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Bible Explorations Newsletter

January 2021 Issue

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BIBLE EXPLORATIONS THANKS YOU!

Time is short! Lots to be done! Help us spread His word to the world! Please continue to help support us. At this time we are planning on having Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread here live at Terra Bella, April 26-May 3. Start planning and we will keep you updated! Pray for God's will for 2021. You can also always watch us live and recorded talks at: BibleExplorations.com/zoom; BibleExplorations.com/YT (YouTube) and also our site, BibleExplorations.com; and/or Roku.

IS THE CHURCH GOING THROUGH?

By Elder John VanDenburgh with Ellen White

Is the statement about the 'church going through' conditional? "The remnant church is called to go through an experience similar to that of the Jews; and the true Witness, who walks up and down in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, has a solemn message to bear to His people. He says, 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy

candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.'" 3RHA132

That's what happened to the Jewish church. That's what happened in 1798 to the dark ages church. That's what happened to the apostate protestant churches in the mid-1800's. And that's what can happen to us. Any other thought is pre-destination. Purely once saved always saved. This is not true of church bodies, nor is it true of individuals.

It would be well to read a few SOP statements regarding the church: First, the positive ones, they are the ones we like best:

"This vessel sails into the harbor. She will never go down." 5T571

"To claim the Seventh-day Adventist church is Babylon is to make the same claim as does Satan." RH August 29, 1893

"We have never had a prophecy concerning Babylon applied to the Seventh-day Adventist church, or been informed that the loud cry consisted in calling God's people to come out of her, for this is not God's plan concerning Israel." RH October 3, 1893

"The Lord has not given you a message to call the 7th-day Adventists Babylon, and to call the people of God to come out of her. All the reasons you may present cannot have weight with me on this subject, because the Lord has given me decided light that is opposed to such a message. 2SM63

“[The Church] is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this; there is not the least evidence that such a thing will be. Those who shall heed this false message, and try to leaven others, will be deceived, and prepared to receive advanced delusion, and they will come to naught.” The Remnant Church, page 53; 2SM68-69

“I have been shown that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has on earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered.” 3T492 (*written in 1875*).

“We acknowledge the General Conference to be the highest authority recognized by God on earth. Here the whole of our people are represented, and speak through their delegates. Here is not North nor South, nor East nor West. It is one this world over.” G.C. Bulletin, October 23, 1889 (*Taken from an address by President Olsen*).

“The church may appear to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out – the chaff separated from the precious wheat.” 2SM380

NEXT are statements that aren’t so positive, showing that above statements are very conditional, in fact, at times the SOP considered the church structure lost.

“That these men should stand in a sacred place to be the voice of God to the people as we once believed the General Conference to be, that is past.” G.C. Bulletin 1901, p. 25, Col.2

“I do not find rest in spirit. Scene after scene is presented in symbols before me, and I find no rest until I begin to write out the matter. At the center of the work matters are being shaped so that every other institution is following in the same course. And the General Conference itself is becoming corrupted with wrong sentiments and principles.” TM359

“Who can truthfully say: ‘Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world.’ Unless the church, which is not being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing until she shall abhor herself.” 8T250 (The quote continues with rich promises to the church IF the condition of repentance is met.)

Again in the same quote she uses an old testament text: “How is the faithful city become an harlot? My Father’s house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed.”

“In His Word the Lord declared what He would do for

Israel if they would obey His voice. But the leaders of the people yielded to the temptations of Satan, and God could not give them the blessings He designed them to have, because they did not obey His voice but listened to the voice and policy of Lucifer. This experience will be repeated in the last years of the history of the people of God, who have been established by His grace and power. Men whom God has greatly honored will in the closing scenes of this earth’s history pattern after ancient Israel. 13MR 379

Notice especially the conditional character of the next quote: “Christ’s followers are required to come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and they have the promises of being the sons and daughters of the Most High, members of the royal family. But if the conditions are not complied with on their part, they will not, cannot, realize the fulfillment of the promise. A profession of Christianity is nothing in the sight of God; but true, humble, willing obedience to His requirements designates the children of His adoption, the recipients of His grace, the partakers of His great salvation.” 2T441

At various times the church looked pretty bleak to the Lord’s messenger:

