

THE EDIFIER

VOLUME 27

CHURCH OF GOD (7TH DAY)

JANUARY 2021

I once read, *"God's never early, never late, but always on time."*

It is easy to forget that God is eternal. He created time for us, through His Son. God exists outside of it and He is not bound by time, as we are! Yes, I agree it is hard for our mind at times to comprehend that concept because we are born, live and die in the confines of time.

Have you ever thought why is God taking so long to answer your prayers? If so, you're not alone!

Many times we tend to feel our prayers and cries to God are not being heard because we do not see an immediate change in our situation. Instead of waiting on the Lord's guidance or answer, we act impulsively, which brings consequences that we didn't really plan or want!

"A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps." Proverbs 16:9 NKJV

If we struggle with how to be patient when waiting on God, just remember how patient God is with us!

In 2 Peter 3:8-9 we are reminded, *"But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* NKJV

Just because we do not see an immediate change, doesn't mean our Heavenly Father never heard us!

Through God's perfect timing, it allows us to practice faith. It helps us to wait patiently and trust that God has got it in hand.

"My times are in Your hand; ..." Psalm 31:15. NKJV

By accepting that God's timing is perfect, we acknowledge His decisions are perfect and the final result is in our best interest.



Remember when Lazarus was dead in the grave for four days. Why didn't Jesus heal Lazarus right away?

The disciples had seen the power of Jesus to heal people. What was the reason He waited?

The answer is in John 11:14-15;

Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him." NKJV

Through Jesus' perfect timing, the disciples' faith was strengthened in the power of God through Jesus Christ, which encouraged the disciples to take the message of Christ to the world.

"Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!" Psalm 27:14 NKJV

Written by Pastor Phil Kordahi

Seven Love Letters

Have you ever received a love letter, but not any love letter – a love letter that was genuinely honest? Did you know that Jesus sent seven such letters?

Jesus also asked numerous questions. Perhaps one that might directly concern us was: “When the Son of Man returns, shall He find faith on the earth?”

What insight does Jesus have that might counsel us today? His thinking out aloud was intentional. Will faith in the end times be in short supply? How does that speak into my journey and my life? Am I faithful, awake, listening, holy and true?

And, moreover, what about the church I attend? How much does my local church community factor into my enduring faith? Does church life affect personal growth, the ability to serve or my capacity to repent? These are all good questions.

Some years after He ascended to heaven, Jesus dictated to John in vision, when exiled on the island of Patmos, seven letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, where Turkey is today.

What Jesus thought about His Body, the church as the Bride of Christ, is of utmost importance because the relationship between Jesus and the church is compared to that of a groom and his bride. This is not only brought out in many of Jesus’ parables, but also emphasised throughout Paul’s writings, as well as in Revelation.

Christians look forward to the “marriage supper of the Lamb” – a direct continuation of the covenant as instituted at the Lord’s Supper. Marriage between a man and a woman is a type of metaphor for the spiritual reality between the faithful saints on this earth, likened to the Bride of Christ, and Jesus our LORD and Saviour. Jesus is coming for His Bride, who by then has made herself “white” – signifying purity and righteousness.

The analogy of marriage covenant is a powerful illustration, and can help us understand the nuances and realities of living a faithful life amidst church community today. We might ask about our own Church of God (Seventh Day) as it has grown around the world? What do we look like in Jesus’ eyes? What would He have to say to us?

Revelation chapters 2 and 3 is almost like reading someone else’s mail, in that we gain important and compelling insight into Jesus’ will, as well as the risk factors that can easily beset the very nature of church life, even to the point when Jesus regards “church” as hardly authentic or easily recognisable.



Perhaps, we might better appreciate the exhortations as Jesus reached out to those in those early emerging first century churches of God. And, equally today, may we too take on board his timeless admonitions as they reach and speak to us.

Let’s ask: What endearing similarities do we bear to those who pioneered in faith so long ago. What were they commended for? What were their strengths and assets? What about their weaknesses and liabilities? What might we learn from them, and therefore benefit?

