

Christian Church of God Newsletter



The Pastor's Pen

July 2005
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Hello My Friends,

The 4th of July is such a grand celebration of freedom and liberty, privileges that not all in this world enjoy either in part or in whole. We are not only a free people, we are a privileged people. So it is not only a celebration of freedom and liberty, but a cause for reflection on the source of the great freedoms and riches we enjoy in this great land. It is God who deserves the glory and our gratitude for the blessing that is the United States of America.

How often do you or someone you know feel guilty for all that you have? Feeling guilty for having a nice home, nice car, good job, plenty of food and nice clothes . . . everything a reasonable person could want. The premise for this "American" guilt is that there are those who do not have as much. It seems that instead of recognizing our blessings, feeling grateful for and acknowledging the source we languish in guilt, somehow salving our conscience for the abundance we feel we do not deserve. While recognizing and responding to the needs of others is a Christian virtue, guilt for the blessings God has bestowed upon us individually and collectively as a nation is not what God would have us feel. Let us not begrudge God for His generosity. It is gratitude, not guilt

that should fill our hearts as we celebrate our freedoms and our providence. A grateful heart acknowledges God as the source from whom all good things come.

Ps 95:1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!

Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;

Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods.

4 In His hand are the deep places of the earth;

The heights of the hills are His also.

5 The sea is His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry land.

6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture,

And the sheep of His hand.

NKJV

To God be the Glory,

Jeff Booth

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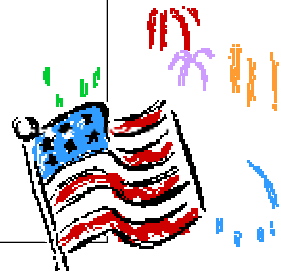
Special points of interest:

- Independence Day
- Pastor's Class
- Transformation of Evil
- Our sermons broadcast on KGRO Radio 9:05 AM Sunday. www.pan-tex.net

Our Home Page:
www.christianchurchofgod.org

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Serpent's Deception

Last Friday evening we had a small rain, just a quick shower that cooled off the air and moistened the very surface of the sand. Given the cool air my wife and I decided to take advantage of the cool temperature by taking a walk. As we often do, we walked down a dirt road on the west side of our place. On sandy ground after a very light shower all tracks made immediately after the shower are very apparent. Even the crossing of a small bug can easily be seen.

As we walked along we came upon the very recent track of a rattlesnake that had crossed from our field to the weeds alongside the neighbors pasture. Having a small amount of experience tracking rattlesnakes I knew the serpent was very close by. The track was made within the past five minutes because it was made since the rain stopped. I walked up and down where he had entered the low weeds and grass but never found him. This I know: he was there but so well hidden that in spite of knowing within a few feet of where he was, and knowing what to look for; I was unable to locate him.

Jody and I discussed how well he was able to deceive his presence. We both were reminded of how Satan is represented in the Bible as having the form of a serpent. I don't think that God used the serpent as a representation of Satan without good reason. Satan's entire scheme is one of deception.

Genesis 3:1-4 (NKJV), "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?'" **2**And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; **3**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.' " **4**Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."

When you read this account there are several very important points: (1) the being speaking in verse one is not a snake, it is Satan the devil who is represented as a serpent. (2) is how he twisted the truth "you will not surely die." True, Eve didn't immediately die, but the reality was that sin brought death.

Note the strategies of Satan. First he isolated Eve from Adam. This tactic gave the pair no opportunity to strengthen each other in a resolve to choose the good (Hebrews 10:24-25). Then he cast doubt on God's motives. Casting doubt is an old and well-proven method of discredit. Satan went on to contradict God. God had warned of death; Satan cried, "That's a lie!" Now two opposing views stood in sharp contrast, and a choice had to be made. What was presented was deception, doubt and intrigue. Satan also focused Eve's attention on desirable ends, a common device of what is known as "situation ethics."

