

Prophecies of HOPE

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Would you like to have a FREE Bible study? Please call, mail or email Prophecies of Hope and ask for the free Bible study guides. We will send them at no cost to you!



Prophecies of Hope, is an independent ministry feeling a responsibility to share Bible truth through the love of God and His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Although not ecumenical in nature, we believe God has a remnant people in every denomination that want to serve Him, keep His Commandments, and have the faith of His Son Jesus. (Revelation 14:12)

Our focus is not on membership in any earthly organization, but on spreading Biblical truth found only in the Word of God. This is the only basis for every subject in the Prophecies of Hope seminars. Please feel free to contact us in regards to supporting this endeavor or with any questions you may have.

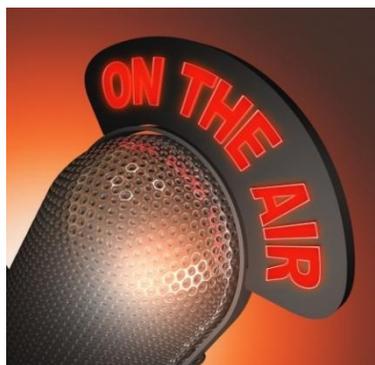
Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 6:4

“Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.”

(Modern King James Version)

Prophecies of Hope presents, Bible Answers!



Listen to Mark and Rick broadcast a radio program each week called, “Prophecies of Hope, Bible Answers”.

Join them as they study and discuss a different Bible topic every Thursday at 10:00 PM Eastern time 7:00 PM Pacific. You can listen live at www.newvisionsradio.com

Do You Know the Origins of Valentine's Day?

Every year in mid-February millions of people share an expression of romance for each other by giving heart-shaped boxes full of chocolates. They also give flowers, red roses, and they exchange cards called "valentines." You may not realize it but the custom of sending valentine cards actually became popular in the 1700s. Then in the early 1800s commercial valentines appeared, and soon there was no end to how entrepreneurs could make money from the holiday. Valentine's Day became so popular in the United States that one 1863 periodical claimed it was second in celebration only to Christmas.

Today, Valentine's Day is more popular than ever, not only with couples, but with children as well. It's definitely one of the biggest moneymaking days for florists, candy makers and gift shops. But just where did the customs of this day come from? What is the origin of the holiday itself? Can we find this celebration in the Bible?

Supposedly, Valentine's Day acquired its name from a Catholic saint, although exactly who he was is a matter of debate. The two most famous candidates were a priest in Rome and a bishop in central Italy, both of whom suffered martyrdom in the last half of the third century.

Robert Myers, in **Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays**, records the story this way:

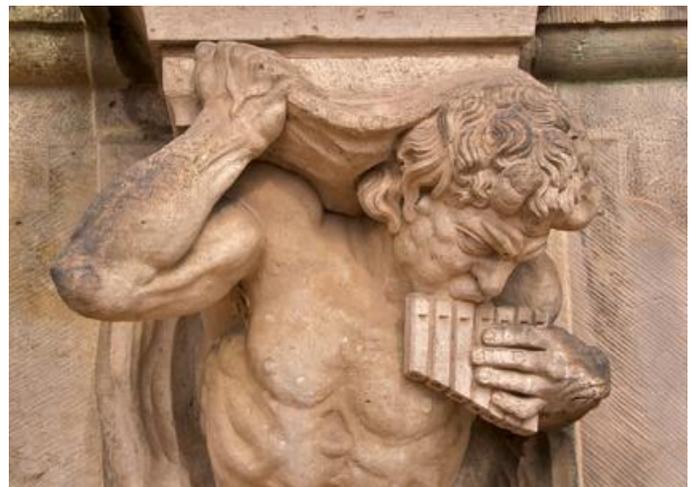
"Everyone knows that St. Valentine's Day is that day of the year when friends and lovers express affection for one another, through cards, candy and flowers, whatever means the imagination can find. But no one is quite certain who this St. Valentine was—or, more appropriately, who these Valentines were. The early lists of church martyrs reveal at least three Valentines, and one source boosted this number to an unwieldy eight, each of whom had his feast day on February 14."

Another reference says the following;



"On February 14 in the year 270 A.D. a young Roman named Valentine was beaten and beheaded because he would not renounce Christianity. The jailer who had charge over him had a daughter who had made friends with Valentine. He left a note for her and signed the note, "From your Valentine." For centuries after this the phrase "from your Valentine" meant only friendship. But around the year 1400 it took on a new meaning."

