy for us to have the opportunities to see the natural beauty of the lands around us. It is of special interest to us to see the farmlands and gardens that are being worked on by individuals who

own these precious land resources. My wife really enjoys looking at the smaller gardens surrounding homes we see, as her family had a half-acre of land in Illinois and cultivated two gardens on it -- one a rose garden her mother tended and the other an extensive vegetable garden her father worked. Of course, she and her brother also worked in these gardens, and she has fond memories of the gardens and the fruits of the family's labor.

THE PHYSICAL RESULTS OF GRATITUDE

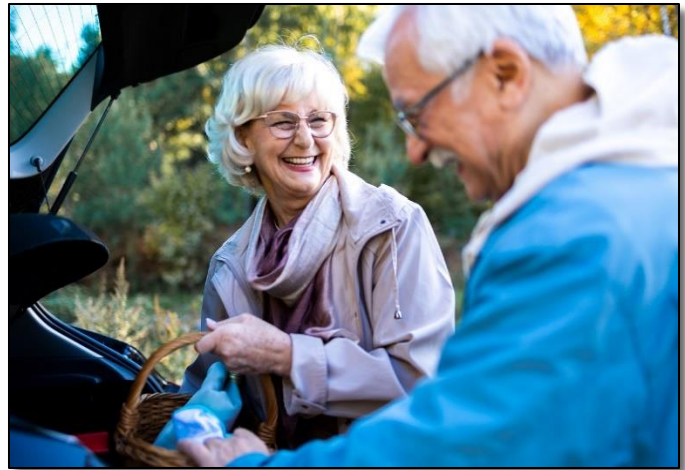
The apostle Paul said in **Philippians 4:8**, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.”** Do we notice that there is not a single unhappy thought in these instructions? No gripes! No complaints! No negative attitudes! This truly is a commandment of God. We must realize that a lack of gratitude can prevent us from putting this teaching into practice.

On a physical level, modern research has shown that giving thanks boosts our mental, emotional, and physical health. The society and culture we live in often bombards us through avenues such as social media and advertisements to want to have more and to do more. As if what we have isn't enough. This is a recipe for personal disaster consisting of despair, discontent, and often, depression. A very unhealthy situation. Gratitude, on the other hand, is a positive step towards wellness and health.

Social scientists have proven that gratitude fosters optimism and enriches our lives with hope, enhancing our well-being and promoting better sleep habits, increased immunity, a



reduction in anxiety, decreased depression, and stronger personal relationships.



A state of gratitude encourages the development of many positive emotions including hope, courage, joy, and contentment, among others. In fact, researchers at Harvard University found that, **“In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.”** What a physical impact from a simple outlook of thankfulness -- an attitude, with God's help, we can learn to grow and control in our lives. It is an attitude we consciously choose, to acknowledge the things in our lives that are good, enjoyable, and beneficial, and recognize with joy and thankfulness the many individual blessings we've each been given.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF GRATITUDE

Have we learned to be grateful? Are our prayers to God filled with praise and thanksgiving, or do we continually bother Him with requests or complaints? We must examine our hearts next time we pray to Him. **Romans 8:28** tells us, **“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”** Do we believe all things are working together for

our good? We should. If we fulfill the clearly stated conditions -- to love God and be called according to His purpose -- the promise mentioned above in **Romans 8:28** applies to us. The Bible is full of inspiring examples of Godly gratitude. Let's examine a few!

King David was a man after God's own heart. Can we understand why? His courage? Or, his willingness to repent of his sins? His earnest desire to search out God's ways? Undoubtedly all of these were contributing factors, but one of David's greatest, most famous, qualities was his gratitude toward God. Amidst sorrows, trials, and persecutions, he constantly praised God. We have an entire book of Psalms in the Bible at our fingertips that demonstrates how King David sang psalms of thanksgiving and appreciation to God. **Psalm 100:1-5** reads, **"Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations."**

How uplifting! Do we as Christians feel this way? Do we share these sentiments? Are we

grateful to God for *everything*? Be honest! Examine our thoughts during the day -- when we get up in the morning, during our conversations each day, at work with the people around us, or even when we are alone?



If we are truly converted, the thoughts of **Psalms, chapter one hundred**, should be on our lips and in our hearts, whatever the circumstances. Imagine if we are asked to count our blessings one by one. How would we go about it? What would be on top of our personal list? Our spouse? Our children? The health we may enjoy, or the job we have? Or would God's love for us sit at the top of the list as our greatest blessing?

