

## CHRIST'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY - DECISION

Being full text of the Freedom Day Message of the President of God's Kingdom Society, Brother E. T. Otomewo, to the celebrants of Freedom Day – Christ's Birth Anniversary in October, 1991

Fellow celebrants,

Glory be to God Almighty and Jesus Christ in the Highest!

On this important occasion of the remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God and Saviour of the world, I give very profound and sincere thanks to our Father, the Creator and Possessor of the world for His boundless goodness which we taste every moment, by His grace.

As serious Bible students very well know, Jesus Christ the Righteous was born into this sinful world in the month of October about 2000 years ago to shed His precious blood to save whoever would heed His call from sin and death.

### Why We Celebrate

Some people are saying that we are wrong for observing the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ which the Bible does not command should be celebrated.

The yearly observance of the birth of Jesus Christ by God's Kingdom Society (GKS) by way of divine services was instituted by St. G. M. Urhobo, a servant of God whom He used to found the GKS.

The Holy Bible does not forbid the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. And being an institution of a servant of God based on the great importance to mankind of the birth of Jesus Christ, there is nothing scripturally wrong in our observance of the event. Moreover, the Bible enjoins us Christians to submit ourselves "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake..." (1 Peter 2:13), especially when such ordinance does not contradict the law of God."- Acts 4:1-20; 5:17-29, etc.

It should also be noted that the occasion is used to honour Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Addressing the Jews, Jesus Christ said: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." – John 5:22,23.

And what is more, St. Paul ordered Christians to think of, and do whatever is good that would give glory to God. As it is written: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things. Those things, which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me do: and the God of peace shall be with you." – Philippians 4:8,9; See also 1 Corinthians 10:31; etc.

From the explanation I have given above, it is therefore wrong for anyone to say we should not celebrate the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ.

### My Message

This evil world will soon be a thing of the past. There is need therefore to use this opportuned occasion for sober spiritual reflections and to make adjustments in our lives, where necessary, so that by God's grace, we may be favoured by Him when He hands down his final verdict on the world.

For the above reasons, I have chosen "DECISION" as the title of my message for this year's (1991) Freedom Day Celebrations.

To every controversy there is ultimately a decision. But the greatest and most significant decision which is yet to be handed down is that of JEHOVAH the Almighty God in the age-long controversy between righteousness and unrighteousness, that is between good and bad or evil. It is a verdict that will end all disputes and iniquity, and usher the righteous into the everlasting, blissful kingdom of God, free from sin and all its unpleasant consequences. This final decision is fast-approaching. But when?

The word "decision" as used in this address means judgement or verdict.

Some people want to hear only sweet and soft things preached to them. So, some preachers, in order to please their flock, preach what their followers like to hear. Therefore they do not rebuke sin. But Jesus Christ rebuked sin in His days. If we read the Bible carefully with understanding, we will see that it is necessary to rebuke sin so that the people may repent in order to be saved. Please read Isaiah 30:9-11; Matthew 3:4-10; 15:1-14; 23:13-39; Acts 2:22-42; 3:13-26; etc.

Whatever opinion anyone holds to the contrary, the painful consequences of the sin of disobedience by the first human pair – Adam and Eve – in the Garden of Eden testify to the eternal truth of the word of God contained in the Holy Bible. God has told the man not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, lest he should die. (Genesis 2:16,17). But the devil, in the guise of a snake, disputed the truth of the word of God in the dialogue between him and Eve, Adam's wife.

As it is written: "Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?" "We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden" the woman answered, "except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die. The snake replied, That's not true: you will not die..." – Genesis 3:1-4, Good News Bible.

As a result of this deception, the woman ate of the fruit of the tree and gave to her husband who also ate. (Genesis 3:6). After due process of judgement (Genesis 3:18-13), God Almighty handed down His DECISION.

As the Bible states: "Unto the woman He (God) said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."- Genesis 3:16-19.

And so, right from that time, man has been experiencing illness and pain of different types, and at the end, he dies. This is in accordance with God's righteous judgement because of sin. See Romans 5:12; 6:23; etc. But there is the glorious hope to be set free from sin, pain and death. – Hosea 13:14; Romans 8:18-23; Isaiah 33:24; 2 Corinthians 4:17,18; etc.

Man has continued to multiply his sins and to intensify his acts of wickedness since the time of Adam's original sin. As of today, no one by human ability can successfully enumerate all the sins being committed by man. But everyone knows the sins he commits. The prophet Isaiah declared: "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them." – Isaiah 59:12. Please compare 1 John 3:20,21.

#### First World

After giving sufficient warning through the righteous man, Noah, God destroyed the first world with the historic Deluge. Before its destruction, man had become so wicked that, like as we can see in the world today, every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and the earth was corrupt and filled with violence (Genesis 6:5,11,13). The flood killed all the human beings except eight persons, Noah and his family of seven. Please read Genesis chapters 6,7, and 8. See also Matthew 24:37-39; 2 Peter 2:5.

