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**Publisher:** Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors, or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens Iron

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**1Co 14:26** How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

## Is Yayshua God?

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Or, What about Arianism & Polytheism?

A question one might ask is, if the Son Yayshua (Jesus) was a separate Being from the Father, and if we worship Yayshua, then are we not breaking the second commandment and sinning? In essence, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3 speaking of the LORD i.e., Yehovah the Father)

Some do worship Yayshua the Son as they believe he is *also* the Father, which makes this a belief in the Trinity (assuming they believe in the Holy Spirit the same way). We can ask, ‘Who was Yayshua praying to in the garden; himself?’ An answer we have heard is that he prayed aloud so as to show the disciples how to pray; that it was just for an example for them.

Luke records Yayshua praying in Luke 22:42, “...Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

The book of Hebrews 5:7 says, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;” To say Yayshua was praying to himself (and just as an example) would defy logic.

There is a belief out in the Christian religious world that the Arian or Polytheistic belief is un-Biblical. The Arian belief, which this writer has on the nature of God, is in opposition to the Homoousion belief of three Beings in one, or the Trinity which came from the Gnostics. (See the explanation of this controversy below this study).

There are reasons to believe the Father and the Son are two separate Beings.

In Genesis 1:26, “And Elohim said [one individual being to another per context], Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion....” Also in Genesis 3:22, “And Yehovah Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil, and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.”

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The question then is *who or what* is the ‘us’ and ‘our’? One Being? Two holy spiritual beings like a Family of Beings? A Trinity of three in one? So, we need to answer the question, “Was Jesus or Yayshua a God?” And if he was a separate being, then are we to only worship the one true God or Yehovah per the second Commandment?

The Hebrew term Elohim (Strong’s H430) means, Mighty One or a mighty one (in a position of authority). Strong’s gives this explanation of Elohim in part: “This masc. Hebr. noun is plural in form but has both singular and plural uses.”

There are reference books out there that may not develop the full meaning of the word ‘one’ as found for example in John 10:30 where the Son Yayshua said, “I and my Father are one.” The explanation from my Bible’s “Lexical Aids to the New Testament” by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D. shows: “G1520; one; *mia* (fem.); *hen* (neut.) in the mas. *heis* must be distinguished from the neut. *hen*. *Heis* means one numerically while *hen* means one in essence, as in John 10:30: “I and my Father are one *hen*” (i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis* it would have meant one person.”

**Elohim or god also does apply to humans. Let’s examine some Scriptural examples:**

**Those who have authority as judges:** Psalm 82:1-8 “God [Elohim] standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods [H430 elohim]. 2 How long will ye [the judges or gods] judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. 5 they know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye are gods [elohim]; and all of you are children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. 8 Arise, O God [Elohim], judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.”

Ex 22:9 “For all manner of trespass, *whether it be* for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of lost thing, which *another* challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges [H430 elohim]; *and* whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.”

Again, the example of John 10:30-38, “I and *my* [my emphasis] Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [Quoted from Psalm 82:6 shown above] 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of [the] God [Yehovah]? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.” How? Again, I will give the *hen* wording of Strong’s G1520, as explained by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D. “(i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis* it would have meant one person.”

### **EI Shaddai**

The first occurrence of this title or description is found in Genesis 17:1, “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Yehovah [the LORD] appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God [EI Shaddai]; walk before me and be thou perfect.”

‘EI’ [H410] or God and ‘Shaddai’ [H7706] Almighty, means the God that is over all others who could be or are called gods. i.e., there is no other that can be higher in authority. That is why Yayshua said his Father was greater than him (John 14:28).

Acts 3:13, “The God [Elohim] of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God [Elohim] of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.” Who was the God of the Old Testament? It was Yehovah (the Father) as Exodus 3:15 says, “And Elohim [God] said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou [Moses] say unto the children of Israel, Yehovah Elohim [The LORD God] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.”

In Isaiah 44:6, “Thus saith Yehovah [the LORD] the King of Israel, and his [Israel’s] redeemer Yehovah [the LORD] of

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hosts [armies]; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no Elohim [God]." It is true that apart from Yehovah there is no God because without Him there is nothing else, including Yayshua. But because Yehovah exists the Son does as well. For he came forth from the Father (John 8:42).

**Now regarding Yayshua the Son**

John 8:42, "Yayshua [Jesus] said unto them, If [the] God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from [the] God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

Yayshua the Son said as recorded in John 5:23, "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which has sent him."

Yayshua added more information in John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was [appears two beings involved prior to the start of the world]. 6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them and* have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

In Revelation 3:14 John wrote the message that came from the Father who gave it to His Son (Rev. 1:1), "And unto the angel [messenger] of the assembly of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning [G746, the ar-Kay or arche] of the creation of [the] God [Yehovah]." It is my belief this is talking about Yayshua the Son as the very beginning of the Father's creation; as we believe Proverbs chapter 8:22-31 describes in more detail.

Pro 8:22 "Yehovah [the LORD] possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth" [**H2342; born, to be in labor (childbirth), amongst other meanings. See Isaiah 66:7-9 for an example. John 17:8 "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."**]; (continuing Prov.8) "when *there were* no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men."

Does the above reading sound like just wisdom which a person would think the Father had from eternity? It reads like an individual being that was brought forth, the Son Yayshua.

Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of God [Elohim] and the wisdom of Elohim [God]."

John 14:19 "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20 "At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Is this not the 'us' in Genesis 1:26 quoted above? "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."

John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." I believe I would not be incorrect in assuming the 'one' here is the same neutral *hen* meaning of G1520 as in John 10:30 described above.

Acts 7:55, "But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and

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Yayshua standing on the right hand of [the] God. 56 And said behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of [the] God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.” This appears to show there are two entities.

It was the question of Yayshua’s deity (being the Son of God) that got Yayshua killed (Mark 14:61-64) and also Stephen (Acts 7:55) who believed that Yayshua was the Son.

Romans 12:4-5 “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Messiah, and every one members one of another.” But we are not ‘one being’ physically, we are individuals, and will be also in our future spiritual bodies.

So hopefully as can be seen, this question is not so cut and dried as a person might think. The question of the meaning of “Elohim” singular or plural, is normally dependent on the context. When it says “let us” do this or that; in our understanding it means there is one spiritual family of a Father and His Son; the Father who *sent* His Son and the Son who accepted His role to save mankind. They are in the process of adding to that spiritual family; in fact, converted believers are even now called ‘children and sons of God’.

Romans 8:17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Messiah [Christ]; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of [the] God [Yehovah].”

Here is the beloved Apostle John, “Whosoever shall confess that Yayshua is the Son of [the] God, [the] God dwelleth in him, and he in [the] God.” (1 John 5:15)

**Two different Thrones:** Revelation 3:21 Yayshua is speaking, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Finally, (before the bottom note on Arian belief), I will mention about John 20:28 where some use this single verse to try to prove that Yayshua was also the Father, “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord [Master] and my God [the Theos – Yehovah].” I will quote from one website, “In fact one interpretation of these words of Thomas saying, ‘My Lord and my God’ may mean that Thomas was repenting of his sins of unbelief to BOTH Jesus AND the Father.” For more on this subject and verse, see the link

<http://www.amatteroftruth.com/john-20-28-my-lord-and-my-god>.

These and various other scriptures are why we believe as we do. For any reading this explanation of our belief, we don’t expect this to change any person’s mind; but at least it hopefully helps you to understand why others can have a different understanding as to the nature of the God Family. We do not believe it to be a sin against the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment to believe that Yayshua is also an Elohim or a God who is below the Rank of his Father, El Shaddai the Almighty God.

Philippians 2:9-12 Wherefore Yehovah also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Yayshua every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Yayshua Messiah *is* Lord [Master], to the glory of Elohim the Father. 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” [I.E., **IN GIVING HONOR APPROPRIATE TO OUR SAVIOR**]

**(NOTE REGARDING THE ARIAN BELIEF VS HOMOIOUSION BELIEF:)**

“The **Arian controversy** was a series of **Christian** theological disputes that arose between **Arius** and **Athanasius of Alexandria**, two **Christian theologians** from **Alexandria, Egypt**. The most important of these controversies concerned the substantial relationship between **God the Father** and **God the Son**. [or the Son of God]

The deep divisions created by the disputes were an ironic consequence of **Emperor Constantine's** efforts to unite Christianity and establish a single, imperially approved version of the faith during his reign.<sup>[1][2]</sup> These disagreements divided the **Roman Church** into two opposing theological factions for over 55 years, from the time before the **First Council**

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of Nicaea in 325 until after the [First Council of Constantinople](#) in 381. There was no formal resolution or formal [schism](#), though the [Trinitarian](#) faction ultimately gained the upper hand in the imperial Church; outside the Roman Empire this faction was not immediately so influential. [Arianism](#) continued to be preached inside and outside the Empire for some time (without the blessing of the Empire) but eventually it mostly died out. The modern [Roman Catholic Church](#) and the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), as well as most other modern Christian sects have generally followed the Trinitarian formulation, though each has its own specific theology on the matter.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arian\\_controversy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arian_controversy)

**Pre-Nicene usage:**

“**Homoousion** (*/ˌhɒmʊˈuːsiən/ HOM-oh-OO-see-ən*; **Greek**: ὁμοούσιος, **translit.** *homooúsios*, **lit.** 'one in being', from ὁμός, *homós*, "same" and οὐσία, *ousía*, "being") is a **Christian theological** doctrine pertaining to the **Trinitarian** understanding of **God**. The **Nicene Creed** describes **Jesus (God the Son)** as being ὁμοούσιος, "one in being" or "of single essence", with **God the Father**. It is one of the cornerstones of theology in **Nicene Christianity**.

The term was adopted at the [First Council of Nicaea](#) to clarify the **ontology of Christ**. In **Latin**, which is lacking a **present participle** of the **verb 'to be'**, the translation *consubstantialis* is used (*substantia* being the traditional Latin translation of the **Aristotelian** term *ousia*).

The term ὁμοούσιος had been used before its adoption by the First Council of Nicaea. The Gnostics were the first to use the word ὁμοούσιος, while before the Gnostics there is no trace at all of its existence.<sup>[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]</sup> The early church theologians were probably made aware of this concept, and thus of the doctrine of emanation, taught by the Gnostics.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Examples of warnings of Gnosticism in the New Testament:**

Colossians 2:8, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after rudiments of the word and not after Messiah.”

1 Timothy 6:20-21; “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.”

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**See James Steinle’s other articles at:**

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## Ingratitude

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On December 1, 2000, the hotel in which I worked at the time shut down for a \$50 million renovation, causing about 250 employees to lose their jobs. Only a few managers and a skeleton engineering crew remained.

Months beforehand, the hotel's Human Resources Director and the General Manager devised a plan to provide jobs for all those who were good employees and wanted to continue to work. Working diligently over several months and trying to keep the employee's best interests at heart, they were able to place most of our staff with our other eleven Chicago hotels. To the rest, even those who were not very good employees, they gave handsome severance packages and helped them to find other employment. These two men labored diligently to ensure that everybody who wanted to work received jobs.

A fellow who worked for me expressed a bit of a bad attitude a couple of weeks before the closing, and it worsened to the point that I finally had to call him into the office and talk to him about it. For my department, I had to develop a plan, budget, and justification for a skeleton crew to be maintained during the renovation, and this employee was not one of those who could be kept. His particular job was unnecessary to the hotel's operation during the shutdown. However, he

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was an excellent department member, and I had already assured him that, when we reopened, he would be offered a job in a different classification, making a substantially increased wage.



Because of his particular job description and pay, placing him with one of the other hotel properties was difficult, but I had been able to work out some options for him and a few others who would be let go. One was to move him and two others to another property for less money initially but a greater chance for advancement if they chose to go that route.

His other option was to take \$5,800 in severance pay plus his accrued six weeks of vacation pay and sit out the three months until we could rehire him. Under this plan, he could even collect unemployment compensation! In addition, upon his return to work, we would reinstate his seniority and full benefits, including his six weeks of vacation.

I had given him several excellent options, especially under the circumstances. However, here he was in a snit because, as he said, he felt like an orphan nobody wanted. He believed I had made sure to work out jobs for some of my department's people during the renovation, but not him.

I had to remind him how much negotiating I had to do with the corporate office to justify the small staff that was staying. I also repeated that he was getting one of the best severance packages of anyone and would return to a much better-paying job with all his seniority and vacation benefits completely reinstated. It took quite a bit of time to show him that I was not rejecting him out of hand but that many people had worked very hard to help him through an ordeal that could have been much worse.

By the end of the conversation, he still thought he was getting the short end of the stick, but his attitude had improved. He saw what the hotel faced in shutting down and renovating a property that would make no money for the company for six months to a year.

Nevertheless, this fellow was being given enough money to cover his salary for the three months he would be off, plus unemployment. He would not be paying for transportation to and from work. Because he is very handy, he could pick up extra money doing side jobs during that time and return to a career-advancing, higher-paying job—but all he could see was what he was not getting and others were!



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**I Deserve Better!**

Is this not how we look at things in this life, more often than not? We see how much we lack as opposed to how much we have. Our glass is always half-empty rather than half-full. We see ourselves as a "have-not" rather than a "have."

When I looked at this man during our conversation, I saw one of my best employees, a good worker, one for whom I had tried very hard to do what was right—and he turned my best intentions around, saying it was not enough! He deserved better! Looking at him, I was disappointed and disgusted because I knew I was looking in the mirror!

How many of us sincerely thank God for what we have and what He is doing to create us in His image (Genesis 1:26)? How many of us thank Him for every breath we take and for every action He takes for our benefit? How many of us gratefully sing His praises and glorify His holy name when He answers our prayers—or, for that matter, even when He "seemingly" does not?

For instance, we are often encouraged to pray for the ill among us. God not only hears our prayers, but He also frequently acts upon them, giving the afflicted strength and healing. Do we sound His praises and thank Him with the same fervor in which we requested His aid? Could this be why more of our brethren are not healed completely? Could we possibly be demonstrating ingratitude in our hearts toward God?

We all think that we esteem God highly and are grateful to Him for everything, but how true is that? Ingratitude will separate us from God and what we are to become. We see this in Jesus' first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Being poor in spirit is an attitude of poverty in all respects, one that is so poor that every little favor warrants joyous thanksgiving!

Do we believe that God owes us nothing except death? Do we believe that everything we have and are is a gift worthy of praise to the eternal God?

Or do we think that God owes it to us because we prayed hard for it? That God owes us blessings because we work hard? That He owes us because He called us into His church or because we have endured the persecution of this world for His sake?

Maybe we do not think we think this way, but then again, maybe our actions betray us. Maybe God sees our heart because the mouth does not speak the words of thankful praise, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34).

**Korah and Satan**

Two biblical examples will illustrate this attitude of ingratitude. The first appears in Numbers 16:1-2: "Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*; and they rose up before Moses . . ." Notice that "men" is written in italics. The translators, not knowing what to do with the verb "took" at the end of the clause, supplied it to finish the thought. In Hebrew, the word underlying "men" is plural, but "took" is singular, so it cannot apply to all these men. "Took" expresses the action of the singular subject of the sentence, "Korah." *Young's Literal Translation* says, "Korah . . . takes both Dathan and Abiram . . ." Interestingly, the *New American Standard* version renders it, "Korah . . . took action." The sense, however, is the same: Korah took these men against Moses.

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?" . . . Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD." (Numbers 16:3, 8-11)

Korah is an example of a person who, dissatisfied with what he has, stirs up others because of his ingratitude for what God had given him already.