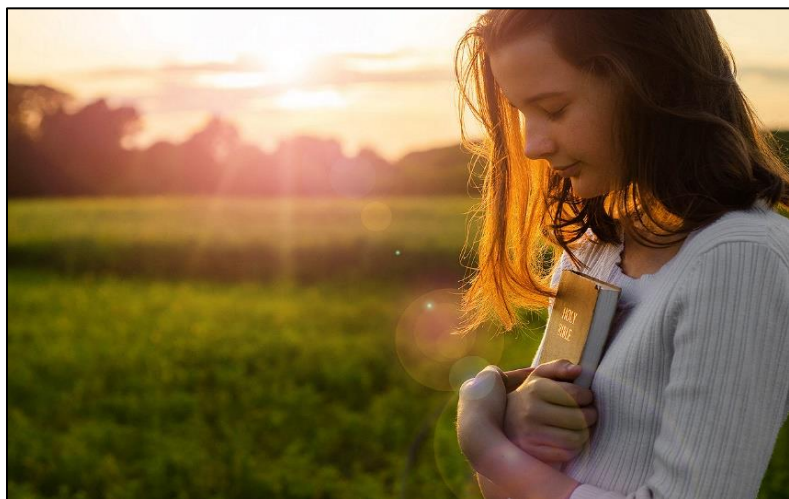
Jesus Christ was a man of joy, even amid persecution and adversity. He told us to share His joy with Him, even as we remember that trials, tribulations, and persecutions are necessary to building Christian character. On one occasion, when Christ told a man that to be a true Christian meant to be willing to give up everything and follow Him, His own disciples were upset. They thought the conditions were much too harsh to allow anyone to receive salvation. But Christ told them: **"Jesus said, 'Truly, I say to you, there is**



no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30 - RSV).

Christ revealed to us that a Christian is not only promised blessings, but also persecutions. That's part of our calling -- part of our joy. Are we willing to accept our share of the covenant and to meet life's challenges? All of us in God's Church, whatever our condition, are very blessed. All of us -- whatever our problems -- have more reasons to be thankful to God than any other human beings on earth. Unfortunately, when persecutions come, some weaken and forget to be thankful. They forget their blessings and begin to count their sorrows. We must resist doing this. James wrote in **James 1:2-4**, **"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."**

Do we really understand this teaching? We must **"count it all joy,"** not only when things go right, but also when they go wrong. Anyone can be happy and joyful when life is full of



happiness. But only a true Christian can express gratitude when undergoing trials. Life is not always easy for anyone. We may be having serious problems today -- trying moments that are hard to understand, and for which we don't honestly feel grateful for. But can we name any man of God who didn't encounter trials, hardships, and persecutions? Of course not. Life challenges us with circumstances that contribute to our growth. Did Jesus have an easy life on earth? Easier than ours? We know better: **"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:3-4).**

In his day, the apostle Paul was a prolific writer and teacher of God's laws. Paul most likely suffered more than any other disciple of Christ, yet his epistles are filled with thanksgiving and gratitude. He exhorts us to, **"Rejoice always" (1 Thessalonians 5:16)**. We cannot possibly rejoice if we keep complaining and whining about our miseries. And we cannot be in the right attitude if we forget the will of God. **"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18)**. Rejoicing, prayer and giving thanks are commanded by God.

Like King David, Paul too was a man after God's own heart. He was courageous, obedient, repentant, and wanted to learn God's way. And he had learned, as all of us must, to be happy in whatever state he was in (**Philippians 4:11**). Here was Paul's secret. He knew that God's Spirit in him strengthened him in all his trials and enabled him to do **"all things"** in the fulfillment of his mission. If we each cultivate this type of attitude, then no matter what happens to us -- whether we are sick or in good health, poor or rich -- we can always get on our knees and praise God, saying: **"God,**

thank you for your blessings. Thank you for your patience with me. Thank you for your love and mercy.” Remember, growth in gratitude is a sign of spiritual growth.

WAYS TO CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

Sometimes our personal troubles make it hard to muster gratitude. It’s not always easy to practice daily gratitude amid a culture filled with chaos, stress, and discontent. But if we want to develop or even boost our level of thankfulness in our lives, here are some ways to cultivate gratitude.



First, we can meditate on our physical and spiritual blessings. There are probably dozens of good things, blessings, in our lives that we don’t fully appreciate because we take them for granted -- things we are likely to overlook or ignore until they are taken away from us.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Next, take some time to make a list of personal blessings to be grateful for. Write down a list of things you are thankful for. They can be big or small, but the key is to begin focusing our attention on the positive aspects of our lives that we experience and begin to savor them; to feel joyful for what we have and what God has given us.