The truth is, many centuries before this the early Greeks believed that the deity Pan was the god of the flocks and shepherds. Greek myth says that when Pan was born he was full grown, with horns, beard, goat's feet and a tail. The arts picture him as a voluptuous, sensual, dancing creature.



With the rise of the Roman Empire, Pan was adopted by Rome as their god Faunus, also called Lupercus. His wife Lupercia, in the form of a she-wolf, was supposed to have nursed Romulus and Remus, the founders and builders of the ancient city of Rome.



The priests that served in the temple of this demon god were known as Luperci. Clothed only in goatskins, in mid-February these priests went about striking women with goatskin thongs, claiming it would promote fertility. Other mystic and sexual rites of this ancient spring love festival included the giving of young women to men by a sort of lottery. The names of girls were shaken up in a box and drawn by the men.



All of this went on, many centuries before young Valentine signed his note to his friend, "From your Valentine." When the Catholic Church rose up, it absorbed practically all the pre-Christian feasts of Greece and Rome, and included in these was this spring love festival of the pagan Greek god Pan.

And in keeping with the Catholic Church's practice of giving Christian garb to cover over the pagan origins of such feasts, it dubbed this one St. Valentine's Day.

Certain embellishments were added. The game was enlarged by letting girls, in turn, draw boys' names out of the box. The one chosen became the Valentine for one year of the one choosing. During the Middle Ages Valentine's eve and the day following, February 14, were celebrated with much the same sensual frolicking that characterized the original pagan festival. Cupid, the god of fertility pictured as a winged boy or youth, added his bow-and-arrow activities to the occasion. During the last century Valentine cards with their lace trimmings and sentimental verses were introduced to dress up the old mythologies.



Does It Really Matter?

The question that many ask when learning of these things is, what harm can there be in the celebration of lovers in the name of St. Valentine? After all, what does it matter that some of the day's customs stem from pagan rites?

In the Bible God warned ancient Israel, not to mix pagan customs with worshipping Him as the one true God, Notice Deuteronomy 12:29-31;

"When Jehovah your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you do not become snared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods, that I too may do likewise? You shall not do so to Jehovah your God. For every abomination to Jehovah, which He hates, they have done to their gods." (Modern King James Version)

Also, in the New Testament, Paul compares mixing paganism with Christianity to worshipping demons:

“What then do I say? That the idol is anything, or that an idolatrous sacrifice is anything? But I say that the things which the nations sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. And I do not desire that you should have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of a table of demons.” (1Corinthians 10:20-21)

Though the practices of Lupercalia have been re-packaged and dressed up in the form of Valentine's Day, the above verses show that these things remain just as detestable as they have always been in God's eyes. The fact is, when we merge pagan teachings with what God instructs through the Bible, we weaken the truth and violate God's clear commands.

Even so, most Christians couldn't care less if the origins of Valentine's Day are in the Roman Lupercalia or in early church doctrines that had nothing to do with the Bible. Yet, it's this very apathy about how to worship God, and the corresponding moral decay, that is the result of mixing Christianity with paganism. It's unfortunate that many Christian churches have Valentines banquets and/or dances during this time of year even though the leaders of the churches likely know of these Pagan origins.

While speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus said the following;

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him. 24 God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24, Modern King James Version)

Our Heavenly Father asks for and deserves pure worship! When we mix what is clean with that which is unclean, our worship is futile. On the surface, many will try to say that there is nothing wrong with observing Valentine's Day and they

will justify it in some way, shape or form. However, the evidence is overwhelming that the observance of Valentine's Day is just one of many traditions that must be rooted out of Christian lives if Christianity is to return to its true foundation which laid by Jesus Christ.

Mark Martin



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Office Hours

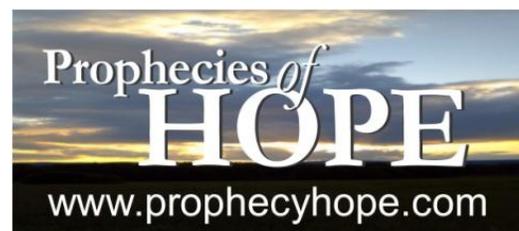
Monday - Thursday
8:00AM - 5:00PM

Friday 8:00AM - Noon

Sabbath School
Saturday 9:30AM

Worship Service
Saturday 11:00AM

Bible Study
Wednesday 7:00PM



Questions from the POH

Mailbox

Did the Ten Commandments exist before Moses received them on Mount Sinai?



