

## The Temple Symbolism in Genesis

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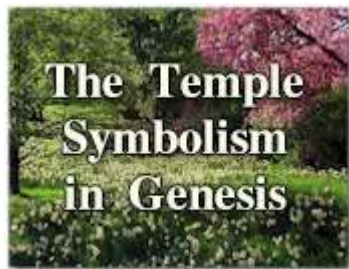
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## Articles

### The Temple Symbolism in Genesis

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The Bible is consistent from Genesis to Revelation. The matter of the Temple and its symbolism is an example of this. In this Exposition we show the beginning and ending of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind. It is a glorious plan from which God has never varied — in the typical sense.

The temple was a physical replica of God’s heavenly abode. When Moses was first ordered to construct a temple, he was told to make it portable — it was a tent, or tabernacle.

**“Let them make me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it.”<sup>1</sup>**

• **Exodus 25:8–9**

In the Book of Hebrews, we are told that the tabernacle, and all its services, were “**patterns of things in the heavens**” (Hebrews 9:23). The physical objects associated with the earthly sanctuary were “**figures of the true**” (Hebrews 9:24) — the “**shadow of heavenly things**” (Hebrews 8:5). Each physical item had its spiritual counterpart in heaven. So, as long as there was a tabernacle or temple on earth, there was a material reflection of God’s heavenly palace for mankind to see.<sup>2</sup> The temple represented God’s home on earth. Of course, God does not literally dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 17:24), and though the temple at Jerusalem was a true image of the heavenly, in Hebrews it is made abundantly clear that the earthly sanctuary of God is “**not the very image of the [heavenly] things” (Hebrews 10:1). It was only “**figures of the true**” (Hebrews 9:24).<sup>3</sup>**

If we wish to know what God’s heavenly abode is really like, then we must understand the significance of the three general compartments in the earthly sanctuary, the furniture, and the persons (the priests) who served within the holy

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areas. All these physical things typify spiritual counterparts in heaven. The heavenly dwelling place is where God is at the present.

In the Book of Revelation, which depicts a period of time yet future to us, John is transported by the Spirit into heaven (Revelation 4:2). While there, he saw a throne with God seated on it. Around the throne were 24 elders and four living creatures (Cherubim). Before the throne was a seven branched lampstand and a sea of glass. The heavenly beings gave glory and honor to the Father who sat on the throne (Revelation 4:2–11). Inside this heavenly temple — the inner temple — John also saw individuals worshipping God who no longer needed the sun for light (Revelation 7:14–16). In the inner temple he witnessed the true **“ark of the testament”** (Revelation 11:19) and the pot of manna (Revelation 2:17). And finally, the inner sanctum contained **“the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”** (Revelation 2:7).

Outside the Holy of Holies and just to the East of it was the general Holy Place. In it John saw a golden altar with incense and a censor associated with it (Revelation 8:3). Located in front of this incense altar, outside the Holy Place, was another altar under which were the **“souls of them that were slain for the word of God”** (Revelation 6:9).

Every one of these heavenly features was represented in typical form by the physical sanctuary on earth. The complete and permanent temple was that of Solomon which he built in Jerusalem. It had all the heavenly factors exhibited. The celestial throne of God was portrayed by the mercy seat located in the Holy of Holies.

**“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest [the Holy of Holies] by the blood of Jesus through the veil.”**

- **Hebrews 10:19–20**

**“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy.”**

- **Hebrews 4:16**

The throne of God is one of mercy. Also, within the holiest area of Solomon’s temple was **“the golden pot of manna”** (Hebrews 9:4). Those who will eat of this manna **“shall serve him day and night in his [inner] temple [the Holy of Holies] ... they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore”** (Revelation 7:15–16).

### **The Ark of the Covenant**

Alongside this pot of manna was the **“ark of the testament”** (Hebrews 9:4). In the earthly tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon the slabs of stone on which were inscribed the Ten Commandments were placed within this ark, a box-like structure supported by two horizontal poles that enabled it to be carried. <sup>4</sup> These stones were called the “tables of the covenant” (Hebrews 9:4). These physical stones with their laws were meant only for Israel under the Old Covenant. <sup>5</sup> Spirit beings do not need these Old Covenant physical regulations, so the ark of the testament in heaven does not have within it the two tables of stone or the extra scrolls positioned in its sleeves (Exodus 40:20; Deuteronomy 31:26).

Only the ark itself is in heaven. It represents the external witness that God has the power to make any necessary laws for the supervision of the universe. The ark could figuratively contain different laws for the administration of the various phases of divine government that God imposes on His creatures. Thus, the tables of stone which originated from the granite outcroppings at Mt. Sinai were never positioned in the **heavenly** ark. They were carved out of Sinai and only placed in the tabernacle in the time of Moses.