Once we have concentrated our thoughts on the positive aspects of our lives, the things we can be grateful for, we have done our spiritual preparation in the cultivation process. Like cultivating a garden, once the preparation is finished, we can move forward with actual work to bring forth the fruits of our labor. We can act by praying confidently and specifically to God, offering Him our thanks for all He is and all He has ever done for us, physically and most importantly, spiritually. For the mercy He grants us every day of our lives. **(Psalms 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 136:1-26)**. Then we can become truly joyful and grateful people and demonstrate the characteristics of God’s Holy Spirit within us **(Galatians 5:22-23)**.

Finally, we must remember that the moment we stop being grateful, we put ourselves on Satan's wavelength and become vulnerable to his attacks. Satan wants us to complain, because that's one sure way of making us turn away from God. We should set our minds, our eyes, and our thoughts on the goal -- on the purpose of our existence, on the opportunities we will have in God's Kingdom to help and serve. Discard from our minds any thoughts that may be a hindrance to our resolution.

God will fight for us if we stop complaining and start to express gratitude. Then we will fully grasp the deep meaning of Paul's words, **“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).** ◆

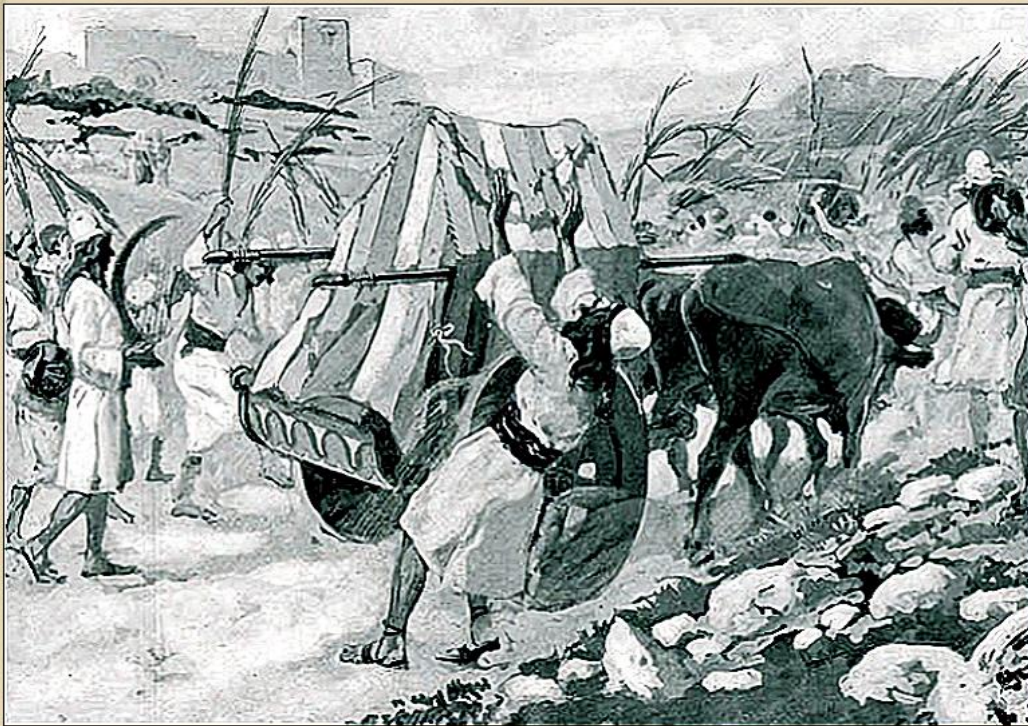


THE STORY OF UZZAH

A LESSON IN OBEDIENCE

In a nation -- indeed, a world -- filled with compromise, crime, and disrespect, a fair question to ask is... How has it all affected God's people? Do we take God seriously? Do we perhaps feel that because He has shown such mercy and patience at these troubled times, that we can sort of do things our own way, as we see fit in our everyday lives?

Geary Whiting



Is it possible that we might “shade” various situations a little, to justify our actions from time to time? One question that might help us understand the importance of taking a good look at ourselves is: **“JUST WHY DID GOD KILL UZZAH?”**

That’s a good question to consider and ponder. In **1 Chronicles 13:8-10** we find the story of Uzzah and King David. Starting in **verse 8**, **“Then David and all the people danced before the Lord with great enthusiasm, accompanied by singing and by zithers, harps, tambourines**

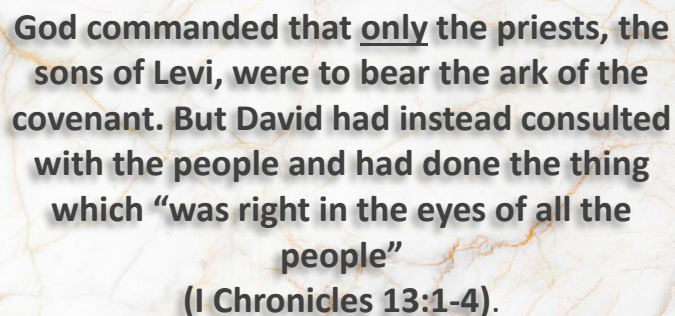
cymbals, and trumpets. But as they arrived at the threshing-floor of Chidon, the oxen stumbled and Uzza reached out his hand to steady the Ark. Then the anger of the Lord blazed out against Uzza and killed him because he had touched the ark ... And so he died there before God" (TLB).