Let’s briefly look at those seven churches. Could it be that we’re looking at broad brush-stroke mirror-like synopsis of church life even today?

Those at Ephesus were known for their toil and patience; they cannot bear evil, and they hated the false teachings of the Nicolaitans. But they abandoned their first love. And thus, they’re sadly remembered as being the loveless church. Imagine, for a moment, that in Jesus’ love for His Bride, He had to content with “lovelessness”! Yet, despite this, for those who overcame, Jesus promised the tree of life.

Smyrna was known for their tribulation and poverty, slander by false religion, suffering, prison, and death. There’s no rebuke or correction, instead, aware of their suffering, Jesus promised that they would not be hurt by the second death.

The church at Pergamum apparently existed in a climate akin to where Satan’s throne was. They are commended for holding fast to Jesus’ name, and keeping the faith. Ironically, embedded into much of the church were the

teachings of Balaam, inferring idolatry and sexual immorality, and the teaching of false Nicolaitan doctrine. (Those at Ephesus decried such false teaching, but those at Pergamum embraced it. Imagine the conflicts that arose between these two sister churches!) To those who overcome, Jesus promised a new name.

Those in Thyatira were commended for their works, love, faith, service, and patient endurance. Yet, they tolerated a prophetess with a Jezebel spirit that led to seduction, idolatry, and the deep things of Satan. Yet, even to these who overcame, Jesus promised authority over the nations, and “the bright morning star”.

Sardis church had a reputation of being alive, but they were dead. Imagine a part of the Body of Christ dying, or about to die! Surely a groom wants to marry a bride alive, vibrant, and responsive! Thus, the call to repent. A few of them, however, inherit a promise of white garments, and their names forever in the book of Life. Moreover, Jesus promises to confess their names before the Father and his angels.

The brethren at Philadelphia were known for their works. Theirs was an open door (open for the gospel and open for Jesus). Noted for their “little power” is either a reflection on the lack of the Holy Spirit, or perhaps the oppressive society they lived in. However, they had not denied Jesus’ name. They patiently endured, and apparently had trouble with false religion. Jesus promised to keep from world tribulation. They would be pillars in the temple of God, with the name of Jesus written on

them.

Finally and sadly those at Laodicea were known for being lukewarm! Thinking they were rich and having prospered, Jesus described them as “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked”. What damning appraisal for the bride of Christ! Jesus thus invited them to find riches in Him, to dress in “white”, and be healed so they can “see”. We see Jesus knocking and calling – from outside the church environment! Is anyone listening? Will anyone open the door to fellowship with Jesus? Those in Philadelphia had an open door; here the door was closed to Jesus. Yet, to those who overcome, Jesus promised them to share His throne.

All seven churches receive the reoccurring admonition, *“He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*



Some have viewed the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 as historical eras of the church, Ephesus as the first century church, and Laodicea as being the church in existence prior to Christ’ return. Maybe. Maybe not. Yet other theologians have seen them as apt assessments of Christianity at any given time throughout history.

Within any Christian community there are those who pray and those who don’t; those who read their Bibles and those who think they know what it says. There

are those who know Jesus and those who don’t. Those who are judgmental, and those who extend grace. In other words, Jesus’ wheat and tares parable comes to mind. Some look like Christians; other are.

The commendations and corrections directed to these first century churches should be a clarion call for us today. What are our strengths? What would Jesus commend us for? In what area would he correct us? What specific promise might he make to us, now, collectively?

Are we a loving people – loving the LORD with all our heart, mind, soul, strength? Are we alive, full of “*first love*”? Or do we just put on a good act? Are we faithful? Is our door to Jesus always open, or conspicuously closed? Do we have genuine fellowship with Him? Are we hot and alive, or lukewarm and dead? Do we tolerate false, unbiblical teachings?