Indeed, just before the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., those stones, according to Jewish tradition, were deposited East of the Dead Sea by Jeremiah near where Moses was buried (2 Maccabees 2:4–8). Jeremiah was supposed to have prophesied that the physical ark will one day be found at the end of the age and it, along with the stones thereof, will be replaced in the Millennial temple. This is highly probable. One thing for certain: Those material stones were never placed within the heavenly ark. They are buried East of the Dead Sea. As far as we know, there is nothing (in a literal sense) within the heavenly ark.

### **The Holy of Holies**

But what else was located in the Holy of Holies? In heaven there were twenty-four elders. On earth these were typified by the twenty-four priestly courses (each headed by a chief priest) who performed the regular daily services in the temple

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on a rotation basis (2 Chronicles 24:1–19). The father of John the Baptist was portraying the role of one of these heavenly elders when he administered in the eighth course of the twenty-four orders (Luke 1:5, 8).

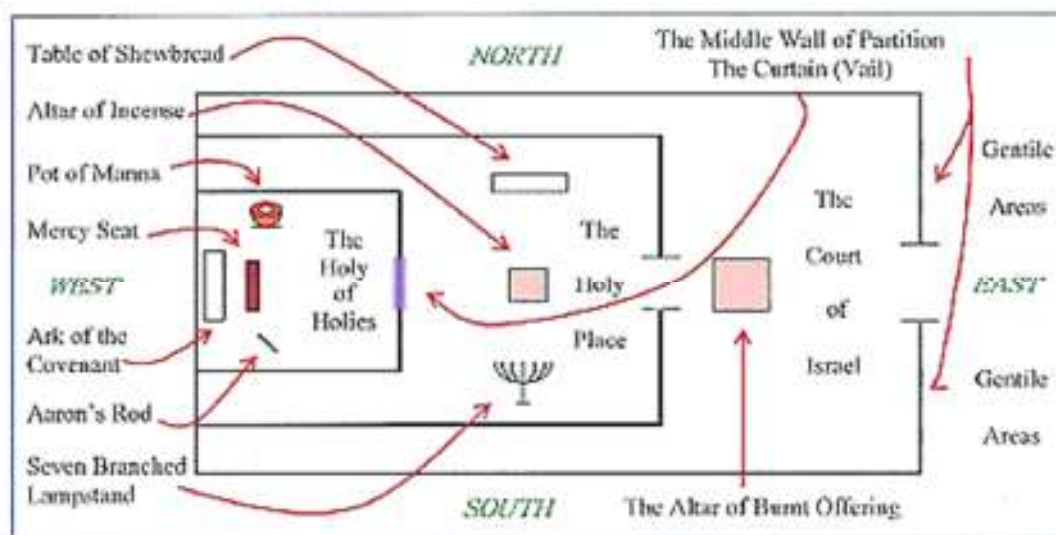
There were also the Cherubim in the heavenly temple. Statues were made of them and placed near the mercy seat in the earthly temple. Also, within the Holy of Holies was **“Aaron’s rod that budded”** (Hebrews 9:4). This staff was made from a limb of an almond tree (Numbers 17:8). The almond is the earliest of the springtime trees to blossom in the Holy Land. It represents new life — the first new life of every new year. This rod made from an almond tree was typical of *the tree of life* located in the Garden of Eden.

**“To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise [park or garden] of God”**

- **Revelation 2:7**

With this reference to the tree of life, we are ready to investigate the theme of this Exposition: “The Temple Symbolism in Genesis.” The events associated with the story of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, the land of Nod, etc., will take on normal temple features which anyone in the time of Moses would have recognized. Even in the New Testament the scenes within the Garden of Eden were reflections of things in God’s heavenly temple. John told the Ephesian church that they could have a right to partake of “the tree of life” located in God’s paradise in heaven (Revelation 2:7). There was once an actual “tree of life” in the Garden of Eden.

If all the symbolic features have literal counterparts (which they do) then this **“tree of life”** must have been represented by a real almond tree growing in the Garden of Eden. But there was also another tree in the Garden called **“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”** (Genesis 2:17). Our first parents were allowed, at the beginning, to eat of any tree of the Garden (including even the tree of life). Only the tree of good and evil was off-limits to them. If the tree of life was the almond tree, what was this latter tree? The identification may also be given in the Bible. We will show this in due course.



**The Plan of the Temple**

It is necessary to recognize the basic patterns of the temple before one can grasp what happened (in a symbolic way) with the story of Adam and Eve. The temple had three compartments with major pieces of furniture located within each of them.

