

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5

the OLIVE BRANCH

SUMMER
2011

“That I may dwell among them”

*From the
Overseer’s Desk*

*Part 3 in the series
“His Glorious Church”*

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8

This scripture could be viewed as the point where the tabernacle/house of God/Church of God program began its realization. Abraham and the patriarchs had “seen it afar off” (Hebrews 11). But, in this verse, is seen God’s first visible step in bringing His people together to provide a place where He might “dwell among them.”

Both key phrases already have been considered, but focus was upon the first: “let them make me a sanctuary.” This first phrase is by no means exhausted, and will be explored further at a later time. But our attention will now

turn to focus on the latter phrase: “that I may dwell among them.”

Essence of God’s Eternal Plan

As previously noted: God desired His relationship with His covenanted people Israel to be richer and more intimate than simply for His presence to be seen from a distance (the pillar of fire, the cloud, etc.).

He desired to dwell among them! Exodus 29 concludes reaffirming the ultimate importance of their effort to build Him a tabernacle:

“And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest’s office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.” (Exodus 29:44-46)

While the traveling tabernacle was built to God’s specifications, the ultimate conclusion of that building program is yet to be realized. Consider the revelation that John witnessed of God’s completed plan from Revelation 21:3. John quoted the description that he heard from heaven:

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

The significance of this phrase cannot be overemphasized, for it captures the essence of God’s eternal plan that He formed “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4), and that will not be completed until we all see what John saw: “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared

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BTI...Coordinator Wendell Flick

“But be ye doers of the word...” James 1:22a.

James goes on to tell us and instruct us to be “not hearers only.” If we only hear God’s word and do not do it, we will be deceiving our own selves and thus will miss out on the blessings of God.

BTI trains us to be doers of God’s word. The next BTI is now nearly a year away, but it isn’t too early to plan to attend. Also, there are many

correspondence courses available through BTI that can be taken at home or through your local church any time of the year.

God bless BTI.

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2011 Calendar

July 15-17 – **Regional Convention**, Uniontown, PA

Aug. 19-22 – **International Youth Camp**, Lutheridge Conference Center, Asheville, NC

Aug. 23-28 – **General Assembly**, Ridgecrest Conference Center, Asheville, NC

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Contact us:

The Olive Branch is a publication of The Church of God–Northeast Region, which serves churches in Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania and new works throughout the greater area. It can be viewed online in English, Spanish and French at www.tcog-ne.org.

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WMB...Coordinator Diana Seese

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
Matthew 5:13-16

Far out in the desert, high on a mountain peak, alone in the desolate countryside – only in places like these can we sense the impact of a single star. The visibly brightest star (except for our sun) is Sirius, estimated to be 8.6 light years from earth. Sirius is only dimly visible amid artificial city glow. Yet, in spite of its distance, it can light up a purely black sky.

Then, add other stars. One by one, the impact accumulates and the light in the sky becomes brighter. We are able to see more clearly. This illustrates the amazing impact of light. Light changes everything – our emotions, our attitudes, the atmosphere, our perceptions, and how we view the world and events. When we are surrounded by light, we see more clearly and make better decisions.

But the absence of light – darkness – has the opposite effect. Darkness hides things. It blinds us. It creates the illusion that our actions are invisible and that no one is watching. In darkness, we're more susceptible to temptation and it's harder to find our way.

Without Christ, we all are in spiritual darkness. But, the Lord has called His people *"out of darkness into His marvelous light."* We are to shine our light so that others can see that Jesus is in us. We are to let our light shine – in our homes and everywhere we go – to light the way to Jesus for our families and for others. The Lord does not want any to perish, but wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Child of God, we are also to be spiritual salt. Salt prevents decay from occurring, it also makes food more palatable to the taste.

We, as children of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, are not to lose our saltiness or dim our light. The world is in spiritual darkness, blinded by the power of the devil, the prince of darkness.

