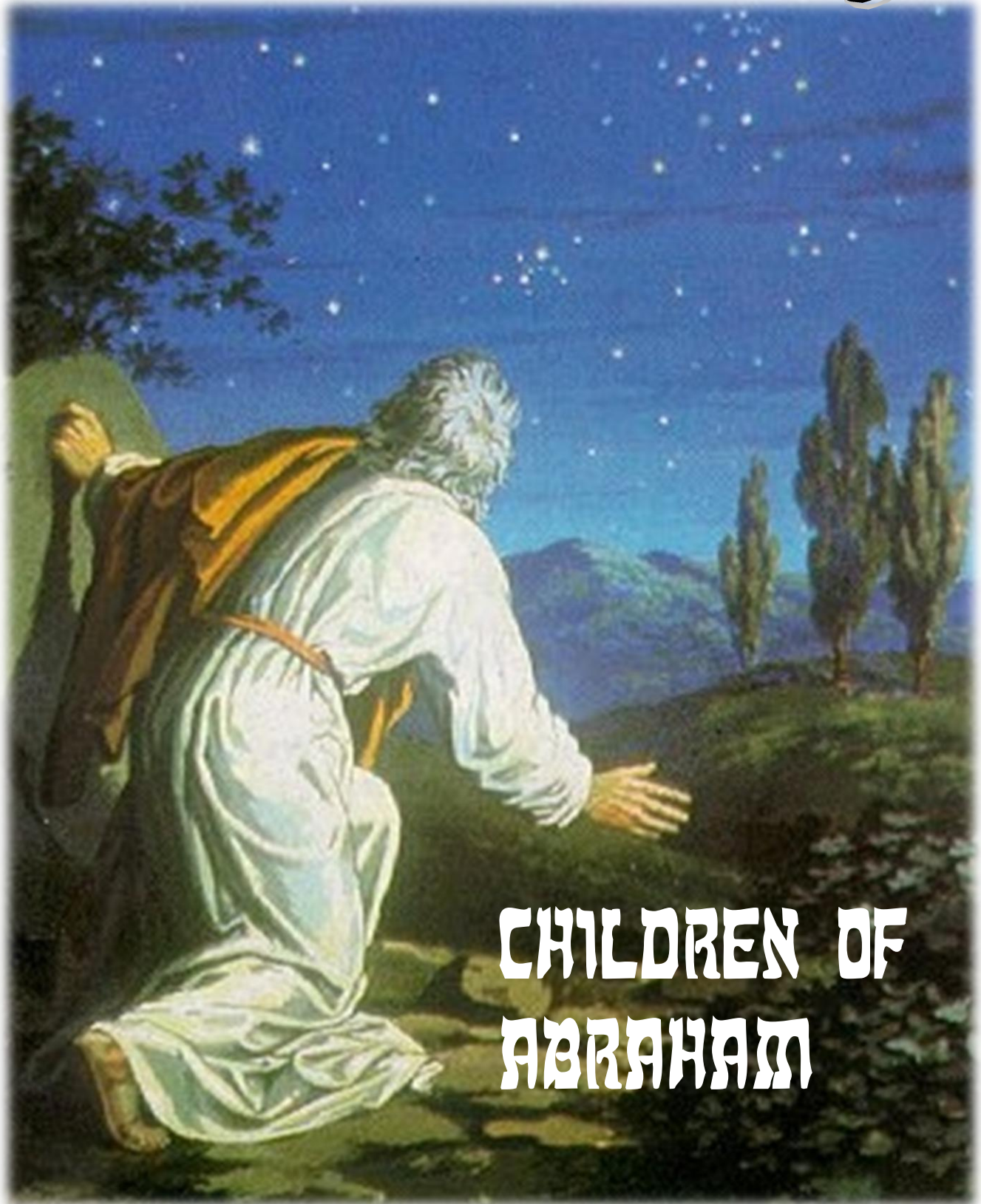


The Bible Guys

of Yesterday and Today פדן

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**CHILDREN OF
ABRAHAM**

705 S. Cedar Street
P.O. Box 119
Paden, OK 74860

Phone: (405) 932-4583
E-mail: dmcnabb@tpot.org
Internet: www.tpot.org

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PUBLISHER
C. Elden McNabb

MANAGING EDITOR
David M. McNabb

WEBSITE EDITOR
Larry G. Danko

CIRCULATION MANAGER
David E. Allen

Circulation: 37,000

Other Contributors:

Paula Allen, Melissa Danko, Virginia Lavery,
Letha Ketcherside, Randy Ketherside, Arturo Linaldi,
Delvin McClendon, Jennifer McClendon, Joel McNabb,
Lyudmila McNabb, Richard McNabb, Zena McNabb,
Thomas Smith, Traci Smith

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The People of Truth
A Holy Nation

Children of Abraham

By David M. McNabb

The children gather at the front of the sanctuary, and with smiles on their faces, they lift their voices and begin to sing, "Father Abraham had many sons, many sons had father Abraham; I am one of them and so are you, so let's just praise the Lord." After a dizzying display of arm swinging, foot stomping, head bobbing, and spinning around, the song ends, and the congregation beams with joy at the innocence of the young people, and at the truth of being the children of Abraham.