Note that the entrance into the temple was from the East. Only Israelites were permitted to pass the eastern gate and enter the court of Israel. On the West side of this court, and just before the entrance into the Holy Place, was the **“altar of burnt offering.”** This was the altar on which animals were sacrificed. Into the next compartment (the Holy Place) only the priests could enter — they also entered from the East. And into the third room (the Holy of Holies) only the High Priest could go on the Day of Atonement — again he could only enter it from the East. I am emphasizing that the entrance to

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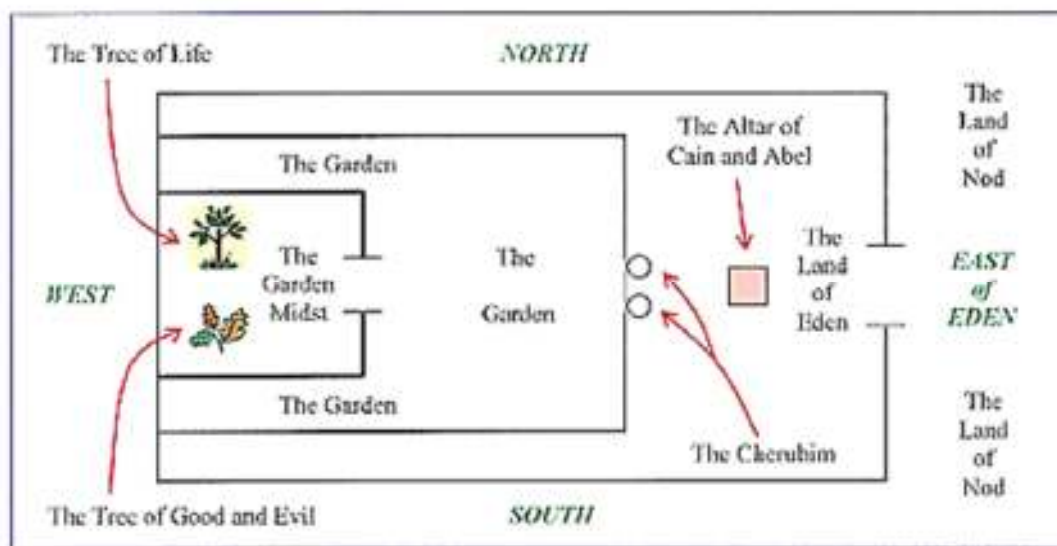
all compartments was from the East. There is an important reason for this that I will explain in a moment.

***The Temple and the Garden of Eden***

When Adam and Eve were put into the Garden they were in a state of moral and spiritual perfection. <sup>6</sup> As a result they were able to observe God in a visible sense and even talk with Him at particular times of the day. Only after they sinned was this privilege taken away. This occurred when they were cast out from the Garden.

Before they sinned, however, they were in a very privileged state. Of all the multitudes of spiritual beings in the universe, how many of them are able to have such a close and daily contact with the Creator God? Just very few — probably those associated with the throne itself such as the Cherubim and the twenty-four elders. But in the Garden were two human beings in the closest of association with God Himself. It must have been like a heaven on earth! And indeed, that’s just what it was, in a symbolic way. It was as if God’s celestial palace temporarily had come to earth. Even the Garden, the Cherubim of the Garden, the altar built by Cain and Abel, the land of Eden, and the land of Nod are all connected with the temple symbolism and are direct images of God’s heavenly abode. And for the brief period of time before the sin of Adam and Eve, “heaven” was really here on earth.

In the Garden our first parents were able to talk face to face with God. But note an important point. They only had conversations with Him at certain times of the day. They did not see Him on all occasions. It was **“in the cool of the day”** that they came into **“the presence of the Lord”** (Genesis 3:8). The expressions **“cool of the day”** and **“the presence of the Lord”** were a part of temple language. <sup>7</sup> **“The cool of the day”** was the period when the Sun got lower in the sky and the cool sea breezes normally swept over the Palestinian region. This was the time of the evening sacrifice (1 Kings 18:36; Daniel 9:21) — about three in the afternoon. This was the time when the animals were being regularly sacrificed (and also in the morning about nine o’clock). At these times the people were then reckoned as being **“in the presence of God”** (2 Chronicles 20:19).



Finally, Adam and Eve sinned. They ate of the tree of which they were forbidden. This tree, like the tree of life, was also in the middle of the Garden. But with their partaking of it, God was angry and sent them out of the Garden. Never again could they enter the Garden in this life.

