

NEW COVENANT PRESS

NEW COVENANT CHURCH “NEWSLETTER” Georgette Snook, Editor Issue # 13 April 2019

APRIL 1st AND APRIL 21st

April Fool’s day was well known when I was growing up. Kids used to have a lot of fun with it, playing tricks on each other and yelling, “April Fool” when someone fell for them. Haven’t heard very much about it for some time. Maybe it’s only for kids? Or maybe we grew out of it.

But it pales into insignificance compared to April’s other holiday---Easter. Only trouble is, Easter is becoming insignificant in the eyes of those who truly are April Fools. We used to make a big deal of it; we had to have new clothes, even hats and shoes. We went to church on Easter Sunday—even folks who did not ordinarily go. We had Easter egg hunts, and candy, celebrated Easter bunnies, and had Easter Vacation from school. (But it’s just not the same thing as “Spring break”, as it is now called.)

Bunnies are cute, Easter eggs and candy are fun, vacations are wonderful, and who doesn’t like new clothes? But they do not express the true meaning of Easter.

Let’s not be April fools. Let’s all go to church on Easter Sunday---not just to show off any new clothes, but to praise the Lord that Easter speaks of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the awesome promise that we too will be resurrected and spend eternity in heaven with Him! HAPPY EASTER, everyone! And praise the Lord.

A MAN WITH TWO NAMES

And we are familiar with both of them. His parents named him Jacob. But in Genesis 35:9 & 10 we find that God appeared unto Jacob “and God said unto him, ‘Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name;’ and He called his name Israel.” According to one Bible footnote, Jacob means “deceiver”, a name which Jacob certainly deserved. And Israel means “he struggles with God.” (Don’t we all? It is sometimes not very easy to do what God calls us to do.)

But even though God gave Jacob the new name of Israel in Genesis 35, in the following chapters and on into the first chapter of Exodus, we find that, in the 67 times he is mentioned, he is still called Jacob 51 times, and Israel only 36 times. (Doesn’t add up to 37? That’s because in some of the verses his name occurs more than once---and in nine of those verses, he is called both Jacob and Israel.)

But most unexpected of all, God Himself even calls him Jacob. (Genesis 46:2). “And God spoke unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob”, and he said, “Here am I.” Why would He do that? The Bible is sometimes so mysterious! But something that is definite is found in Revelation 2:17 where we are promised “To him that overcometh will I give a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Then we will also have two names.

OPPOSITE OPINIONS

Mom and her daughter went out shopping for a new dress for the big class party at school. They entered a fancy clothing store and looked through the racks there. Finally, a very low cut dress caught their eyes. “Wow!” said the daughter, “that sure is awful pretty!” “No!” said Mom, “It’s pretty awful!

SOMEONE ELSE WITH SEVERAL NAMES!

There are a number of names given to God---The LORD, GOD ALMIGHTY, I AM THAT I AM, YAHWEH, EL SHADAI, JEHOVAH---all names we recognize as other names for God. In a conversation between Himself and Moses concerning who Moses should say had sent him to lead the people out of Egypt, God identifies Himself to Moses saying, "I am the The God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." In 3:14, when Moses asks God what to tell the people, He tells Moses "I AM THAT I AM," and says to tell people that I AM has sent him. In verse 15, He says that His name (as the God of Moses' ancestors) is His name forever and His memorial unto all generations. But in Exodus 6:3, God says "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY, but by My name of JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

And then there are several Bible footnotes which say that the proper pronunciation of JEHOVAH should be YAHWEH, (sometimes spelled YHWH.) Thankfully, God isn't particular by what name we address Him. He just wants us to do it, and do it often.

PREMATURE PLANS

It is the better part of wisdom to plan ahead---but don't carry out the plan before its time! And don't finalize all the details of the plan before you know what the situation will be when the time arrives. Or else it may not turn out the way you intended. This idea came up as we discussed how we would celebrate an important family occasion coming up next September. We will have to figure out who, where, when, and what, so as to best accommodate all involved, and it's just too early to do that with any finality. But in the meantime, we need to be thinking what we would like to do, and invite other family members to do the same. That's as far as we can go for now.

But it's not that way with the Lord. No matter what we may think about the way things are going in this sinful world, He knew from before the beginning of time how sinful we humans would be---each one of us---and He made the perfect plan for our salvation. And then He let us in on it, and gave us the power to make up our own minds whether or not we would go along with it. It's not premature to accept Jesus as our Savior, no matter how early in life we do so. And since there's no way we can determine when it will be too late, we must all plan to accept Him and live for Him right now if we have not already done so. And we need to let others in on it too!

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

There's a holy, high vocation needing workers everywhere;
'Tis the highest form of service---'tis the ministry of prayer.

Woodworth

Many things in this life are important and necessary. But in the long run, is there anything more important than communication with God? Prayer is the most effective thing we can do, for the power of Almighty God is in it, and it helps keep us right in our relationship with Him. It is our means of gaining His blessings not only for ourselves, but for others. So let's not ever think we're too busy to spend time in intercessory prayer. This world has desperate needs, and really, there's nothing any of us can do to solve all the problems. And the more we realize how helpless we are, the more we see that we need God's supernatural power. As the old song goes, "We are weak, but He is strong." He is in control, and He instructs us to pray. And that opens up possibilities beyond our human imagination. When we pray, we can trust God to take care of the answers. We can safely leave it all in His hands. So let's listen to His voice, pray, thank and praise Him for whatever He does, and do what He directs.