God had promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (Gen. 17:4-5). When he was 100 years old, Sarah bare him a son named Isaac. In Genesis 22:2, God said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac," and offer him for a burnt offering. However, Isaac was not really Abraham's only son. Fourteen years prior to Isaac's birth, Abraham had a son by his wife's maidservant Hagar. That son's name was Ishmael.

While many believers teach that Ishmael's birth came from a lack of faith by Abraham and Sarah, the child was named by God, who, by an angel, instructed Hagar (then with child) to return to Sarah and have the child. Those instructions made it possible that, thirteen years after his birth, Ishmael would be in the house of Abraham when he received the covenant of circumcision. It was God's plan that Ishmael be a partaker of that covenant, and be joint heir of the promises to Abraham. Had God not intended for Ishmael to be a partaker of the covenant, He could have simply allowed Hagar to carry out her plans to abandon her mistress, and raise Ishmael on her own. This is seen in that God did not instruct Abraham about circumcision until after Lot had separated himself from him, thereby excluding Lot and his descendants, the Moabites and the Ammonites, from the promise.

While Isaac was Abraham's "only son," "it is written, that Abraham had two sons" (Gal. 4:22).

Further examination of the Scriptures, however, will reveal that Abraham did not only have two sons. In Genesis 25:1-4, we are told that Abraham married Keturah after the death of Sarah. She bare him six sons: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. These were all likely allied with Ishmael. Midian was the father of the Midianites, to whom Joseph was sold, and with whom Moses dwelt in exile. Medan may have been the father of the Medes, who were joined with the Persians in a great empire in the days of Daniel. The Medes survive today in the modern Kurdish peoples found in Kurdistan, a region which includes adjacent parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

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Jubilee: the End of Harvest

By C. Elden McNabb

"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars." February 4th or 5th, 1962, depending on the part of the world you lived in, there was a total eclipse of the Sun, by the Moon, which coincided with a rare grouping of five of Earth's planets. The prophet and Chief Bishop of The Church of God, Grady R. Kent published an article in the March issue of *The Vision Speaks*, entitled "The Beginning of The End;" rightly asserting that the eclipse was a sign of that beginning.

Then, shortly after Passover, I was sitting in church with my sermon outline in hand. As the final song was being sung, a voice spoke to me, saying, **"Preach barley harvest."** It was as if a man about six feet tall was speaking to me from three or four feet to my left. I turned toward where the voice had come from, and in a low voice like a whisper, I said, "Lord, I don't even know what Barley Harvest is." I turned back, and studied it for a little, and almost immediately I knew what the Lord wanted me to preach about. I stepped to the podium and preached about forty-five minutes on the prophetic fulfillment of the Old Testament allegory of "Barley Harvest," the key to the time of the gathering of God's people together for the coming of Jesus (Lev. 23:15-17).

An Old Testament story about Abigail going, with her five maidens, to her marriage to David, and Jesus' parable of the "ten virgins, five of which were wise," show that there will be an assortment of groups at the marriage of the Lamb: the Bridegroom (Sun), the Bride (Moon), and the five Bridesmaids (planets), together with the guests (stars), of course. They all must soon be gathered together "in the unity of the faith," and go out

together to meet the Bridegroom. The harvest is on!

"The End of the World." We can readily see, from the parable of the tares, that the end of the world (not the planet), is not a singular event (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). Jesus said, "Gather ye together **first the tares.**" The harvest, therefore, consists of a series of events. The Tares (false grain) are gathered first. The gathering of the wheat (the Children of the Kingdom) comes later.

As the time drew near for the Harvest to begin, on January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII announced his intentions of calling a worldwide church council. Then, in February 1962, the extremely rare eclipse and planetary alignment signaled that **the time of the end had come.** Pope John XXIII opened the first session of Vatican II, on October 11, 1962, and Vatican II began to redefine the public image of the Catholic Church in dramatic ways which would make it more acceptable to the Protestants. Thus was launched a new ecumenical effort to bring all of the wayward "daughters" back into "the fold," and there arose in Babylon "him that handleth the sickle" (Jer. 50:16). We have recently seen Pope Benedict XVI ascend to the Papacy, and it appears that he has already begun to shut down that era of the harvest of the tares.

The Decline of the United States of America. During the time of Vatican II (October 11, 1962, to December 8, 1965), the U. S. Government made a sweeping move to socialize the country and establish Atheism as the official religion. It started, in about 1963, with the prohibition of prayer and Bible reading in the public schools. This restriction has been amplified by a zealous and determined effort to teach our children to commit sexual sins and to accept the doctrine that human life spontaneously sprang from matter (Psalm 100:3).

The U.S. government began to use the public schools to implement a whole new way of life in America. They already have managed to minimize the freedoms which have been guaranteed by the Constitution. It was not long until we saw Affirmative Action, Head Start and school busing all innocent sounding, and seemingly beneficial, but their true intent was to deprive us of our liberties. The plan has gone forth speedily, and today, parents are no longer free to even correct and train their own children. The whole face of this nation has been changed with laws enacted which will surely be used to exercise tyranny upon our citizens, especially those embracing Christianity. Surely it is time for the believers to "confess that they are strangers and pilgrims here, and to declare plainly that they seek a country" (Heb. 11:13-14.).