**“And the Lord God 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’: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”**

• **Genesis 3:22–24**



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This episode has some very significant features associated with it. Observe they were expelled *East* of the Garden. Cherubim (angelic beings — later connected with temple symbolism) were also stationed at the *East* gate to the Garden with a flaming sword to prevent Adam and Eve from re-entering.<sup>8</sup> When this happened, the tree of life became off-limits to them. Their face-to-face contact with God came to an end. The Cherubim guarded the East entrance (the only gate) into the Garden and forbade anyone to enter. We will see in a moment that these features represent precise arrangements found in the later tabernacle and temple.

### **Cain and Abel**

Our first parents were cast out of the Garden — never to re-enter in this life. They still remained, however, in the territory of Eden. It is important to note that the “Garden” and the country of “Eden” were not synonymous. The Garden was *in* Eden, but the Garden did not represent *all* Eden. Look at a modern example. My residence is in Pasadena, California. Pasadena is *in* California, yet not *all* California is Pasadena. Adam and Eve were simply expelled from the Garden *in* Eden. They were still able to live in other regions of Eden.

Adam and Eve then had children. The first of which we have record were Cain and Abel. Cain became a tiller of the ground — he raised fruits and vegetables. Abel was a shepherd (Genesis 4:2).

**“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, ‘Why are you wroth? and why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted? and if you do not well, sin lies at the door. And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him.’ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”**

• **Genesis 4:3–8**

There are three major points to consider in this narrative. **First**, both men decided to bring offerings at a set time of the year — on a particular day. The phrase **“in process of time,”** in Hebrew, means **“at the end of days.”** It often signified the end of the agricultural (or civil) year (1 Kings 17:7) and was near the beginning of Autumn. Recall that the Israelites were required to appear three times in the year at the temple (Exodus 23:14–17). One of these occasions was **“at the end of the year”** (verse 16). This was the season of Tabernacles. Cain brought token offerings of his crops **“at the end of days.”** This shows the brothers must have appeared before God at a precise time near the Autumn of the year. This means they must have been told by God when to bring them.

**Second**, they also must have been told where to bring them because they “brought” their offerings to one altar.

**Third**, they were no doubt told what to bring. God would hardly have been angry with Cain unless he brought offerings not sanctioned by God.

This is similar to what happened with the later Israelites in regard to the temple. They were told when, where, and what to bring to the temple. All sacrificial offerings could only be presented at the sanctuary. Under no circumstances was any other location allowed (Deuteronomy 16:5–6, 11, 16). With Cain and Abel, the same factors are in evidence. Back at that time, they went to the area where they knew God had been dwelling — He was a resident of the Garden. They built their altar as close to God as possible near the East entrance (the gate or door) to the Garden.

When the proper time came, they both offered their gifts, waving them in sacrificial praise to God whom they believed to be in the Garden. God then issued His approval of Abel's offering, but He was displeased with Cain's offering. The older brother no doubt had been told to bring a lamb or goat, but Cain offered fruit and vegetables. God was not pleased, and Cain's countenance fell. God then answered:

**“Why is your countenance fallen? If you do well [in the future and bring the proper sacrifice], shall you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin [a sin offering] lies at the door.”**

• **Genesis 4:6–7**

Many people for generations have stumbled over the meaning of this verse. Yet it is quite clear what is meant if one

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understands that temple language is being used. God was really being merciful to Cain. The mercy was this:

If Cain would repent and still bring the proper offering (“**if you do well**”), then he would be accepted; but if he did not do so, then “**sin** [a sin offering] **lies at the door.**” This “sin” was a sin-offering. God said that He would provide a sin-offering which would lie “**at the door.**” What was this door?

***The Gate of the Garden, the Door of the Temple***

The matter becomes understandable once this “door” is identified. The word in Hebrew is *pehthagh* and refers in other parts of the Old Testament to the entrance of any tent (Genesis 18:1), but more particularly to the “**door of the tabernacle**” (Exodus 29:4), or the “**door of the temple**” (Ezekiel 8:7, 16), or “**the door of the east gate of the Lord’s house**” (Ezekiel 10:19).

In the case of Cain and Abel, they constructed their altar at *the East gate* of the Garden just in front of the Cherubim which guarded its entrance (Genesis 3:24). God was indicating to Cain that he still had a chance to obtain a proper offering and offer it. Cain, on the other hand, was a tiller of the ground. He had no lamb to give unless he got one from his brother. God understood the problem, so He added further: “**if you do not well**” (even if Cain was unable to obtain the proper animal sacrifice) God would have a sin-offering to lie “**at the door**” of the Garden where the altar was located. <sup>9</sup>

The next phrase has been an enigma to many. “**And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him.**” This expression is explained in Genesis 3:16. Like a wife desired her husband and like a husband ruled his wife in Old Testament times (Genesis 3:16), so Cain would have a sin-offering provided for him that would allow him to rule over “sin.” It simply meant that Cain would gain mastery over sin — over his mistakes — by an offering provided by God. (Genesis 4:7). This was a noble gesture of grace on God’s part. Yet in spite of this act of mercy Cain did not obtain the proper animal, nor did he accept God’s grace of supplying a sin-offering for him to master sin. He responded with something very bad and in no way in accordance with the divine command. He offered up his own brother.