#### Sodom and Gomorrah

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were given to wickedness. Apart from other sins, they committed homosexuality and the Bible tells us that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Genesis 13:13). But it went ill with the two cities as God razed them down with fire and brimstone, rained down from heaven. Only Lot and his two daughters who obeyed God were saved.

The incidents of the destruction of the first world and of Sodom and Gomorrah were meant to serve as a warning to the world. As it is written: "God did not spare the ancient world, but brought the flood on the world of the godless people; the only ones He saved were Noah, who preached righteousness, and seven other people. God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying them with fire, and made them an example of what will happen to the godless. He rescued Lot, a good man, who was stressed by the immoral conduct of lawless people. That good man among them, and day after day he suffered agony as he saw and heard their evil actions." – 2 Peter 2:5-8. Good News Bible.

But the big question is: Has the world at large learnt any lesson from the fate of the first world and of Sodom and Gomorrah? I think it has not.

According to the Holy Bible, this world is wicked (1 John 5:19). And in this evil world, evil doers often get away with their mischievous acts. It is not God Almighty, but Satan the devil, that is using and helping them to have their way. This has been a source of dispute. But according to the Bible, God does not help evil doers. (Job 8:20). God only allows the wicked to live to afford them the opportunity to repent. But where they refuse to repent, they shall be justly punished by God. Please see 2 Peter 3:9; 2:9-19; Ecclesiastes 8:11-14; Isaiah 3:10,11.

Some people think that evil will continue in this world for ever. But this is not correct, according to the Bible. God shall put an end to evil some day. Thus, addressing King Zedekiah of ancient Israel, God said through His prophet Ezekiel: "And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end.." (Ezekiel 21:25-27). The statement of God to Zedekiah typifies what God shall do to the devil and his agents when He will bring iniquity or sin to an end.

Like He had against ancient Israel, God Almighty has a controversy, that is a charge or accusation against this present world of sin. As it is written: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and everyone that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of the heaven: yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away." – Hosea 4:1-3.

The Bible says that God will judge and punish the world because of sin. As it is written: "... Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad...before the Lord, for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth, He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth." – Psalm 96:1-13; particularly verses 11-13.

And Isaiah the prophet declared: "...For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." – Isaiah 26:20,21.

#### Last Days

Present day events in fulfilment of Bible prophecies, show that we are now in the age known as the end of the world, the last days or time of the end when God shall down His final DECISION. – Daniel 12:4,8-10; Matthew 24:3-8; Luke 17:26-30; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; etc.

God by His truth, the saving gospel is already judging the world through Jesus Christ, who is using his ministers to preach the gospel without lies. (John 5:22; 12:48; Acts 17:30,31; 2 Timothy 4:1 etc). The gospel serves as warning to the people of the world. Those who obey it shall be spared and saved, while those who disobey shall be destroyed at the forthcoming battle of the great day of God

Almighty. – Matthew 24:14,1; Luke 4:16-22; Matthew 9:9-15; Acts 2:32-40; 1 Peter 4:17,18; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-14; Revelation 16:13,14; etc.

About what the world of sin will suffer, God used Zephaniah the prophet to say in prophecy: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasten greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness...And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land." (Zephaniah 1:14-18). This prophecy will find full fulfilment in these last days.

And Jeremiah the prophet stated that: "... the slain of the Lord shall be at the day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." – Jeremiah 25:31-33. Please see also Amos 5:18-20; 2 Peter 3:10-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Revelations 16:13-16; etc.

The punishment that will precede the utter destruction of the wicked at that time will be so severe that men shall "seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."- Revelation 9:6. See also Revelation 6:15-17; etc.

The trouble of that day is unique. There shall be no more trouble after it. Thus Nahum the prophet stated: "What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time." (Nahum 1:9). And Jesus Christ declared: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." – Matthew 24:21.

The Bible says that godless nations shall be utterly decoyed on that Day of Decision. As it is written: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted," (Isaiah 60:12). And God stated: "Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy." – Zephaniah 3:8.

Notwithstanding the mass destruction, God has promised to deliver, through Jesus Christ, His faithful worshippers on that great day of DECISION, and give them everlasting life in His everlasting, perfect kingdom. – Daniel 12:1; Zephaniah 2:1-3; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 7:9-14; 21:1-7; etc.

It is presumptuous for anyone to say or claim to know the day when God shall hand down His final JUDGEMENT. Jesus Christ stated: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"- Matthew 24:36. See also Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 19:13; etc.

But knowing that we are now in the age known in the Bible as the end of the world and that God can strike at any time, I exhort that we, people of God everywhere should repent of our sins of whatever description now, serve Him in truth with fear and love and to pray always. It is then God will spare and save us by His grace, according to the Bible. – Acts 10:34,35; Mark 12:28-31; Romans 13:9,10; 1 Peter 4:7; etc.