God Gives Knowledge to the Righteous, as it is written, **"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth his secret unto His servants the prophets"** (Amos 3:7). That includes the coming of the Bridegroom.

I have noticed for years that many Christians love the idea that we are not supposed to know anything, especially about the return of our Lord. However, it is the ungodly who cannot know the planning or timing of the works of God. Paul asserted that the natural man has not seen nor understood the things of God, but told us that **"God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit:** for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1Cor. 2:9-10). Paul assured us that not even the coming of Jesus should surprise us, saying, **"Ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief"** (1 Thess. 5:4). There were things which even Jesus did not know before His crucifixion, but when he later came before the throne of His father, God gave him the book of "the vision of all" to open the seals thereof, and to reveal those thing to whomever He

will (Rev. 5:1-10). But Jesus went into great detail concerning the sign of His coming, and of the end of this world (Matt. 24 & 25).

The Time of Harvest is here: the day of preparation for our Lord's return. The harvest of the tares will soon give way to the gathering of the Children of the Kingdom into God's "barn." Then shall we come in the unity of the faith. We might have thought that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last one hundred years would have fostered that unity, but, it seems to have created even more division. The Holy Ghost has not yet guided us into all truth, but The Scriptures cannot be broken. "[We] shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isa. 52:8).

"Pentecost" of the New Testament is called, in the Old Testament, "The Feast of Weeks" and "The Feast of Harvest" (Ex. 34:22, and Ex 23:16). As Paul said, the law served as "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). When God called it the "Feast of Harvest," he was telling us that it is a prophecy about the end of the world. However, by using the term the "Feast of Weeks," He instructs us concerning **the time frame** of its fulfillment. "**Ye shall count** unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; **seven Sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days;** and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord" (Lev. 23:15,16). "**Begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.** And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 16:9-10).

In applying this precept to the spiritual harvest, we must count a day for a year. I will begin to count from the time that the Harvest of the Tares began in 1962. The sign, "in the heavens above," appeared a

few days before the beginning of the lunar year. So, I will make my calculations from Abib, the first month of that lunar year. That is the method which the Lord commanded the Israelites to use. With that reckoning, we are now almost at the end of the seventh week of years and the ushering in of the Year of Jubilee

With the blessing of Boaz, Ruth gleaned "unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest." He commanded his young men saying, "Let fall also some of the **handfuls** of purpose for her" (Ruth 2:16,23). God also used the term "handfuls" in Genesis 41:47-49, in order to relate the gleanings of Ruth to the harvest of Joseph. He said, "In the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by **handfuls**... And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, **until he left numbering;** for it was without number." In so doing, Moses made a direct connection to "**the appointed barley**" of Isaiah 28:25. In Jeremiah 5:24, He calls it "**the appointed weeks of harvest.**" So, in one allegory we have barley harvest and wheat harvest, and in the other we have an amount which is numbered, whereas the rest were not. When the appointed time comes, God will call for the "Book of Remembrance" to be opened, and of those who are written therein, He will gather together in one that predestined number (Mal. 3:16-17).

In the allegory of the Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15-17), God told Israel to bring out of their habitations **two wave loaves**, saying, "**They are the firstfruits unto the Lord.**" Those **two appointed loaves of barley** are indeed numbered in the New Testament. James called the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad "**a kind of firstfruits**" of His creatures (James 1:1,18). It is numbered in Rev. 7:1-9. The **Gentile kind** is also numbered, saying, "These were **redeemed from among men**, being the

firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:1-5). These two groups of 144,000 will make up the world government of the "seventh millennium."

Weeks of days cannot apply to the spiritual harvest at the end of the world. It will be, rather, seven weeks of years **which precede the year of Jubilee.** It too is about the end of harvest, and reveals something very wonderful, "which God has prepared for them that love Him." With the Feast of Pentecost, we have weeks of days, but with Jubilee there are seven weeks of years, both of which prophesy of the last fifty years before the coming of Jesus, the **proclamation of liberty:** "The glorious liberty of the sons of God."

The Commission: When Jesus began His ministry, He stood up in the synagogue and read the Scripture, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, **to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD**" (Isa 61:1). Jesus purchased our liberty on the cross, but that liberty will be realized only when Jesus appears in His glory.

Hear the words of the Apostle Paul. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God... I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature (Christian) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into **the glorious liberty of the children of God**" (Rom. 8:11-24).

Paul said, “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive.” [He did not say, “led captivity to liberty.” They are still captive (John 3:13).] (“Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?”) (Eph. 4:8-10). Again the Lord said, “By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water” (Zechariah 9:11). The people indicated by Jesus in His parable of the the rich man and Lazarus are still in the “pit wherein is no water,” but He moved the righteous dead to a better place. John also quoted Jesus, saying, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18). Paul so aptly put it when he said, “(We) shall not prevent them which are asleep, (but) the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain...” Yes, Jesus has the keys, and in the year of Jubilee, He will crown us with the “**glorious liberty** of the Sons of God.”

That time will come swiftly now. However, we must consider Job’s prayer, “O that thou wouldest **hide me in the grave, until thy wrath be past!**” (Job 14:13). To those living at the time of the end, He said, “Come, my people, **enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.** For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” (Isaiah 26:20).