“**And Cain talked with Abel**” (Genesis 4:8). The margin has “quarreled”. They got into an argument. “**Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him**” (Genesis 4:8). This murder took place in the field. God then reprimanded Cain. “**What have you done? the voice of your brother’s blood cries unto me from the ground**” (Genesis 4:10). In later times it was recognized that the murder of Abel was a sacrifice of one of God’s saints. Such sacrifices symbolically took place on the altar of God. Jesus said:

“**That upon you [Pharisees] may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the [inner] temple and the altar.**”

- **Matthew 23:35**

In Revelation the blood of righteous saints was also reckoned as flowing from the altar from whence they were figuratively sacrificed.

“**I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.’”**

- **Revelation 6:9–10**

This is very similar to what God said about Abel. “**The voice of thy brother’s blood cries unto me from the ground**” (Genesis 4:10). Clearly, a New Testament connection was made between Abel and the end-time martyrs mentioned in Revelation. Like Abel, their blood was dripping down from their sacrificed bodies into the pool located under the altar. This receptacle for blood was supposed to be for that of animals, but in the case of righteous Abel (and all the other martyred saints), their deaths were considered human sacrifices — killed on the altar of God. Abel’s murder was too much for God to take:

“**Now are you [Cain] cursed from the earth, which has opened her mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand ... a fugitive and a vagabond shall you be in the earth.**”

- **Genesis 4:11–12**

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Whereas Cain had worked in the same area of Eden with his brother and parents, he was now to be sent away from the land. He was to be a wanderer — one without a fixed abode. He was to live at a distance from God, even “out of His sight.” Cain considered this almost too much to carry.

**“My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me out from the face of the earth [the land where Cain lived]; and from your face shall I be hid.”**

• **Genesis 4:13–14**

Cain’s punishment involved him being “driven out” from the land he formerly tilled, and away from the “face” of God.

**“And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod [Wandering], on the east side of Eden.”**

• **Genesis 4:16**

What marvelous teaching is found in this latter scripture once it is understood that temple language was being used by Moses. Note that Cain was sent *OUT OF EDEN*. He went East of Eden. And by leaving Eden, he **“went out from the presence of the Lord.”** Now look at the second diagram. It will be similar to the outline of the temple which we gave earlier, but this time we will involve the story of Adam and Eve, the Garden, the Cherubim with the flaming sword, the altar of Cain and Abel, the land of Eden, and the land of Nod [Wandering]. It has excellent teaching.

### **The Tabernacle of Moses**

The whole story revolves around the later design of the tabernacle of Moses — and the temple of Solomon. The Garden in which Adam and Eve were first placed was later represented by the Holy Place into which only priests could enter. When Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem, he decorated the outside and inside walls of the Holy Place in a way that made it look like a garden.

**“He carved all the walls of the house roundabout with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, within [on the inside walls] and without [on the outside walls].”**

• **1 Kings 6:29**

Israelites came into the court of the temple and looked westward beyond the altar of burnt offerings towards the Holy Place, it looked like a garden protected by Cherubim. This exactly depicts the Garden in Eden.

When Adam and Eve were at first in the Garden, they could talk with God at certain times. He was **“among the trees”** (Genesis 3:8). The two important trees (the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) were located **“in the midst of the Garden”** (Genesis 2:9). And in the Holy of Holies (in the “middle” of the temple), was placed Aaron’s rod that budded and produced almonds. This rod was not attached to the earth; it needed no water or nutrients to cause it to grow. It represented life coming from a supernatural source. It was a fit description of the tree of life. The tree of life was no doubt symbolized by the almond tree.

But there were many kinds of trees in the Garden (Genesis 2:9; Ezekiel 31:9). But the main type that Solomon most associated with the Garden was the palm — the date palm (1 Kings 6:29). In fact, in Solomon’s temple only the date palm figured prominently. <sup>10</sup> This was also the case with Ezekiel in his future temple. So, alongside the main almond tree, it could well be that a date palm represented the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve **“saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes”** (Genesis 3:6). This could well describe the dates that grow in clusters near the top of the palm tree.