The marriage supper of the Lamb will bring Christ and His Bride together as ONE forever. How is His bride doing? How are you doing? Is the church beautiful, radiant and dressed in white? Or, is she still stained by sin, self, the world and Satan?

When we reread Jesus’ letters to the seven churches, they are not incomparable to a Groom’s love letter to his Bride. The good news is that it ends well. The outcome is powerfully reassuring:

Revelation 19:7-9 ESV *“Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds*

of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Thus, Jesus' words for the church bears his heartfelt, candid, honest, eye to eye conviction, designed to move every heart and soul to repentance and renewed faith.

Notice the three elements of Jesus' appraisal, firstly consisting of encouragement, then correction and finally promises, all underlined with a call to really, really listen.

The past 70 or so years have provided fertile ground for broader Christianity to flourish. In many places the church has bloomed and grown to reflect her Lord and Saviour Jesus. But in other places, Christianity has become known for its lukewarm nature, its tolerance of evil, its complicit silence in the face of wickedness, as well as the very public idolatry and sexual sin that has added to unbelievers' distaste.

Whatever "community" has become, much of "church" must become like her Lord Jesus Christ. The call is to repent, to change.



Thankfully, in almost every faith community, now as well as 2000

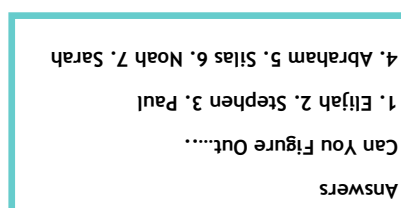
years ago, there were always holy and faithful people, enduring terrible times, and triumphing in the name of Jesus. "You have not denied my name," is Jesus' powerful affirmation as to His Bride's identity and testimony.

So, when the Son of Man returns in His glory, will he find faith on earth? Will he find a faithful bride, dressed in white, resplendent and radiant?

We can be convinced that Jesus will find His bride, the church, faithful and true, and "worthy to stand before the Son of Man" on that glorious day.

The love letters of millennia ago have served their purpose. The next step in our faith journey is the wedding invitations: "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Written by Pastor John Klassek



The Seven Churches of Revelation

1. Ephesus. The Church that had left its first love. (Revelation 2:1-7)

2. Smyrna. The Church that remained faithful, amidst persecution. (Revelation 2:8-11)

3. Pergamum. The Church that compromised its beliefs. (Revelation 2:12-17)

4. Thyatira. The Church that follows false prophets. (Revelation 2:18-29)

5. Sardis. The Church that is spiritually dead. (Revelation 3:1-6)

6. Philadelphia. The Church that was faithful and endured, despite little strength (Revelation 3:7-13)

7. Laodicea. The Church with a lukewarm faith. (Revelation 3:14-22)



The Lord's Supper

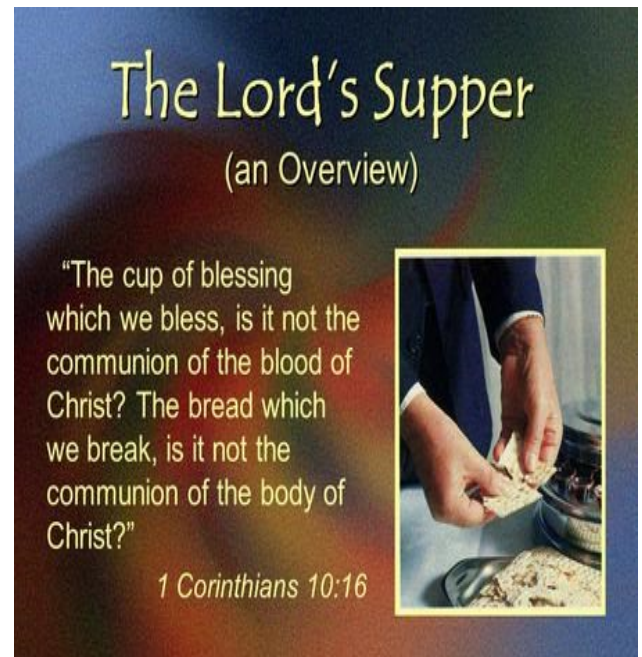
Significance of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper graphically illustrates the doctrine of salvation. As we partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine, we proclaim the Lord's atoning death, (Corinthians 11:26) and that His blood ".... Purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