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The consequences of Korah's "taking action" are clear: God destroyed all these who rose against Moses and Aaron—against Him. Does this pattern look familiar? It should. It is the age-old and oft-repeated sin of pride manifesting itself in ingratitude. Satan did the same thing (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17). It was not enough for him to be a covering cherub at God's throne. It was not enough to have the lordship over the earth and one-third of the angels (Revelation 12:3). No, he wanted to resemble or compare to the Most High (Isaiah 14:14)! His pride led him to go to war against God, a battle he soundly lost (Luke 10:18). Revelation 12:7-10 prophesies that his pride will drive him to attempt another *coup d'état* before Christ's return.

We see that ingratitude can ultimately lead a person into total rebellion against God. It leads to an individual feeling a false sense of worth, that he deserves more. If not checked, it becomes a plague of discontent that soon infects others, just as Satan's ingratitude spread to other angels.

If this kind of attitude lands us in trouble, just what should our attitude be? A truly humble and grateful person will never rebel against God because he knows that even the very breath he breathes is a gift and calls for praiseful thanksgiving to the Father. Sharing this thanksgiving with others in the church works like soothing oil that helps to heal the body.

### **Paul in Philippi**

Acts 16 contains a clear example of what God expects from us. As the chapter opens, Paul and his companions are traveling through the cities of Asia Minor, delivering the Word of God, and the people heartily receive them (verse 4). They establish new churches in the faith, and the number of converts increases daily (verse 5). God's Holy Spirit directly leads them in the work (verses 6-7), keeping them from certain areas under Peter's responsibility (see I Peter 1:1).

In Acts 16:9-10, Paul has a vision in which a Macedonian pleads with him for help, and the apostle and his companions conclude that God wants them to preach the gospel there. Macedonia, a Roman province, lies north of Greece. There, Paul preaches first to those who kept the Sabbath, and Lydia becomes his first convert (verses 13-15). He seems to be making good but labored progress.

However, a demon-possessed woman begins to follow Paul and his party, calling them "servants of the Most High God" (verses 16-17). Though what she says is true, it distresses the apostle because the Jews might conclude he consorted with soothsayers, unlawful according to Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; and Deuteronomy 18:9-14. From their point of view, the Gentiles might consider the religion Paul preached to be as pagan as all the other religions of the time. Thus, in the name of Jesus Christ, Paul commands the demon to leave the woman (Acts 16:18).

Her employers, who profited greatly from her fortunetelling, are not pleased because her supernatural abilities disappeared with the demon. So, they haul Paul and Silas before the city courts (verse 18), saying:

"These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. (verses 20-24)

Unlike the Jews, the Romans were not limited to 39 stripes, so the beating Paul and Silas took was severe. The stocks they had to endure afterward were two large pieces of wood pierced with holes at different distances, designed to restrain the feet and produce pain.

Confined to the pitch-dark bowels of the prison, Paul and Silas now lie on a filthy floor on their bloody, shredded backs, their legs painfully distended. One might think they would have every right to complain about how unfairly the Philippians had treated them—or at least to spend all their time beseeching God to relieve them of their pain. Notice verse 25, however: "But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them!"

Not only were they singing praises of thanksgiving to God, but they were also doing it loud enough for the other prisoners to hear them! Just as James says in James 5:13: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." They were praying for their affliction but also singing songs of praise to God from hearts filled with

thanksgiving!

### Gratitude Is a Gift

Are we willing to do this, or will we thank God only when we think He deserves it? We need to make it a sincere habit to thank God fervently every day for all His benefits, glorifying His holy will and purpose for us. He is *never* undeserving of our praise and thanks—indeed, we cannot thank Him enough.

It stung when my employee griped and grumbled about my best efforts to give him something good. Even after I sat down and explained what he could have and why things had been done the way they had been, he only expressed a qualified thanks to me. I had done the best I possibly could, but it rated only a grudging "thank you" from him.

How does our heavenly Father feel when we only express a reluctant or half-hearted "thank you" occasionally or not at all? How does He feel, knowing that He has done what is absolutely, perfectly the best for us for now and all eternity?

Ingratitude, whether passive or active, is a tool Satan uses to recruit us to join him against God's Family. By this means, we can allow him to plant us as a tare within Christ's field and spread our ingratitude to others (Matthew 13:24-25, *cf.* verse 33). On the other hand, a constant attitude of praiseful thanksgiving, no matter the circumstances, is a gift of God to us. Gratitude spreads a healing balm among those with whom we fellowship, and it will speed us on the path to God's Kingdom!

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## Israel's Long War

(Copyright 2023) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (Charlotte, North Carolina)



The early-morning Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023—a Sabbath day as well as the Eighth Day (see Leviticus

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23:36, 39)—shocked the world. Beginning with a barrage of at least 3,000 rockets, militants crossed into Israeli territory via both ground and aerial (paragliding) units. The stunning attack, which overcame Israel’s complex physical and technological defenses, killed 859 civilians and around 345 soldiers and policemen, wounding over 5,100. In addition, Hamas took about 250 hostages (thirty of whom are children), both civilians and soldiers, transporting them to the Gaza Strip. Israel claims to have killed around 1,500 militants in its response.

Since then, according to the historically unreliable Gaza Ministry of Health, the death toll has climbed to over 15,000 in total. Most of the dead were Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, which is being pounded to dust by the relentless Israeli bombardment. More than 20,000 have been wounded, and thousands more are missing. An estimated 300 people have died each day since the initial assault.

While Hamas’ October 7 attack erupted into war and markedly elevated casualty numbers, Palestinian aggression toward Israel is nothing new. Whether it is Hamas, Fatah, Islamic Jihad, or one of the many militant groups striking out at what they see as their oppressors, such attacks have been an unhappy facet of life in Israel since the Jewish state began in 1948. In recent decades, attacks—usually rocket launches and mortar shelling’s—have occurred on a fairly regular basis, usually an incident every few months. Islamists have also perpetrated other forms of terrorist activity, like bombings, shootings, and knife and even axe attacks.

For this reason and others, Christians should be cautious about proclaiming the present, lopsided war in the Holy Land to be a sign of the end. In reality, the State of Israel has been in a *de facto* war with its neighbors, particularly the Palestinians, since its founding. It ebbs and flows depending on the leadership of each side and the resources the Palestinians can muster to use against its perceived satanic overlords. The grisly pictures on our news feeds show us the results of perpetual hatred on both sides, and it is not pretty.

We can take this long war back still further—more than 3,500 years further! Scripture tells us of the enmity between Abraham’s sons, Ishmael and Isaac, an antagonism primarily based on the older son’s jealousy and bellicose attitude (see Genesis 16:11-12). A generation later, Isaac’s sons, Esau and Jacob, feuded over their father’s blessing to where Esau, who hated his younger brother, vowed to kill him after their father died (Genesis 27:41). A tribe of Esau’s descendants, the Amalekites, acted so maliciously against the children of Israel as they left Egypt that God promised He would “have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (Exodus 17:16). Finally, when the Kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon, the Edomites, the main body of Esau’s descendants, hunted down Jews trying to escape their nation’s calamity (see the book of Obadiah; Psalm 137:7-9).

Thus, the current war between the Jews and the Palestinians, whose ancestry likely originates in Israel’s longtime enemies—the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and the remnant of the Philistines—is sadly normal, even traditional and unsurprising. Add in the animosity between the Jewish and Islamic faiths, as well as the substantial economic and technological disparities between the two peoples, and explosive conflict is unavoidable. It is surprising that *more* clashes have not occurred between them!

While many people have taken sides in the conflict, the world’s nations have so far done little more than voice support or condemnation and raise humanitarian concerns. On Israel’s southern border, Egypt has reluctantly made the flow of humanitarian aid easier but wants nothing to do with taking refugees or joining the fray under current conditions. Even the Islamist terror group Hezbollah, lying in wait on Israel’s northern border, has only made a show of support for Hamas—trading fire with Israel Defense Forces—but the government of Lebanon, an Iranian proxy state, has publicly stated that it wishes to avoid war with Israel. Iran itself has been aggressively belligerent, but strategically placed U.S. and allied military assets in the region deter it. Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has lashed out at Israel and expressed support for Hamas, but he has done little to back his words because of his country’s strong economic ties to Israel.

Jesus’ warning about war in the end time in Matthew 24:6-8 should guide us in situations like the current one in Gaza:

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. . . . All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Wars are a deplorable part of the human condition. Without God’s Spirit, people, and nations, consumed by self-interest,

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will turn to violence to take or keep what they believe is rightfully theirs. (*Hamas* connotes “violence” in both Arabic and Hebrew.) Conflicts great and small are inevitable in a crowded world filled with self-centered, aggressive people.

Our Savior warns that not all wars—even massive, worldwide conflicts (like two world wars) or those in sensitive areas (like the Holy Land)—presage the end of the age. Instead, they are grievous reminders of human sinfulness and its resulting destruction and death (Romans 6:23). In Scripture, God has provided other signs of Christ’s coming that must be present in tandem with warfare—and even if we recognize them all, Jesus tells us He will return “at an hour [we] do not expect” (Matthew 24:44)!

So, we must temper our expectations about what the Israel-Hamas War will lead to. If it widens with the addition of other nations, triggering regional or even world war; if it reveals a strongman who begins gathering nations into a one-world government; or if it initiates increased persecution of God’s elect, among other signs, then we should definitely give it more heed prophetically.

Until then, as Jesus advises in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” or as He puts it in Luke 21:36, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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**See Richard T. Ritenbaugh’s other articles at:**  
**Ritenbaugh, Richard T. – Church of God, Bismarck ([church-of-god-bismarck.org](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org))**

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**Life, Death, Life**  
**(Copyright 2023) by David Sielaff (Portland, Oregon)**

**The Shared Experiences Of All Human Beings**

“Life, Death, Life” is the sequence of existence for most every human being. It was the sequence for Christ Jesus also. Created by God His Father (and our Father). He **“is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature”** (Colossians 1:15–20). All was created through Him (verse 16). See also Revelation 3:14.

He was alive when He humbled (or emptied) Himself (Philippians 2:6–8) to be born to Mary (Matthew 1:16). He grew to adulthood, began His ministry until He was crucified unto death: **“... in the body of his flesh through death”** (Colossians 1:22 and read Philippians 2:8). He was brought back to life with even greater glory than before:

**“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:**

- **That at the name of Jesus EVERY knee should bow, of**

- [1] **things in heaven, and**
- [2] **things in earth, and**
- [3] **things under the earth; And**

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- **that EVERY tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

• **Philippians 2:9-11**

He was created, He was the "prime contractor" of all creation, He became flesh, lived, died, and was resurrected to life. This is the pattern of creation from God our Father, through Christ, to and through you, me, and every human being: we also were created, we will die, and God will bring us back to life.

**"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."**

• **Hebrews 9:27-28<sup>1</sup>**

Jesus had no negative judgments against his behavior or His actions in His life. He received only rewards. He was sinless. Even more, He was righteous in all His actions. As the only begotten Son of God, the Messiah (= Christ, both terms mean "anointed"), the prophesied son of David and King of Israel, chief King of all the nations (Psalm 89:27), and Melchizedek, a priest before YHWH, He went before the judgment seat of God on our behalf.

**"But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being NOW justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**

**For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."**

• **Romans 5:8-10**

He is now seated at the right hand of God. Angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22). He is **"being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they"** (Hebrews 1:4). How far will His power and authority extend?

**"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and [above] EVERY NAME that is named, not only in this world [*eon*, in Greek], but also in that which is to come:**

**And has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church [*ekklesia*], Which is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all."**

• **Ephesians 1:21-23**

The risen Christ is referred to as God in the prophecy of Psalm 82:8, **"Arise, O God** [Elohim in Hebrew], **judge the earth: for You shall inherit all nations.**" In that verse "Elohim" is governed by two singular verbs indicating that the reference is to a single individual who will inherit all the nations. Who will do that? Learn from Psalm 2:8, 22:38, and especially Revelation 11:15:

**"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying,**

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<sup>1</sup> A tiny remnant will not die, but will be saved alive to glory when Christ returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). So far as Scripture tells us, this will be unique in history.

**'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ [Messiah]; and he shall reign for ever and ever [for the eons of the eons].''**

The full impact of Christ's "*life, death, and life*" will also be ours. When our current experience of life ends, we will experience decline toward death,<sup>2</sup> then (without any passage of time) our future resurrected life of immortality and glory will have no end. But we must experience the rest of our life now, experience our dying, before we will be given the life and glory promised to all believers. Eventually that glory will extend to every human being. As I wrote at the beginning of my article "[Your Resurrection](#)":

**"YOU are the object of God's creation. All creation was made for YOU. Christ died for YOU.**

**Every son and daughter of Adam — every human being — will become a mature child of God, completing God's declaration to make man in His image. You live because God wills you to live, moment to moment, heartbeat by heartbeat, breath upon breath.**

**Days or years from now your heart will stop, your breathing will cease, you will lose consciousness. You will die. Your cells quickly decay. Your soul ceases to exist, your spirit returns to God, until you are resurrected from the dead."**

Rest with the knowledge that God is in full control.

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See David Sielaff's other articles at:

[Sielaff, David – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](#)

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## Why we can't marry close relatives (and the truth about human population) (Copyright 2021) by David Rives (Lewisburg, Tennessee)

There are many instances in early Biblical history of people marrying closely related family. In fact, it doesn't seem to be a big deal, and if we take the Bible literally at its word, this would have been necessary just after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, as well as immediately following the Genesis Flood.

But in Leviticus 18:6 things appear to have changed. It states, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him."

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<sup>2</sup> Remember, once we are dead there is no "experience" of any sensation, memory, or consciousness until God makes us live again. DWS

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Some might ask: “Why now? Did God suddenly change His mind?” Does the Bible know best?

What we don’t usually take into consideration is that Adam and Eve had a 100% pure genetic code. Beginning at the very next generation, copy errors would have been made in the DNA sequence, and over time, these errors would only worsen, producing non-beneficial genetic traits and mutations.

Two people who are related will share a similar genetic make-up, in fact, it will identically overlap in some cases. But this means that any recessive genetic traits have a great chance of being passed on to their children, and the more this inbreeding takes place, the more birth defects, mutations, and even mental disabilities.



At the appropriate time in history, we were commanded not to marry close relatives, and long before genetic science, once again, the Bible knew best.

**Is 6,000 years enough time for 7 billion people to populate the Earth? It’s more than enough time!**

Why should you believe in creation, and not evolution? I mean, scientifically speaking. Haven’t we proven that evolution is a fact?

Over one million years ago modern humans arrived on the planet, or so the evolutionary story goes. Now have you ever wondered where all the people are if humans have been around for over a million years?

If we assume a really, really slow growth rate of just .01%—a population that doubles every 7,000 years as opposed to 39 years like it does today—in just one million years the number of people on earth could be 10 to the 43rd power. That’s an unimaginably large number that earth could not even begin to sustain.

Now, some evolutionists will say that wars, famine, disease, and high infant mortality rates have kept the population on the verges of extinction until relatively modern times. But, if this rather incredible story is true, where are all the human remains? We supposedly have a handful of human remains that have survived the ravishes of hundreds of millions of years, but why aren’t there more?

If evolution is true, there should be many more human remains to account for the billions of individuals who have died. And even if we don’t find human remains, we should find artifacts they left behind or were buried with. Yet, we simply



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don't find evidence that billions and billions of people have lived and died over the supposed last million years.

But what happens when we start with God's Word? Well, the human population started out with two individuals just 6,000 years ago. Around 4,000 years ago, the population was reduced to just eight at the time of the worldwide Flood.