Maybe it was or maybe not, but within the future temple as described by Ezekiel there are representations of Cherubim and palm trees directly inside the Holy of Holies (Ezekiel 41:18–20, 25–26). <sup>11</sup> This could show that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the midst of the Garden alongside the tree of life (the almond) was the date palm. It is interesting that Jeremiah considered the palm was a tree connected with good and evil (Jeremiah 10:5). Of course, there is nothing wrong with date palms or the dates they produce, but if God said not to eat from a tree of the Garden (be it any type of tree), it became bad — not for the tree — but for any who would partake of it. This is the essence of the narrative.



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**Further Temple Teaching**

Cain was sent into the land of Nod, East of Eden, away from the presence of God. He became cut off from the Eternal. God then gave him a “mark” to show that Cain was not completely forgotten and that a measure of protection would be afforded him and his descendants. Cain became a representative of *all* Gentiles. They were reckoned as being in Nod (wandering — without a fixed spiritual home). And while they could approach the East entrance to Eden, they could not go in. A barrier was placed around Eden. The altar which Cain and Abel constructed in the area of Eden near the East gate (door) of the Garden was out of bounds to those who lived in Nod.

This condition existed throughout the antediluvian period. But with the great flood of Noah, everything was destroyed — the Garden, the altar, the barriers, etc. When Noah and his children began to repopulate the earth, none of these former things were retained — except in the memory of man, and only in symbol. In the time of Moses, however, God selected the Israelites to be His nation — in favored status to Him. Moses was ordered to build a tabernacle which resembled the condition that existed in the pre-flood age. Outside the tabernacle was represented the land of Nod. The court on the inside of the tabernacle (the court of Israel) was Eden. The Holy Place was the Garden. The Holy of Holies was the center of the Garden. The tabernacle not only represented Eden and the Garden, but it was also a physical type of God’s heavenly abode.

The Israelites were reckoned as being in Eden like Adam and Eve were. However, even the privileged nation could only go to the East entrance to the Holy Place — which represented the Garden. Into the Holy Place (the Garden) only the Aaronic priests could go at the time of the morning and evening (the cool of the day) sacrifices. And even the priests were barred from entering **“the midst of the Garden”** — the Holy of Holies. They were only able to get close to the curtain that separated the outer Garden from its midst.

Only once in the year was anyone allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest, after many ceremonies of purification, and after he clouded the entire inner chamber with incense so that the mercy seat would be hidden from view, was able to push the curtain aside and briefly step into the inner sanctum. After he did his required duties, the curtain came down once again, and the Holy of Holies (the midst of the Garden) became closed for another year. This showed that while the tabernacle stood, God still reckoned barriers between Himself and mankind. <sup>12</sup>

While Adam and Eve before they sinned were able to witness God’s presence, their sins caused them to be sent from the Garden (the Holy Place). Cain and his descendants were sent further East — they were expelled from Eden and went to Nod. But when the Flood came the Garden, the altar, Eden, etc. all disappeared from earth. Mankind now found itself without any physical area on earth in which God dwelt. That’s why the early descendants of Noah wanted to build a tower **“to reach to heaven”** (Genesis 11:1–9). They wanted to reach God, to have access to His heavenly presence. But God would not allow it. He had been angry with man for his ways, so He changed their languages and scattered them into all the earth. He sent all mankind into a condition of “Nod.”

Finally, God selected Abraham to be the father of a nation which would be responsible for leading man (in a step-by-step way) back to God. By the time of Moses, the Abrahamic family had now reached nationhood. Moses built the tabernacle, and Israel was brought back into Eden once again. A middle wall of partition was erected, however, that kept all Gentiles out. God even put restrictions on Israel. Even they were told to stay out of the Holy Place (representing the Garden). The Aaronic priests were allowed to go in. But no one was permitted in the Holy of Holies except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement — and even then, he (the holiest man on earth, symbolically) was not allowed to see the mercy seat. All of this shows that God still had several barriers which kept many sections of mankind away from an intimate association with Him.

**The Revelation of “the Mystery”**

Through Christ (who was the sin-offering that God first told Cain about, which God would place on the altar at the door of the Garden by grace) through *that* offering the whole barrier system was to be abolished. Instead of a step-by-step expelling of man eastward into relative oblivion (as happened with Adam, Eve, Cain, the antediluvian world, and those at the tower of Babel), all the barriers to God as shown by the temple (and the Garden) were to be removed in Christ. Paul said, **“The middle wall of partition”** has now been broken down (Ephesians 2:14). This means that the Gentiles (like Cain) who were in a state of wandering and without any fixed spiritual home, can come into the court of Israel where the altar is located. This got them back to Eden. But there is more than simply getting access to the holy altar.