Let us remember what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4:3-6:

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the gods of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

As we live close to the Lord and reflect His light, He will truly be seen to be the light of the world.

Our theme this year is taken from Isaiah 6:8: *"..Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."* Can we, Church of God, tell the Lord, "Send me! I go to take your light to a lost and dying world?" We can do this through our Sharing Hands Ministry, World Missions, Coins for Missions and Missionary Partnership Alliance.

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CPMA... Coordinator Roger Fuester

An eye-catching notice was posted on the bulletin board of a business office: "It has come to attention of management that workers dying on the job are failing to fall down. This practice must cease immediately, as it has become impossible to distinguish between death and the natural movement of the staff. Any employee found dead in an upright position will be dropped from the payroll."

This tongue-in-cheek announcement has a serious implication for believers in Jesus. If we are not careful, we can go through the motions of obedience without any real heartfelt involvement. A business-as-usual attitude can indicate a lack of enthusiasm for righteous living and serving God.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote:

"...knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand..." (Romans 13:11-12)

We must stay focused in our wish to please the Lord. Long ago, the psalmist wrote:

"Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments. So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes"
(Psalm 119:41-48)

Does this sound like somebody who's asleep at the switch spiritually? Like somebody who will settle for a casual religious experience? Like somebody who has a half-hearted commitment to love what God loves and hate what He hates? No.



The psalmist is committed to giving his whole heart, mind and strength to the matter of walking in the light – and showing the light to others.

In his time, Paul believed that salvation was near and the night was far spent, and with good reason. As we see the day of the Lord's return approaching – with a deluge of political sex scandals, parents killing small children, and decency under assault – we find that the night is even further spent. We can accomplish much for the Lord if we set our will and our energies against the sinful current flowing through the world. Let's not fall asleep on the job.

Living for Jesus is not a part-time job. It means being faithful in the little things, as well as the big things. There is only a short time left in the Assembly Year, and we need to be faithful in paying our CPMA dues. We want the Northeast Region to be 100 percent. So, please attend to this matter if you have not already done so. It's all part of working full-time.

May God bless you!

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as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Revelations 21:2)

Panoramic View of God’s Eternal Plan

To help us understand the significance of God’s “dwell among” plan, we shall consider examples of His efforts to establish a people with whom He might share His presence. This examination is not exhaustive, since this theme runs throughout Scripture – from Adam and Eve in Eden, to the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.

This sermon will consider examples from the Old Testament, such as the special relationships God had with Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, the patriarchs, the children of Israel and David; and the revelations that He shared with the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah. Our next sermon then will consider how this purpose and plan of God matured in the New Testament, and will be ultimately fulfilled according to God’s divine plan and purpose.

Adam and Eve Walk with God

The first manifestation of this desire of God is found in the Garden of Eden, the first special dwelling place where God could meet with and fellowship with man. Following His creation of man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26), God also prepared a special place for man to dwell:

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” (Genesis 2:7-9)

God had prepared this special place for man, and man was given the special responsibility to maintain the garden: *“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” (Genesis 2:15)*

Thus, from the beginning, God’s plan for a special relationship between Himself and man is clearly established.

In His desire to fellowship with Adam and Eve, God regularly visited them: *“walking in the garden in the cool of the day.”*

(Genesis 3:8) We do not know how long this special relationship existed. Man had previously been instructed to *“be fruitful and multiple”* (Genesis 1:28). God thus would have a people created in His *“image and likeness”* (Genesis 1:26) with whom He could fellowship. But because of the transgression of Adam and Eve, this was not to be the case.



Regional
Overseer
James Smith

Enoch Walks with God

With the fall of man, and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the next significant relationship of God with mankind is seen in His walking with Enoch, described in Genesis 5:22-24:

“And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”

Enoch was a man who *“walked with God.”* This phrase is restated for emphasis. Hebrews 11:5 tells us why he was taken: *“...God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”* Enoch clearly had a special relationship with God. He so pleased God that God took him to glory to evermore be in His presence – Enoch now dwells with God!

