

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



VOL. 2, NO. 37

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 15, 1980

"BORN-AGAIN POLITICS"

by

Herbert W. Armstrong

On the front cover of this past week's Newsweek magazine was a picture of the TV evangelist who comes on just ahead of me on our Tucson Channel 11 Sunday mornings. His name is Jerry Falwell, and if I may be forgiven for a harmless pun, he does fall well when it comes to UNDERSTANDING the Word of God!

The big-type red-ink headline atop his pic on Newsweek's front cover is "Born-Again Politics." It reminds me of the poem of sixty years ago: "The barefoot boy with shoes on stood sitting in the grass, and it rained all day that night"--a parody of opposites.

Mr. Falwell is NOT "born again" and has no understanding of what the term MEANS. And if he were, he would never be in politics. When one is born again he would no more be in politics than a barefoot boy would have shoes on his feet--than a boy sitting in the grass would be standing, or than day would be night.

Do I then criticize Mr. Falwell or condemn him? Not at all. Not at all. God is not judging him--yet, and neither do I. But this is an apt illustration, blared before the whole nation on Newsweek's cover, of what did happen to the first man, Adam--and what is consequently the state of ALL in the world today, EXCEPT the very few God has specially called. Humanity has lost sight of all this. The religionists of "traditional Christianity" think they believe the Bible as the Word of God, yet they don't--any more than the barefoot boy has on shoes.

The first man Adam was the father--the progenitor--of the human race. He was required to make a CHOICE between receiving God's Holy Spirit to open his mind to revealed knowledge from God, or taking to himself knowledge of what is good and what is evil. ADAM MADE THE CHOICE FOR MANKIND as a whole--his progeny who would be born from him. He CUT MANKIND OFF FROM GOD, from the Holy Spirit, and thus from revealed KNOWLEDGE from God understandable only through the Spirit of God. All, that is, EXCEPT the minute FEW God would specially call and choose.

God made Adam's decision BINDING on all EXCEPT the very few God would call. That made God RESPONSIBLE, knowing well He was leaving Satan on the throne to DECEIVE mankind. So God BLINDED humanity--left humanity CUT OFF from Him and His KNOWLEDGE U N T I L the second Adam, Jesus Christ, should overcome Satan, qualify to restore God's GOVERNMENT, and Himself be inducted on the throne over the earth.

That means the world is CUT OFF and cannot UNDERSTAND God's knowledge UNTIL the second coming of Christ and the removal of Satan. Meanwhile,

the world is NOT BEING JUDGED. Those in the world uncalled are NOT "lost," neither are they "saved." Just not judged--YET! But this they do not understand.

The leaders of "traditional Christianity" do not seem to know Jesus was born to be a KING. Jesus came to QUALIFY to replace Satan on the THRONE over the earth. If we are called, and chosen by Him, we shall sit with Him in His THRONE over the entire earth. We shall be given divine spiritual POWER to RULE the world with and under Christ, "with a rod of iron."

WHY are we called, now, into God's CHURCH? For a PURPOSE! That purpose is that we, too, through Christ and the Holy Spirit overcome Satan, have our minds opened by God's Spirit to GOD'S KNOWLEDGE (Truth), grow in grace and knowledge, develop spiritual CHARACTER to qualify us to RULE in the Kingdom of God with the restored GOVERNMENT OF GOD over all the earth.

BUT WE ARE NOT called to become part of the GOVERNMENTS of THIS WORLD --manipulated by Satan. This is Satan's world. Those not begotten (not yet BORN) are NOT children of God, THEY ARE CHILDREN OF SATAN (Jesus said so--John 8:44). But when we are called to repentance, faith, and receiving the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the begotten children of GOD (Rom. 8:16), but until then we are NONE OF CHRIST'S (Rom. 8:9).

IF we are begotten children, not yet BORN, we are like father Abraham, a stranger and pilgrim in this world. Yet not OF this world or its politics. Our real citizenship is reserved in heaven (Phil. 3:20). We are like foreigners and strangers in this world.

ONE BEGOTTEN OF GOD TAKES NO PART IN THIS WORLD'S POLITICS!

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MUST WE DWELL IN BOOTHS?

by

Herbert W. Armstrong

Back in the spring of 1927 God opened my mind to see that not only is the weekly Sabbath binding FOREVER, but the ANNUAL Sabbaths as well. God had not yet revealed to me WHY, I just knew He commanded, and I obeyed. For seven years my wife and I kept these days ALONE. When I made the truth plain to the Sardis brethren in Oregon they laughed me to scorn.

Seven years after my conversion the Philadelphia era of God's Church was raised up, through a six weeks, six-nights-a-week campaign in a one-room country school house near Eugene, Oregon. They were mostly my own new converts. They did listen, and with Mrs. Armstrong and me join in observing them. But it was 12 years later, 1945, when God finally revealed to me the MEANING of His annual Festivals--the real REASON WHY He had commanded them FOR EVER!

God is working out a PURPOSE here on earth! That PURPOSE is dual:
a) God is reproducing Himself--forming future GOD BEINGS from mortal

humans made from material soil, b) restoring the GOVERNMENT of God through these future born children of God.