“Now Is Your Salvation Nearer.” The final year of this era is upon us, and there is much yet to be done to prepare for our Lord’s return: including the gathering and the perfecting of the Elect of God. A group of God’s people must “come in the unity of the faith,” to the condition mentioned in Isaiah 60:7, and described in Romans 15:16-18. **“That the offering up of the**



Brothers Joel McNabb (left) and David McNabb baptize Sister Brenda Marie McMahon of Cork, Ireland.




Chloe McClendon, Brenda McMahon and Hannah McNabb made their public declaration of faith by being baptized recently in Paden, OK. Here they are with Pastor Elden and Sister Zena McNabb. Back row: Zena McNabb, Brenda and Elden McNabb. Front row: Chloe and Hannah. (See more photos at tpot.org.)

Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed...” “All the flocks of Kedar (and) the rams of Nabaioth (Ishmael and his twelve) shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.” (See also Gen. 25:13-15.) The law is clear about what was acceptable as an offering upon that altar. He said, “It shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy” (Ex. 29:37). No

such condition exists among Gentile Christians today. Nor can Jesus present to Himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle until there is one in that condition. The day of “our gathering together unto him” and our cleansing must soon be accomplished.

Jesus will “return at the appointed day,” all things will be “ready for the wedding,” and that prophecy shall fulfilled where He said, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the

marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath **made herself ready**. And to her was granted that she should be **arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, **These are the true sayings of God**" (Rev 19:7-9).

No group of Gentile Christians, large or small, has been granted such an honor, unto this time. However, that honor shall be given to someone. Then shall the words of Paul come to pass, "In a race run all, but **one receiveth the prize**. So run that ye may obtain." "And that, **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: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and **let us put on the armour of light**." **What a day for the righteous when "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former!"** (Haggai 2:9). 

Children of Abraham

Continued from Page 2

So, the Scriptures tell us that Abraham had eight sons: one by Hagar, one by Sarah, and six by Keturah. Isaac, though, was the promised seed, and, while his half-brothers all received gifts and were sent away, Isaac got all that his father Abraham had (Gen. 25:5-6).

Isaac had twins by his wife, Rebekah: Jacob and Esau. God chose Jacob, the younger, to receive the promises, and forsook Esau. However, just like his uncles, Esau was heir of the promises and covenant with Abraham by way of the circumcision. Like the children of Ishmael, Midian, and Abraham's other sons, Esau's descendants, the Edomites, would continue the tradi-

tion of circumcising their male children on the eighth day, in remembrance of God's word to their father Abraham.

So, the children's song rings true, father Abraham had many sons, at least with respect to his natural descendants.

Still, one must ask the question, "What does it mean to be a child of Abraham?" Does one have that esteemed identity because of the natural rite of circumcision? Is it because one can trace his or her roots through a particular lineage of Abraham's seed?

One day, as Jesus confronted the Pharisees, they told Him, "Abraham is our father." This was a true statement, as it pertains to the flesh. But Jesus' reply gives us some insight into what it means to be a child of Abraham. He said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39).

In these words of our Lord, we have the key to identifying the true sons of Abraham: as we say in our modern vernacular, "Like father, like son." If we be truly sons, spiritual sons, of the friend of God, we must do the works that he did. We must learn his ways, and live by them. What, then, are the works of Abraham?

When we are first introduced to Abraham (then called Abram) in Genesis 12, we see him receive a message from the Lord telling him to leave his family and his country, and go somewhere that the Lord would show him at some future date. What did Abram do? "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came" (Gen. 12:4-5). This first glimpse into the nature of

our father shows his first works: obedience and trust. God told him to do something, and with minimal information, he did it. Even in his advanced years, he believed God's word and proceeded to act on it, completely assured that God would perform His word, regardless of the apparent impossibility that it could happen. He obeyed God, and trusted Him to do as He said.

In Genesis 13, a dispute arose between Abram's servants and those of his nephew Lot. This was unacceptable to Abram, and he told Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Gen. 13:8-9). Here is another characteristic of Abraham. He would not allow discord to occur between brethren, but rather peace. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). So to resolve the conflict, Abram put Lot before himself, and offered for him to choose whatever land he wanted. Abram was willing to give up the best land, if it would mean that there would be peace.

Later, when Lot was carried away captive with the rest of the inhabitants of Sodom, he raised a small army to rout the captors and emancipate the hostages. Later still, when the wickedness of the people of Sodom and the other cities of the plain could no longer be tolerated by the Lord, Abraham plead with God to spare the city if even as few as ten righteous could have been found there. When not even ten righteous could be found, God proceeded to pour out His wrath on those cities, but He spared Lot and his two daughters, because He remembered Abraham (Gen 19:29).

Together, these first works of Abraham (first trust and obey God, and then to use all of his resources

to make peace and defend others) serve to show his fulfillment of the great commandment: as Jesus reminded us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

It was to these works that Jesus apparently referred in His confrontation with the Pharisees. As He said, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham" (John 8:38-40).