“Like ancient Israel, the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character. Her members have violated their covenant to live for God and Him only. They have joined with the selfish and world-loving. Pride, the love of pleasure, and sin have been cherished, and Christ has departed. His Spirit has been quenched in the church. Satan works side by side with professed Christians; yet they are so destitute of spiritual discernment that they do not detect him.” 2T442



“I was shown the awful fact that Satan and his angels have had more to do with the management of the property of God’s professed people than the Lord has.” 1T199

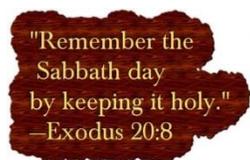
“Right here in this church, corruption is teeming on every hand. Now and then there is a sing, or some gathering for pleasure. Every time I hear of these, I feel like clothing myself in sackcloth. ‘O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!’ ‘Spare Thy people O Lord.’ I feel distressed. I have an agony of soul that is beyond anything that I can describe to you. You are asleep.” 2T361

“Have I not a knowledge of the state of the church, when the Lord has presented their case before me again and again for years? Repeated warnings have been given, yet there has been no decided change...” 5T64

“The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating towards Egypt.” 5T217

“The church has taken the world into her fellowship, and has given her affections to the enemies of holiness. The church and the world are standing on the same ground in transgression of the law of God. The church prefers to assimilate to the world rather than separate from its customs and vanities.” MS44, 1900

Evidently, at one time the church was getting away from the following council:



"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."
—Exodus 20:8

“Those who have received the evidence of the Word of God concerning the verity of the Lord’s holy day are to bear in mind that the line of demarcation between Sabbath-keepers and those who observe the day upon which no sanctity has been placed by the Lord, is never to be obliterated.” MS29, 1910 pp. 1,3,4

No one speaks straighter than the testimony of Jesus. Evidently there were times when things looked very bleak. The point that we are to see, is that members do have a responsibility, and so also the leaders, to hold a very high standard of character. For God’s promises are still very definitely conditional regarding who and what ‘goes through’ to see the Lord’s coming.

“Jerusalem is a representation of what the church will be if it refuses to receive and walk in the light that God has given.” 8T67

“In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: ‘found wanting’. By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.” 8T247

God has, in all ages, had His church. He has always had a church of true believers, and He always will. His church is very special to Him, and are known of Him. Let’s watch the SOP put a spotlight on the most precious and special people in the world:

“From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchman, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived.”

“The church is God’s fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church

is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of ‘His only-begotten Son.’” AA11

“There is no other church than the assembly of those who have the Word of God, and who are purified by it.” 4SOP237

“The church on earth is composed of those who are faithful and loyal to God. It is the ‘true tabernacle’ whereof the Redeemer is the minister. God, and not man, pitched this tabernacle on the high elevated platform.” 4ST94, Feb. 14, 1900 (7BC931)

How high and holy is the platform?

“Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assemble, and the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.” Hebrews 12:22-24

Is it represented on earth? Yes!

“This tabernacle is Christ’s body, and from north, south, east, and west He gathers those who shall help to compose it...” 4ST94

“For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building...know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” 1Cor. 3:9,16

“God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them’. There Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ’s church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church.” The Upward Look, p.315, October 28, 1886

So, why am I giving you all of this information? Obviously my hope is that the structure of the church, as we know it, will go through to see our Lord come. We love our church, we belong to our church, many of us pay tithe to the church. So, what is my purpose in bringing to you the above information? To renew in your heart, and in your mind, what you have always known. Your salvation must not be tied to any structure, or to any human being, or even to any preconceived thought. You must anchor your faith in Christ alone, because anything else can fail.

Our hope is that the structure does not go belly up in a financial disaster, or worse yet, apostatize from the faith we believe; but if such an event did take place, you must not despair or yield your faith or righteousness.

You need to keep your feet planted solidly in God's heavenly church, regardless of whether the church on earth, as we know it, goes through or not.

Whether or not the structure as we know it goes through is just as conditional as whether or not you and I go through. Jesus has already done His part, we must allow the Holy Spirit to work in us a building fit for eternity, and pray that the leaders of the 7th-day Adventist church structure do the same.