To begin to answer this question, let's first consider the Apostle Paul's words in Romans 4:15;

"...but where there is no law, neither is there transgression." (Revised Version)

In other words, Paul is saying if there is no law, the law cannot be broken. To illustrate, if you are traveling on a highway where no speed limit exists and you are driving at a speed of 75, 80 or even 90 miles per hour, can you be given a ticket for speeding? The answer is no! You cannot be given a ticket for speeding where there is no law stating a maximum speed or speed limit. As Scripture says, ***"where there is no law, neither is there transgression."*** A law must exist in order to be transgressing or "breaking" the law.



Next, let's consider Genesis 4:8-12. Keep in mind that this Bible account occurred over 2000 years before Moses went up to Mount Sinai and received the 10 Commandments written in stone.

"And Cain talked with his brother Abel. And it happened when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. 9 And Jehovah said unto Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?' 10 And He said, 'What have

you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed more than the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it will not again give its strength to you. And you shall be a vagabond and a fugitive in the earth." (Genesis 4:8-12 Modern King James Version)

The question is, was it wrong for Cain to kill Abel? Was the act of killing considered a sin? Yes it was! God said to Cain in verse 10,

"...Your brother's blood cries to me from the ground."

The Contemporary English Version translates it this way,

"Then the LORD said: Why have you done this terrible thing? You killed your own brother, and his blood flowed onto the ground. Now his blood is calling out for me to punish you."

An interesting fact: The word translated blood in the King James Version is literally "bloods" in the plural form. This means that Cain was held responsible not only for killing Abel, but for killing all of his potential progeny or offspring as well!



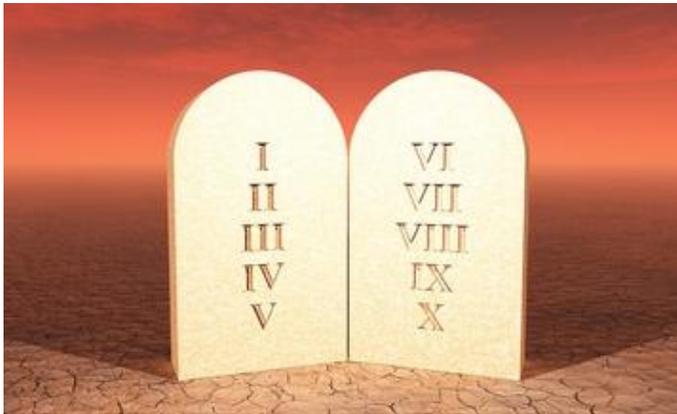
So the question is, would it have been wrong for Cain to kill Abel if there was no Commandment stating, ***"Thou shalt not kill."*** (Exodus 20:13 KJV) In other words, how could God hold Cain responsible for Abel's death if this Commandment did not exist until Sinai? Keep in mind that we already established from Scripture that, ***"Where there is no law, there is no transgression."*** (Romans 4:15) It seems clear that there had to have been a law or Commandment about not killing, if God were to hold Cain accountable for killing his brother Abel.

Another account which shows God's Commandments existed before Sinai can be found in Genesis chapter 39. When you read this account you will find that Potiphar, (one of Pharaoh's officers) had

a wife who tried to seduce God's faithful servant Joseph. When Potiphar's wife attempted to do this, Joseph responded in Genesis 39:9;

"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Modern King James Version)

Notice that Joseph called the act of adultery a sin! How could this be a sin if the seventh Commandment, ***"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*** did not exist until Sinai? (Exodus 20:14)



Now let's go back to the Garden of Eden to a time even before Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. In Genesis chapter 3, after dialoguing with Eve about the trees in the Garden, the serpent said to Eve regarding the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, ***"You will not surely die."*** (Genesis 3:4 New King James Version)

We know that this was a lie because Adam and Eve did eventually die. The question is, was it a sin for Satan to lie? How could it be if there was no Commandment saying, ***"You shall not bear false witness."*** (Exodus 20:16, New King James Version) The fact is Satan lied when he told Eve she would not die, essentially calling God a liar.

When speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said In John 8:44,

"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."