Abraham's inclination to keep these greatest two commandments defined his walk before God. It was not just connected to a couple of abstract events in his life. When Sarah died, Abraham approached the people of the land of his sojourning to purchase land for a family burial plot. The Hittites offered to give him a burying place for free. They actually insisted that he take it from them, but Abraham respectfully declined, rather himself insisting that they take fair market value for the land. (Gen. 23:1-20)

How different this approach is from modern "children of Abraham." Claiming as their own the promise to Abraham that God will "bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee," today's Christian often seeks some financial benefit from all with whom they transact business. Today's prosperity followers believe that "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22b), and are therefore ready and willing to take every advantage. Worse still, a Christian

customer will often expect a Christian business owner to "bless" them with discounts, since they are "brothers." Is not the reverse also true? Should not the Christian customer seek to bless the Christian business by supporting it? These modern sons of Abraham are very unlike their faithful father. Abraham was blessed by God with great substance, but he did not get his gain by taking advantage of his fellow man. The opposite is true, he was fair with those around him, and God blessed him for it. He lived according to another proverb, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold. The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all" (Prov. 22:1-2).

Sure, Abraham had obeyed God, and left all that he knew: his homeland, his kindred, and his father's house. He was now on a pilgrimage that would take him to a land which he knew not, and which would be possessed by his offspring. He had trusted God to fulfill His promises, and to raise up seed by Sarah, of whom would come a multitude of people that could not be numbered. Along the way, he had gained favor with the people of the land, as he earned a reputation of fairness and righteousness. He walked before God and was perfect. Still, God wanted to know beyond a doubt the level of Abraham's faith and devotion. He had one last test.

In Genesis chapter 22, we read the story when God told Abraham to take his only son Isaac to the land of Moriah, and sacrifice him there on the mountain. While we already know that Isaac was not Abraham's only son, he was the only son by Sarah, and he was the promised son, by whom God would fulfill his covenant. It was this son that God required at the hand of Abraham. So, the father of the faithful obeyed, and took his son Isaac to the mountain top. Isaac noticed that, while they had wood and fire, they lacked one thing: the

lamb. Abraham assured him, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Abraham trusted God, and knew that He would raise up Isaac from the dead if need be, because God could not fail to keep His promise to him.

When the time came, Abraham laid the wood on the altar he had built, and laid Isaac upon the wood. As he raised the knife to take his son's life, the angel of the Lord said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Gen. 22:12).

There was nothing that Abraham would not give up in his service to God. We love to call ourselves Abraham's children, and love to recall what Abraham named that place: Jehovah-Jireh, Jehovah will provide. But as children of Abraham, continuing the tradition of following the great Jehovah God, do we not only rely on God's provision, but also assert our intention to sacrifice all if it be His will? Who is serving whom? Are we the servants of the Lord, or His masters?


Are you really a child of Abraham? Isaac was. This true son of Abraham could have doubtless overcome his centenarian father on the mountain of Moriah, and avoided the whole, ugly, near-sacrifice scene. Rather, he submitted to his father, and to the will of the Almighty, allowing himself to be offered. Abraham had imparted such devotion to his son, and his son worked the works of his father.

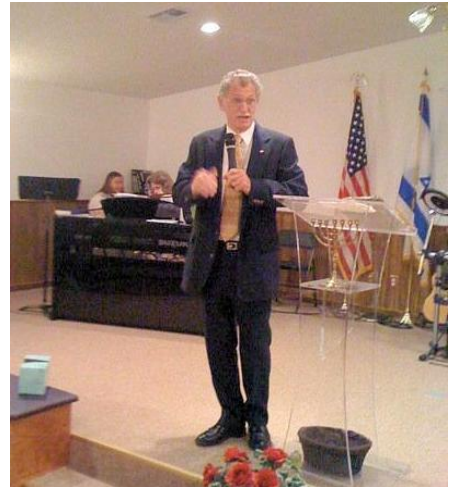
Do you love God with all of your being, and do you love your neighbor as yourself? Or do you reject other Christians, your brethren, because they perhaps disagree with some of your doctrines or mannerisms? Will you follow God when you are not sure of the destination of the path? Are you willing to give up all to follow Him?

The disciples of our Lord were true sons of Abraham. The left all to follow the Savior (Mark 10:28). Though they thought they did not know where Jesus was going, they were still determined to follow Him (John 14:5). They took the Lord's message to the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. They diligently shared the word of God, as Abraham did with his children. This was the great testimony which God made of Abraham in Genesis 18:19. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19).

It is high time for you to stop simply claiming your heritage as a son of Abraham and begin living up to it. The "children of Abraham" in Jesus' day proved themselves to be children of the devil. Whose child are you? Whose works do you do? Whom do you emulate?

The children of Abraham have been promised the world for an inheritance (Rom. 4:13), and the father of the faithful staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham ... For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:7-9, 26-29). 



Scenes from the 2009 Feast of Ingathering. (Clockwise from top left) 1. Sis. Debra McNabb from Springfield, MA with Bro. David McNabb after another wonderful service. 2. Sis. Brenda McMahon from Cork, Ireland poses with visiting minister Bro. Mark Miller of St. Louis during a time of fellowship as Bro. Elden McNabb looks on. 3. Bro. Elden McNabb shares the word during one of the Spirit-filled services. 4. Oklahoma City gospel group Power of Praise enjoys some refreshments with Sis. Paula and Bro. David Allen, after blessing us in song during the Friday night meeting. 5. Bro. Joel McNabb preaching a message during Saturday's service. 6. The Saints gather for fellowship between meetings. (See more pictures at www.tpot.org.)