What is our work? "Individually we are to give the church where we are an example of faithfulness and consecration." MS61, 1909

Some of the conditions the church is to meet:

"If church members do not act the part God has assigned them, the movement of health reform will go on without them and it will be seen that God has removed their candlestick out of its place." MS 78, 1900

"Christ shall come for His faithful children...but before that time shall come, everything that is imperfect in us will have been seen and put away..." Letter 416, 1907, p.9

"Those who would share the benefits of the Savior's mediation, should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God." GC486-488

"The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their Great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill." Ibid same pages

"None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict." GC593

Those who overcome appetite are promised "moral power to overcome every other temptation of Satan." CDF 59

"I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country places where they may cultivate the land and raise their own produce..." 2SM 354-359



"Christ gave to Moses religious precepts which were to govern everyday life. These statutes were explicitly given to guard the ten commandments. They were not shadowy types to pass away with the death of Christ. They were to be binding upon men in every age as long as time should last." 1BC1104

Speaking of the time when final events commence: "The very means that is now so sparingly invested in the cause of God, and that is selfishly retained, will in a little while be cast to the moles and to the bats. Money will soon depreciate in value very suddenly when the reality of eternal scenes opens to the senses of man." Welfare Ministry, C34 p266.1

There is a strong hint that this depreciation of money's worth takes place before the Sunday law. In fact, money's depreciation may be a contributing factor to the passing of that law.

"Those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troubles of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity. GC 590 [*Please note Elder VanDenburgh wrote this study years ago. By the time of his death, he had sadly realized many issues within the church denomination. He always said he was a member of the Church of the Firstborn.*]

Wow, doesn't this sound like something that could come to this world soon? The headlines today would be very scary if we didn't know our Father in heaven. Let's continue to pray and study His Word, obey Him and get our lives in order so that we can be in that great reunion when He comes! I look forward to that trumpet sounding and joining in the air with all our loved ones who are now sleeping. Be ready! Time is short!

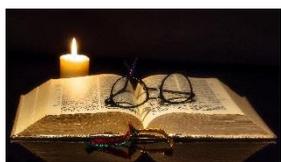
TIME TO REMEMBER, TIME TO DECIDE, WHICH DEALS WITH MALACHI 4:4, 5

By Ted Schultz

THE TORAH AND THE FORMER RAIN

The law, of which the prophet Isaiah speaks that is to be sealed among Christ's disciples, is the torah. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* under #8451 defines "law" as "torah, to-law; from **3384**; a precept or statute, espec. The Decalogue or Pentateuch;—law." The root word from which torah is derived is from the word yarah which *Strong's* #**3384** defines as "yarah, yaw-rah; a primitive root, to flow as water (i.e. to rain); trans. To lay or throw (espec. an arrow, i.e. to shoot); fig. To point out (as if aiming the finger), to teach;—(+) archer, cast, direct, inform, instruct, lay, shew, shoot, teach (-er, ing), through." The prophecy of the former and the latter rain of Joel 2:23 is based upon the same root word that the torah is based upon. *Strong's* #4175 for "former rain" is "mowreh, mo-reh; from **3338**; an archer; also teacher or teaching; also the early rain [see 3138];—(early) rain."

It is interesting to see that “torah” has the same root word as “former rain.” God’s people are sealed with the torah which falls upon the ones being sealed during the time of the former or early rain. The torah is the teacher of those being sealed. This written teacher works in harmony with the Holy Spirit. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26. The Holy Spirit inspired Malachi the prophet to prophesy the words to remember the law of Moses with the statutes and judgments. And does not that written word now call upon us to remember the same things? Is not the Holy Spirit now calling upon us to remember those same things just as Jesus promised? “Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 507. How is it possible that something as powerful as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would be unrecognized? Is it possible that something outwardly miraculous was looked for and will be looked for in the future? Perhaps the wrong thing is being looked for at this present time. Psalm 119:172 says that “all thy commandments are righteousness.” Joel chapter two tells us that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is the raining of the law of Moses upon the people. This would be the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 32:2. “My doctrine [teaching] shall



drop as the rain.” Indeed it will. Not only will additional light come to God’s people, but the Holy Spirit will enable them to see and to walk in that

advanced light. It will be doctrine long forgotten but now remembered (Malachi 4:4) that will drop as the rain. This rain will come with great power and the earth will be lightened with its glory. A. T. Jones touched on Joel 2 at the 1893 General Conference.

