

November 2009

Cyberspace News

Michigan News



The Thanksgiving Feast

Elder Charles Moore

Winter Retreat
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Nazarene District
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Did you know that Thanksgiving may be the most Biblical of all holidays? We often think of Christmas as being the most "Christian" holiday, especially at this time of year, and in a way it is because at Christmas, we celebrate the birth of the Christ. There are many great lessons that can be taught from the nativity narrative. We can learn from the humility of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the faithfulness of the Magi, the wonder of the shepherds, the ruthlessness of Herod and the great love of God in sending a Savior into the world to redeem the world. But in terms of telling us exactly how and why special days were to be celebrated in Scripture, Thanksgiving is the most Biblically defined.

The feasts of the Old Testament were not only looking backward, but also looking forward to the coming of Christ. They were a shadow of things to come. **"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a**

Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." (Colossians 2:16-17 ESV) Imagine Jesus approaching you with the sun behind Him. Even before Jesus reaches you, you will see His approaching shadow. A feast functions like a "Shadow" of things to come. In fact there are seven feasts that mark special occasions in the Scripture and they are shadows of the reality that would be fulfilled because of Christ's birth.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Hag Ha Matzah) was a week of eating bread made without yeast (Matzah), to remember how God brought the Israelites out of Egypt in haste. It is also a picture of our salvation through Christ from the bondage of sin, for the leaven is seen as a symbol of sin.

The Feast of First Fruits (Yom Ha Bikkurim) was the harvest offering on the first day after the Sabbath after Passover. It

is also a picture of Jesus' resurrection: He is "the firstfruits" from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20)

The Feast of Weeks or *Pentecost* (Shavuoth) celebrates the time of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The offering is made fifty days after Passover (hence: Pentecost). It is also a picture of the Holy Spirit that was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus.

The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) this celebrates the beginning of the Jewish civil year. It is both a time of rejoicing as well as a holy occasion. Shofars (Ram's horns) are blown to proclaim a gathering for worship. It is also a picture of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when the final trumpet shall sound and the age to come shall begin.

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is the holiest day of the Jewish year when sacrifices for sins of the nation were made. It is also a picture of how Christ fulfilled our needed atonement on the cross by becoming our perfect sacrifice

The Feast of Tabernacles or of *Booths* (Succoth) recalls 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, living in tents (booths) and worshiping in a portable tabernacle. It is also a picture of the church age, which we are now in; one day we will shed both these booths (bodies) for new

(Continued on page 2)

booths made for our eternal place with God.

Finally, *Pesach* (Passover) commemorates the Exodus from Egypt, Israel's deliverance from Egypt. It is also a wonderful picture of Christ, our Passover lamb, in it **"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son," (Colossians 1:13 ESV)**

Each of these feasts was marked by four things. They share amazing similarities to our feast of Thanksgiving.

Gathering of Community: Everyone in the nation would take part in these holidays. All focus was on the special occasion. Thanksgiving gathers us together as a community. This is important because it involves: "Not only your family, but millions of Americans". The community will come together for a celebration, each home celebrating in their own way.

Giving of Thanks: During each of these feasts, the nation of Israel would pray and give thanks to God for all of His blessings. We are called as a nation to give thanks, but even though we all take Thanksgiving off from work, most of us forget to thank God for the multitude of blessings. We often forget to give thanks because we forget why we should, which is the third mark of these feasts.

Remembrance: Each feast brought the things of God to mind in a specific way, they are a call to remember God's mighty acts. Thanksgiving should bring to our mind thoughts of God's blessing on our nation. Thanksgiving is explicitly Biblical when God is at the center of our thanks.

Feast: In every Old Testament holiday there was an accompanying feast. Arguably the best part of the Thanksgiving tradition and the only part that is universally observed in this nation. It amazes me sometimes how important food is in Scripture as a figure. Jesus referred to Himself as the bread of life and as Living Water. Heaven is symbolized by a wedding feast. The greatest feast we share as Christians is the Lord's Supper. In it we gather together as a community of believers. We thank God for the sacrifice of His Son. We remember the promise we have through Him and **"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26 ESV)**

We who are the beneficiaries of God's great grace should be most thankful not just at this time of year but every day. We ought to sing with David ". . . **Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5 ESV)** We are the objects of God's grace; let him be the object of our gratitude.

Amen!

November has been a very pleasant experience this year. We had great weather most of the month.

The first weekend of the month we were able to spend some time with Roy and Bennie Gee as they had come for a Thanksgiving celebration at the Petersburg Church of God. They stayed in the Dundee area so we were able to see them here at home. They are always pleasant company. Bennie had an attack of phlebitis, but has recovered since arriving back home in CA.

Once more we report that Rachel Sottile had further surgery to be sure that there would be no danger of cancer coming back. She recovered from the first surgery very rapidly and this one is over and she is recouping again. Please continue to remember Rachel in your prayers. She reports that she needs them and is very thankful for all the prayers.