Heaven on Earth

By Joel McNabb

We have all heard stories of what heaven may be like. It has been recorded in song and published in books and magazines. You may have your own vision of what you would like it to be: Peter at the

pearly gates, opening the gate for someone to enter; and you pass by some angels on clouds or in a mansion, or a corner cabin. They are all sitting around the throne of God on his right side, with harps in hand singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Some may have even had an after death experience: seeing a light, going to heaven and then coming back. We want to see our loved ones, the men

and women of the Old and New Testament, and most of all we want to see the One who died for all. As Jesus hung on the cross, His promise to the thief next to Him was that he would be with Him in paradise. With this statement, we envision ourselves in a Garden of Eden type place, strolling around in robes and crowns. Could this really be what heaven is like? Where did Jesus actually go when He died on the cross? Since we do not see the heavens or the Kingdom of God, we can only dream of how it is.

To answer any of these questions, we will have to consider John 3:13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." This passage is not as popular as verse 16 of the same chapter, which most believers are able to quote: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John wrote this epistle well after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and James the brother of John, and other disciples were already martyred at this time. This shows that Jesus was the only man to have gone to heaven before or after His death. This same John, who was exiled to the isle of Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, said that he was "in the spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:9-10). In chapter four, when he saw the throne of God and the heavenly host, he says that he was in the spirit. In chapters 17 and 21, he was carried away in the spirit to see the woman on the beast and the great city descending out of heaven. All the things the angel showed John were symbolic of the things God has and will have on earth and in heaven. John was clearer about his experience than Paul was in 2 Cor. 12:1-5, when he said that he could not tell if John was in the body or spirit. But John said clearly, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So the Kingdom of God can be seen; but we must be born again before we can see it. This means that becoming born again does not automatically make you a part of the kingdom; it only makes you able to see it. We also must believe that the Bible is God's word, for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word" (Rom. 10:17). If we are to see and understand what the heavens are and what the kingdom will be like, then it must be found in the Bible. The first written words that God gave man were to Moses on Mount Sinai. Before Moses, He spoke to men by a voice, by His angel, or they were moved on by His spirit. On the mount, God brought a picture that revealed to Moses His law, how to worship, and the place where they were to worship. He called it a pattern, saying, "do all things according to the pattern... shown on the mount" (Ex. 25:9, 40; Num. 8:4). Paul said that the law was the pattern of things in the heavens, which things were an example and shadow of heavenly things (Heb. 8:5; 9:23). "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1). The things that God revealed to Moses were like a dress pattern one might buy at the store. The individual pattern papers do not look like a dress at all; there are dotted lines on the papers, and you can only tell what shape the dress is by the shape you see in the picture on the package; even after it is cut out, it is not the final product or a dress. The tabernacle, the furnishings inside and out, down to the curtains that made up the tent that was to house the very presence of God, all represent those things that God has in heaven, and good things to come. These were only the dotted lines to a pattern of what God would reveal

to man of the real: the things in heaven, and the heavenly things themselves (Heb. 9:23)

Even the Temple which Solomon built was after a pattern God showed to David his father, when he wanted to build God a house (1 Chron. 28:1-21). Solomon built and furnished it with the same accuracy that God showed Moses, with detailed instruction of every piece of equipment down to the last pin or stitch. The tabernacle and the temple were not the real, just shadows, or a layout of what was to come. Jesus said, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13). He knew that when John the Baptist came, those things spoken and done in the Old Testament began to be fulfilled. Jesus and John both preached the same message: "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand." With the written prophesies now in motion, the heavenly kingdom of God could be set up on earth as it is in heaven. With our sins forgiven, we become spiritual beings that can be used of God to build His kingdom on earth. We can see Jesus laying the foundations, as Solomon did, "in the fourth year" the foundation of the temple were finished (1 Kings 6:37-38). By the fourth year of his ministry, Jesus had chosen twelve men and then another seventy men also, establishing the foundation upon which the church could be built, which Paul

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

Don't get me wrong, I like Heaven ok... but it seems like we are going to church all the time.



Barry and Rollie had the misconception that Heaven should be like a retirement community with unlimited free golf.

called “the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20). When Jesus went back to heaven, he gave Peter the greater task of building upon that foundation. Think of all the times Jesus took his disciples up on a mountain. I can hear him say, “See thou make all according to the pattern I showed thee on the mount.”

Peter was the one who believed on Jesus and did greater works than those that Jesus did (John 14:12). What else could it mean by greater works? Who could do greater works than those which Jesus did? There is no greater work than when Jesus offered himself and died on the cross. He was speaking of the magnitude of labor involved in putting together the material that both He and John the Baptist prepared by their ministry, as David did for Solomon to build the House of God. Jesus set up the altar of stone which had no man’s tool on it: the Twelve (Ex. 20:25). These twelve had not sat at the feet of Gamaliel or any other man’s feet to learn the law; they were common men, the “average Joe,” from different occupations. These disciples were prepared by John and called by Jesus, who taught them his commandments in Matthew chapters 5-7. The priests and leaders who questioned Peter and John after the miracle at the Beautiful gate of the temple marveled, knowing they were unlearned and ignorant men, and noticed that they had been with Jesus (Acts 3:1-11; 4:13). Now that the foundations were set, it was time to build, and on the Day of Pentecost they began to build the house on the apostles’ and prophets’ doctrine.