Satan also proposed a mixed good as the end: "You will become like Him, for your eyes will be opened—you will be able to distinguish good from evil!" (Genesis 3:5) Remember what Isaiah records as being the sin that caused Satan to fall? Isaiah 14:13-14, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly. . . . **I will make myself like the Most High.**"

And to close the deal, Satan relied on the appeal of the senses. The fruit was "lovely and fresh looking" (Genesis 3:6). How could anything that looked and smelled so pleasant be bad?

Eve made her choice. She rejected trust in God and confidence in His wisdom and, as Satan himself had before her, Eve determined to follow her own will and reject God's. Then she offered the fruit to Adam, and he too ate, following the lead of his wife.

Just as surely as the crafty rattlesnake was able to deceive me and to hide his presence, Satan never reveals his true intentions. What he told Eve was part truth and part lie, some good mixed with some evil. This method of operation is most deceptive, because all too many only see the good.

Satan's many messengers do not show up saying, "I am an agent of the devil and I am here to rob you of your salvation." They don't come telling us they want us miserable and without hope as they are, they don't come telling us all the bad, they come appearing as something they are not.

The apostle Paul experienced this fact: **2 Cor. 2:11 (NKJV)** "lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." **2 Cor. 11:1-15 (NKJV)** "Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly--and indeed you do bear with me. **2**For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. . . . **3**But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. **4**For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted--you may well put up with it! . . . **13**For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. **14**And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. **15**Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."

Paul knew that Satan was a snake in the grass, that he is a deceiver and a transformer who never wants Christians to know who he really is and how he really operates. Thankfully Paul also understood what we need to do, how we need to react.

Ephes. 6:10-18 (NIV), "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11**Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. . . ." [Note the rest of the passage through verse 18.]

Don't be deceived, Satan wants you to follow him down his path of evil, but he will lead you down that path only if you allow him. We must daily put on (embrace, and clothe ourselves) with the full armor of God. Not just a part, but the full armor. Don't allow the serpent's deception to deter you from the simplicity found in Jesus!

~ Joe Kirkpatrick

PRAYER REQUESTS: "... The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; ... Pray for one another that you may be healed." — James 5:15-16.



Sandy Booth: Sister-in-law of Jeff Booth, ovarian cancer has returned. Is undergoing chemo.
Amber & Dylan Clark: Grandchildren of Betty Clark, cerebral palsy—Amber is doing very poorly.
Vickie Crevoi: Sister of Linda Booth, Chronic Progressive MS.
Dan Copenhaver: Brother of Betty Clark, disabled & prostate cancer; to have surgery end of June.
Leah Cryer: Underwent surgery for removal of malignant colon tumor.
Nell Foster: Friend of Betty Clark, in nursing home has squamous cell cancer & surgery for breast cancer.
Velvet Green: Gary's wife, schizophrenia.
Randy Gnessett: Friend of Candace Seller, pulmonary hypertension, improved but still awaiting a lung transplant.
Anna Law: Lupus, kidney failure—needs kidney transplant.
Judy McKinney: Completed radiation treatments; pray for complete recovery.
Brian McDaniels: Friend of Steve & Teresa Cryer, suffering from emphysema; awaiting a lung transplant.
Dollie Meil: Cerebral palsy.
Patton Pugh: Grandson of Bonnie Cryer, lungs & bones not fully developed; suspect hormone problem.
Ted Rankin: 6 herniated disks; is in extreme pain. Also diagnosed with MS.
Kathryn Scott: Friend of the Baileys; severe MS, losing use of arms and swallowing ability.
Katie Warnecke: Friend of Shannon Stephen's family, Hodgkins Lymphoma - she is 12 years old.
Bob Wertz: Achalasia, a disorder of the esophagus.

Rejoice with those who rejoice;
 mourn with those who mourn. Rom. 12:15.

CELEBRATIONS
July

Birthdays:

J.R. Hamilton	07/03
Teresa Cryer	07/10
Jo Beth Vines	07/10
Shannon Stephens	07/16
Larry Lyles	07/22
Julie Ford	07/23
Gary Green	07/27

Anniversaries:

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Lyles	07/06
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Pastor's Class

Jesus: Man or God?

Continues each Sabbath at
 10:45 a. m.

Christian Church of God

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his
sanctuary;

praise him in his
mighty heavens.

PS 150:1



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