David wanted to bring the ark back from Kirjath-Jearim to Jerusalem. In doing so, he had the ark carried on a new cart. One moment Uzzah had been driving the ox cart toward the threshing floor and the next moment, Uzzah was lying on the ground dead! And why? When the oxen stumbled and the cart shook, Uzzah had merely put out his hand to steady the ark of the covenant, which was being carried in the cart. God struck Uzzah down (**II Samuel 6:3-7**). Simply because Uzzah touched the ark, God killed him!

Have we ever wondered about this incident? Why did God deal with Uzzah in such a harsh manner? On the surface, this would appear to be a very innocent act. So why, then, did God take the life of Uzzah for trying to steady the ark when it was about to fall to the ground? A closer study of this incident reveals valuable insight into what God expects of our lives now, as well as our future opportunities.

IGNORING GOD'S EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS

The men of Israel had ignored explicit instructions from God concerning the transport of the ark. God commanded that only the priests, the sons of Levi, were to bear the ark of the covenant. But David had instead consulted with the people and had done the thing which "was right in the eyes of all the people" (**I Chronicles 13:1-4**). He did not consult God's law on this matter -- which was clear and explicit. Instead of having the Levites carry the ark, David had the ark put in a CART! (**I Chronicles 13:7**).



God commanded that only the priests, the sons of Levi, were to bear the ark of the covenant. But David had instead consulted with the people and had done the thing which "was right in the eyes of all the people"
(**I Chronicles 13:1-4**).

God had instructed those responsible for carrying the ark that they should carry on their shoulders. Notice in **Numbers 7:9**, "Unto the sons of Kohath he gave none (oxen and carts): because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear it ON THEIR SHOULDERS!"

Nobody other than Aaron and his sons, was to touch any holy articles at all, including the ark. The penalty for violating this law? "And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary ... after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die" (**Numbers 4: 15**).

We can see from **Numbers 4:15** that on two points, the ark was being transported in a fashion totally unacceptable to God. To begin with, Uzzah was NOT of the Levitical priesthood. The genealogy in the book of Chronicles shows that Uzzah was David's nephew. He was the son of Abinadab, David's brother (**I Chronicles 2: 13**). And, as we have seen, instead of having the ark carried, David had it put into a cart (**I Chronicles 13:7**). God had distinctly instructed that the ark be carried on the shoulders of the Levites, not in a cart (**Numbers 7:1-9**).

King David, who was accompanying the ark, had obviously forgotten these conditions, and had chosen to do what **“was right in the eyes of all**

David later realized what he had done wrong, and learned after the death of Uzzah how the ark should be transported -- by being carried on the shoulders of the Levites (I Chronicles 15:2).

the people" rather than consult God's clear law in the matter (**verses 1-13**).

This wasn't just a little accident on Uzzah's part. The parallel account in **II Samuel 6:6-7** explains that God smote Uzzah for **"his error."** The word error is rendered "rashness" in the margin. It was a rash act to touch the ark of God that even the Levites were forbidden to touch. The ark was so holy that at one time God killed over 50,000 Israelites for profaning, by opening and looking inside of it (**II Samuel 6:9**). The death of Uzzah was the **CLIMAX** to a series of disobedient acts. An attitude was beginning which -- if not halted -- would have quickly led to a complete casting aside of other laws.

A VITAL LESSON

I Chronicles 15:2 shows us that David later realized what he had done wrong, and learned after the death of Uzzah how the ark should be transported -- by being carried on the shoulders of the Levites. David told the Levites to sanctify themselves so that they could carry the ark. Because they hadn't carried the ark at first, God made a breach upon them (killing Uzzah). David said they hadn't sought God after **"the due order"** (**I Chronicles 15:12-15**).

Notice that when they did everything according to God's instructions, they were able

to bring the ark of the covenant with joy (**I Chronicles 15:25-26**). The principle we need to learn here is that we must do EXACTLY as God commands -- not "reason" or "water down" His instructions. Also, we must deeply respect **everything** He has made holy -- for example, the Sabbath, God's Holy Days, tithes, offerings, and respect for the teachings of His apostles!