Traditionally Jesus’ ministry was about three and a half years, which would be the right timing of laying the foundation of the new temple in the fourth year. According to the prophecy, the temple took eleven years to build, if we subtract the four years of building the foundation, we have seven years

left to build the temple (1 Kings 6:38-39). The greater work that Peter did, in constructing the Lord’s house, took seven years for him to accomplish, twice the time that Jesus had worked. Once the people had been gathered, Peter’s massive work was to bring them to a state of acceptance on the altar that Jesus had set up. In Acts 5, we are told of an incident that shows the church had reached a form of perfection or acceptance: Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, both lying to the Holy Ghost set an unclean offering on the altar of the Lord, at the apostle’s feet. They both agreed to this unholy offering, and both were carried out dead. This could not and would not have happened if the house had not been perfected. We are told that great fear came upon the church and those that heard of it. And the rest would not join themselves to them, but magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, both men and women. Some even thought that if they brought their sick near enough to Peter, his shadow could heal them. Paul confirms the twelve as being the altar, “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle” (Heb. 13:10). We can see that the church had been established and set in order; it just needed the finishing touches.

The house was finished. Now there was one more prophecy to be fulfilled to complete the house. A question arose; some of the Greeks had notice that the widows among them were not properly being taken care of. They came to the twelve who sounded a little insensitive here; they talked about not leaving the word of God to go about providing for the poor widows. Peter and the twelve were about to put the last nail in the house. They said to choose out seven men full of wisdom and full of the Holy Ghost, to set over this business, “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars” (Prov. 9:1). When the apostles’ laid hands on them, the word of God was in-

creased, meaning they became the word of God made flesh (Acts 6:1-7). Whenever prophecy is fulfilled the word of God increases, and becomes alive. Before Jesus and John came along, the Bible was the word of God written in a book, but now it walks, talks, and lives. Every prophecy that is fulfilled causes the word to increase and proves it to be true. The men that prophesied had faith that words would become substance. NOW we can see the faith is “the substance of the things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). The seven were not just some men chosen to make sure that the finances were taken care of, nor were they mere caretakers. Look at Steven’s sermon, and Philip’s revival. They were men of power, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, they became the fulfillment of the Candlestick in the tabernacle, which had seven lamps of fire that the priests kept lit. The apostles, being the priests who did not leave the word of God, ordained the seven into those offices. They gave them the word, and they carried it to and fro throughout the land (Zech. 4:10).


These men, by the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus, were made to sit in heavenly places. The manner of prayer that Jesus taught was coming to pass, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Paul called it a heavenly gift and they were made partakers of the Holy Ghost (Heb. 6:4). When all this is set up, we have heaven on earth now. It is an order: a priesthood and offices that make up the true tabernacle and temple made up of disciples that have followed the commandments of our Lord. The law was the shadow, or mirror, of what was to be. These men took the pattern Moses saw of things in the heavens, and were purified becoming heavenly things themselves (Heb. 9:23). Paul shows us three things here: God’s kingdom in heaven (things in the heavens), the tabernacle and temple (the patterns of things in the hea-

vens), and the heavenly places in Christ (the heavenly things themselves). Paul also tells us that they had come to that spiritual city, “the heavenly Jerusalem, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:22-23). The men in the Old Testament prophecies are now fulfilled, “the spirits of just men made perfect.” It is required that we fulfill what they wrote and did or they would be made liars, “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:40). “That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past” (Eccl. 3:15). All of the Old Testament has to be fulfilled, as Jesus said, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18).

I know that we all would love to go to heaven and see what God has there. However if He has the same pattern here on earth, and Jesus is sitting on the throne of David in the heavenly places, then it is heaven on earth. The fall of Lucifer left heaven lacking in its members; a third of heaven had gone with the deception of Lucifer. Things in heaven were maimed, and a healing needs to take place. God’s right eye and hand offended Him, and He removed them (Matt. 5:30). So that the heavenly body would not perish, God came up with a plan to restore the heavens and show how great this sin was. He made man to replace that which was lost in heaven, and gave man free choice to choose between good and evil here on earth. Moses was given the law for a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, who, with his sacrifice on Calvary, would give us the means to attain unto those places in heaven (Gal. 3:24). When the dead in Christ rise, and we which are alive and remain are joined together with them, we will make up on earth the

complete image of what is now lacking in heaven. Jesus will rule on this earth for a thousand years in a kingdom just like what God had in heaven before the fall, and He will take His Sabbath day. God has given all judgment to the Son, and He will reign on the throne of David in the tabernacle of David meting out His true justice (Isa. 16:5). His throne will consist of those who have followed Him. They are the epitome of a disciple, and he will grant them to sit on thrones ruling and reigning in His kingdom (Matt. 19:28-30; 2 Tim. 2:12). Jesus will return to them that look for Him, without sin unto salvation. They are that mountain and the Bride prepared to meet the Bridegroom (Heb. 9:28; Rev. 19:7). We can have our little piece of heaven on earth now, if we get ourselves into a condition to be vessels of honour in His house.