Jon Lane (in Phoenix) flew to Europe for the company he works for this month. He visited Galway, Ireland and Luxembourg, Luxembourg. Hope you had some time to sightsee, Jon. His son Scott had a hockey tournament in California over Thanksgiving so the family attended that and enjoyed a visit with Kevin and Heather Lane while in their neighborhood.

Kay, Jim and Katie Nevil traveled down to the Jacksonville area to spend Thanksgiving with son Josh. The remainder of the Charles siblings were at Larry and Peggy Charles' for the feast. (That includes the Vaughns and Smeltzers.)

Kerry Johnson was able to spend some time off work during the holiday. He got a shot block for the injury he suffered a few months back. It went well for him and his next step is therapy. He and Kathleen spent Thanksgiving with their daughter Leanne and her husband Jon and had a great day.

Rox-Ann and David Brugman hosted their family for Thanksgiving in Hillsdale, MI at their home and Elder Moore and Aurine report a lovely dinner with the them and the grandchildren.

Ellen Momberger also reports a lovely Thanksgiving dinner with her son Carl and his wife Sherry at a nice restaurant this year. She is doing well at this time.

That wraps up our Thanksgiving month, but I want to say that our thanks giving to God should never be over.

Jerome and Norma Ripley entertained Charlie and Aurine Moore the very last day of the month. I am sure they all enjoyed the gabfest!

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore

November was mild, with several sunny days, and not too wet. No doubt about it, though. Winter is on its way.

Melinda Begeman, Terrie Fedor, Don Daniels and Charlie and I have stayed in touch with Marcia Moore who has transferred to Specialty Hospital at Oakwood Heritage in Taylor for physical therapy and medical care to get her ready for her much-awaited move into her new apartment. She's had a difficult time but remains very determined to do what needs to be done to recover strength and get better. Keep her in your prayers, please.

It is truly a privilege to pray for others and we have done this in November for several people, including students at Jefferson high school, Marie Mayville struggling with an ear infection after ear surgery, Roy and Bennie Gee, our far away friends like Kerry Johnson, Vicki Chapman, and friends of our church members who we see at our schools and jobs.

Play practice kick off started at the tail end of this month and we are hoping and praying for a good Christmas Eve program. We so regretted not having the program last year, due to illness, and look forward to bringing all the pieces together for this year's.

Marshala Goins is putting in a barrier free bathroom at her home so that her son, James, will be able to have overnight visits and someday move in with her and her daughters, Jamesha and Elizabeth. We still get to meet new caregivers who bring James to church and enjoy them all.

Tim started a new job at Cauffiel Technologies. He's looking forward to the work in his new position, but I'll bet he hopes that no one *else* tries to recruit him to any other new positions. He'll be doing product development projects for them, among many other things. Diane and Tim enjoyed a concert this month with the Trans Siberian Orchestra in Toledo. Nick and his girlfriend, Brittannie Good, had surprised them with tick-

ets as a Christmas gift. The group does rock opera, light shows, and lots of great special effects. Tim and Diane have liked the group for years so the gift was a hit.

Kathy and Joe Smeltzer enjoyed attending a recent concert with the Collingsworth family and especially seeing Larnell Harris. After the show, Kathy and Joe stopped up to speak to him and he clearly remembered her and her sister Kay and singing at the Michigan/Ohio Concert Choir. She loved one of the songs he sang from I Corinthians 13. Coincidentally, a friend of mine from the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries was at the same performance and said that Larnell Harris is one of the most impressive performers he sees in concert.

November seems to have been a great month for couples to marry. Three of our local church couples celebrated anniversaries within one week of each other in November. This year Charlie and I celebrated 31 years of marriage, Kathy and Joe Smeltzer celebrated 30 and Jeff and Melinda Begeman celebrated 29. From all indications, all are very happy!

We joined the Petersburg Church of God Seventh Day for their weekend retreat with Roy and Bennie Gee. People from both churches gathered at John and Sue Schott's house for a social gathering on Friday night to welcome Roy and Bennie and we enjoyed a full day and a half of talks on the total solution for the troubled Galatian churches. Bennie had some leg problems and Roy lost his camera, which we are still praying may somehow be returned to him, but it was a wonderful weekend and opportunity, especially to be included with our friends from Petersburg. Roy shared an interesting web site rulesofthumb.org which is worth taking a look at.

Until next month, may you be aware of God's abounding presence, wherever you walk this month!



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The Real Meaning of Christmas

A Christmas Poem by Joseph P. Martino Copyright© 2003

Two thousand years ago the King of Kings was born.
'The Lamb of God' later made to feel the thorn,
If his words are accepted and not scorned,
They will make us all reborn.

Though God's grace, Joseph and Mary presented
A gift to the world that day, which we can all repay,
by living the ten commandments each and every day.

Try to remember and keep in your heart and mind
Jesus's gospel while here on Earth,
Redemption not a life lived in constant mirth.
Peace on Earth, good will toward man
Everyone should try it, whenever they can.

The Lord gave us the option and choice of 'free will,'
Now it's up to us to fit the bill.

So when you're Christmas shopping for family and friends,
and money is tight at both ends,
Remember that the greatest gift of all,
Is your love of Jesus in the manger stall.