Perhaps we might feel sorry for Uzzah. On the surface, after all, he was merely the unwitting victim of unfortunate circumstances. But remember that the events of biblical history are recorded as examples for us today (**I Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4**). These are vital lessons for us to learn now, in these tremulous times. We can certainly learn from this incident that God does not compromise with His commands! In this case God acted to halt a dangerous trend -- certain of His laws were being ignored and others would have soon been cast aside. God stamped out disobedience before it spread.

Our eternal well-being is of primary importance to God. For us to learn important spiritual lessons, severe trials are sometimes necessary. God has called us and is constantly aware of our circumstances, and He promises that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our capability to handle the situation (**I Corinthians 10:13**). How reassuring!

Our eternal well-being is of primary importance to God. For us to learn important spiritual lessons, severe trials are sometimes necessary.

(Continued on page 11)

Feast of Tabernacles

2023

FLORENCE, KENTUCKY

The Feast of Tabernacles for 2023 was held this year in beautiful Florence, Kentucky. Florence, which is nestled just south of the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, made for a lovely Feast site, with the trees turning to their fall colors and the rolling green lawns making for a lovely contrast! Florence provided us with a lot of dining and shopping options, as well as being centrally located to attractions such as the Creation Museum and The Ark Encounter.



The brethren gathered at the Ark Encounter attraction on Monday for “Family Day.” A full sized, to-scale replica of Noah’s Ark based on Biblical dimensions, the sheer size and detail of the ark really makes one speechless! The ark was also surrounded by gorgeous gardens full of a variety of lovely plants and flowers, and with the weather being practically perfect (as it was for almost all the Feast), it enhanced the experience for everyone greatly.

Finally, to top everything off, we had wonderful spiritual messages ranging from the “Behind the Work” film from 1985, to the inspiring sermons and sermonettes for the season, such as:

- God’s Millenium
- A Feast of Joy
- Our Inheritance
- The Knowledge of God
- The Hope of God
- Rivers of Living Water, and more!



NDHIWA, KENYA

Erick Odhiambo



We had a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles. This was the most enjoyable Feast in Ndhiwa Center, Kenya. The happiest week of all the weeks. I was very happy with the 2023 Feast of Tabernacles because God’s Church obeyed the commandment and reached at the feast site at the appointed time.



Our brethren from Mombasa who attended and kept the Feast of Tabernacles in Ndhiwa arrived the same day. The opening hours found everybody inside the hall. Day one was a wonderful day and the brethren enjoyed chicken, juices, and snacks. The faces were smiling, and the temperature was good.

On Wednesday we had free walking in the afternoon where brethren visited different places to see God's creations. Some went to Ruma National Park where we saw different kinds of animals, like buffalo, rhinos, antelope, giraffes, etc. The Ndhiwa Feast site is surrounded by so many wonderful sites. We also have Lake Victoria, the freshwater lake, nearby.

There was also a luncheon for brethren above 60 years of age and I was able to organize a special day where they were left alone to study and have special meals so that they would then teach the young people how to live and only follow Jesus Christ in this deceived world. **Proverbs 1:8-9 -- "My son, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck."** **Proverbs 3:1-2 -- "My son, do not forget my law, But let your heart keep my commands; For length of days and long life And peace they will add to you."** Some of the sermons heard were:

- Feast Focus
- The Feast of Tabernacles and The Feast of Ingathering
- Teachings in the Millennium
- Eliminating Stress in the Millennium
- Seven Laws of Success in the Millennium
- Judges in the Millennium
- Meaning of the Last Great Day ♦



The Story of Uzzah...

(Continued from page 9)

These lessons should inspire us to constantly and carefully examine our lives to see if we have moved out of line with God's law. Often, we carry out this examination only during the Passover season, or when we are going through a severe trial. It is far better to be continually studying God's Word and measuring ourselves against its teachings.

Had Uzzah and those around him, even King David, been studying God's commands in the form that was available to them, Uzzah possibly would have lived to a ripe old age.

It has been almost 40 years since the death of God's end-time apostle, Mr. Herbert W.

Armstrong. With a world filled with compromise, crime and hatred for the nation, the United States of America, that God raised up because of a promise made to Abraham, we see that we are now finally brought close to the zenith of our power.

Because of God's anger, we are now slipping quickly towards captivity (**Ezekiel 6:8-9**). Wouldn't it make sense that God's people have been affected by the world surrounding them? But the good news is, if we have slacked, or compromised, we can still get back on-track and make our latter works greater than our former works. We still have a "little" time, although it is running out rather quickly. Let us remember the lesson of Uzzah! ♦

The Remedy for Spiritual Doubt!