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Once the **“sin-offering at the door”** is accepted they can join hands with Israelites (with both peoples now called **“the new man”** — not Israelite or Gentile), and both walk up the fifteen steps into the Holy Place. The Cherubim no longer will keep them out with their flaming sword. They are now back in the Garden from whence our first parents were expelled. But that is not the end. When Christ died on the cross, the curtain in the temple that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (**“the midst of the Garden”**) was supernaturally torn in two from the top down (Matthew 27:50–51). In Hebrews we are told that the destruction of this final barrier now gives us **“boldness to enter into the holiest** [the Holy of Holies] **by the blood of Christ ... through the veil”** (Hebrews 10:19–20).

**“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”**

- **Hebrews 4:16**

What glorious teaching! All the obstacles that God set up in a progressive sense to alienate Himself from man (in a spiritual way) from the time of Adam and Eve onward, He has systematically abolished through the work of Christ Jesus.

**“Having ABOLISHED in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances** [decrees of separation]; **for to make in himself of two one new man, so making peace.”**

- **Ephesians 2:15**

All the commandments and decrees which God formerly ordained to separate Himself from various peoples, have been removed in Christ. Adam and Eve, Abel and Cain, Israelite and Gentile, you and I, are now back “in the Garden” — and now in the very midst of it. We do not even have to wait for **“the cool of the day”** to come into contact with our Father. We now have a constant presence — in a spiritual sense. And the day is soon coming when we ourselves will be spirit beings (1 Corinthians 15:42–55).

When that day arrives, we will not only be able to talk with God face to face as did our first parents, but **“we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”** (1 John 3:2). As God is Spirit, so will we be. We will then be **“as he is”** — as His own Spirit-born children. This is far more glorious than it was with our first parents. Indeed, reaching this position is the very purpose for living. Our experience with sin, with an alienation from God, with suffering, will help us for all eternity to love God our Father in a much greater way than our first parents were able to experience. What a glorious future awaits mankind through Christ.

The Holy of Holies is now open to all people on earth without social, racial, or outward religious distinction. It is Christ who has redeemed Adam and his family to Himself. Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead are mankind’s guarantee of a certain salvation. It comes to us by God’s grace, not man’s works. One day all humanity will understand this truth. *ELM*

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#### **Appendix 1: The Garden of Eden and the Temple**

In what kind of geographical region was the Garden of Eden? The Bible gives the answer. Moses said that a stream watered the Garden. From its midst it became the headwaters of four major rivers. Since it is self-evident that rivers flow down slope, this is an indication that the Garden was located in an elevated area of the earth — probably on a mountain. Ezekiel said that Eden **“the garden of God”** was **“the holy mountain of God”** (Ezekiel 28:13–14).<sup>13</sup> When the tabernacle was established in the land of Palestine by Joshua, he placed it on the mound of a hill called Shiloh. Recall that the tabernacle and the temples represented the Garden and the Land of Eden. They were each placed on a “high place” in order to resemble the “mountain of God” in which our first parents saw Him. This is why Solomon followed the same pattern and constructed the temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1).

All peoples of the world recognized that the Garden of God had first been located on a mountain. This is why they almost always erected their pagan altars or temples on **“high places”** in order to mimic this primeval situation. While this point in itself was proper, they combined such heathen practices with their worship that the prophets felt compelled to vilify those **“high places”** (Numbers 22:41; Jeremiah 48:35). The pagans held the belief that their temples on “high places” made them in closer contact with their gods in the heavens. This was a very early belief and is reflected in the building of the Tower of Babel not long after the Flood. They built it high so that its **“top may reach unto heaven”** (Genesis 11:4). They wanted God to come in contact with them at this Mesopotamian shrine.

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Professor Mercea Eliade, the famous historian of ancient religious beliefs, said: **“According to Mesopotamian beliefs, a central mountain joins heaven and earth.”** <sup>14</sup> This “mountain” was the means of reaching heaven. So, it was either a temple on a mountain or a high tower into the heavens that the ancients used as a means of worshipping their gods or even the true God. When Jacob was at a site called Luz he saw a ladder that seemed to reach into heaven. **“Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold angels of God ascending and descending on it”** (Genesis 28:12). So impressed was Jacob over this event that he named the place **“Bethel”** — the House of God. This term was synonymous with the later word **“temple.”** And interestingly, the region where Jacob had this experience was called **“Mount Bethel”** (1 Samuel 13:2).

All of this reflects the fact that the original Garden of Eden (where God first came in contact with man) was on a mountain — a **“high place.”** The Garden, as we have shown in the body of the Exposition, was looked on as an archetype of the heavenly abode of God. The later tabernacle and temples showed the same thing. Even the Gentiles wanted their temples (or holy areas) to resemble — in their way of thinking — the living places for the gods. Plato’s ideal city was reckoned as having a celestial counterpart (Plato’s *Republic*, 592b; cf. 500e). The pagans reckoned that God would come and visit them if they constructed a home or a city on earth like the one, He lived in among the stars. And true, God told Moses (and later David) to build Him a home on earth like His home in heaven. So, the tabernacle and the temple were constructed. These were only types, but they served to give mankind an example of what the palace of God was really like. Knowing God’s home helps us know Him.