For this transcendental PURPOSE God has a MASTER PLAN for its accomplishment. There are seven major steps in that Master Plan. The annual Festivals of God PICTURE that Master Plan.

God commanded these Festivals to be kept FOR EVER--WHY? For His CHURCH His purpose and reason is to remind us every year--so we never forget--each of these seven steps in the working out of His Supreme PURPOSE.

Just going through the motions of meeting together on each of the Feasts would not accomplish God's PURPOSE in GIVING us these feasts--IF WE DO NOT PROCLAIM SERMONS TO THE PEOPLE on the MEANING of these Festivals. By two or three years ago many ministers had drifted into preaching on these feasts just whatever subject they themselves liked to speak on--with not a word about the MEANING of the feast God wants the congregations to bear in mind.

In the PAGAN religions, they believe that going through certain motions--doing certain physical things--is the religious duty of people. For example, one branch of "traditional Christianity" is merely a continuation of the ancient BABYLONIAN MYSTERY RELIGION (Rev. 17:5). One motion they go through, for example, is to cross themselves. It is merely a SUPERSTITION. Without actually realizing it, the reason they do this is that they suppose a harsh, stern, angry GOD of some kind is watching. If they don't go through this motion this god will be angry, and they will have bad luck. They think just going through the physical motion will please this false, non-existent god.

But the REAL GOD is a God of LOVE--a God of KNOWLEDGE--of UNDERSTANDING--who wants to develop in us HIS holy, righteous, perfect CHARACTER.

He gave us these annual Feasts to renew yearly in our KNOWLEDGE His Purpose--what He is developing in us!

Now in Old Testament Israel they did not have the Holy Spirit. They could not UNDERSTAND the SPIRITUAL meaning of these Festivals. But the New Testament Church is the FIRST FRUITS--that is, the first GROUP or BODY to receive the Holy Spirit AS A BODY to become the FIRST BORN as finally resurrected and born GOD BEINGS.

Ancient Israel did not understand the MEANING of these Feasts. In them God takes the MATERIAL HARVEST in Judea to picture to His Church annually His SPIRITUAL HARVEST of GOD BEINGS.

True, God ordained the Feasts to be observed FOR EVER. But to ancient Israel--AT THE TIME when they were in the desert BEFORE they entered the Promised Land, God said to them, "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born" (NOT us that are Christians begotten of GOD) "shall dwell in booths."

WHY? "That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel" (NOT the begotten children of GOD) "to dwell in booths," WHEN?

"When I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23:42-43).

They were in a hot climate where they could find branches of certain trees--palm, myrtle and olive branches. Later in Palestine, a part of Israel only (of Judah) under Ezra and Nehemiah used these booths (Neh. 8:14-18). But, for example, myrtle branches are found only in Palestine, and palm and olive branches are found only in some hot climates.

But now the Church, then to be made into the Kingdom of God, ruling the earth, in the time PICTURED TO US BY THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, will cause ALL NATIONS to go to Jerusalem for this Festival. WHY? To make booths of tree branches and live inside them?--each alone by himself seven days--in order not to DISplease an angry god? NO! But "to worship the KING, the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14:16).

Jesus observed the Feast of Tabernacles when He was in human flesh on earth. Did He make a booth of tree and shrub branches to dwell in for seven days? NOTICE!

Jesus was in Galilee (John 7:1). The Feast of Tabernacles was at hand (verse 2). His brethren urged Him to depart at once for Jerusalem for the Feast (v. 3). But Jesus remained behind in Galilee for a while (v. 9). But after their departure, Jesus also went up secretly (v. 10). About the middle of the Feast, Jesus went into the Temple (v. 14). He taught the people there. On the last Great Day, Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit (v. 37-39).

But there is NOT A WORD that Jesus or any of His disciples (future Apostles of the Church made "booths" of tree and shrub branches, or dwelt in them. Jesus met with them IN THE TEMPLE, where He taught and preached. They thus had services--or teaching--in an auditorium--JUST AS WE DO TODAY. We call these meeting halls tabernacles. Jesus and the first Apostles SET US THE EXAMPLE--but there is no evidence or record that they dwelt in booths.

The dwelling in booths was not the PURPOSE or reason for this fall festival.

The Feast of Trumpets is to teach God's people all over again every year about the coming of Christ as KING of kings to RULE THE EARTH! The Day of Atonement was given to keep us in knowledge that Satan shall be taken away so that we may be AT-ONE-MENT with God and with Christ. The Feast of Tabernacles was commanded forever, and is to teach the CHURCH today over and over every year about the MILLENNIAL REIGN OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD OVER THE WHOLE EARTH--with Satan gone--with EVERYONE then living being at last CALLED to judgment and opportunity for eternal salvation.

That is the PURPOSE of the Feast--not gathering branches for a booth to shelter us. Today we have houses and buildings to shelter us.

So we find NO dwelling in booths in the New Testament Church, nor in the millennium AFTER Christ returns!