Now, if we start with those eight people and assume a conservative growth rate of just half a percent, we easily get to our modern population today, even taking into account wars, famines, disease, and high infant mortality. The evidence confirms the Bible, not evolutionary ideas about the past.

The data makes a clear case that almost completely precludes the notion of any more than a few thousand years of human existence.

Just one more scientific reason that you shouldn't believe in long ages of evolution. It takes a LOT of faith.

I'm David Rives,

Truly, the heavens declare the glory of God.

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**See David Rives other articles at:**

**Rives, David – Church of God, Bismarck ([church-of-god-bismarck.org](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org))**

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## **Welcome to Israel!**

**(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)**

Planning to fly to Israel to see historical sites? Well, it may not be so easy right now to find a flight to Israel because of the war. If you can manage to land at Tel Aviv, you won't have to deal with any of the usual crowds as you can imagine.

The video below will give you a "behind-the-headlines" report on the conditions in Israel because of the war. What makes this report special is that it's made by an Arab-Jewish couple who have a positive perspective on the age-old conflict between Jews and Arabs.

Sergio and Rhoda were visiting family in Florida when the war broke out. They wanted to ship supplies to others in Israel but the usual cargo flights, UPS, FedEx, DHL, have been cancelled. All airlines have cancelled flights to Tel Aviv except one due to the danger of rockets. Why is this one airline able to fly there when the others can't? Sergio and Rhoda will explain.

As you would expect, tourism in Israel has crashed. This has severely affected the economy. Some businesses have had to close down because the war has pulled many workers into military service. The prior shutdowns from the pandemic took their toll and now the war effort will also add a major strain on the economic health of Israel.

When I visited Egypt in the autumn of 1991, which was after the Gulf War, our Egyptian guide remarked that there were no tourists during the war. As a consequence, all the local businesses which depended on tourists were severely affected.

From Cairo, I flew to Tel Aviv late Sunday night on an EL AL flight for a tour of Israel. At the Ben Gurion Airport, I got my bags and then got in line to go through Customs. This harmless looking guy came up behind me and sat his bag on the

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floor. He asked me if I would watch his bag while he went to the restroom. I said, "Sure." After a few minutes, it hit me, "Maybe this guy isn't coming back because there is a BOMB in his bag." I was starting to panic and wondered if I should notify someone before something exploded. To my relief, this guy came back to the line for his bag. But it took a few minutes for my heart to stop racing.

Sergio and Rhoda share a powerful testimony in this video and give a good example of how Jesus, the Prince of peace, will finally bring peace to the Middle East. This is an uplifting report that will give us all hope.

Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIPD6BSAxOQ>

See Dwight Fleming's other articles at:  
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## The Third Temple

(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)

The short video, linked below, provides an excellent report on the difficulty of building a third temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It also covers the history of the Temple Mount and the building of The Dome of the Rock.

You will see video evidence of past clashes on the Temple Mount between Muslims and Israeli police. Any attempt to allow Jews to worship or pray on the Temple Mount will be violently resisted by Muslim believers.

This video will supplement the article that I recently sent out, titled, "Red Heifer or Red Herring?" This is where I questioned if a third temple has to be built in order to fulfill Paul's prophecy found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Paul said that a man of sin or lawlessness would **sit** in the temple of God and proclaim that he is God before the return of Christ.

As the video vividly shows, building a third temple on the Temple Mount is presently an impossibility. There will have to be some monumental shift in the Middle East before Muslims would allow that to happen. The video also assumes that a third temple must be built in order for there to be an "abomination of desolation" as predicted by Daniel and Jesus Christ.

Jesus said that the "abomination of desolation" would be "**standing** in the holy place" (Matthew 24:15). It is assumed by everyone that "the holy place" will be a third temple on the Temple Mount. Is it possible that "the holy place" is somewhere else in Jerusalem other than the Temple Mount?

However, if a third temple is not in existence with the conquering of Jerusalem by a false messiah, **then** it is likely that he will command that a third temple be built. Only when Jerusalem is occupied by the armies of the Beast, aka, King of the North, would circumstances change to allow the building of a third temple.

Otherwise, as things are now, the Israeli government would be very foolhardy to attempt to provide even one square foot on the Temple Mount for Jewish worship. For that to happen, it will take the approval and backing of several Muslim nations. Even then, there would probably be a major Muslim backlash by those who did not agree with such a "profane" agreement with infidels.

We certainly need to watch as events develop in the Middle East. Now is not the time to fall asleep when it comes to Bible prophecy and how we may be personally affected. Here is the link:

Temple Mount -- Ongoing Conflict: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jCUQryL8Fs>

See Dwight Fleming's other articles at:

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## What's worse, Aunt Jemima's picture, Hunter's crack or Uncle Joe's fentanyl from China?

(Copyright 2023) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

**"The other day I was in Madison (Moscow-on-the-Yahara) less than half an hour before seeing a case of drug overdose." -from my Facebook page, August 2022**

THAT WAS A FIRST FOR ME. I've heard of celebrities dying with their head in a toilet, but this guy had his head in a bathroom sink at an Arby's. He was standing up – sort of – so he seemed alive yet. Another customer reported him to Arby's and before I left the police, and an ambulance were there. Don't know if they were administering Narcan, or, if the guy survived.

We lost over 100,000 people to overdoses in 2022. That's more than 270 per day, enough people to fill the Rose Bowl. Thanks for nothing, Uncle Joe. A child of five could understand the problem. What's so hard to understand?

**The Biden administration couldn't stop the flow of illegals in the pipeline if they wanted to at this point.**

**WHAT border?**

You can be fined for not wearing a seat belt. Plastic straws have been banned in some places. Fitness clubs must have wheelchair accessible toilet stalls, but our immigration laws are ignorable by the true deplorables.

They can't solve the BIG problems, so they are "fixing" things that aren't even problems in their obsession with signaling "virtue" (in lieu of virtue). An Indian maiden on a box of butter? Outrage! Washington Redskins? Full stop. Aunt Jemima? Get rid of her!

**But the same people legalized all "recreational drugs" in Oregon. How's that working out for them?**

Who is running the White House? Does the Gang of Eight get kickbacks from China for being the Welcome Wagon at the border? "We'll leave a light on for ya, MS-13 and Hamas." The U.S. ought to be pressuring Mexico to close the border -their *southern* border! It's a lot shorter than ours. But in the meantime, how do you turn the stampede around and send them all back home? Lots of questions. Is Mexico charging the "migrants" tolls? Do we *really* need more homeless people? Why have a department of Homeland Security if they aren't *doing* anything?

**Does the Left want to legalize ALL immigration like all drugs? Then try to change the law!**

**P.S.** The President signaled on Sunday that he is open to some compromise with the GOP on the border, but I'm not getting my hopes up. Someone go fetch a child of 5, Groucho.

**PPS:** Have yourself a nice day.

See Curtis Dahlgren's other articles at:

[Dahlgren, Curtis – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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## The Second Seal (Video Part 3)

(Copyright 2023) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

OPENING THE 2ND SEAL OF REVELATION - PART 3 Very enlightening info especially about what is going on in GAZA right now and what the very near future holds for that area per prophecy (Zephaniah 1 & 2)

<https://thecogmi.org/video/secondseal-3.htm>

Sermon by Tom Kerry of the COGMI this past Sabbath 11/18/23. If you have not seen Parts 1 and 2, they are available on their home site <https://thecogmi.org/>.

See James Steinle's other articles at:  
[Steinle, James – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

**Iron Sharpening Iron**  
New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)  
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

**In regard to: Expect the Unexpected**  
Article by Warren Zehrung  
Comments by Dwight Fleming (Orville, California)

I found the main article, "Expect the Unexpected," well written and thought provoking with a new concept regarding Nebuchadnezzar's dream found in Daniel two. The author brought out some good details about the feet of the image which are composed of **iron** and **clay**. An end-time kingdom of iron and clay may indicate two elements or cultures of people which do not mix well.

Muslim immigrants into Europe have caused untold problems for native countrymen since Muslims do not assimilate into the established society of their host nation. So, the author has a valid point concerning the iron and clay not mixing.

His point that Daniel two actually reveals **five** kingdoms and not only four has merit. However, he has assumed, as well as many others, that the beasts listed in Daniel seven are identical to the first four kingdoms listed in Daniel two. Daniel seven specifically says, "These great beasts, which are **four**, are **four kings**, which shall arise out of the earth" (verse 17).

Is there a connection between the four beasts of Daniel seven and the first four metal kingdoms of Daniel two? Absolutely. The difference is the time element and the locations. The first four kingdoms of Daniel two existed in the distant past and are all extinct. The fifth kingdom of feet with ten toes will exist at the end-time at Christ's return. The four beasts are empires that arose after the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. and then the Byzantine Empire in 1453 A.D. What are those empires? Britain, Russia, Germany, and a revived Roman Empire yet to happen. The ten horns

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of Daniel seven tie-in to the ten toes of Daniel two.

The author also tied Christ's return to the Feast of Trumpets as taught by Mr. Herbert Armstrong. I understand his conclusion, which is also held by many other COG brethren, since Christ comes at the last **trumpet**. It is then easily assumed that Christ will return on a future Feast of Trumpets. The author's warning to "Expect the Unexpected" may prove to be on the money since it is very likely that Christ will return on a future Pentecost— not Trumpets—to first resurrect and gather together the saints for a wedding in heaven (Revelation 19:1-9).

The author did ask if those in heaven in Revelation 19:1 are the resurrected saints. The answer is yes if you can receive it. Christ will then return on a white horse with the saints to make war against the nations on the following Feast of Trumpets. So, Christ's return is in two phases. First is the resurrection on Pentecost. Then to make war on Trumpets. The seven trumpets of Revelation sound in the same **pattern** as the seven annual Sabbaths according to the civil year which begins with the Feast of Trumpets. Thus, the first trumpet will sound on a future Feast of Trumpets with the seventh and last trumpet sounding on a future Pentecost.

Overall, I found the main article a stimulating read which had several thoughts similar to some things that I have also written. Since we don't know each other, this tells me that the Holy Spirit is working, causing similar thinking among God's people. The only criticism: The section at the end, "Random Prophetic Verses to Consider," may lessen the impact of the main article by overwhelming the reader with so many verses. The verses are good but would be better used in a separate composition focusing on a particular prophetic theme.

**In regard to: Expect the Unexpected**  
**Article by Warren Zehrung**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

As Dwight noted, the resurrection of the Saints may well happen on a future Pentecost due to the following scriptures:

**Mat 24:31** And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**1Co 15:51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **1Co 15:52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

There are seven trumpets, the last three trumpets are called woes or woe trumpets which is where the pattern comes from. In other words, the first trumpet is on Feast of Trumpets, the second trumpet is on Atonement, the third trumpet is on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the fourth trumpet is on the Last Great Day. These are all warning trumpets that Christ will soon return.

With the woe trumpets the warning is louder and going to a worse conclusion for the people on the earth if they are not heeded. In other words, the three woe trumpets are leading right up to the bowls of wrath which will be poured out on all the earth just before Christ returns.

The last trump sounds most likely on Pentecost which makes a lot of sense because it is also called the Feast of First Fruits. So, when the seventh trumpet sounds the elect will be resurrected or changed at the same time as the two witnesses are resurrected. A great time to harvest the elect.

**Rev 11:3** And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

**Rev 11:14** The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. **Rev 11:15** And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our

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Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Read the entire chapter of Rev. 11)

The two witnesses are killed and resurrected right around the time of the third woe trumpet. Since this is the last trump, it is also the time the elect will be resurrected.

In Rev. 14:3, 1 it clearly shows the elect are in heaven most likely for the wedding supper of the lamb and to be trained for their duties in the Kingdom of God on earth which will officially start happening starting with the Feast of Trumpets.

**Rev 14:3** And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the **hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.**

**Rev 14:1** And I looked, and, lo, **a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

So, in other words the elect will not be on earth while the bowls of wrath are poured out. They will return from heaven with Christ to help fight the nations and to help set up the Kingdom of God on earth..

**In regard to: Is Yayshua God?**  
**Article by James & Patt Steinle**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

**Laura writes:**

You did a great job proving that both God the Father and Christ the Son are Gods and that the Holy Spirit is not a person but the essence and power of God.

I did, however, find a few problems with the article.

**From the article:**

**Elohim or god also does apply to humans. Let's examine some Scriptural examples:**

**Those who have authority as judges:** Psalm 82:1-8 "God [Elohim] standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods [H430 elohim]. 2 How long will ye [the judges or gods] judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. 5 they know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye are gods [elohim]; and all of you *are* children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. 8 Arise, O God [Elohim], judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

**Laura writes:**

**Psa 82:1** A Psalm of Asaph. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. **Psa 82:2** How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. **Psa 82:3** Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. **Psa 82:4** Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. **Psa 82:5** They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. **Psa 82:6** I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. **Psa 82:7** But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. **Psa 82:8** Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

I think verse seven is telling us this is not talking about people but perhaps some sort of created being that is not fully clear to us right now. All men die like men but this is saying something else. These are gods with a small "g" already but it says they will die like men. Keep in mind that Christ became a man and died like a man and yet he was God with a big "G". It also seems like as you read chapter 82 it is talking about wicked entities which God is judging now. Look at verse one which tells you God is judging gods. So, I don't think it proves that these verses are talking about human men.

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**From the article:**

Ex 22:9 "For all manner of trespass, *whether it be* for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of lost thing, which *another* challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges [H430 elohim]; *and* whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour."

**Laura writes:**

Exodus 22:9 is more likely a translation error because many bibles translate it as God.

One bible translated it this way:

Exo 22:9 "For every matter of transgression, for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for garment, or for whatever is lost which another claims to be his, let the matter of them both come before Elohim. And whomever Elohim declares wrong repays double to his neighbour. (The Scriptures 2009)

And one bible avoided the whole problem this way by leaving it totally out of the verse:

Exo 22:9 "If a man entrusts his neighbor with a donkey, ox, sheep or any animal to care for, and it dies, is hurt or taken away with no one seeing, (Tree of Life Version)

Old bible translations used God:

And in al maner of trespace, whether it be oxe, asse, shepe, raymente or any maner loste thyng whiche another chalengeth to be hys, the cause of bothe parties shall come before the goddes. And whom the goddes condemne: the same shall paye double vnto his neyghbour. (Matthew's Bible 1537)

Yf one accuse another in eny maner of trespace, whether it be for oxe, or Asse, or shepe, or rayment, what so euer it be that is lost: then shall both their causes come before the Goddes: Loke whom the Goddes condempne, the same shall restore dubble vnto his neghbour. (Cloverdale Bible 1535)

to `do fraude; as wel in oxe, as in asse, and in scheep, and in clooth; and what euer thing may brynge in harm, the cause of euer eithir schal come to goddis, and if thei demen, he schal restore the double to his neiybore. (Wycliffe Bible 1382)

**From the article:**

Again, the example of John 10:30-38, "I and *my* [my emphasis] Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?** [Quoted from Psalm 82:6 shown above] 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of [the] God [Yehovah]? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him." How? Again, I will give the *hen* wording of Strong's G1520, as explained by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D. "(i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis* it would have meant one person."

**Laura writes:**

I am going to assume that you believe this is a quote from Psalms 82 because you believe the entire Old Testament is the law of God. Actually, the entire bible is the law of God, the only problem is that not all of the bible is stating God's Law. Some of it is history and some is prophecy and etc. Psalms 82 is not a law of God, it is talking about a meeting that took place where God is judging some entities.

If you look closely at John 10:34, Christ is saying that them being gods is written in the law of the Jews. He is not saying it is written in the law of God.

I have just eradicated all of your examples of man being god or God. If you have other examples I would like to see them.