The Hebrew word (“laaqach”) means “to take” – with the idea of taking “to oneself.” The only other instance where it is used in relation to removal from this world occurs in the description of the translation of Elijah. *“And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel, came forth to Elisha, and said to him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away (laaqach) thy master from thy head today?” (2 Kings 2:3,5)*

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Noah Walks with God

This outcome was great for Enoch, but it did not further God's plan to have a people here on earth among whom He would dwell. So, God continued to work His foreordained plan.

Next was Noah who *"found grace in the eyes of the LORD."* (Genesis 6:8) Furthermore, *"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."* (Genesis 6:9). Although Noah was not translated as Enoch, God did commune with Noah and promised him that *"with thee will I establish my covenant."* (Genesis 6:18)

Hebrews states that, *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."* (Hebrews 11:7) Obeying God and keeping His covenant are clearly part of what it means to *"walk with God."*

The Patriarchs' Dwelling

That the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) sought a place where God dwelled is considered in Hebrews 11:8-10:

(8) By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. (9) By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: (10) For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

That dwelling place they did not reach, but they saw it afar off and embraced it – Hebrews 11:13-16:

(13) These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (14) For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. (15) And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. (16) But now they desire a better

country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Israelites Walking and Dwelling with God

To Moses was revealed the plan of God to have a people among whom He might dwell. God stated His plan in Exodus 25:8: *"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."*

Because of Israel's disobedience in worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32), the tabernacle of God was moved from their midst to an area "without" or outside the tribal camp, as described in Exodus 33:7:

"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp."

He may have been outside the camp, but the Lord continued to promise that His program would be fulfilled. Indeed, the two themes of God, walking and dwelling with His people, were renewed in Leviticus 26:11-12:

"And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

God thus foreshadowed the day when He would both set His tabernacle in their midst and would walk among them. One of the earliest Jewish Aramaic paraphrases or commentaries of the Old Testament, the "Targum of Jonathan," described this promise of God thus: *"I will put the Shechinah of my glory among you:"*

Paul made reference to this promise of God in 2 Corinthians 6:16 *"... for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."* As we shall yet examine in a later sermon, Paul took this theme to a new level: *"ye are the temple of the living God."*

David Would Dwell with the Lord

King David often contemplated walking and dwelling with the Lord – even from his youth as a shepherd tending his father's sheep. The last verse of Psalm 23 made the leap from our walking here on this earth in the flesh to our eternally dwelling

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with the Lord: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

David repeats this thought in Psalm 27:4: “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”

David’s thoughts continually turned to what it meant for the Lord to dwell with His people. The following are more examples of his understanding of God’s plan:

“A Psalm of David. LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” (Psalm 15:1) “Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” (Psalms 101:6)

When the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, David danced before the Lord with all his might in celebration of its return (2 Samuel 6:15-16). Then as he considered where the Ark would be housed, David had a heavy burden regarding the house of the Lord – there wasn’t one!

The account of that burden and how the Lord responded is found in 2 Samuel 7, and 1 Chronicles 17. David declared his dismay: “...Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains.” (v. 1) God’s response to David was unexpected: “Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in.” (v. 5)

God’s House Shall be Built – an Everlasting House

One might take this answer to indicate David was out of touch with God’s will. The truth was that God had a plan that far exceeded what David had contemplated. The prophet Nathan revealed God’s great eternal plan to David in 1 Chronicles 17:9-11:

“Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, ... (10) ... Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house. (11) ...I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.”

An obvious conclusion would be that Nathan spoke of Solomon, who one day would reign in David’s stead. Solomon did build the first Jerusalem temple – clearly a short-term fulfillment of Nathan’s pronouncement from God. But Solomon in all his wisdom (2 Chronicles 1:12) understood that God

had a far greater plan as Solomon prayed at the dedication of God’s house in 2 Chronicles 6:18

“But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!”