On the one hand the Lord's Supper is a solemn memorial of our Saviour's suffering and dying on the cross, prompting thoughts of agony and sorrow. On the other hand, it is a celebration of our redemption and deliverance from sin, which brings us great joy!

The night we partake of the Lord's Supper we remember the love of God that sent His Son into the world to save the lost (John 3:16); we remember the self-sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sins (Ephesians 1:7); and we remember the completed redemptive work of Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:12,14).

Friday Evening
26th of March, 2021





CHEESES & CRACKERS

In 1959 my family moved 30 miles across the City of Los Angeles. We brought our two cats with us, Cheeses and Crackers by name. After a few days in our new home Cheeses disappeared and never returned home. Crackers the cat seemed quite content with her new surroundings and stayed with us for the next ten years until she passed away from old age. About a month after Cheeses disappeared my mother received a phone call from a former neighbor where we used to live. Cheeses was at their door. Cheeses had traversed THIRTY miles across Los Angeles roads and freeways and went back to where our old home was. Amazingly Cheeses traveled about a mile a day. She left her family for her former life. Like Lot's wife, she looked back. Crackers stayed with us and remained faithful to her family.

STAY THE COURSE

When it comes to our faith, are we a "Cheeses" or a "Crackers"? Do we have the FAITH to stick with the family God has called us into, or do we long to return to our old neighborhood like Cheeses did? Paul tells us in Romans 8:14-17 that we are God's children and have been adopted into His family. How magnificent is that! We are a part of God's family. Living the Christian life is not always easy. There are distractions set before us every day which can cause us to return to our former lives if we do not remain faithful. Do not allow yourself to be distracted from seeking first His mighty Kingdom (Family) Matthew 6:33. We are reminded in Hebrews 12:1-2 that we will have snares and heavy weights on our daily lives but *"let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, look-*

ing unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." It takes faith to stay the course of our Christian lives.

Jesus tells us in the time of the end, *"he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."* Matthew 24:13-14. We have a job to do. Endure to the end and preach the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to ALL the world. It is not an easy job.

To *"endure to the end"* takes faith, faith in God and His family. Life is a long-distance race and we must endure NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS. Do not be distracted from our calling. Seek His Kingdom first, endure to the end, be faithful.

Are we going to be Cheeses the cat and return to our old lives? Or are we going to be Crackers the cat and remain faithful to the family God has given us? I choose Crackers.