In the end most people will be born into the God family which would make us all like God, but we are not there yet.

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**From the article:**

Acts 3:13, “The God [Elohim] of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God [Elohim] of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.” Who was the God of the Old Testament? It was Yehovah (the Father) as Exodus 3:15 says, “And Elohim [God] said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou [Moses] say unto the children of Israel, Yehovah Elohim [The LORD God] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.”

**Laura writes:**

The God of the Old Testament is Christ.

In Acts 3:13, Peter is explaining that it was the power of Christ which healed the lame man.

Exodus 3:15-16 is also talking about Christ. I think the problem comes in with the use of “God”. God can and does many times include both God the Father and Christ. We know from other scriptures they are one in purpose, however there are two beings and the only one anyone has seen or heard is Christ. God the Father is invisible, and no one has seen him. Remember that Christ did let Moses see His backside and he has arms and legs just like the rest of us.

Exo 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations. Exo 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:

1Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:4 tells you flat out who was spending time from Egypt to the Promised Land with the Israelites and that was Christ.

**From the article:**

In Revelation 3:14 John wrote the message that came from the Father who gave it to His Son (Rev. 1:1), “And unto the angel [messenger] of the assembly of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the *beginning* [G746, the ar-Kay or arche] of the creation of [the] God [Yehovah].” It is my belief this is talking about Yayshua the Son as the very beginning of the Father’s creation; as we believe Proverbs chapter 8:22-31 describes in more detail.

**Laura writes:**

The Bible is pretty clear that God the Father did not make anything. So, what this is talking about is the power of God (the Holy Spirit) impregnated Mary and she had Christ as a baby who grew into a man and walked among us as a man. Then Christ was crucified and then resurrected by God the Father. And yes, Christ is the First Fruit of the First Fruits but that is because He became a man and died and was resurrected. So, in that sense He is the first, but it is not saying He was created. Christ would not be able to create Himself anymore than He was able to resurrect Himself. God the Father has a part in all of this, but Christ is the one who is creating everything and when everything is complete, Christ will present the finished product to God the Father like a gift.

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

**From the article:**

Pro 8:22 “Yehovah [the LORD] possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth” [H2342; born,



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*to be in labor (childbirth), amongst other meanings. See Isaiah 66:7-9 for an example. John 17:8 "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."]; (continuing Prov.8) "when there were no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."*

Does the above reading sound like just wisdom which a person would think the Father had from eternity? It reads like an individual being that was brought forth, the Son Yayshua.

**Laura writes:**

Proverbs 8 is talking about Wisdom.

Pro 8:22 **The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.** Pro 8:23 **I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.**

Right here it is flat out telling you that the Lord possessed wisdom from the beginning and the next verse tells you wisdom was set up from everlasting. It is not talking about Christ having been created by God the Father.

**From the article:**

Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of God [Elohim] and the wisdom of Elohim [God]."

**Laura writes:**

1Co 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (King James Version)

The below version may clean up the wording somewhat.

1Co 1:24 But for those who have been chosen to follow him, both Jews and Greeks, he is God's mighty power, God's true wisdom, and our Messiah. (The Passion Translation)

It is talking about Christ having the power of God and the wisdom of God because He is God.

In conclusion I believe you have proven there are two Gods with one purpose. God the Father and Christ His son. Much of the Bible is literal. If you read the scripture for what it says without adding to it the outcome is better and more realistic.

I think that most people doing a bible study are looking for mysterious or hidden things so they miss what a verse is actually saying. The Bible is written in such a way to hide the truth from those not called. As you ask for and get more of God's Holy Spirit more verses are opened up to you.

You have a tendency to lean to Christ as having been a created being but scripture just does not back that up.

I think these 18 verses should clear all of this up if you read it as being literal.

Joh 1:1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** Joh 1:2 **The same was in the beginning with God.** Joh 1:3 **All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.** Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. Joh 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. Joh 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. Joh 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. Joh 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the

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world. Joh 1:10 **He was in the world, and the world was made by him**, and the world knew him not. Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. Joh 1:12 **But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name: Joh 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Joh 1:14 **And the Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**;) full of grace and truth. Joh 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. Joh 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Joh 1:18 **No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son**, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

**In regard to: Life, Death, Life**  
**Article by David Sielaff**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

I have one problem with this article. Christ is not a created being.

The following is talking about Christ:

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

**From the Adam Clark Commentary in regard to Col. 16 & 17:**

**For by him were all things created, etc. - These two verses contain parts of the same subject. I shall endeavor to distinguish the statements of the apostle, and reason from them in such a way as the premises shall appear to justify, without appealing to any other scripture in proof of the doctrine which I suppose these verses to vindicate.**

**Four things are here asserted:**

- 1. That Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe; of all things visible and invisible; of all things that had a beginning, whether they exist in time or in eternity.**
- 2. That whatsoever was created was created For himself; that he was the sole end of his own work.**
- 3. That he was prior to all creation, to all beings, whether in the visible or invisible world.**
- 4. That he is the preserver and governor of all things; for by him all things consist.**

**In conclusion**, since scripture states that Christ created everything, He cannot be a created being because He cannot create Himself.

**Announcements**

**Announcement from William P. Goff (December 23, 2023)**

**Greetings Brethren,**

**The latest "revised" Kenya update (December 23, 2023) is now posted at: [khofh.org](http://khofh.org) Thank You.**

**Bill Goff**

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**Announcement from William P. Goff (December 27, 2023)**

Greetings,

We started a new fundraiser for the orphans School Fees. For those who can help, it will be greatly appreciated. The link is:

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/ydppp-orphans-school-fees?utm\\_campaign=p\\_lico+share-sheet-first-launch&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_source=customer](https://www.gofundme.com/f/ydppp-orphans-school-fees?utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet-first-launch&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer)

Thank You.  
Bill Goff

## Go to the Lost Ten Tribes (Part 8)

(Copyright) by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)

*It's commonly believed that Jesus came to evangelize and save the Jewish Nation first and foremost. Yet He Himself said otherwise. The Commission given to His Disciples reflected that of His own. Whatever we think about that, we know that "...He came to His own and His Own' received Him NOT"! (John 1:11)*

Perceptions exist in the religious community that may or may not be totally accurate. Let's look into an area we see much New Testament Evidence of. While it's logical to think that the Bible is a book written about and to the Jewish peoples, that's not fully comprehensive of the true picture. More accurately, it's written to greater Israel, which encompasses all twelve tribes, not just two.

Of the peoples of Israel, including all Twelve of the Tribes, it's said that *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."* (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:11) That's referring to the Old Testament accounts and the examples demonstrated by them. It being a derogatory assessment rather than a complementary one!

Oft quoted, the passage in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, presents a sad situation as it regards Jesus' relationship with His very own ethnicity. It says, *"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."* (v. 10-11) How much does this change our assessment of what is really being 'worked out'?

Jesus' Ministry and Teachings among the Jewish religious culture were largely **not** received. It'd be fairly accurate to say that it was what we'd regard as a bust! So much for that! It was necessary for Him to act very cautiously at times in the Judean regions, as they were more than just unreceptive. They were actually very hostile to His teaching. (Matt.26:4)

An earlier presentation explained the religious climate in the Judean region. That accounts for the hostility to Jesus' Person and message. The situation in the district to the north, Samaria, was less hostile, and in the one north of that, in Galilee, even more amenable. His apostles were all Galilean partly for that reason. Only Paul was a Judean and look what it took to change his persuasion.

### **I Am NOT Sent...**

In His own statement of purpose, Jesus said *"I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."*<sup>3</sup> There are those who interpret that statement to be referring to the Jews. It actually was not. It doesn't mean 'lost' in the sense of not being 'saved'. We can see that from other clear passages. What it does is identify a broader ethnicity than just Jews.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 15:24 Matthew 10:6

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This suggests His real Ministry was to others than those of His own ethnic peoples! Jesus’ Ministry and Teachings within the Jewish religious environment of the day were largely received very poorly overall. Is that changed, really? This also illustrates for us that the Jewish peoples are presented as a different ethnicity than what’s referred to as “His own”! This exposes a fundamental difference.

Nor should we overlook the Commission He gave to His Apostles, to “...go rather to the *Lost Tribes of Israel*.” This was in reference to the dispersed and ‘lost to history’ (ours’ at least) northern 10 Tribes, more correctly referred to as the “House of Israel”. This instruction makes it even clearer that the intended people to be sought and evangelized were other than Jews in their near vicinity.

#### **Unanticipated Direction**

To give that instruction, saying ‘rather’, suggests they were to leave off doing what they likely were expecting to soon be doing. There’d be no need to give such an instruction if they were already intending to go to those dispersed Tribes. This suggests it was a change to their expected assignment.

The “House of Israel” refers to the Ten Tribes, who were well known to the people of that era! What accounts for the interest toward evangelizing them, but not so much toward the Jewish peoples? This is where the story becomes ‘interesting’!

#### **King of the Jews**

Why we tend to think that Jesus’ ministry was to be directed primarily to His own ethnicity is the term used referring to Him as “King of the Jews”. However, that term is not what actually was the case. We read of the Magi’s exchange with Herod, where they said, “...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.”

The term “King of the Jews” was used only about a dozen times in the New Testament. And those were exclusively by the Magi, Herod and Pilate. Many of the citations were repetitive in the synoptic Gospels so the actual number of times were fewer than that. That term wasn’t the correct term, nor was it the common term in reference to Him. The more commonly used term was distinctly and purposefully different.

#### **King of Israel**

Prior to His trial, in what’s known as the Triumphant Entry, on that occasion that occurred four days before His crucifixion, the exclamation of the crowd was, “*On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*” (John 12:12-13)

We find this term used in several key situations. Detractors of the day reflected their prevailing understanding in Matthew 27:42 where they said, “*He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*” Mark 15:32 includes, “*Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe...*”

The term used by them was not “King of the Jews”. Even among detractors! We don’t find the common people, and for that matter, even their religious leaders, using “King of the Jews”. The reason being that they understood the greater aspect of their Messiah’s coming, which included the entire House of Israel, not just the Jewish contingent.

We also should note that He didn’t make major corrections to the beliefs and practices of the Jewish religion of the day. His assessment of them fell more within the area of what they lacked: faith, mercy, and justice rather than ceremonial or ‘legal issues’.<sup>4</sup> His teaching introduced a whole new dimension of awareness.

#### **There are Twelve Tribes**

James sent greetings in his epistle “*to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*”. [James 1:1] To say that as he did, James must have recognized that the twelve (the other ten as well) were not really ‘lost’ from history!

Neither are they ‘lost’ to God’s awareness. Speaking of their ongoing identity, Amos 9:9 says, “*For, lo, I will command,*

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*and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”* The peoples themselves may have lost track of their ethnic origins, but God knows who and where they are. And they’re a key factor in the administration of the coming Millennial Kingdom.

Our religious denominations for the most part generally dismiss the relevance of the Tribes of Israel in the civil and religious organization of His Kingdom on Earth. He explained in part what His Apostles should anticipate. He said to them when asked, *“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* (Matt. 19:28) (The ‘regeneration’ there referring to the First Resurrection.) That’s huge!

Another key passage is in Revelation 14, where we see 12 thousand sealed from among the 12 Tribes of Israel being assigned to each of the 12 Tribes. They stand with Christ on Mount Zion. Already we may logically deduce that these 12 thousands will each serve under one of those 12 Apostles. So, we see that echelon of administration already identified!

Luke 22:30 and Revelation 7:4 explain the primary nation that will comprise the religious leadership in the World to Come!

But what’s significant between the terms “King of the Jews” and “King of Israel” is that the latter is inclusive of the entire nation. The Magi likely used the term that they did, not so much to limit or define His realm of authority, but in recognition of which tribe He’d be born of. They knew the ancient prophecies! And knowing that by His lineage, <sup>5</sup> He was a legitimate heir to the Parthian Throne (that was their ulterior interest), they were compelled to pay their respects while obscuring their intentions. Remember, their nation wasn’t ethnically Jewish! <sup>6</sup>

This shows us that a contingent within the Parthian nation’s governing body (from whence the Magi came) retained certain aspects of their former religious orientation and devotedness to God’s Covenant with Israel. Their interest, though, was more politically based than religious. While it’s thought that the northern Ten Tribes left the original faith, that’s not entirely the case.

### **Purposeful Sidelining**

As to Jesus’ ministry being primarily toward the tribes of Judah, the Apostle Paul understood something that modern disciples find difficult to fathom. He wrote this to the Church at Rome: *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness** in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”* (Romans 11:25) Adding clarification, he says, *“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”* (v.32) He continues there with the exclamation, *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”* (v.33) This reflects on the passage in Isaiah 55:8. *“For my **thoughts** are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my **ways**, saith the LORD.”* God is not working things out in the manner that we might imagine, as there’s a much bigger operation in play here! Paul seemed to have a sense of that.

That operation began centuries ago!

From these verses we’re given that the people we’d expect to be first among those called to conversion, are left unaware of essential matters until a particular point in time. It can’t be the first coming of the Messiah, because as Paul was writing this, He had ascended to Heaven decades prior! No, it’s when the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ comes to be. And it’s God who has put them and left them in that state!

But it’s the ‘mercy’ aspect that we’re left to explain.

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<sup>4</sup> Mt. 23:13-29; Mt. 9:13; Mt. 12:7

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38

<sup>6</sup> See the article:

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So, the carrying the Gospel to ‘Gentile’ and other nations, other than Jewry, specifically seeks out the ‘lost Tribes of Israel’. We can expect that the preaching of the Gospel was better received among them than it was among the Jewish peoples.<sup>7</sup>

**Is the Preaching Limited?**

We might ask, what about the Commission: “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel?*”<sup>8</sup> Let’s not forget that the Ten Tribes are scattered abroad, as James attests. By this time in history, the Tribes are to some degree dispersed, but are also nations coalescing by their varied tribal ethnicities, as God decrees.

This passage in Mark 16 is what we call “the Great(er) Commission”. There’s an affinity among peoples of similar heritage, so it’s no surprise that they would coalesce into communities.

Though those other nationalities might not respond to the Gospel to the same degree as those God is specifically calling, the Israelites among them are certainly the intended echelon. A broadened ‘cast’ (being fishers of men) may be the chosen approach, but what ‘catches’ the attention of the hearers is limited in ways most Bible students may not understand. What’s related in John 6:44 poses a profound consideration: “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*” God’s calling is in most cases selective. That reflects back on Jesus’ Commission to seek out the ‘lost Ten Tribes’. How do we process that in today’s world?

**Grace, not Race**

A common come back to the Ten Tribes assertion is that God’s Calling is ethnically non-specific. While partly true, at the same time we need to be aware that the leading nation in the Millennium will be 144,000 sealed out of one particular ethnicity. It’s these who will form that High Administration.

But the consideration in this chapter is the specific focus Jesus put on the Commission He gave His apostles. Except for what He said, we might not realize the interest in Israel’s long-term.

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**See Rich Traver’s other articles at:**

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**Passover – April 23, 2024 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)**

**Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 23-29, 2024**

**Pentecost – June 12, 2024**

**Trumpets - October 3, 2024**

**Atonement – October 12, 2024**

**Tabernacles –October 17, 2024, to October 23, 2024**

**Last Great Day – October 24, 2024**

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<sup>7</sup> See these related articles: “*The Harvest of Firstfruits*”; “*The Early and Latter Rains*”; “*Israel’s Blindness*” & “*And So, All Israel Shall Be Saved.*”

<sup>8</sup> Mark 16:15

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**Publisher:** Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors, or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens Iron

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**1Co 14:26** How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

## Is Yayshua God?

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Or, What about Arianism & Polytheism?