Nathan had seen beyond Solomon’s day and the literal coming of a son of David to the coming of the Son of God. It was His Son who would build the eternal house (dwelling) of God:

“He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. (13) I will be his father, and he shall be my son; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: (14) But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.” (1 Chronicles 17:12-14)

The Prophets Speak Out

The New Testament writers quoted from the prophets who continually reiterated this grand desire of the Lord to walk and dwell with His people. Isaiah repeatedly spoke of the eternal house of God, where He would dwell among people from all nations – Isaiah 2:2-3:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

The prophet Ezekiel expressed the connection that would exist between God’s covenant, God’s tabernacle, God’s sanctuary and God’s people in Ezekiel 37:26-28:

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. (27) My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (28) And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

Especially note the promise here that God’s “sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

ABM...Coordinator Nancy Horchar

If I offered you a crisp \$100 bill, would you take it? Now, if I took that same \$100 bill and crinkled it in my hand and then offered it to you, would you still take it? What if I took that crinkled money and put it in my garden and got it all dirty? How about then – would you still take it?

I believe most people would still take the money because they would recognize that, no matter if it's crisp, wrinkled or dirty, the value is still the same. It will still spend at any store.

I believe that same standard applies to the soul. It matters not to God where a soul has been or how broken and dirty it is. Each soul is still of great value to God and should be to each of us, as well.

Let us see every soul through those eyes of compassion. Let us value every person we meet or who enters the church doors. No matter if they come ragged, soiled or broken – physically or spiritually – just one touch of the Master's hand can make a new creature.

Remember our theme of "No one left behind!"

Also, let's not forget to pay our Emergency \$5 for the 2010-2011 year before the Regional Convention in July if that has not already been done. And, please offer to host a prayer band meeting at your home. You will be blessed!

Here is a poem by Myra Brooks Welch that goes along with this month's ABM boost:

The Touch of the Master's Hand

'Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer thought it scarcely worth his while to waste much time on the old violin, but held it up with a smile. "What am I bidden good folks," he cried. "Who'll start the bidding for me?

"A dollar, a dollar," then two. "Only two? Two dollars, and who'll make it three? Three dollars once. Three dollars twice. Going for three."

"But no, from the room, far back, a gray-haired man came forward and picked up the bow. Then, wiping the dust from the old violin and tightening the loose strings, he played a melody pure and sweet as caroling angels sing.



The music ceased and the auctioneer, with a voice that was quiet and low said, "What am I bid for the old violin?" And, he held it up with the bow. "A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two? Two thousand. And, who'll make it three? Three thousand once. Three thousand twice and going, going, gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried, "We do not quite understand what changed its worth." Swift came the reply: "The touch of the master's hand."

And many a man with his life out of tune and battered and scarred with sin is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd much like the old violin. "A mess of pottage," a glass of wine, a game and he travels on. He is "going once" and "going twice." He's "going and almost gone." But the Master comes and the foolish crowd never can quite understand the worth of a soul and the change that's wrought by the touch of the Master's hand.

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Regional photos...

Spring and early summer were active seasons around the region. On pages 9 and 10 are photos that include: regional attendees of Bible Training Institute in Tennessee (including 2011 graduate Nancy Smith); Youth Camp scenes from Mt. Chestnut Center in Pennsylvania; a new member taking the church covenant at the New Rochelle, NY church; Youth Convention activities at Uniontown, PA; and Ladies Retreat activities that took place in Markleysburg, PA.



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Zechariah also glimpsed God's plan for a people that expanded well beyond the Israelites. He rejoiced to see (even if afar off) a holy people that would be gathered from amongst all nations and races of people, as he prophesied in Zechariah 2:10-11:

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. (11) And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee."

This Is God's Plan – It Will Be Fulfilled!

We have briefly considered the maturing of God's plan given in the Old Testament. The 400 years of silence from Malachi to the coming of

Jesus would not deter its fulfillment. During this dark period, many in Israel began to doubt whether God's promises would ever be fulfilled. Others claimed to know the Scripture (Matthew 2:4-6), yet they did not know the day of their visitation (Luke 19:41-42).