Have you ever in your life had a doubt of any kind? Perhaps you've had a doubt about your job, or an employer or employee. Maybe you've had doubts about a whole range of topics or circumstances. But, what about having SPIRITUAL doubts, such as doubts about God's Church, or even doubts about your own spiritual survival? Those kinds of doubts can be deadly, spiritually! This article will look at the remedy for spiritual doubt.

Gary Liebold

Nearly 50 years ago now, I had planned a date with Karen, my future wife, to be. We had only been dating for a short time when an unexpected incident occurred. We had the date all planned. I was to pick Karen up at her grandparents' home one evening before sunset and take her to a movie. Well, on that evening, instead of me driving to her home the usual way (a logical, more direct route), I decided to take a few other streets to reach her grandparents' house.

When I arrived, there was no Karen. I knocked; I rang the doorbell several times. Her grandparents weren't there either, so I couldn't ask them anything. I looked at my watch. Yes, I was there at the right time. Did something bad happen? Then I wondered, could I have been

"stood-up?" Since we hadn't been dating all that long, I wasn't sure. I had DOUBTS!

Then I noticed a little boy, probably about eight, a couple of doors away, playing with a soccer ball in his front yard. I asked him, "**Have you seen the young lady who lives here? She doesn't seem to be home.**" He answered, "**Oh, yes! I saw her drive-off with another guy.**" Well, my heart sank! I thought, "**Well, I guess I just have been 'dumped.'**"

Thankfully, that wasn't the end of the story. I found out later that the eight-year-old boy "fed me a line." What he had said to me was a made-up story. Karen hadn't gone out with another guy. What she had decided to do was to walk down to the end of the street, to wait

on the corner so I would see her when I drove by. Her thinking was, **“That way, he won’t have to drive all the way down the street to my home. I’ll be there waiting for him.”** The only problem was, I didn’t come from that way, and didn’t leave that way either. So, I never saw her, and she never saw me. Thankfully, it wasn’t left at that point, and later we compared “notes,” realizing the boy had told me a big fat lie.

The next day, Karen asked the little boy why he lied and made up a story. His answer was, **“I just thought it was funny.”** However, we didn’t laugh so much with him! That one lie began to create DOUBTS in our minds, especially after not knowing one another very well yet. That “evening of doubt” was just a physical type of doubt, not a spiritual one.

But what about SPIRITUAL doubts? Sometimes God’s people can have doubts about the Church of God, doubts about Mr. Armstrong and his office, or even doubts about their own spiritual survival.



What exactly is doubt? According to the Oxford dictionary, it defines DOUBT as: **1) “Uncertainty as to truth or reality of something...” 2) “... an inclination to disbelieve or hesitate; a reservation.”**

In **Ephesian 6:12-13, 16**, we read about Christians wearing God’s spiritual ARMOR: **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand ... above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”**

THE DART OF DOUBT

Just one little chink in our spiritual armor can be an invitation for Satan’s fiery darts. We might as well openly say to Satan, **“Come on in -- I’m vulnerable.”** One of his common darts is the highly poisonous **“DART of DOUBT.”** Think of how many people began to have doubt once the Church began to “split apart,” becoming scattered. Far too many went back into the world, leaving God’s Church altogether. Many, if not most, of the COG groups today have doubts about Mr. Armstrong’s office as an apostle and as a “type” of Elijah (**Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 17:10-11**). A few years ago, one of our members asked a man he met from another Church of God group (a major one), **“Does your church discuss Mr. Armstrong at all?”** The answer was, **“No, we don’t talk about him.”**

Some have doubts about God’s power to heal. Others become offended with the phrase, **“Time is short,”** and will say, **“No it isn’t. Look at how many decades have passed since Mr. Armstrong came on the scene.”** See **Matthew 16:1-3** and **Luke 21:34-36**. Back in the early 1980’s, if you would have asked Church members the following questions, you would likely have received the same answer of: **“YES!”** to every one of them. What would some of those questions be? First, **“Is Mr. Armstrong God’s end-time apostle?”** -- **“YES!”** Secondly, **“Are we**

the firstfruits of salvation?" -- "YES!" Lastly, "Do you believe there is any such thing as **PHYSICAL SIN**, and that Christ not only paid the penalty for our spiritual sins, but He paid the penalty for our physical sins as well?" -- "YES!"

However, in the late 1980's, Satan (through another man's leadership), began planting **SEEDS of DOUBT** in the Church of God. Many of those "YES" answers would likely be solid "NOS," today. The same answer of "NO" would likely be given for many other questions asked, as well.

Most of these same people today, who once answered "YES," probably wouldn't even think about what has happened to their understanding, or why the answers have changed away from what they once believed. Members began changing so rapidly that today they no longer attend ANY congregation but have gone fully back into the "world." Remember, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Christ placed His doctrines and judgements into the Church of God, NOT MEN!