A question one might ask is, if the Son Yayshua (Jesus) was a separate Being from the Father, and if we worship Yayshua, then are we not breaking the second commandment and sinning? In essence, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3 speaking of the LORD i.e., Yehovah the Father)

Some do worship Yayshua the Son as they believe he is *also* the Father, which makes this a belief in the Trinity (assuming they believe in the Holy Spirit the same way). We can ask, ‘Who was Yayshua praying to in the garden; himself?’ An answer we have heard is that he prayed aloud so as to show the disciples how to pray; that it was just for an example for them.

Luke records Yayshua praying in Luke 22:42, “...Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

The book of Hebrews 5:7 says, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;” To say Yayshua was praying to himself (and just as an example) would defy logic.

There is a belief out in the Christian religious world that the Arian or Polytheistic belief is un-Biblical. The Arian belief, which this writer has on the nature of God, is in opposition to the Homoousion belief of three Beings in one, or the Trinity which came from the Gnostics. (See the explanation of this controversy below this study).

There are reasons to believe the Father and the Son are two separate Beings.

In Genesis 1:26, “And Elohim said [one individual being to another per context], Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion....” Also in Genesis 3:22, “And Yehovah Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil, and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.”

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The question then is *who or what* is the ‘us’ and ‘our’? One Being? Two holy spiritual beings like a Family of Beings? A Trinity of three in one? So, we need to answer the question, “Was Jesus or Yayshua a God?” And if he was a separate being, then are we to only worship the one true God or Yehovah per the second Commandment?

The Hebrew term Elohim (Strong’s H430) means, Mighty One or a mighty one (in a position of authority). Strong’s gives this explanation of Elohim in part: “This masc. Hebr. noun is plural in form but has both singular and plural uses.”

There are reference books out there that may not develop the full meaning of the word ‘one’ as found for example in John 10:30 where the Son Yayshua said, “I and my Father are one.” The explanation from my Bible’s “Lexical Aids to the New Testament” by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D. shows: “G1520; one; *mia* (fem.); *hen* (neut.) in the mas. *heis* must be distinguished from the neut. *hen*. *Heis* means one numerically while *hen* means one in essence, as in John 10:30: “I and my Father are one *hen*” (i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis* it would have meant one person.”

**Elohim or god also does apply to humans. Let’s examine some Scriptural examples:**

**Those who have authority as judges:** Psalm 82:1-8 “God [Elohim] standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods [H430 elohim]. 2 How long will ye [the judges or gods] judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. 5 they know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye are gods [elohim]; and all of you *are* children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. 8 Arise, O God [Elohim], judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.”

Ex 22:9 “For all manner of trespass, *whether it be* for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of lost thing, which *another* challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges [H430 elohim]; *and* whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.”

Again, the example of John 10:30-38, “I and *my* [my emphasis] Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [Quoted from Psalm 82:6 shown above] 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of [the] God [Yehovah]? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.” How? Again, I will give the *hen* wording of Strong’s G1520, as explained by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D. “(i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis* it would have meant one person.”

### **EI Shaddai**

The first occurrence of this title or description is found in Genesis 17:1, “And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Yehovah [the LORD] appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God [EI Shaddai]; walk before me and be thou perfect.”

‘EI’ [H410] or God and ‘Shaddai’ [H7706] Almighty, means the God that is over all others who could be or are called gods. i.e., there is no other that can be higher in authority. That is why Yayshua said his Father was greater than him (John 14:28).

Acts 3:13, “The God [Elohim] of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God [Elohim] of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.” Who was the God of the Old Testament? It was Yehovah (the Father) as Exodus 3:15 says, “And Elohim [God] said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou [Moses] say unto the children of Israel, Yehovah Elohim [The LORD God] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.”

In Isaiah 44:6, “Thus saith Yehovah [the LORD] the King of Israel, and his [Israel’s] redeemer Yehovah [the LORD] of

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hosts [armies]; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no Elohim [God]." It is true that apart from Yehovah there is no God because without Him there is nothing else, including Yayshua. But because Yehovah exists the Son does as well. For he came forth from the Father (John 8:42).

**Now regarding Yayshua the Son**

John 8:42, "Yayshua [Jesus] said unto them, If [the] God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from [the] God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

Yayshua the Son said as recorded in John 5:23, "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which has sent him."

Yayshua added more information in John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was [appears two beings involved prior to the start of the world]. 6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them and* have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

In Revelation 3:14 John wrote the message that came from the Father who gave it to His Son (Rev. 1:1), "And unto the angel [messenger] of the assembly of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning [G746, the ar-Kay or arche] of the creation of [the] God [Yehovah]." It is my belief this is talking about Yayshua the Son as the very beginning of the Father's creation; as we believe Proverbs chapter 8:22-31 describes in more detail.

Pro 8:22 "Yehovah [the LORD] possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth" [**H2342; born, to be in labor (childbirth), amongst other meanings. See Isaiah 66:7-9 for an example. John 17:8 "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."**]; (continuing Prov.8) "when *there were* no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men."

Does the above reading sound like just wisdom which a person would think the Father had from eternity? It reads like an individual being that was brought forth, the Son Yayshua.

Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of God [Elohim] and the wisdom of Elohim [God]."

John 14:19 "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20 "At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Is this not the 'us' in Genesis 1:26 quoted above? "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."

John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." I believe I would not be incorrect in assuming the 'one' here is the same neutral *hen* meaning of G1520 as in John 10:30 described above.

Acts 7:55, "But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and

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Yayshua standing on the right hand of [the] God. 56 And said behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of [the] God. 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.” This appears to show there are two entities.

It was the question of Yayshua’s deity (being the Son of God) that got Yayshua killed (Mark 14:61-64) and also Stephen (Acts 7:55) who believed that Yayshua was the Son.

Romans 12:4-5 “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Messiah, and every one members one of another.” But we are not ‘one being’ physically, we are individuals, and will be also in our future spiritual bodies.

So hopefully as can be seen, this question is not so cut and dried as a person might think. The question of the meaning of “Elohim” singular or plural, is normally dependent on the context. When it says “let us” do this or that; in our understanding it means there is one spiritual family of a Father and His Son; the Father who *sent* His Son and the Son who accepted His role to save mankind. They are in the process of adding to that spiritual family; in fact, converted believers are even now called ‘children and sons of God’.

Romans 8:17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Messiah [Christ]; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of [the] God [Yehovah].”

Here is the beloved Apostle John, “Whosoever shall confess that Yayshua is the Son of [the] God, [the] God dwelleth in him, and he in [the] God.” (1 John 5:15)

**Two different Thrones:** Revelation 3:21 Yayshua is speaking, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Finally, (before the bottom note on Arian belief), I will mention about John 20:28 where some use this single verse to try to prove that Yayshua was also the Father, “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord [Master] and my God [the Theos – Yehovah].” I will quote from one website, “In fact one interpretation of these words of Thomas saying, ‘My Lord and my God’ may mean that Thomas was repenting of his sins of unbelief to BOTH Jesus AND the Father.” For more on this subject and verse, see the link

<http://www.amatteroftruth.com/john-20-28-my-lord-and-my-god>.

These and various other scriptures are why we believe as we do. For any reading this explanation of our belief, we don’t expect this to change any person’s mind; but at least it hopefully helps you to understand why others can have a different understanding as to the nature of the God Family. We do not believe it to be a sin against the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment to believe that Yayshua is also an Elohim or a God who is below the Rank of his Father, El Shaddai the Almighty God.

Philippians 2:9-12 Wherefore Yehovah also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Yayshua every knee should bow, of *things in heaven*, and *things in earth*, and *things under the earth*; 11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Yayshua Messiah *is* Lord [Master], to the glory of Elohim the Father. 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” [I.E., **IN GIVING HONOR APPROPRIATE TO OUR SAVIOR**]

**(NOTE REGARDING THE ARIAN BELIEF VS HOMOIOUSION BELIEF:)**

“The **Arian controversy** was a series of [Christian](#) theological disputes that arose between [Arius](#) and [Athanasius of Alexandria](#), two [Christian theologians](#) from [Alexandria, Egypt](#). The most important of these controversies concerned the substantial relationship between [God the Father](#) and [God the Son](#). [or the Son of God]

The deep divisions created by the disputes were an ironic consequence of [Emperor Constantine's](#) efforts to unite Christianity and establish a single, imperially approved version of the faith during his reign.<sup>[1][2]</sup> These disagreements divided the [Roman Church](#) into two opposing theological factions for over 55 years, from the time before the [First Council](#)

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of Nicaea in 325 until after the [First Council of Constantinople](#) in 381. There was no formal resolution or formal [schism](#), though the [Trinitarian](#) faction ultimately gained the upper hand in the imperial Church; outside the Roman Empire this faction was not immediately so influential. [Arianism](#) continued to be preached inside and outside the Empire for some time (without the blessing of the Empire) but eventually it mostly died out. The modern [Roman Catholic Church](#) and the [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), as well as most other modern Christian sects have generally followed the Trinitarian formulation, though each has its own specific theology on the matter.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arian\\_controversy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arian_controversy)

**Pre-Nicene usage:**

“**Homoousion** (*/ˌhɒmʊˈuːsiən/ HOM-oh-OO-see-ən*; **Greek**: ὁμοούσιος, **translit.** *homooúsios*, **lit.** 'one in being', from ὁμός, *homós*, "same" and οὐσία, *ousía*, "being") is a **Christian theological** doctrine pertaining to the **Trinitarian** understanding of **God**. The **Nicene Creed** describes **Jesus (God the Son)** as being ὁμοούσιος, "one in being" or "of single essence", with **God the Father**. It is one of the cornerstones of theology in **Nicene Christianity**.

The term was adopted at the [First Council of Nicaea](#) to clarify the **ontology of Christ**. In **Latin**, which is lacking a **present participle** of the **verb 'to be'**, the translation *consubstantialis* is used (*substantia* being the traditional Latin translation of the **Aristotelian** term *ousia*).

The term ὁμοούσιος had been used before its adoption by the First Council of Nicaea. The Gnostics were the first to use the word ὁμοούσιος, while before the Gnostics there is no trace at all of its existence.<sup>[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]</sup> The early church theologians were probably made aware of this concept, and thus of the doctrine of emanation, taught by the Gnostics.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Examples of warnings of Gnosticism in the New Testament:**

Colossians 2:8, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after rudiments of the word and not after Messiah.”

1 Timothy 6:20-21; “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.”

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**See James Steinle’s other articles at:**

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## Ingratitude

(Copyright 2001) by Mark Schindler (Charlotte, North Carolina)

On December 1, 2000, the hotel in which I worked at the time shut down for a \$50 million renovation, causing about 250 employees to lose their jobs. Only a few managers and a skeleton engineering crew remained.

Months beforehand, the hotel's Human Resources Director and the General Manager devised a plan to provide jobs for all those who were good employees and wanted to continue to work. Working diligently over several months and trying to keep the employee's best interests at heart, they were able to place most of our staff with our other eleven Chicago hotels. To the rest, even those who were not very good employees, they gave handsome severance packages and helped them to find other employment. These two men labored diligently to ensure that everybody who wanted to work received jobs.

A fellow who worked for me expressed a bit of a bad attitude a couple of weeks before the closing, and it worsened to the point that I finally had to call him into the office and talk to him about it. For my department, I had to develop a plan, budget, and justification for a skeleton crew to be maintained during the renovation, and this employee was not one of those who could be kept. His particular job was unnecessary to the hotel's operation during the shutdown. However, he

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was an excellent department member, and I had already assured him that, when we reopened, he would be offered a job in a different classification, making a substantially increased wage.



Because of his particular job description and pay, placing him with one of the other hotel properties was difficult, but I had been able to work out some options for him and a few others who would be let go. One was to move him and two others to another property for less money initially but a greater chance for advancement if they chose to go that route.

His other option was to take \$5,800 in severance pay plus his accrued six weeks of vacation pay and sit out the three months until we could rehire him. Under this plan, he could even collect unemployment compensation! In addition, upon his return to work, we would reinstate his seniority and full benefits, including his six weeks of vacation.

I had given him several excellent options, especially under the circumstances. However, here he was in a snit because, as he said, he felt like an orphan nobody wanted. He believed I had made sure to work out jobs for some of my department's people during the renovation, but not him.

I had to remind him how much negotiating I had to do with the corporate office to justify the small staff that was staying. I also repeated that he was getting one of the best severance packages of anyone and would return to a much better-paying job with all his seniority and vacation benefits completely reinstated. It took quite a bit of time to show him that I was not rejecting him out of hand but that many people had worked very hard to help him through an ordeal that could have been much worse.

By the end of the conversation, he still thought he was getting the short end of the stick, but his attitude had improved. He saw what the hotel faced in shutting down and renovating a property that would make no money for the company for six months to a year.

Nevertheless, this fellow was being given enough money to cover his salary for the three months he would be off, plus unemployment. He would not be paying for transportation to and from work. Because he is very handy, he could pick up extra money doing side jobs during that time and return to a career-advancing, higher-paying job—but all he could see was what he was not getting and others were!

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**I Deserve Better!**

Is this not how we look at things in this life, more often than not? We see how much we lack as opposed to how much we have. Our glass is always half-empty rather than half-full. We see ourselves as a "have-not" rather than a "have."

When I looked at this man during our conversation, I saw one of my best employees, a good worker, one for whom I had tried very hard to do what was right—and he turned my best intentions around, saying it was not enough! He deserved better! Looking at him, I was disappointed and disgusted because I knew I was looking in the mirror!

How many of us sincerely thank God for what we have and what He is doing to create us in His image (Genesis 1:26)? How many of us thank Him for every breath we take and for every action He takes for our benefit? How many of us gratefully sing His praises and glorify His holy name when He answers our prayers—or, for that matter, even when He "seemingly" does not?

For instance, we are often encouraged to pray for the ill among us. God not only hears our prayers, but He also frequently acts upon them, giving the afflicted strength and healing. Do we sound His praises and thank Him with the same fervor in which we requested His aid? Could this be why more of our brethren are not healed completely? Could we possibly be demonstrating ingratitude in our hearts toward God?

We all think that we esteem God highly and are grateful to Him for everything, but how true is that? Ingratitude will separate us from God and what we are to become. We see this in Jesus' first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Being poor in spirit is an attitude of poverty in all respects, one that is so poor that every little favor warrants joyous thanksgiving!

Do we believe that God owes us nothing except death? Do we believe that everything we have and are is a gift worthy of praise to the eternal God?

Or do we think that God owes it to us because we prayed hard for it? That God owes us blessings because we work hard? That He owes us because He called us into His church or because we have endured the persecution of this world for His sake?

Maybe we do not think we think this way, but then again, maybe our actions betray us. Maybe God sees our heart because the mouth does not speak the words of thankful praise, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34).

**Korah and Satan**

Two biblical examples will illustrate this attitude of ingratitude. The first appears in Numbers 16:1-2: "Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*; and they rose up before Moses . . ." Notice that "men" is written in italics. The translators, not knowing what to do with the verb "took" at the end of the clause, supplied it to finish the thought. In Hebrew, the word underlying "men" is plural, but "took" is singular, so it cannot apply to all these men. "Took" expresses the action of the singular subject of the sentence, "Korah." *Young's Literal Translation* says, "Korah . . . takes both Dathan and Abiram . . ." Interestingly, the *New American Standard* version renders it, "Korah . . . took action." The sense, however, is the same: Korah took these men against Moses.

They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?" . . . Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD." (Numbers 16:3, 8-11)

Korah is an example of a person who, dissatisfied with what he has, stirs up others because of his ingratitude for what God had given him already.