Jesus calls Satan a "murderer", a "liar" and the "father" of lies. Jesus also said this was so "from

the beginning". At least since the beginning of the human race, Satan has been breaking God's Commandments or transgressing. These things show that the Ten Commandments must have existed before Moses received them in writing on Mount Sinai. If this were not so, God could not possibly hold Satan accountable for breaking them. Keep in mind Romans 4:15 says, ***"...where there is no law, neither is there transgression."***

As we can see, a careful study of the Bible makes it abundantly clear that the Ten Commandments have existed from the beginning, even before Moses received them in writing on the tablets of stone. However, God promised to transfer the Commandments from the physical tablets of stone to writing them in our minds and on our hearts! God said, ***"...I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*** (Jeremiah 31:33 New King James Version)

This helps us to understand that through the indwelling Christ we will want to keep the Commandments because we have been truly converted from within, having the faith of Jesus and living according to His righteousness instead of trying to keep the Commandments outwardly by our own fleshly works! (See Colossians 1:20, Galatians 2:16)

Just as the God we worship is eternal, so are His Ten Commandments.

Mark Martin, POH.

Is there a Bible question you would like to have answered but have hesitated to ask? Please feel free to mail or email your Bible questions to;

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The following article was written by our brother Ed Short in the autumn of 2015. Since that time, within a period of less than 3 months, Ed lost both his Mom and his Dad to death.

Where Is God?

I recently watched an interview of Roma Downey and Mark Burnett, who are the producers of the TV series, A.D. The Bible Continues. They are also husband and wife. As the interview proceeded, and they talked about their motivation for creating this Bible series for TV, the inevitable question was posed to them. If God is a God of love, why are there so many terrible things happening in the world today? I don't remember much about their response except that their answer didn't really answer the question that was asked of them.

This seems to be an age old question that is being asked more often today. With all the wars and terrorism, extreme weather, immorality, civil unrest, even police brutality that seems to be so prominent in the news today. Is it a wonder then that so many people are today asking that very same question, "Where is God?"

Can I tell you about my Mom?

Mom is 82 years old, and lives in a nursing home with my Dad. She has had multiple strokes and has Alzheimer's as well as multiple other medical problems. I called and talked with her on her birthday about a month ago.

During our conversation I would ask her questions, such as "has so and so been to see you", "have you finished your devotional book", and so on. For each question I asked, she would simply respond "I don't know". Yet, before our conversation was completed, she was very intent on wanting me to understand something. This is what she told me, "I love Jesus, and that He is with us when we have to go through difficult times and circumstances." "I love God, I love Jesus too, but I love God." She repeated these feelings to me several times; she wanted to make sure I understood what she was telling me.

We talked a little about what heaven would be like, when all the difficult times that we experience on this earth will be no more. Then we ended our conversation.

Today much of the world is asking the question, "Where is God?" maybe even mocking the concept that God exists. Yet my Mom, who could not answer any of the simple questions I asked her that day, except to say "I don't know", knows the answer to the question the whole world seems to be asking today.

Where is God? – My Mom will tell you, God is with her, every day. You see she experiences the presence of God in her life every day. She has learned to depend on Him through all the hardships and trials that she has experienced in this life.

But what she doesn't know is that this is exactly what I have been praying for my parents to experience, the presence of God, daily in their lives. To know and believe the story of God's salvation through His Son Jesus, that it may sustain them through this difficult time in their lives.



Do you long to experience God in your life every day? Then take the time to talk with Him, every day. Read the book that will tell you all about him, the Bible. Share Him with others in word and actions. Then you will be able to answer the question so many people seem to be asking, "Where is God?"

You can simply say, like my Mom, He is with me, every day.

Ed Short, POH.

Shared Testimony

After a funeral, a sister who worships at the Prophecies of Hope church was witnessing to a close relative about what happens when we die. The following is a letter our sister wrote to follow up with her relative.



I'm writing to you because you seemed so disturbed about mom believing that when people die, they are asleep (and maybe also when I said I believe the same thing). I shared some Bible verses with you at the park, but I didn't feel like there was enough of an explanation to sufficiently explain what we believe. I say "we" because I think I can say that mom and I believe the same thing about what happens when someone dies. I simply want to share with you what we believe and why we believe what we do from a Biblical perspective. My prayer is that this idea won't be so disturbing to you once I share some of these thoughts and verses with you. But, I am also always looking for more truth if I am in some way misunderstanding what the Bible teaches, so please feel free to share your thoughts with me if there is something you can see I have misunderstood.