Satan's Strategy

In *Wikipedia* under the article of "**BLOWGUNS**," with the subheading of "**POISONED DARTS**," we

find these paragraphs: "Shooting darts with a blowgun is an extremely stealthy, and even lethal, hunting technique if the darts are poisoned with plant extracts or animal secretions. In Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, some isolated areas in South America, and in the Amazon and Orinoco basins, blowgun hunters impregnate the tips of their darts with curare. ... The Piaroa are known for making curare to impregnate the darts of their blowguns. They produce it beginning with extracts of different species of plants from the Strychnos genus mainly *maracure* (*Strychnos crevauxii*) - mixed with *kraraguero* sap to increase the adhesion of the poison. An animal hit by a dart poisoned using the Piaroa recipe usually dies within fifteen minutes, depending on its body mass."



With what we see the nations who use poisonous darts for hunting, there is a scriptural parallel to show us how Satan attacks (Ephesians 6:11-13, 16). We can unwittingly succumb to the fiery "DART OF DOUBT," and not even have a clue as to what hit us, just like the animal that dies from a poisonous dart, clueless of what is happening to it, becoming paralyzed in a short time.

In the book of **Genesis**, we read how Satan used his "dart of doubt" right in the Garden of Eden. "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,

God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die." Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die!" (Genesis 3:1-4). The serpent put DOUBT into Eve's mind.

How many times have ministers and members said: "Mr.

Armstrong was just a man."

Yes, he was a man, flesh and blood as we are. But what they are actually saying is:

"I'm not sure God used Mr.

Armstrong to RESTORE any TRUTHS to the Church of God, and by the way, he's now

dead.", as if that somehow justifies their actions. Today, we have all sorts of people making various claims -- claiming they are "prophets," or "apostles," or even both. Some may even think THEY themselves have become "Elijah," (in "type"). Yet, they sure haven't restored anything to the Church, but have created more doubt than ever before. **"Blessed is he who endures under trial; for when he has stood the test, he will gain the crown of life which is promised to all who love Him" (James 1:12 - MOFF).**

WHAT CAN WE DO?

What is the remedy for spiritual doubt?

1) Grow in your depth of understanding.

Grow spiritually through deep prayer, Bible study, fasting and godly meditation. Those "ingredients" are indispensable. They're to be practiced every day! **"...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (II Peter 3:18).** I had a pastor rank minister tell me that God's people didn't need any spiritual basics anymore. If that's the case, why then were so many people CONFUSED about doctrine when Joseph W. Tkach took the Church off course? We're to be well-rounded in the TRUTH and to grow in our depth of understanding.

2) Avoid spiritual seduction from God's Truth.

I've had members tell me that after 30, 40 or more years in the Church were a waste. **"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to**



deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons," (I Timothy 4:1). How well do you know and understand the "Restored Truths" given to the Church? When was the last time you read ***Mystery of the Ages?***

3) Allow God's Spirit to lead you.

God's Spirit is our protection, the armor we need. Realize and meditate upon your potential. Hold fast to that which is good. **"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown" (Revelation 3:11).** That's the future God wants for you and me -- FOREVER! ♦



BIBLE STUDY

HOW TO PRAY

Jesus Christ's disciples knew that He kept in close contact with His Father in heaven. As a result, His life was filled with faith, love, and power from God, and His daily, inspired prayers made possible His victory over sin and death. So, the disciples asked Christ to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1).

1. Our Savior gave us an inspired guide to learn how to structure our prayers effectively in **Matthew 6**. Note in **Matthew 6:9**, that He also told us to pray in a similar way to his outline, "after this manner," not just to repeat the example prayer over and over. His outline in these scriptures is a simple and basic approach to God in prayer.

2. Christ always began His prayers by addressing His Father in heaven (**Matthew 6:9**). Through prayer with God, we have the opportunity of a personal, private, and intimate relationship with our creator, who should be as real to us as our own earthly parents.

3. As we begin our address to God in prayer, we should also praise His name, His character, and His office, showing deep respect and reverence to him. Addressing God in an attitude of praise and worship will focus our attention on the greatness of God (**Psalms 18:1-2; 104:33**).

4. Turning to **Matthew 6:10**, we observe the need to pray for God's Kingdom. In doing so, we ask for God's Government to be set up on this earth through the return of Christ as "**King of Kings and Lord of Lords**" (**Revelation 19:16**), to establish the Kingdom of God, all according to the will of the Father. Scripture directs us to ask for God to help us to understand the foundation of all knowledge, the Holy Bible, and what He reveals as His will for mankind. He stands behind His promises and backs up His will and His law.