“You remember the other evening when I was reading that second chapter of Joel, that one of the brethren, when I had read that 23d verse [of Joel 2],— Brother Corliss—called attention to the margin. Do you remember that? And I said we would have use for that margin at another time. Now all of you turn and read that margin. The 23d verse says: ‘Be glad,

then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you *the former rain*, moderately.’ What is the margin? ‘A teacher of righteousness.’ He hath given you ‘a teacher of righteousness.’ How? ‘According to righteousness.’ ‘And he will cause to come down for you the rain;’ then what will that be? When he gave the former rain, what was it? ‘A teacher of righteousness.’ And when he gives the latter rain what will it be? ‘a teacher of righteousness.’ How? ‘According to righteousness.’ Then is not that just what the testimony has told us in that article that has been read to you several times? “The loud cry of the third angel,” the latter rain has already begun, “in the message *of the righteousness of Christ*.” Is not that what Joel told us long ago? Has not our eye been held that we did not see? Did not we need the anointing? Brethren, what in the world do we need so much as that? How glad we ought to be that God sends his own Spirit in the prophets to show us, when we did not see! How infinitely glad we ought to be for that!

“Well then the latter rain—the loud cry—according to the testimony, and according to the Scripture, is ‘the teaching of righteousness,’ and ‘according to righteousness,’ too. Now brethren, when did that message of righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: ‘Three or four years ago,’] Which was it, three? Or four? [Congregation: ‘Four.’] *Where* was it? [Congregation: ‘Minneapolis.’] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some in the congregation: ‘The loud cry.’] What is that message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry—the latter rain. Then what did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain—the loud cry of the third angel’s message.

“Brethren, isn’t it too bad? Of course the brethren did not know they were doing this, but the Spirit of the Lord was there to tell them they were doing it, was it not? But when they were rejecting the loud cry, ‘the teaching of righteousness,’ and then the Spirit of the Lord, by his prophet, stood and told us what they were doing, — what then? Oh, then they simply set this prophet aside with all the rest. That was the next thing. Brethren, it is time to think of these things. It is time to think soberly, to think carefully.” *1893 General Conference Daily Bulletin*, p. 183.

What is a message of righteousness of which A. T. Jones was speaking? It would be a message that biblically defines righteousness and encourages people to walk in the path of right doing. It may be asked, what could there be in such a message that so many would reject it as fanaticism? A. T. Jones answered that question in a later session. "I simply ask now, Are you ready to receive the latter rain? That is, are you ready to receive God's message of righteousness, according to righteousness. Let us look at that a little further. Joel says, according to the margin, that it is a teacher of righteousness, that which brings the teaching of righteousness *according to righteousness*. Whose idea of righteousness? [Congregation: 'God's'] No, mine. [Congregation: 'No.'] Yes, mine will do! [Congregation: 'No.'] Why? If I receive the righteousness of Christ according to my idea, is not that enough? Is not that receiving the latter rain? Is not that receiving the righteousness of Christ? [Congregation: 'No sir, it is receiving your own righteousness.'] But that is what is the matter with a good many people who have heard this message of the righteousness of Christ. They have received the message of the righteousness of Christ *according to their own idea* of what his righteousness is, and they have not the righteousness of Christ at all.

"When we receive the teaching, that teaching of righteousness 'according to righteousness,' we must receive it according to God's idea of righteousness, and not according to our own measure of it. And he who thinks of receiving that message of Christ's righteousness according to his own idea of it, will miss it entirely. We are to receive it according to God's idea of it, and nothing else than God's idea of righteousness, nothing else than that, is righteousness." *Ibid.* p. 243.

Where do we find God's idea of righteousness? "All thy commandments are righteousness." Psalm 119:172. The book of the law says, "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us." Deut. 6:25. "All these commandments" include the commandments, statutes and judgments. "All these commandments" are God's idea of righteousness. "The law is an expression of God's idea." *1888 Materials*, p. 1576.

It was this very thing that the church was struggling with in 1888. The struggle on this very point is even

greater today. But the more sure word of prophecy declares that God will "have a clean and holy people to declare His statutes and judgments." *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 333.

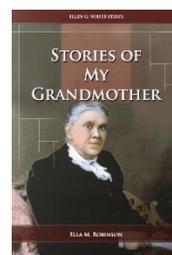
If it is the book of the law that is to determine what true righteousness is, we will want to have all of the law and not just part of it. If we mix God's idea of righteousness with our own ideas then we have nothing but a good counterfeit of righteousness. We have been warned. "Christ will be personified, but on one point there will be a marked distinction. Satan will turn the people from the law of God. Notwithstanding this, so well will he counterfeit righteousness, that if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect." E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, Aug. 17, 1897.