Fortunately, there were others (like Simeon and Anna) who not only knew the Scripture, but also knew the giver of that Scripture. These patiently waited for "*the consolation of Israel*" (Luke 2:25,36).

And, still today, when we truly understand God's divine plan and purpose, we too will "*be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter*" (2 Thessalonians 2:2). What God has planned and promised – that He surely will do!

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Sunday School...

Coordinator Elaine Smail

At a recent Ladies Retreat, I had the opportunity, for the first time, to teach a class. It was a blessed experience for me to prepare and present a teaching on the “if” part of 2 Chronicles 7:14. In its entirety, God spoke, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”* I want to share with you a small part of my presentation, specifically, the part when God says *“seek my face.”*

This phrase lets us know that God is not impersonal, distant, unknowable or unreachable. God *wants* to hear from us, meet with us, commune with us. He is waiting ... but it is up to us to make the first move. When we do, He is right there.

God is not hiding Himself so that we can't find Him. Consider the game of hide and seek. Most small children want to be found. They don't want to be isolated forever in their hiding place. If a child is left unfound, he starts making sounds so that he will be found by the seeker. We DO need to seek God. But, we must realize He is there, and will allow us to find Him because He really wants us to fellowship with Him.

If God had only spoken *“seek me,”* we might think that there exists a distance between Him and us. Perhaps we could seek, but shouldn't expect to see Him too closely or be able to touch Him. But when God says *“seek my face,”* we are forced to understand we should get close enough to Him to see His face. In other words, we are told to get right in the face of God.

However much God desires to be found, it is interesting to note that it is impossible to *seek God's face* without accomplishing the first two conditions of 2 Chronicles 7:14 – humility and prayer.

This commitment will keep Him first in our affections. Let me remind you of the reason for Israel and Judah's backsliding from God. Their love and devotion to the God of Abraham – the God who delivered them from Egyptian slavery, and the God who proved faithful to them time and time again – was replaced by vain idols.



What about us? Do our affections go after things that cannot truly satisfy – a good job, lots of money, a nice house, a child, a friend, food, clothes, cars, technological gadgets, etc.? Do we think these things hold some magical key to a successful life or happiness and contentment? Every different idol that we have trusted must be confessed. Anything that has taken our eyes off God must go!

A genuine, sincere heart *seeking the face of God* will find it and reap benefits. It will take perseverance, endurance, humility and prayer. It is a condition God says must be met. But remember, in the latter part of 2 Chronicles 7:14, God promises a reward.

The Bible also gives us this model for action: *“When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.” Psalm 27:8.* Let us follow this advice and seek His face! This close encounter with God will be an experience you will never forget!

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Final thoughts...

Assistant Editor Nora Edinger

An acquaintance who is having difficulty finding a home large enough for her family of eight recently made an interesting remark: "There are all these older couples alone in these huge houses," she said. "I know they love their homes, but there comes a time when they need to give someone else a turn."

At first, I was mildly offended on behalf of elderly couples everywhere. Then, I realized a truth in what she said. No matter how much we have invested in a certain place, circumstance or time of life, there's a time to let go.

If it's not age that brings such a change, something else will. I think that must have been what the Apostle Peter was thinking of when he wrote 2 Peter 3:11: "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.*"

Peter – who had experienced Jesus's nomadic, geographically-rootless ministry first hand – certainly knew whereof he spoke. He understood that all things are temporary. He understood that, even if life's circumstances do

not force our grip off something, death or the rapture eventually will. He ultimately understood that all these things we hold dear will eventually burn up in God's renewal program.

More importantly, he understood that this knowledge is not an end in itself. An awareness of the temporary nature of things shouldn't sadden us. It should spur Christians to hold things loosely and God tightly.

We will surely be a more joyful, inspiring people if we can remember to do this.

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