5. The request to "**Give us this day our daily bread**," (**Matthew 6:11**) is a dual request -- physical bread as well as our spiritual "bread" (**Matthew 4:4**). In **John 6:35**, Jesus tells us that He is the spiritual Bread of Life. We must come to God through daily prayer and Bible study. He will provide our daily spiritual needs, as much as we need physical food.

6. Since we all sin daily, in one way or another, we need to recognize and repent of our sins, asking for God forgiveness. We should also learn to have Godly compassion for other spirit-begotten Christians and to be forgiving towards others (**Matthew 6: 12, 14-15**). Remember that you may receive God's forgiveness only if you, yourself, forgive others.

7. The final request in Jesus' example prayer (**Matthew 6: 13**), is for us to pray daily with heartfelt earnestness that God would not permit us to be brought into any severe trial or temptation, and that He will give us the assistance to overcome any wrong desires as we do His daily will.

As we close our prayers, we should be sure to acknowledge Jesus Christ (**Matthew 6:13**). When we know His will, we know that God's authority stands behind our requests for the various things we need and bring before Him in prayer. As Jesus' inspired outline of prayer begins with the praise of God, so should it end. Then, to affirm that we mean what we have prayed, we should conclude our prayer with "**Amen**," which means, "**so be it.**" ♦

Excerpts From the Desk of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong...

For each continuing issue of our magazine, we will post various EXCERPTS from Mr. Armstrong's past writings, sermons, and Bible studies.

PAGAN HOLIDAYS OR GOD'S HOLY DAYS -- WHICH?

Herbert W. Armstrong

Pages: Introduction, 2, 5-7

“Does it make any difference which days we observe -- or whether we keep them? Does the Bible establish whether we are to keep certain days holy to God? Were these days given to ancient Israel only? Are they binding today only on the Jewish people, while Christians are commanded to keep holidays such as Christmas?”

PAGAN ORIGINS

Ancient Rome's pagan holidays have been chained upon a heedless and deceived world. These include certain annual holidays -- Christmas, New Year's, Easter, as well as many more, every one a pagan day -- every one used to stimulate the sale of merchandise in the commercial markets. Upon honest investigation, the earnest seeker after truth learns that these days are all of heathen origin and pagan significance. He learns that he can have no part in them.

But is the Christian of today left without any annual holy days? Did God never give to His people annual holy days, as well as the weekly Sabbath? Are not ancient Rome's annual holidays mere counterfeits of God's true holy days, exactly as Sunday is a counterfeit of the true Sabbath?

THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY DAYS

...Now in like manner, when God gave His Church seven annual Sabbaths, God, in His wisdom, had a great purpose. These days, too, were given to keep God's children in the true memory and worship of God by keeping us constantly in the understanding of God's great plan of redemption. For these annual days picture the different epochs in the plan of spiritual creation -- mark the dispensations, and picture their meaning.

...It is an historic fact that any nation which ever profaned God's holy Sabbath (weekly), has lost contact with and knowledge of the true God, and gone into idolatry.

...And in the same way, when in these New Testament times we have failed to observe God's annual Sabbaths we, as a nation and people, are without knowledge of God's true plan of reproducing Himself.

...**God's feasts, or holy days, or Sabbaths, were commanded to be kept year after year, and forever!** We ask the reader to retain an open mind, for we shall prove that forever, in this case, means forever!

Thus God purposed to impress the truths these “high” Sabbaths picture upon all the minds of His children through all time, keeping His Church in the true understanding of His plan!” ♦

(Emphasis above, by editor of *The Lantern* magazine)



COMING ARTICLES



II Peter 1:19

◆ The Talent of Time

There's a saying that **"time waits for no man"** -- and how true it is! Think about it -- when someone is suddenly gone, the subject of life and death becomes painfully real to us. We think more seriously about it. For instance, the death of someone very close to us is a reminder that life is **"... a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away"** (James. 4:14). But why should it always take a brush with the tragedy of death to make us stop and think about life and how suddenly it can expire?

◆ Fix This in Your Minds

In **Deuteronomy 4:40 (TLB)** we read these words, **"You must obey these laws that I will tell you today so that all will be well with you and your children. And so that you will live forever in the land that Lord God is giving you."** We, the descendants of Manasseh, were given this great land, America. Here's a question in connection with the admonition of that scripture: **"Just how are we doing?"**

◆ Bible Study – Born to Rule (Part 1)

The Bible reveals that we were born for an incredible purpose -- to ultimately help rule the universe with Jesus Christ after He returns to this earth! Just as surely as King Charles of the United Kingdom was born into the British Royal Family to be a king, once we are **"born again"** into the family of God, we are destined to reign as an even greater, eternal ruling king.