If you remember, at the reunion, we talked for a minute about how, when Lazarus died (see John 11:1-43) his sister, Martha, understood that Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection **at the last day** (vs. 24). When my mom said to you that death is a sleep, she is using the same language the Bible and even Jesus uses. In John 11:11, Jesus says ***"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up"*** (NIV). But then in verse 14, Jesus clarifies and says, ***"Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe."***

When the Bible refers to death as a "sleep", it is because, right now while we are still here on this earth with all the sin and suffering around us, death is nothing permanent. This idea is more clearly understood when the Bible talks about two deaths (Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, and 21:8), and two resurrections (John 5:29). Are you familiar with them? I do not want to go into that discussion right now (although it is very interesting) – the main point is that death is not a permanent state right now.

Paul makes it very clear about the hope that we have in a resurrection when Jesus returns. It is very plain and simple in the 4th chapter of 1st Thessalonians. In fact, Paul gives us words to encourage each other when one of our loved ones faces death.

"Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore, encourage each other with these words."



This is why Lazarus' sister, Martha, knew that ***"at the last day"*** (John 11:24) her brother would be part of the resurrection.

The Bible is very clear when it talks about the state of being dead. I do not want to draw this out too long because I really don't want to burden you with something you may not be interested in. But if you are interested, I've outlined the main verses in the Bible that have led to the beliefs that mom and I have:

- The breath and the body makes a soul, you cannot live without a physical body (See Genesis 2:7)
- Dust we are and to dust we will return. (Genesis 3:19)
- The first lie (told by the serpent) was that "you shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4)
- The dead know nothing. (Ecclesiastes 9:5,10) They have no thoughts. (Psalm 146 3,4) There is no remembrance of God. (Psalm 6:5)
- Jesus will call the righteous, sleeping saints from their graves and will take them to heaven. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) Those that are alive will be changed in an instant. (1 Corinthians 15: 51-54)
- The wicked will be resurrected to meet judgement and be destroyed by fire. John 5:28-29) Not to live eternally in hell, but to be burned up, or consumed. (Revelation 20:9 and Malachi 4:1-3)
- When Jesus returns as mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4, He will have His reward with Him. (Revelation 22:12) Even Paul was waiting for his reward till the day of Christ's appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7-8) Based on these verses, can the reward be given before Christ comes at the end of time?
- Even King David is not in Heaven now. (Acts 2:34)

When we were at the reunion, you mentioned specifically 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, so I want to address these texts a bit. I read this passage on the way home from the park since I could not remember the complete context of 2 Corinthians 5:1-11.

When read in context, you can see that Paul is contrasting the earthly, perishable body that is subject to sickness, disease, and death, with the immortal body that we will receive as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

According to my understanding based on the context, the expression "**absent from the body**" means absent from the mortal body with its earthly imperfections and weaknesses. We can also see where Paul is thinking in these same terms when he states that "**what is mortal may be swallowed up by life**" (1Corinthians 5:4). This is also the same thought as when Paul wrote earlier in 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54, that "**the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality.**" It seems that Paul wanted and was looking forward to finally experiencing the immortality that will be given at the second coming of Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 5 and 1Corinthians 15).

I hope I have helped you gain an understanding of what we believe and the hope and promises we have in the resurrection, and that we will be with Jesus together with our loved ones in Heaven someday and on the re-created Earth (See Revelation 21:1).

I love you and I am so touched by your concern for me and for my mom (and our beliefs). Be confident that we do have a heavenly hope and we believe we will see those we love again. And it is promised in God's word! With much Love, ----

Please note that the above letter was written with the Bible based belief and understanding that those whom we will be reunited with someday in Heaven, must have had a real relationship with Jesus Christ and His Father.

The Bible is clear that eternal life comes from knowing the Father and His Son Jesus (John 17:3, 1John 5:20). It is our prayer that sharing this letter will help you not only with an understanding about what happens when someone dies, but also that it will encourage you to make an effort to more fully understand what the Word of God teaches about our relationship with the One true God and His Son.

POH team.

Prophecies of Hope Update

In June of 2015 our Heavenly Father blessed the Prophecies of Hope ministry with a church building of our own located at 1743 West Beverley Street in Staunton Virginia! We meet every Sabbath, (Saturday) morning for Sabbath school and worship. Sabbath school begins at 9:30AM and worship begins at 11:00AM. We have a midweek Bible study every Wednesday evening at 7:00PM. If you can't attend in person you can join us by streaming online!

The Prophecies of Hope team has been working hard to keep our website current. Each week we add a new Sabbath sermon to the website. Also, every lecture from each Bible prophecy series and all of our past radio broadcasts can be found on our website www.prophecyhope.com. A new radio program is added each week as Mark and Rick discuss a new topic revealing Bible truth right from the Word of God!

