



# The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

June 26, 2020

## Happy Birthday?

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, co-workers, spiritual family on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and scattered children of God, from our offices here in Spanish Fort, AL.

A week from this Saturday, our nation will celebrate another “birthday” of its inception as a nation on July 4th. Interestingly enough I’ll be in Philadelphia, PA at that time on a visit. This past week my daughter along with several others with the same birthdate celebrated “another trip around the sun” or had a birthday. Seldom a day goes by that I do not receive a notice from Facebook that someone might like to be wished Happy Birthday! It’s a common part of our society.

You might ask, what prompted this topic to be discussed? Well, for many years in the “Church of God” many taught that celebrating birthdays was wrong, doctrinally incorrect and/or non-Biblical.

Recently a couple people asked me “...if we should observe our birthday, or observe birthdays at all?”

I’ve never been one to dictate, nor should I, whether someone celebrates a birthday or not. I’ve always held to my understanding that it should be a person’s decision to do so. I don’t believe we should dictate somehow from some general source to all the “this and that’s” on many topics.

Okay, well it still was a fair enough question. What about the observance or celebration of birthdays or “birth anniversaries” as I like to call them?

Do the Scriptures actually prohibit the observance and remembering the anniversary of one’s birth?

Birthday celebrations are only mentioned a couple or three times in Scripture. There is an unclear allusion to possible birthday celebrations in the book of Job. “His [Job’s] sons regularly went to one another’s houses, and every one on his day gave a feast: and at these times they sent for their three sisters to take part in their feasts with them.” (**Job 1:4 BBE**) after the days of

feasting were over, Job summoned his children and offered burnt offerings with the comment, *"It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts."* (V.5) It does not say that anything wrong or sinful was actually done.

In **Genesis 40:20** we find that on his birthday Pharaoh held a feast to which he invited his servants. He made note of or brought attention to both *"the chief butler and of the chief baker."* We are told that Pharaoh *"restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker. . ."* (Vv. 21-22) We are not told *when* these events took place. The baker may have been hanged sometime after the actual birthday celebration.

The other birthday celebration mentioned in Scripture is that of Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. **Mark 6:21** records that *"Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee."* His wife Herodias obviously was smarting from the rebuke of John the Baptist who *"had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.""* (Mark 6:18) Then we are told, *"Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not"* (Mark 6:19). It seems likely that it was Herodias who sent her daughter in to dance before Herod and the others on his birthday. After Herod made an offer to give her basically anything she asked, she conferred with her mother. Her mother asked for the head of John the Baptist to be brought in on a platter. Herod had John beheaded in prison and the head was brought to Herod and Herodias and her daughter (Mark 6:22-29). Herod did not initiate the gruesome events on his birthday. His illegal wife Herodias did.

Some develop from these episodes or examples "a doctrine" that birthdays are unbiblical. But, there were other factors on these occasions, too. So, it's inappropriate to use these texts to "prove" that one shouldn't celebrate birthdays. Here's a general guideline in serving the family of God. We should be very careful to not proof text, or misalign scripture to lean like an elephant with any teaching. Unfortunately some continue to do this today.

The Scriptures record the age of many individuals at the time of the birth of a child and also at the time of death. They must have kept track of the anniversary of their birth. The full-time service of the Levites, appointed to serve God in various ceremonies, was specified to begin at age thirty (**Numbers 4:35-47**). They would have needed to take note of the birthdays or birth anniversaries right?

There are a number of milestones in life which are significant. A person's reaching teenage or becoming old enough to drive. Arriving at a significant age whether it be twenty-one, fifty,

seventy or eighty are all events which are perfectly proper for family members and friends to acknowledge. Honoring one's age can have significant respectful and joyous outcome.

While the celebration of a birthday is not a matter of sin or righteousness, the *manner in which it is celebrated* can be. So, each individual must evaluate the circumstances and determine whether or not to celebrate a birthday or participate in a birthday celebration.

On the other hand, a celebration that expresses God's standards, and is wholesome, is not denounced by the Bible. A birthday celebration that would encourage or produce family closeness, and show appreciation and love for the individual, could be such a celebration. Again, each individual and family must decide based on personal decision and feelings, whether and how to observe the anniversary of one's birth. Perhaps this approach with clarification will be of help to all...

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

**-Scott Hoefker**

(Pastor, *The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast*)

The schedule for this **Sabbath** is:

**June 26<sup>th</sup> / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm** (via *teleconference* live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

**June 27<sup>th</sup> / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am**, with services held in **Montgomery and Spanish Fort** at our normal **10:15 a.m.** (with *phone conference connection* available from Montgomery and *Live Webcast* from Spanish Fort). A noon "potluck" meal will be enjoyed and shared in **Spanish Fort** shortly after worship services.

**June 27<sup>th</sup> / Saturday: Short Congregational Meeting** (Spanish Fort) ~ **1:15 pm**

**June 27<sup>th</sup> / Saturday: Malachi 3:16 Sabbath Fellowship** (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Montgomery. (Connecting live with all via *phone conference*).

Telephone Ministry (English): Call **1-712-770-4700**; then, when asked, enter Code **112165 #** to join.

(Note: All callers are muted and must press **\*6** to comment and **\*6** to resume mute.)  
All times are listed in Central Standard Time zone.

### Our Daily Bread Recordings

Sunday through Saturday / Our Daily Bread [listen anytime 24/7 to a recorded 15 minute message] Call 1-712-770-4709 (note this call in number is different and ends in "9"), then when asked, enter code 112165# [reference code numbers are on "Spiritual Fellowship Opportunities" on this website <http://www.tlgministriesgc.org> or at "Resources/Archives" on <http://www.haggai114.net>]

### Daily Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday – Friday / **Morning Sacrifice** (Prayers & Scripture Reading) at 6:00 a.m.  
Sundays / **The Minor Prophets** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Whit, Logan & Friends]  
Mondays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]  
**Almond Branch Fellowship** at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) (Stephen & Friends)  
Tuesdays / **Haggai Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) [Stephen & Friends]  
Wednesdays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]  
1st & 3rd Wednesday / **Sons of God Fellowship** (Young men training) at 6:30 p.m. [Stephen & Friends]  
2nd & 4th Wednesday / **Lydian's Fellowship** (Ladies) at 6:30 p.m. [Esther/Gayle/Laura & Friends]  
Thursdays / **Mt. Carmel Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Scott & Friends]

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