All Bible quotes NKJV

Written by Mike Wallace

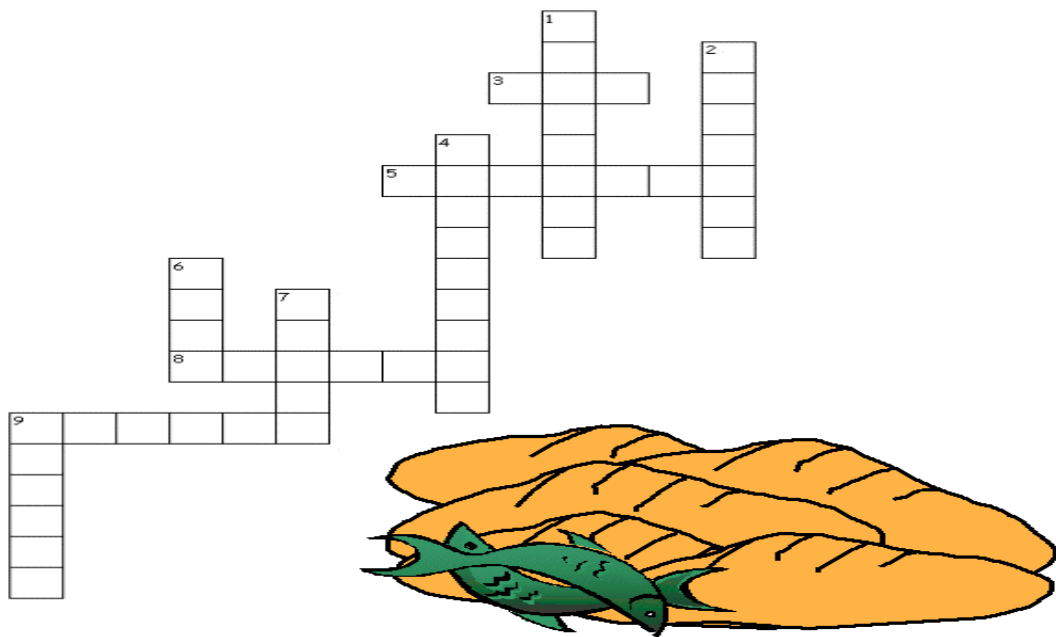
Mike lives in Florence, MT with his wife of 41 years. They attend the Colorado Springs Church of God 7th Day, via electronic media. Mike serves on the board of directors for the CSCOG7 and is the COG7 coordinator for the state of Montana. In his spare time he raises a sheep or two.



Crackers

Youth Corner

Jesus Feeds 5000 Crossword



Across

3. Jesus used this persons small lunch to feed five thousand.
 5. Jesus performed this on the boy's lunch and still does them today.
 8. This is how many baskets of food were left over.
 9. One of the other miracles Jesus did that day was that he ____ people.

Down

1. Five ____ people followed Jesus just to listen to Him and be healed.
 2. Jesus filled enough of these to feed all the people.
 4. The ____ doubted how they would feed all the people.
 6. This was Jesus and the disciples' transportation that day.
 7. The boy had 2 small fish and 5 pieces of ____ in his lunch.
 9. Everyone was ____ that's why Jesus performed the miracle.

Can You Figure Out These Bible Names By Rearranging The Letters?

1. Jaileh
2. Henteps
3. Ulpa
4. Banhara
5. Lisas
6. Anho
7. Raash





The world's biggest Bible weighs 1,094 pounds or 496 kilograms. Louis Waynai created the Bible in the year 1930 and devoted himself to more than 8,000 hours of replicating the King James. It stands at 43.5 inches tall and spans 98 inches when laid open.

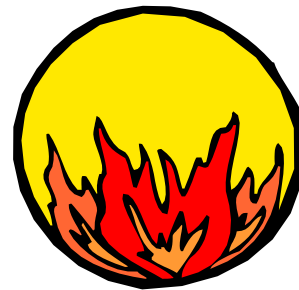
Some concerned organizations "illegally" parachute Bibles into North Korea. However, when authorities spot it, they shoot down each balloon and arrest the locals who will pick up the book. The government tells their citizens that these balloons are filled with poison – although some locals would still take their chances to secure a copy.

But there are about 100 other animals mentioned in the Bible. Sheep are by far the most frequently mentioned.

When Moses comes down from Mount Sinai in Exodus 34, verses 29 and 35 say his face is "*shining*." The Vulgate says "*his face had horns*" instead of the word "shine".

The word "and" appears 46,277 times in the Bible.

Will God Punish the Wicked Forever?



Many Christians believe that a person who dies without Jesus Christ goes to hell immediately at the moment at death. There they burn in the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. There they will spend eternity writhing in torment..... Does this understanding accurately reflect what the Scriptures teach?

**Please send for the
FREE BOOKLET**

Produced and Distributed by CHURCH OF GOD 7TH DAY (Australia)

Postal Address: P.O. Box 29, Tanunda SA 5352

Web Address: www.cog7aus.com

Editor Phil Kordahi

Assistant Editor David Kidd