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The consequences of Korah's "taking action" are clear: God destroyed all these who rose against Moses and Aaron—against Him. Does this pattern look familiar? It should. It is the age-old and oft-repeated sin of pride manifesting itself in ingratitude. Satan did the same thing (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17). It was not enough for him to be a covering cherub at God's throne. It was not enough to have the lordship over the earth and one-third of the angels (Revelation 12:3). No, he wanted to resemble or compare to the Most High (Isaiah 14:14)! His pride led him to go to war against God, a battle he soundly lost (Luke 10:18). Revelation 12:7-10 prophesies that his pride will drive him to attempt another *coup d'état* before Christ's return.

We see that ingratitude can ultimately lead a person into total rebellion against God. It leads to an individual feeling a false sense of worth, that he deserves more. If not checked, it becomes a plague of discontent that soon infects others, just as Satan's ingratitude spread to other angels.

If this kind of attitude lands us in trouble, just what should our attitude be? A truly humble and grateful person will never rebel against God because he knows that even the very breath he breathes is a gift and calls for praiseful thanksgiving to the Father. Sharing this thanksgiving with others in the church works like soothing oil that helps to heal the body.

### **Paul in Philippi**

Acts 16 contains a clear example of what God expects from us. As the chapter opens, Paul and his companions are traveling through the cities of Asia Minor, delivering the Word of God, and the people heartily receive them (verse 4). They establish new churches in the faith, and the number of converts increases daily (verse 5). God's Holy Spirit directly leads them in the work (verses 6-7), keeping them from certain areas under Peter's responsibility (see I Peter 1:1).

In Acts 16:9-10, Paul has a vision in which a Macedonian pleads with him for help, and the apostle and his companions conclude that God wants them to preach the gospel there. Macedonia, a Roman province, lies north of Greece. There, Paul preaches first to those who kept the Sabbath, and Lydia becomes his first convert (verses 13-15). He seems to be making good but labored progress.

However, a demon-possessed woman begins to follow Paul and his party, calling them "servants of the Most High God" (verses 16-17). Though what she says is true, it distresses the apostle because the Jews might conclude he consorted with soothsayers, unlawful according to Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; and Deuteronomy 18:9-14. From their point of view, the Gentiles might consider the religion Paul preached to be as pagan as all the other religions of the time. Thus, in the name of Jesus Christ, Paul commands the demon to leave the woman (Acts 16:18).

Her employers, who profited greatly from her fortunetelling, are not pleased because her supernatural abilities disappeared with the demon. So, they haul Paul and Silas before the city courts (verse 18), saying:

"These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. (verses 20-24)

Unlike the Jews, the Romans were not limited to 39 stripes, so the beating Paul and Silas took was severe. The stocks they had to endure afterward were two large pieces of wood pierced with holes at different distances, designed to restrain the feet and produce pain.

Confined to the pitch-dark bowels of the prison, Paul and Silas now lie on a filthy floor on their bloody, shredded backs, their legs painfully distended. One might think they would have every right to complain about how unfairly the Philippians had treated them—or at least to spend all their time beseeching God to relieve them of their pain. Notice verse 25, however: "But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them!"

Not only were they singing praises of thanksgiving to God, but they were also doing it loud enough for the other prisoners to hear them! Just as James says in James 5:13: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." They were praying for their affliction but also singing songs of praise to God from hearts filled with



thanksgiving!

### Gratitude Is a Gift

Are we willing to do this, or will we thank God only when we think He deserves it? We need to make it a sincere habit to thank God fervently every day for all His benefits, glorifying His holy will and purpose for us. He is *never* undeserving of our praise and thanks—indeed, we cannot thank Him enough.

It stung when my employee griped and grumbled about my best efforts to give him something good. Even after I sat down and explained what he could have and why things had been done the way they had been, he only expressed a qualified thanks to me. I had done the best I possibly could, but it rated only a grudging "thank you" from him.

How does our heavenly Father feel when we only express a reluctant or half-hearted "thank you" occasionally or not at all? How does He feel, knowing that He has done what is absolutely, perfectly the best for us for now and all eternity?

Ingratitude, whether passive or active, is a tool Satan uses to recruit us to join him against God's Family. By this means, we can allow him to plant us as a tare within Christ's field and spread our ingratitude to others (Matthew 13:24-25, *cf.* verse 33). On the other hand, a constant attitude of praiseful thanksgiving, no matter the circumstances, is a gift of God to us. Gratitude spreads a healing balm among those with whom we fellowship, and it will speed us on the path to God's Kingdom!

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## Israel's Long War

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The early-morning Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023—a Sabbath day as well as the Eighth Day (see Leviticus

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23:36, 39)—shocked the world. Beginning with a barrage of at least 3,000 rockets, militants crossed into Israeli territory via both ground and aerial (paragliding) units. The stunning attack, which overcame Israel’s complex physical and technological defenses, killed 859 civilians and around 345 soldiers and policemen, wounding over 5,100. In addition, Hamas took about 250 hostages (thirty of whom are children), both civilians and soldiers, transporting them to the Gaza Strip. Israel claims to have killed around 1,500 militants in its response.

Since then, according to the historically unreliable Gaza Ministry of Health, the death toll has climbed to over 15,000 in total. Most of the dead were Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, which is being pounded to dust by the relentless Israeli bombardment. More than 20,000 have been wounded, and thousands more are missing. An estimated 300 people have died each day since the initial assault.

While Hamas’ October 7 attack erupted into war and markedly elevated casualty numbers, Palestinian aggression toward Israel is nothing new. Whether it is Hamas, Fatah, Islamic Jihad, or one of the many militant groups striking out at what they see as their oppressors, such attacks have been an unhappy facet of life in Israel since the Jewish state began in 1948. In recent decades, attacks—usually rocket launches and mortar shelling’s—have occurred on a fairly regular basis, usually an incident every few months. Islamists have also perpetrated other forms of terrorist activity, like bombings, shootings, and knife and even axe attacks.

For this reason and others, Christians should be cautious about proclaiming the present, lopsided war in the Holy Land to be a sign of the end. In reality, the State of Israel has been in a *de facto* war with its neighbors, particularly the Palestinians, since its founding. It ebbs and flows depending on the leadership of each side and the resources the Palestinians can muster to use against its perceived satanic overlords. The grisly pictures on our news feeds show us the results of perpetual hatred on both sides, and it is not pretty.

We can take this long war back still further—more than 3,500 years further! Scripture tells us of the enmity between Abraham’s sons, Ishmael and Isaac, an antagonism primarily based on the older son’s jealousy and bellicose attitude (see Genesis 16:11-12). A generation later, Isaac’s sons, Esau and Jacob, feuded over their father’s blessing to where Esau, who hated his younger brother, vowed to kill him after their father died (Genesis 27:41). A tribe of Esau’s descendants, the Amalekites, acted so maliciously against the children of Israel as they left Egypt that God promised He would “have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (Exodus 17:16). Finally, when the Kingdom of Judah fell to Babylon, the Edomites, the main body of Esau’s descendants, hunted down Jews trying to escape their nation’s calamity (see the book of Obadiah; Psalm 137:7-9).

Thus, the current war between the Jews and the Palestinians, whose ancestry likely originates in Israel’s longtime enemies—the Ishmaelites, the Edomites, and the remnant of the Philistines—is sadly normal, even traditional and unsurprising. Add in the animosity between the Jewish and Islamic faiths, as well as the substantial economic and technological disparities between the two peoples, and explosive conflict is unavoidable. It is surprising that *more* clashes have not occurred between them!

While many people have taken sides in the conflict, the world’s nations have so far done little more than voice support or condemnation and raise humanitarian concerns. On Israel’s southern border, Egypt has reluctantly made the flow of humanitarian aid easier but wants nothing to do with taking refugees or joining the fray under current conditions. Even the Islamist terror group Hezbollah, lying in wait on Israel’s northern border, has only made a show of support for Hamas—trading fire with Israel Defense Forces—but the government of Lebanon, an Iranian proxy state, has publicly stated that it wishes to avoid war with Israel. Iran itself has been aggressively belligerent, but strategically placed U.S. and allied military assets in the region deter it. Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has lashed out at Israel and expressed support for Hamas, but he has done little to back his words because of his country’s strong economic ties to Israel.

Jesus’ warning about war in the end time in Matthew 24:6-8 should guide us in situations like the current one in Gaza:

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. . . . All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Wars are a deplorable part of the human condition. Without God’s Spirit, people, and nations, consumed by self-interest,

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will turn to violence to take or keep what they believe is rightfully theirs. (*Hamas* connotes “violence” in both Arabic and Hebrew.) Conflicts great and small are inevitable in a crowded world filled with self-centered, aggressive people.

Our Savior warns that not all wars—even massive, worldwide conflicts (like two world wars) or those in sensitive areas (like the Holy Land)—presage the end of the age. Instead, they are grievous reminders of human sinfulness and its resulting destruction and death (Romans 6:23). In Scripture, God has provided other signs of Christ’s coming that must be present in tandem with warfare—and even if we recognize them all, Jesus tells us He will return “at an hour [we] do not expect” (Matthew 24:44)!

So, we must temper our expectations about what the Israel-Hamas War will lead to. If it widens with the addition of other nations, triggering regional or even world war; if it reveals a strongman who begins gathering nations into a one-world government; or if it initiates increased persecution of God’s elect, among other signs, then we should definitely give it more heed prophetically.

Until then, as Jesus advises in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” or as He puts it in Luke 21:36, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

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**See Richard T. Ritenbaugh’s other articles at:**  
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**Life, Death, Life**  
**(Copyright 2023) by David Sielaff (Portland, Oregon)**

**The Shared Experiences Of All Human Beings**

“Life, Death, Life” is the sequence of existence for most every human being. It was the sequence for Christ Jesus also. Created by God His Father (and our Father). He **“is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature”** (Colossians 1:15–20). All was created through Him (verse 16). See also Revelation 3:14.

He was alive when He humbled (or emptied) Himself (Philippians 2:6–8) to be born to Mary (Matthew 1:16). He grew to adulthood, began His ministry until He was crucified unto death: **“... in the body of his flesh through death”** (Colossians 1:22 and read Philippians 2:8). He was brought back to life with even greater glory than before:

**“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:**

- **That at the name of Jesus EVERY knee should bow, of**

- [1] **things in heaven, and**
- [2] **things in earth, and**
- [3] **things under the earth; And**

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- **that EVERY tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

• **Philippians 2:9-11**

He was created, He was the "prime contractor" of all creation, He became flesh, lived, died, and was resurrected to life. This is the pattern of creation from God our Father, through Christ, to and through you, me, and every human being: we also were created, we will die, and God will bring us back to life.

**"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."**

• **Hebrews 9:27-28<sup>1</sup>**

Jesus had no negative judgments against his behavior or His actions in His life. He received only rewards. He was sinless. Even more, He was righteous in all His actions. As the only begotten Son of God, the Messiah (= Christ, both terms mean "anointed"), the prophesied son of David and King of Israel, chief King of all the nations (Psalm 89:27), and Melchizedek, a priest before YHWH, He went before the judgment seat of God on our behalf.

**"But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being NOW justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**

**For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."**

• **Romans 5:8-10**

He is now seated at the right hand of God. Angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22). He is **"being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they"** (Hebrews 1:4). How far will His power and authority extend?

**"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and [above] EVERY NAME that is named, not only in this world [*eon*, in Greek], but also in that which is to come:**

**And has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church [*ekklesia*], Which is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all."**

• **Ephesians 1:21-23**

The risen Christ is referred to as God in the prophecy of Psalm 82:8, **"Arise, O God** [Elohim in Hebrew], **judge the earth: for You shall inherit all nations.**" In that verse "Elohim" is governed by two singular verbs indicating that the reference is to a single individual who will inherit all the nations. Who will do that? Learn from Psalm 2:8, 22:38, and especially Revelation 11:15:

**"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying,**

<sup>1</sup> A tiny remnant will not die, but will be saved alive to glory when Christ returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). So far as Scripture tells us, this will be unique in history.

**'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ [Messiah]; and he shall reign for ever and ever [for the eons of the eons].''**

The full impact of Christ's "*life, death, and life*" will also be ours. When our current experience of life ends, we will experience decline toward death,<sup>2</sup> then (without any passage of time) our future resurrected life of immortality and glory will have no end. But we must experience the rest of our life now, experience our dying, before we will be given the life and glory promised to all believers. Eventually that glory will extend to every human being. As I wrote at the beginning of my article "[Your Resurrection](#)":

**"YOU are the object of God's creation. All creation was made for YOU. Christ died for YOU.**

**Every son and daughter of Adam — every human being — will become a mature child of God, completing God's declaration to make man in His image. You live because God wills you to live, moment to moment, heartbeat by heartbeat, breath upon breath.**

**Days or years from now your heart will stop, your breathing will cease, you will lose consciousness. You will die. Your cells quickly decay. Your soul ceases to exist, your spirit returns to God, until you are resurrected from the dead."**

Rest with the knowledge that God is in full control.

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## Why we can't marry close relatives (and the truth about human population) (Copyright 2021) by David Rives (Lewisburg, Tennessee)

There are many instances in early Biblical history of people marrying closely related family. In fact, it doesn't seem to be a big deal, and if we take the Bible literally at its word, this would have been necessary just after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, as well as immediately following the Genesis Flood.

But in Leviticus 18:6 things appear to have changed. It states, "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him."

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<sup>2</sup> Remember, once we are dead there is no "experience" of any sensation, memory, or consciousness until God makes us live again. DWS

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Some might ask: “Why now? Did God suddenly change His mind?” Does the Bible know best?

What we don’t usually take into consideration is that Adam and Eve had a 100% pure genetic code. Beginning at the very next generation, copy errors would have been made in the DNA sequence, and over time, these errors would only worsen, producing non-beneficial genetic traits and mutations.

Two people who are related will share a similar genetic make-up, in fact, it will identically overlap in some cases. But this means that any recessive genetic traits have a great chance of being passed on to their children, and the more this inbreeding takes place, the more birth defects, mutations, and even mental disabilities.



At the appropriate time in history, we were commanded not to marry close relatives, and long before genetic science, once again, the Bible knew best.

**Is 6,000 years enough time for 7 billion people to populate the Earth? It’s more than enough time!**

Why should you believe in creation, and not evolution? I mean, scientifically speaking. Haven’t we proven that evolution is a fact?

Over one million years ago modern humans arrived on the planet, or so the evolutionary story goes. Now have you ever wondered where all the people are if humans have been around for over a million years?

If we assume a really, really slow growth rate of just .01%—a population that doubles every 7,000 years as opposed to 39 years like it does today—in just one million years the number of people on earth could be 10 to the 43rd power. That’s an unimaginably large number that earth could not even begin to sustain.

Now, some evolutionists will say that wars, famine, disease, and high infant mortality rates have kept the population on the verges of extinction until relatively modern times. But, if this rather incredible story is true, where are all the human remains? We supposedly have a handful of human remains that have survived the ravishes of hundreds of millions of years, but why aren’t there more?

If evolution is true, there should be many more human remains to account for the billions of individuals who have died. And even if we don’t find human remains, we should find artifacts they left behind or were buried with. Yet, we simply

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don't find evidence that billions and billions of people have lived and died over the supposed last million years.

But what happens when we start with God's Word? Well, the human population started out with two individuals just 6,000 years ago. Around 4,000 years ago, the population was reduced to just eight at the time of the worldwide Flood.