Satan has turned many from viewing the statutes and judgments as being part of the moral law. It is taught that they are not in force today, but were part of the old covenant. How subtle of that serpent of old to get professed Christians to believe that a portion of God's moral law is ceremonial law, thus making them believe that some part of God's moral law is no longer binding but has been nailed to the cross. Thus the very law that defines righteousness has been changed, thus changing our understanding of righteousness into a counterfeit righteousness.

.....*To be continued.*

STORIES OF MY GRANDMOTHER

"A Storm at Sea" (Chapter 6)



Once a steamer on which James and Ellen were traveling ran into a storm. The boat rolled from side to side, and waves dashed through the windows. Suddenly a large chandelier crashed to the floor. Dishes on the breakfast table clattered in every direction. A woman fell out of her berth, landing amid bundles and boxes which were sliding about on the cabin floor.

"Mrs. White, aren't you terrified?" another woman asked. "Do you realize that we may never reach land?"

"I have nothing to fear," Mrs. White answered calmly. "I have made Christ my refuge, and if my work is done, I might as well lie in the bottom of the ocean as in any other place. But if my work is not

done, all the waters of the ocean cannot drown me. My trust is in God, that He will bring us to land if it is for His glory.”

Some of the women were confessing their sins and crying to God for mercy. Others called on the virgin Mary to save them. One cried out in fear, “O God, if You will save us from death, I will serve You forever!”

A few hours later the steamer landed safely. As the passengers stepped off, Mrs. White heard a woman exclaim mockingly, “Glory to God! I’m glad to step on land again!” She turned to see who was speaking and discovered it was the same woman who had promised to serve the Lord forever if He would only save her life that day.

Looking earnestly into the woman’s face, Mrs. White said, “Go back a few hours and remember your vows.” The woman turned from her with a sneer.

On another steamer trip Mrs. White was telling some young women about the terrible storm she and her husband had been through. “Christians should always be ready to close their probation either at death or at the coming of Jesus,” she told them.

“That’s just the way the Millerites talk,” one of the young women said. “They are the most deceived people on earth. On the day they expected Christ to come, companies in different places put on ascension robes, went into graveyards and up on the tops of houses and high hills, and there they prayed and sang until the time passed by.”

“Did you ever see any of these persons dressed in ascension robes?” Mrs. White asked.

“No, I didn’t see them myself, but a friend who saw them told me. And the fact is so well known everywhere that I believe it just the same as if I had seen it myself.”

“Oh, yes!” another of the group said. “The Millerites all around the town where I lived put on ascension robes.”

“And did you see them with their robes on?” Mrs. White asked.

“No, I didn’t see them; they were not in my neighborhood. But the report was all around that they

made white linen ascension robes and wore them. Everybody believed it.”

Then the first woman, seeing the doubtful look on Mrs. White’s face, said positively, “I know it was so. I’m just as sure of it as if I had seen it myself.”

“Well, I should think that if putting on ascension robes was that common, you can surely give me the names of some of the people who did it,” Mrs. White said.

“Certainly,” came the confident answer. “There were the Harmon sisters in Portland. Friends told me that they saw the girls going out to the graveyard with their robes on. Since the time has passed, both of these girls have become infidels.”

A member of the group who had been listening quietly could not keep from laughing. “Perhaps you don’t know you are talking to one of the Harmon sisters,” she said. “The woman sitting beside you was Ellen Harmon. She and I were schoolmates. I have known the Harmon sisters nearly all their lives, and I know the report that they made ascension robes and wore them is a lie. I’m not a Millerite, but I’m sure nothing of the kind ever took place.”

An embarrassed silence followed. “Probably all the stories about ascension robes are as untrue as this one,” Mrs. White said. “The robe we must have on when Jesus comes is the robe of a pure, sinless character.”



Most of you know we are on Roku and our website 24/7. We are also live every Wednesday night (5pm Pac time) for prayer meeting and Sabbath mornings (9:45 a.m.) on Roku and YouTube and also on zoom. Join us at BibleExplorations.com/zoom. Join us if you can on zoom, or just watch all of this live on YouTube, www.BibleExplorations.com/YT or on Roku or www.BibleExplorations.com. We look forward to “seeing” you all weekly! Call or email for more info. We are family and God is ALWAYS in control! Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread is April 26 through May 3, 2021. You can see our calendar for 2021 on our website and included in this newsletter!