Jesus will reign a thousand years here on earth, for He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. Then Jesus will subject Himself to the One that put all things under Him, even God the father, that He might be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). When all this is finished, then God will have a new heaven and a new earth forever, because we have made our choice here on earth. I pray you will all choose to serve the soon coming, risen Savior, for great is your reward when you are made to sit in heavenly places.

May the Lord bless you with understanding is my prayer. 

Obama signs ‘hate-crimes’ bill into law

*By Chelsea Schilling
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A “hate crimes” bill opponents claim will be used to crack down on Christian speech, even the reading of the Bible, was signed into law today [Oct. 28, 2009] by President Obama.

The Senate approved the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act by a vote of 68-29 on Oct. 22 after Democrats strategically attached it to a “must-pass” \$680 billion defense appropriations plan.

Most Republicans, although normally strong supporters of the U.S. military, opposed the bill because it hands out federal money to states and local governments in pursuit of “preventing” hate crimes. The bill creates federal protections and privileges for homosexuals and other alternative lifestyles but denies those protections to other groups of citizens.

Obama signed the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act at a White House ceremony today. Prior to signing the act into law, Obama spoke briefly of the hate crimes bill.

“After more than a decade, we’ve passed inclusive hate-crimes legislation to help protect our citizens from violence based on what they look like, who they love, how they pray or who they are,” he said. “I promised Judy Shepard when she saw me in the Oval Office that this day would come, and I’m glad that she and her husband, Dennis, could join us for this event. I’m also honored to have the family of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy who fought so hard for this legislation. I just want you all to know how proud we are of the work that Ted did to help make this day possible.”

American Family Association President Tim Wildmon warned that the new law “creates a kind of caste system in law enforcement, where the perverse thing is that people who engage in non-normative sexual behavior will have more legal protection than heterosexuals. This kind of inequality before the law is simply un-American.”

Wildmon said the legislation creates possible situations where pastors may be arrested if their sermons on sexuality can be linked in even the remotest way to acts of violence.

"It threatens free speech and freedom of religion and is totally unacceptable," he said.

As WND reported, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder admitted a homosexual activist who is attacked following a Christian minister's sermon about homosexuality would be protected by the proposed federal law, but a minister attacked by a homosexual wouldn't be.

The Alliance Defense Fund blasted the "hate-crimes" bill, calling it "another nail in the coffin of the First Amendment."

"All violent crimes are hate crimes, and all crime victims deserve equal justice," ADF Senior Legal Counsel Erik Stanley said in a statement. "This law is a grave threat to the First Amendment because it provides special penalties based on what people think, feel, or believe. ADF will be on the front line to defend those whose free speech or free exercise of religion rights are violated by this unconstitutional law and to ultimately overturn this attack on freedom."

Opponents point to cases in Canada and Sweden, where Christians have faced criminal prosecution for preaching that homosexual behavior is a sin.

"ADF has clearly seen the evidence of where 'hate crimes' legislation leads when it has been tried around the world: It paves the way for the criminalization of speech that is not deemed 'politically correct,'" Stanley explained. "'Hate crimes' laws fly in the face of the underlying purpose of the First Amendment, which was designed specifically to protect unpopular speech."

Stanley said such crimes are already punishable under existing federal, state and local laws.

"Bills of this sort are designed to forward a political agenda and silence critics, not combat actual crime," he said. "The bottom line is

that we do not need a law that creates second-class victims in America and that gives the government the opportunity to ignore the First Amendment."

Brad Dacus, president of Pacific Justice Institute, testified before Congress against the hate crimes bill in 2007.

"It is fundamentally unjust for the government to treat some crime victims more favorably than others, just because they are homosexual or transsexual," Dacus said. "This bill is an unnecessary federal intrusion into state law enforcement authority, and it is an unwise step toward silencing religious and moral viewpoints."

He said the adoption of hate crimes legislation has led to widespread suppression of speech deemed politically incorrect. The Pacific Justice Institute noted that in California, hate crimes laws are commonly invoked as a basis for further laws pushing acceptance of homosexuality in public schools and the workplace. The group also warned that use of "hate speech" terminology is also now being employed by minority religious groups in America to encourage suppression of free speech, as a prominent Hindu group called on Congress and major Internet service providers to

shut down websites critical of Hinduism, including websites of Christian mission organizations.


The Pacific Justice Institute pledged to come to defend anyone who is prosecuted under the new hate crimes law because of their religious expression.

Liberty Counsel litigation counsel Matt Krause told WND, "It's a very sad day for America and for religious liberties in general."

He said the law will not deter crime or help the law-enforcement system.

"The only thing it will do is silence and scare Christians and religious organizations," Krause said. "It will penalize thoughts and actions, and it will not stop crime. It should be called the 'thought-crimes' bill."

He continued, "We encourage pastors and church leaders to keep doing what they're doing and preach the gospel. If they run into any barriers, they can contact us because we are ready and willing to defend them in any way we need to."

The White House announced it will host a reception this evening to commemorate the enactment of the hate crimes legislation. Obama's remarks will be aired live on the White House website. 

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