Now, if we start with those eight people and assume a conservative growth rate of just half a percent, we easily get to our modern population today, even taking into account wars, famines, disease, and high infant mortality. The evidence confirms the Bible, not evolutionary ideas about the past.

The data makes a clear case that almost completely precludes the notion of any more than a few thousand years of human existence.

Just one more scientific reason that you shouldn't believe in long ages of evolution. It takes a LOT of faith.

I'm David Rives,

Truly, the heavens declare the glory of God.

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**See David Rives other articles at:**

**Rives, David – Church of God, Bismarck ([church-of-god-bismarck.org](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org))**

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## **Welcome to Israel!**

**(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)**

Planning to fly to Israel to see historical sites? Well, it may not be so easy right now to find a flight to Israel because of the war. If you can manage to land at Tel Aviv, you won't have to deal with any of the usual crowds as you can imagine.

The video below will give you a "behind-the-headlines" report on the conditions in Israel because of the war. What makes this report special is that it's made by an Arab-Jewish couple who have a positive perspective on the age-old conflict between Jews and Arabs.

Sergio and Rhoda were visiting family in Florida when the war broke out. They wanted to ship supplies to others in Israel but the usual cargo flights, UPS, FedEx, DHL, have been cancelled. All airlines have cancelled flights to Tel Aviv except one due to the danger of rockets. Why is this one airline able to fly there when the others can't? Sergio and Rhoda will explain.

As you would expect, tourism in Israel has crashed. This has severely affected the economy. Some businesses have had to close down because the war has pulled many workers into military service. The prior shutdowns from the pandemic took their toll and now the war effort will also add a major strain on the economic health of Israel.

When I visited Egypt in the autumn of 1991, which was after the Gulf War, our Egyptian guide remarked that there were no tourists during the war. As a consequence, all the local businesses which depended on tourists were severely affected.

From Cairo, I flew to Tel Aviv late Sunday night on an EL AL flight for a tour of Israel. At the Ben Gurion Airport, I got my bags and then got in line to go through Customs. This harmless looking guy came up behind me and sat his bag on the

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floor. He asked me if I would watch his bag while he went to the restroom. I said, "Sure." After a few minutes, it hit me, "Maybe this guy isn't coming back because there is a BOMB in his bag." I was starting to panic and wondered if I should notify someone before something exploded. To my relief, this guy came back to the line for his bag. But it took a few minutes for my heart to stop racing.

Sergio and Rhoda share a powerful testimony in this video and give a good example of how Jesus, the Prince of peace, will finally bring peace to the Middle East. This is an uplifting report that will give us all hope.

Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIPD6BSAxOQ>

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**See Dwight Fleming's other articles at:**  
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**The Third Temple**  
**(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)**

The short video, linked below, provides an excellent report on the difficulty of building a third temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It also covers the history of the Temple Mount and the building of The Dome of the Rock.

You will see video evidence of past clashes on the Temple Mount between Muslims and Israeli police. Any attempt to allow Jews to worship or pray on the Temple Mount will be violently resisted by Muslim believers.

This video will supplement the article that I recently sent out, titled, "Red Heifer or Red Herring?" This is where I questioned if a third temple has to be built in order to fulfill Paul's prophecy found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Paul said that a man of sin or lawlessness would **sit** in the temple of God and proclaim that he is God before the return of Christ.

As the video vividly shows, building a third temple on the Temple Mount is presently an impossibility. There will have to be some monumental shift in the Middle East before Muslims would allow that to happen. The video also assumes that a third temple must be built in order for there to be an "abomination of desolation" as predicted by Daniel and Jesus Christ.

Jesus said that the "abomination of desolation" would be "**standing** in the holy place" (Matthew 24:15). It is assumed by everyone that "the holy place" will be a third temple on the Temple Mount. Is it possible that "the holy place" is somewhere else in Jerusalem other than the Temple Mount?

However, if a third temple is not in existence with the conquering of Jerusalem by a false messiah, **then** it is likely that he will command that a third temple be built. Only when Jerusalem is occupied by the armies of the Beast, aka, King of the North, would circumstances change to allow the building of a third temple.

Otherwise, as things are now, the Israeli government would be very foolhardy to attempt to provide even one square foot on the Temple Mount for Jewish worship. For that to happen, it will take the approval and backing of several Muslim nations. Even then, there would probably be a major Muslim backlash by those who did not agree with such a "profane" agreement with infidels.

We certainly need to watch as events develop in the Middle East. Now is not the time to fall asleep when it comes to Bible prophecy and how we may be personally affected. Here is the link:

**Temple Mount -- Ongoing Conflict:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jCUQryL8Fs>



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## What's worse, Aunt Jemima's picture, Hunter's crack or Uncle Joe's fentanyl from China? (Copyright 2023) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

"The other day I was in Madison (Moscow-on-the-Yahara) less than half an hour before seeing a case of drug overdose." -from my Facebook page, August 2022

THAT WAS A FIRST FOR ME. I've heard of celebrities dying with their head in a toilet, but this guy had his head in a bathroom sink at an Arby's. He was standing up – sort of – so he seemed alive yet. Another customer reported him to Arby's and before I left the police, and an ambulance were there. Don't know if they were administering Narcan, or, if the guy survived.

We lost over 100,000 people to overdoses in 2022. That's more than 270 per day, enough people to fill the Rose Bowl. Thanks for nothing, Uncle Joe. A child of five could understand the problem. What's so hard to understand?

**The Biden administration couldn't stop the flow of illegals in the pipeline if they wanted to at this point.**

**WHAT border?**

You can be fined for not wearing a seat belt. Plastic straws have been banned in some places. Fitness clubs must have wheelchair accessible toilet stalls, but our immigration laws are ignorable by the true deplorables.

They can't solve the BIG problems, so they are "fixing" things that aren't even problems in their obsession with signaling "virtue" (in lieu of virtue). An Indian maiden on a box of butter? Outrage! Washington Redskins? Full stop. Aunt Jemima? Get rid of her!

**But the same people legalized all "recreational drugs" in Oregon. How's that working out for them?**

Who is running the White House? Does the Gang of Eight get kickbacks from China for being the Welcome Wagon at the border? "We'll leave a light on for ya, MS-13 and Hamas." The U.S. ought to be pressuring Mexico to close the border -their *southern* border! It's a lot shorter than ours. But in the meantime, how do you turn the stampede around and send them all back home? Lots of questions. Is Mexico charging the "migrants" tolls? Do we *really* need more homeless people? Why have a department of Homeland Security if they aren't *doing* anything?

**Does the Left want to legalize ALL immigration like all drugs? Then try to change the law!**

**P.S.** The President signaled on Sunday that he is open to some compromise with the GOP on the border, but I'm not getting my hopes up. Someone go fetch a child of 5, Groucho.

**PPS:** Have yourself a nice day.

See Curtis Dahlgren's other articles at:  
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## The Second Seal (Video Part 3)

(Copyright 2023) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

OPENING THE 2ND SEAL OF REVELATION - PART 3 Very enlightening info especially about what is going on in GAZA right now and what the very near future holds for that area per prophecy (Zephaniah 1 & 2)

<https://thecogmi.org/video/secondseal-3.htm>

Sermon by Tom Kerry of the COGMI this past Sabbath 11/18/23. If you have not seen Parts 1 and 2, they are available on their home site <https://thecogmi.org/>.

See James Steinle's other articles at:  
[Steinle, James – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

**Iron Sharpening Iron**  
New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)  
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

**In regard to: Expect the Unexpected**  
Article by Warren Zehrung  
Comments by Dwight Fleming (Orville, California)

I found the main article, "Expect the Unexpected," well written and thought provoking with a new concept regarding Nebuchadnezzar's dream found in Daniel two. The author brought out some good details about the feet of the image which are composed of **iron** and **clay**. An end-time kingdom of iron and clay may indicate two elements or cultures of people which do not mix well.

Muslim immigrants into Europe have caused untold problems for native countrymen since Muslims do not assimilate into the established society of their host nation. So, the author has a valid point concerning the iron and clay not mixing.

His point that Daniel two actually reveals **five** kingdoms and not only four has merit. However, he has assumed, as well as many others, that the beasts listed in Daniel seven are identical to the first four kingdoms listed in Daniel two. Daniel seven specifically says, "These great beasts, which are **four**, are **four kings**, which shall arise out of the earth" (verse 17).

Is there a connection between the four beasts of Daniel seven and the first four metal kingdoms of Daniel two? Absolutely. The difference is the time element and the locations. The first four kingdoms of Daniel two existed in the distant past and are all extinct. The fifth kingdom of feet with ten toes will exist at the end-time at Christ's return. The four beasts are empires that arose after the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. and then the Byzantine Empire in 1453 A.D. What are those empires? Britain, Russia, Germany, and a revived Roman Empire yet to happen. The ten horns

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of Daniel seven tie-in to the ten toes of Daniel two.

The author also tied Christ's return to the Feast of Trumpets as taught by Mr. Herbert Armstrong. I understand his conclusion, which is also held by many other COG brethren, since Christ comes at the last **trumpet**. It is then easily assumed that Christ will return on a future Feast of Trumpets. The author's warning to "Expect the Unexpected" may prove to be on the money since it is very likely that Christ will return on a future Pentecost— not Trumpets—to first resurrect and gather together the saints for a wedding in heaven (Revelation 19:1-9).

The author did ask if those in heaven in Revelation 19:1 are the resurrected saints. The answer is yes if you can receive it. Christ will then return on a white horse with the saints to make war against the nations on the following Feast of Trumpets. So, Christ's return is in two phases. First is the resurrection on Pentecost. Then to make war on Trumpets. The seven trumpets of Revelation sound in the same **pattern** as the seven annual Sabbaths according to the civil year which begins with the Feast of Trumpets. Thus, the first trumpet will sound on a future Feast of Trumpets with the seventh and last trumpet sounding on a future Pentecost.

Overall, I found the main article a stimulating read which had several thoughts similar to some things that I have also written. Since we don't know each other, this tells me that the Holy Spirit is working, causing similar thinking among God's people. The only criticism: The section at the end, "Random Prophetic Verses to Consider," may lessen the impact of the main article by overwhelming the reader with so many verses. The verses are good but would be better used in a separate composition focusing on a particular prophetic theme.

**In regard to: Expect the Unexpected**  
**Article by Warren Zehrung**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

As Dwight noted, the resurrection of the Saints may well happen on a future Pentecost due to the following scriptures:

**Mat 24:31** And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**1Co 15:51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **1Co 15:52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

There are seven trumpets, the last three trumpets are called woes or woe trumpets which is where the pattern comes from. In other words, the first trumpet is on Feast of Trumpets, the second trumpet is on Atonement, the third trumpet is on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and the fourth trumpet is on the Last Great Day. These are all warning trumpets that Christ will soon return.

With the woe trumpets the warning is louder and going to a worse conclusion for the people on the earth if they are not heeded. In other words, the three woe trumpets are leading right up to the bowls of wrath which will be poured out on all the earth just before Christ returns.

The last trump sounds most likely on Pentecost which makes a lot of sense because it is also called the Feast of First Fruits. So, when the seventh trumpet sounds the elect will be resurrected or changed at the same time as the two witnesses are resurrected. A great time to harvest the elect.

**Rev 11:3** And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

**Rev 11:14** The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. **Rev 11:15** And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our

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Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Read the entire chapter of Rev. 11)

The two witnesses are killed and resurrected right around the time of the third woe trumpet. Since this is the last trump, it is also the time the elect will be resurrected.

In Rev. 14:3, 1 it clearly shows the elect are in heaven most likely for the wedding supper of the lamb and to be trained for their duties in the Kingdom of God on earth which will officially start happening starting with the Feast of Trumpets.

**Rev 14:3** And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the **hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.**

**Rev 14:1** And I looked, and, lo, **a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

So, in other words the elect will not be on earth while the bowls of wrath are poured out. They will return from heaven with Christ to help fight the nations and to help set up the Kingdom of God on earth..

**In regard to: Is Yayshua God?**  
**Article by James & Patt Steinle**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

**Laura writes:**

You did a great job proving that both God the Father and Christ the Son are Gods and that the Holy Spirit is not a person but the essence and power of God.

I did, however, find a few problems with the article.

**From the article:**

**Elohim or god also does apply to humans. Let's examine some Scriptural examples:**

**Those who have authority as judges:** Psalm 82:1-8 "God [Elohim] standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods [H430 elohim]. 2 How long will ye [the judges or gods] judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. 5 they know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye are gods [elohim]; and all of you *are* children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. 8 Arise, O God [Elohim], judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

**Laura writes:**

**Psa 82:1** A Psalm of Asaph. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. **Psa 82:2** How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. **Psa 82:3** Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. **Psa 82:4** Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked. **Psa 82:5** They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. **Psa 82:6** I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. **Psa 82:7** But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. **Psa 82:8** Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

I think verse seven is telling us this is not talking about people but perhaps some sort of created being that is not fully clear to us right now. All men die like men but this is saying something else. These are gods with a small "g" already but it says they will die like men. Keep in mind that Christ became a man and died like a man and yet he was God with a big "G". It also seems like as you read chapter 82 it is talking about wicked entities which God is judging now. Look at verse one which tells you God is judging gods. So, I don't think it proves that these verses are talking about human men.

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**From the article:**

Ex 22:9 "For all manner of trespass, *whether it be* for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of lost thing, which *another* challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges [H430 elohim]; *and* whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour."

**Laura writes:**

Exodus 22:9 is more likely a translation error because many bibles translate it as God.

One bible translated it this way:

Exo 22:9 "For every matter of transgression, for ox, for donkey, for sheep, for garment, or for whatever is lost which another claims to be his, let the matter of them both come before Elohim. And whomever Elohim declares wrong repays double to his neighbour. (The Scriptures 2009)

And one bible avoided the whole problem this way by leaving it totally out of the verse:

Exo 22:9 "If a man entrusts his neighbor with a donkey, ox, sheep or any animal to care for, and it dies, is hurt or taken away with no one seeing, (Tree of Life Version)

Old bible translations used God:

And in al maner of trespace, whether it be oxe, asse, shepe, raymente or any maner loste thyng whiche another chalengeth to be hys, the cause of bothe parties shall come before the goddes. And whom the goddes condemne: the same shall paye double vnto his neyghbour. (Matthew's Bible 1537)

Yf one accuse another in eny maner of trespace, whether it be for oxe, or Asse, or shepe, or rayment, what so euer it be that is lost: then shall both their causes come before the Goddes: Loke whom the Goddes condempne, the same shall restore dubble vnto his neghbour. (Cloverdale Bible 1535)

to `do fraude; as wel in oxe, as in asse, and in scheep, and in clooth; and what euer thing may brynge in harm, the cause of euer eithir schal come to goddis, and if thei demen, he schal restore the double to his neiybore. (Wycliffe Bible 1382)

**From the article:**

Again, the example of John 10:30-38, "I and *my* [my emphasis] Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?** [Quoted from Psalm 82:6 shown above] 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of [the] God [Yehovah]? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him." How? Again, I will give the *hen* wording of Strong's G1520, as explained by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D. "(i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said *heis* it would have meant one person."

**Laura writes:**

I am going to assume that you believe this is a quote from Psalms 82 because you believe the entire Old Testament is the law of God. Actually, the entire bible is the law of God, the only problem is that not all of the bible is stating God's Law. Some of it is history and some is prophecy and etc. Psalms 82 is not a law of God, it is talking about a meeting that took place where God is judging some entities.

If you look closely at John 10:34, Christ is saying that them being gods is written in the law of the Jews. He is not saying it is written in the law of God.

I have just eradicated all of your examples of man being god or God. If you have other examples I would like to see them.