If you would like DVD or CD copies of any of our lectures, or CD copies of any of our radio programs from the past, please email Cory Dale and request your free copy. You can reach Cory at, cory@prophecyhope.com. We will send them to you free of charge.

For those who support and attend the Prophecies of Hope ministry through the internet, and for others who have asked, we are providing a number of photos of the church, including a few from the 2015 fall evangelism series which took place in October. This was the first series we held in the Prophecies of Hope church building.



Approaching from the East, the church was completely hidden by trees and brush.



Cutting the trees down started to reveal the church from the road. In the summertime it was not visible from this angle because of the thick foliage.



The church is now visible after the removal of trees, brush and a lot of poison ivy. It may look rough, but structurally the old church is very solid!



Because the building had been abandoned for decades, even the air conditioning units were covered in an overgrowth of trees, bushes and poison ivy. There were vines and branches actually growing from the inside of the units. Cory and Mark cleaned and serviced them even though they looked as though they would never work again. After a little clean up and leveling, our Heavenly Father blessed us with a working air conditioning system! This was certainly an answer to prayer!



Above was our first look inside of the church which was in March of 2015. At first glance it actually looked pretty good! We could see that it had a lot of potential. The ceiling had a few holes and would need repair. Two pianos came with the church. Paul Secord serviced and tuned one of them before the fall evangelism series and our sister Sheri Schumacher came down from Minnesota and played it for us each night of the series. What a blessing!



Above is our first Sabbath School and worship in the church. Notice the ceiling was stained and still had some holes from the leaking roof.



The church exterior needed to be prepared and

painted. By this time the new roof has been completed, along with new gutters and downspouts. Rick, Ed and Mark installed a total of 34 new windows. Rick is wrapping the windows with metal. Lots of work yet to do, both inside and out!

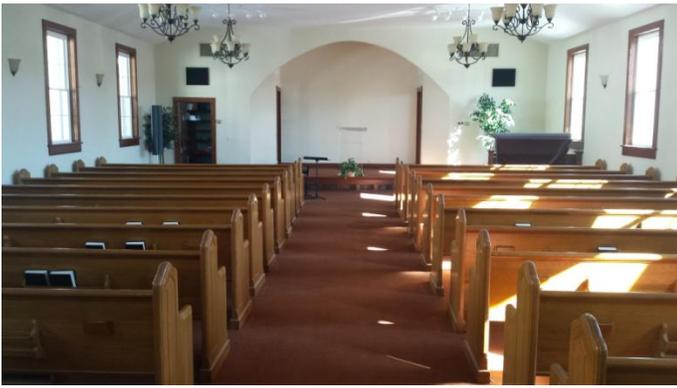


(Above) The old Bryant furnace system from the 1940's had to be replaced. It was huge! Ed and Eric removed it in pieces, some of which weighed nearly 600 pounds.

We then prepared the room for two new state of the art high efficiency furnaces which are twinned together. We can check the operation of the units, turn them on and off and adjust the temperature of the church from any computer or smart phone. If something malfunctions we are informed either by text or by email. The new furnace system works great!



Ed found some really nice used pews for the sanctuary. He purchased them and made arrangements for us to go get them in Newport News Virginia.



The above picture was taken after Russ had the ceiling repaired and had painted the sanctuary. Rick and Ed installed the new chandeliers!



Each night we had new people from the local community joining us. We also streamed the series live on the Internet. A number of people tuned in every night!



Prophecies of Hope purchased the church on June 10, 2015 and by October 19 we were ready for the 2015 Prophecies of Hope evangelism series!



The amazing thing about this church is that our Heavenly Father has opened many doors for us and miraculously provided everything that has been needed to move forward in this ministry. By the grace of God, a very generous donor, (as a free gift) provided the funds to purchase the church and the new roof!



The Prophecies of Hope family is thankful for all of the prayers, the hard work and the generous contributions of everyone who has helped to make this ministry a success.

The POH church family.

On the first night of the series, Mark began with the topic, "The Bible – Fact or Fiction?" This laid a solid foundation for the lectures that followed. Attendance was very consistent throughout the week. On Sabbath morning the sermon was entitled, "Are Christians Ignoring God's Law?" The last night of the series was as well attended as the first! The topic for the last night of the series was, "Will the USA Revoke Religious Freedom?"