In the end most people will be born into the God family which would make us all like God, but we are not there yet.

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**From the article:**

Acts 3:13, “The God [Elohim] of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God [Elohim] of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.” Who was the God of the Old Testament? It was Yehovah (the Father) as Exodus 3:15 says, “And Elohim [God] said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou [Moses] say unto the children of Israel, Yehovah Elohim [The LORD God] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.”

**Laura writes:**

The God of the Old Testament is Christ.

In Acts 3:13, Peter is explaining that it was the power of Christ which healed the lame man.

Exodus 3:15-16 is also talking about Christ. I think the problem comes in with the use of “God”. God can and does many times include both God the Father and Christ. We know from other scriptures they are one in purpose, however there are two beings and the only one anyone has seen or heard is Christ. God the Father is invisible, and no one has seen him. Remember that Christ did let Moses see His backside and he has arms and legs just like the rest of us.

Exo 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations. Exo 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:

1Co 10:4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:4 tells you flat out who was spending time from Egypt to the Promised Land with the Israelites and that was Christ.

**From the article:**

In Revelation 3:14 John wrote the message that came from the Father who gave it to His Son (Rev. 1:1), “And unto the angel [messenger] of the assembly of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the *beginning* [G746, the ar-Kay or arche] of the creation of [the] God [Yehovah].” It is my belief this is talking about Yayshua the Son as the very beginning of the Father’s creation; as we believe Proverbs chapter 8:22-31 describes in more detail.

**Laura writes:**

The Bible is pretty clear that God the Father did not make anything. So, what this is talking about is the power of God (the Holy Spirit) impregnated Mary and she had Christ as a baby who grew into a man and walked among us as a man. Then Christ was crucified and then resurrected by God the Father. And yes, Christ is the First Fruit of the First Fruits but that is because He became a man and died and was resurrected. So, in that sense He is the first, but it is not saying He was created. Christ would not be able to create Himself anymore than He was able to resurrect Himself. God the Father has a part in all of this, but Christ is the one who is creating everything and when everything is complete, Christ will present the finished product to God the Father like a gift.

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

**From the article:**

Pro 8:22 “Yehovah [the LORD] possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24 When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth” [H2342; born,

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*to be in labor (childbirth), amongst other meanings. See Isaiah 66:7-9 for an example. John 17:8 "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."]; (continuing Prov.8) "when there were no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."*

Does the above reading sound like just wisdom which a person would think the Father had from eternity? It reads like an individual being that was brought forth, the Son Yayshua.

**Laura writes:**

Proverbs 8 is talking about Wisdom.

Pro 8:22 **The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.** Pro 8:23 **I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.**

Right here it is flat out telling you that the Lord possessed wisdom from the beginning and the next verse tells you wisdom was set up from everlasting. It is not talking about Christ having been created by God the Father.

**From the article:**

Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 1:24, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of God [Elohim] and the wisdom of Elohim [God]."

**Laura writes:**

1Co 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (King James Version)

The below version may clean up the wording somewhat.

1Co 1:24 But for those who have been chosen to follow him, both Jews and Greeks, he is God's mighty power, God's true wisdom, and our Messiah. (The Passion Translation)

It is talking about Christ having the power of God and the wisdom of God because He is God.

In conclusion I believe you have proven there are two Gods with one purpose. God the Father and Christ His son. Much of the Bible is literal. If you read the scripture for what it says without adding to it the outcome is better and more realistic.

I think that most people doing a bible study are looking for mysterious or hidden things so they miss what a verse is actually saying. The Bible is written in such a way to hide the truth from those not called. As you ask for and get more of God's Holy Spirit more verses are opened up to you.

You have a tendency to lean to Christ as having been a created being but scripture just does not back that up.

I think these 18 verses should clear all of this up if you read it as being literal.

Joh 1:1 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** Joh 1:2 **The same was in the beginning with God.** Joh 1:3 **All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.** Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. Joh 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. Joh 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. Joh 1:8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. Joh 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the

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world. Joh 1:10 **He was in the world, and the world was made by him**, and the world knew him not. Joh 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. Joh 1:12 **But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name: Joh 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Joh 1:14 **And the Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**;) full of grace and truth. Joh 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. Joh 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Joh 1:18 **No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son**, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

**In regard to: Life, Death, Life**  
**Article by David Sielaff**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

I have one problem with this article. Christ is not a created being.

The following is talking about Christ:

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

**From the Adam Clark Commentary in regard to Col. 16 & 17:**

**For by him were all things created, etc. - These two verses contain parts of the same subject. I shall endeavor to distinguish the statements of the apostle, and reason from them in such a way as the premises shall appear to justify, without appealing to any other scripture in proof of the doctrine which I suppose these verses to vindicate.**

**Four things are here asserted:**

- 1. That Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe; of all things visible and invisible; of all things that had a beginning, whether they exist in time or in eternity.**
- 2. That whatsoever was created was created For himself; that he was the sole end of his own work.**
- 3. That he was prior to all creation, to all beings, whether in the visible or invisible world.**
- 4. That he is the preserver and governor of all things; for by him all things consist.**

**In conclusion**, since scripture states that Christ created everything, He cannot be a created being because He cannot create Himself.

**Announcements**

**Announcement from William P. Goff (December 23, 2023)**

**Greetings Brethren,**

**The latest “revised” Kenya update (December 23, 2023) is now posted at: [khofh.org](http://khofh.org) Thank You.**

**Bill Goff**



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**Announcement from William P. Goff (December 27, 2023)**

Greetings,

We started a new fundraiser for the orphans School Fees. For those who can help, it will be greatly appreciated. The link is:

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/ydppp-orphans-school-fees?utm\\_campaign=p\\_lico+share-sheet-first-launch&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_source=customer](https://www.gofundme.com/f/ydppp-orphans-school-fees?utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet-first-launch&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer)

Thank You.  
Bill Goff

## Go to the Lost Ten Tribes (Part 8)

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*It's commonly believed that Jesus came to evangelize and save the Jewish Nation first and foremost. Yet He Himself said otherwise. The Commission given to His Disciples reflected that of His own. Whatever we think about that, we know that "...He came to His own and His Own' received Him NOT"! (John 1:11)*

Perceptions exist in the religious community that may or may not be totally accurate. Let's look into an area we see much New Testament Evidence of. While it's logical to think that the Bible is a book written about and to the Jewish peoples, that's not fully comprehensive of the true picture. More accurately, it's written to greater Israel, which encompasses all twelve tribes, not just two.

Of the peoples of Israel, including all Twelve of the Tribes, it's said that *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."* (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 10:11) That's referring to the Old Testament accounts and the examples demonstrated by them. It being a derogatory assessment rather than a complementary one!

Oft quoted, the passage in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, presents a sad situation as it regards Jesus' relationship with His very own ethnicity. It says, *"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not."* (v. 10-11) How much does this change our assessment of what is really being 'worked out'?

Jesus' Ministry and Teachings among the Jewish religious culture were largely **not** received. It'd be fairly accurate to say that it was what we'd regard as a bust! So much for that! It was necessary for Him to act very cautiously at times in the Judean regions, as they were more than just unreceptive. They were actually very hostile to His teaching. (Matt.26:4)

An earlier presentation explained the religious climate in the Judean region. That accounts for the hostility to Jesus' Person and message. The situation in the district to the north, Samaria, was less hostile, and in the one north of that, in Galilee, even more amenable. His apostles were all Galilean partly for that reason. Only Paul was a Judean and look what it took to change his persuasion.

### **I Am NOT Sent...**

In His own statement of purpose, Jesus said *"I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."*<sup>3</sup> There are those who interpret that statement to be referring to the Jews. It actually was not. It doesn't mean 'lost' in the sense of not being 'saved'. We can see that from other clear passages. What it does is identify a broader ethnicity than just Jews.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 15:24 Matthew 10:6

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This suggests His real Ministry was to others than those of His own ethnic peoples! Jesus’ Ministry and Teachings within the Jewish religious environment of the day were largely received very poorly overall. Is that changed, really? This also illustrates for us that the Jewish peoples are presented as a different ethnicity than what’s referred to as “His own”! This exposes a fundamental difference.

Nor should we overlook the Commission He gave to His Apostles, to “...go rather to the *Lost Tribes of Israel*.” This was in reference to the dispersed and ‘lost to history’ (ours’ at least) northern 10 Tribes, more correctly referred to as the “House of Israel”. This instruction makes it even clearer that the intended people to be sought and evangelized were other than Jews in their near vicinity.

#### **Unanticipated Direction**

To give that instruction, saying ‘rather’, suggests they were to leave off doing what they likely were expecting to soon be doing. There’d be no need to give such an instruction if they were already intending to go to those dispersed Tribes. This suggests it was a change to their expected assignment.

The “House of Israel” refers to the Ten Tribes, who were well known to the people of that era! What accounts for the interest toward evangelizing them, but not so much toward the Jewish peoples? This is where the story becomes ‘interesting’!

#### **King of the Jews**

Why we tend to think that Jesus’ ministry was to be directed primarily to His own ethnicity is the term used referring to Him as “King of the Jews”. However, that term is not what actually was the case. We read of the Magi’s exchange with Herod, where they said, “...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him.”

The term “King of the Jews” was used only about a dozen times in the New Testament. And those were exclusively by the Magi, Herod and Pilate. Many of the citations were repetitive in the synoptic Gospels so the actual number of times were fewer than that. That term wasn’t the correct term, nor was it the common term in reference to Him. The more commonly used term was distinctly and purposefully different.

#### **King of Israel**

Prior to His trial, in what’s known as the Triumphant Entry, on that occasion that occurred four days before His crucifixion, the exclamation of the crowd was, “*On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.*” (John 12:12-13)

We find this term used in several key situations. Detractors of the day reflected their prevailing understanding in Matthew 27:42 where they said, “*He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*” Mark 15:32 includes, “*Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe...*”

The term used by them was not “King of the Jews”. Even among detractors! We don’t find the common people, and for that matter, even their religious leaders, using “King of the Jews”. The reason being that they understood the greater aspect of their Messiah’s coming, which included the entire House of Israel, not just the Jewish contingent.

We also should note that He didn’t make major corrections to the beliefs and practices of the Jewish religion of the day. His assessment of them fell more within the area of what they lacked: faith, mercy, and justice rather than ceremonial or ‘legal issues’.<sup>4</sup> His teaching introduced a whole new dimension of awareness.

#### **There are Twelve Tribes**

James sent greetings in his epistle “*to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*”. [James 1:1] To say that as he did, James must have recognized that the twelve (the other ten as well) were not really ‘lost’ from history!

Neither are they ‘lost’ to God’s awareness. Speaking of their ongoing identity, Amos 9:9 says, “*For, lo, I will command,*

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*and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.”* The peoples themselves may have lost track of their ethnic origins, but God knows who and where they are. And they’re a key factor in the administration of the coming Millennial Kingdom.

Our religious denominations for the most part generally dismiss the relevance of the Tribes of Israel in the civil and religious organization of His Kingdom on Earth. He explained in part what His Apostles should anticipate. He said to them when asked, *“And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* (Matt. 19:28) (The ‘regeneration’ there referring to the First Resurrection.) That’s huge!

Another key passage is in Revelation 14, where we see 12 thousand sealed from among the 12 Tribes of Israel being assigned to each of the 12 Tribes. They stand with Christ on Mount Zion. Already we may logically deduce that these 12 thousands will each serve under one of those 12 Apostles. So, we see that echelon of administration already identified!

Luke 22:30 and Revelation 7:4 explain the primary nation that will comprise the religious leadership in the World to Come!

But what’s significant between the terms “King of the Jews” and “King of Israel” is that the latter is inclusive of the entire nation. The Magi likely used the term that they did, not so much to limit or define His realm of authority, but in recognition of which tribe He’d be born of. They knew the ancient prophecies! And knowing that by His lineage, <sup>5</sup> He was a legitimate heir to the Parthian Throne (that was their ulterior interest), they were compelled to pay their respects while obscuring their intentions. Remember, their nation wasn’t ethnically Jewish! <sup>6</sup>

This shows us that a contingent within the Parthian nation’s governing body (from whence the Magi came) retained certain aspects of their former religious orientation and devotedness to God’s Covenant with Israel. Their interest, though, was more politically based than religious. While it’s thought that the northern Ten Tribes left the original faith, that’s not entirely the case.

### **Purposeful Sidelining**

As to Jesus’ ministry being primarily toward the tribes of Judah, the Apostle Paul understood something that modern disciples find difficult to fathom. He wrote this to the Church at Rome: *“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness** in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”* (Romans 11:25) Adding clarification, he says, *“For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”* (v.32) He continues there with the exclamation, *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”* (v.33) This reflects on the passage in Isaiah 55:8. *“For my **thoughts** are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my **ways**, saith the LORD.”* God is not working things out in the manner that we might imagine, as there’s a much bigger operation in play here! Paul seemed to have a sense of that.

That operation began centuries ago!

From these verses we’re given that the people we’d expect to be first among those called to conversion, are left unaware of essential matters until a particular point in time. It can’t be the first coming of the Messiah, because as Paul was writing this, He had ascended to Heaven decades prior! No, it’s when the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ comes to be. And it’s God who has put them and left them in that state!

But it’s the ‘mercy’ aspect that we’re left to explain.

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<sup>4</sup> Mt. 23:13-29; Mt. 9:13; Mt. 12:7

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38

<sup>6</sup> See the article:

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So, the carrying the Gospel to ‘Gentile’ and other nations, other than Jewry, specifically seeks out the ‘lost Tribes of Israel’. We can expect that the preaching of the Gospel was better received among them than it was among the Jewish peoples.<sup>7</sup>

**Is the Preaching Limited?**

We might ask, what about the Commission: “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel?*”<sup>8</sup> Let’s not forget that the Ten Tribes are scattered abroad, as James attests. By this time in history, the Tribes are to some degree dispersed, but are also nations coalescing by their varied tribal ethnicities, as God decrees.

This passage in Mark 16 is what we call “the Great(er) Commission”. There’s an affinity among peoples of similar heritage, so it’s no surprise that they would coalesce into communities.

Though those other nationalities might not respond to the Gospel to the same degree as those God is specifically calling, the Israelites among them are certainly the intended echelon. A broadened ‘cast’ (being fishers of men) may be the chosen approach, but what ‘catches’ the attention of the hearers is limited in ways most Bible students may not understand. What’s related in John 6:44 poses a profound consideration: “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*” God’s calling is in most cases selective. That reflects back on Jesus’ Commission to seek out the ‘lost Ten Tribes’. How do we process that in today’s world?

**Grace, not Race**

A common come back to the Ten Tribes assertion is that God’s Calling is ethnically non-specific. While partly true, at the same time we need to be aware that the leading nation in the Millennium will be 144,000 sealed out of one particular ethnicity. It’s these who will form that High Administration.

But the consideration in this chapter is the specific focus Jesus put on the Commission He gave His apostles. Except for what He said, we might not realize the interest in Israel’s long-term.

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**See Rich Traver’s other articles at:**

**[Traver, Rich – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)**

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## **Holy Days 2024**

**Passover – April 23, 2024 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)**

**Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 23-29, 2024**

**Pentecost – June 12, 2024**

**Trumpets - October 3, 2024**

**Atonement – October 12, 2024**

**Tabernacles –October 17, 2024, to October 23, 2024**

**Last Great Day – October 24, 2024**

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<sup>7</sup> See these related articles: “*The Harvest of Firstfruits*”; “*The Early and Latter Rains*”; “*Israel’s Blindness*” & “*And So, All Israel Shall Be Saved.*”

<sup>8</sup> Mark 16:15