Ernest L. Martin, 1977

Edited by David Sielaff, March 2004

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**Appendix 2: Salvation, the Garden, and the Temple**

Eden fits the accepted descriptions of what a “temple” is. John Lundquist in his article “What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology,” lists 15 descriptive motifs for Near East temples. <sup>15</sup> It is interesting that although most temples do not fit more than a majority of these motifs, Eden fits them all to some degree. Lundquist notes that Near East Temples:

1. Are architectural examples of “cosmic mountains.” The temple is the mountain itself
2. Are on mountains that arose from waters covering the primordial earth during creation
3. Have waters of life coming from them (figurative if not actual)
4. Are built on set-apart or sacred space
5. Are oriented to all four cardinal directions
6. Have an architectural orientation toward heaven
7. Have architectural plans revealed to man by divinity
8. Are central institutions (a) for social unity & prosperity, (b) their loss is a disaster for the community
9. Are where kings, priests, worshippers, and images of the gods are made holy for contact with deity, eternal life and sacred marriage
10. Are the connecting point “between this world and the next”
11. Are for ritual meals
12. Are for communication with deity
13. Are where deity gives law to man

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14. Are for sacrifice

15. Are a place of secrecy.

In fact, it is likely more correct to say that Eden was the archetype or the pattern for all subsequent temples in the Near East, including the Tabernacle and the Temples in Jerusalem. Yes, as Dr. Martin correctly points out at the beginning, the author of Hebrews does say that the Tabernacle was a shadow of heavenly things, but for the period before the flood, Eden was where God Himself walked. And, as far as we know, Eden continued to exist until the flood at the time of Noah. As Dr. Martin notes above, Eden continued until the Flood. Eden was a place of direct contact with God where earth was connected with heaven, albeit Eden was off limits after Adam's sin, just as much as heaven is to us today.

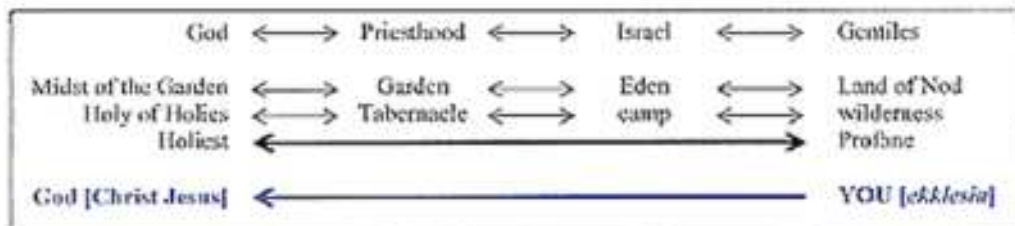
If we put all the factors side by side, the parallels between Eden and the Temple can be summarized as follows (items in italics are unique to one side) [16](#):

<b>EDEN</b>	<b>TABERNACLE / TEMPLE</b>
<b>Garden "midst"</b> (within the Garden) YHWH's presence Tree of Life <i>Tree of good and evil (no parallel)</i> Entrance from the east	<b>Holy of Holies</b> (within the Sanctuary) Shekinah glory Aaron's rod <i>Ark (no parallel)</i> Entrance from the east
<b>The Garden</b> (within Eden) Entrance to east Cherubim at entrance	<b>Sanctuary</b> (within the Court of Israel) Entrance to east Pillars (In Temple) at entrance <i>Furniture (no parallel)</i>
<b>Land of Eden</b> (within the Land of Nod) Cain & Abel's offerings (at an altar?) Source of 4 rivers Entrance from the east (Genesis 4:16)	<b>Court of Israel</b> (within Land of the Gentiles) Altar of burnt offering "Bronze Sea" or Laver, and "living water" Entrance from the east
<b>Land of Nod</b> (Wilderness) Cut off from God	<b>Land of the Gentiles</b> (Outside the Camp) Cut off from God <i>Miphkad altar (red heifer, no parallel)<sup>17</sup></i>

[17](#)

God did not live in the Garden, but it was where His presence was. God did not live in the Tabernacle, but it was where He met with Israel. The Tabernacle was a tent of meeting (Exodus 25:22, 29:42, 30:36). neither did YHWH live in the Temple (2 Chronicles 6:21, 33). The Garden, the Tabernacle and the Temple were where God was present at various times.

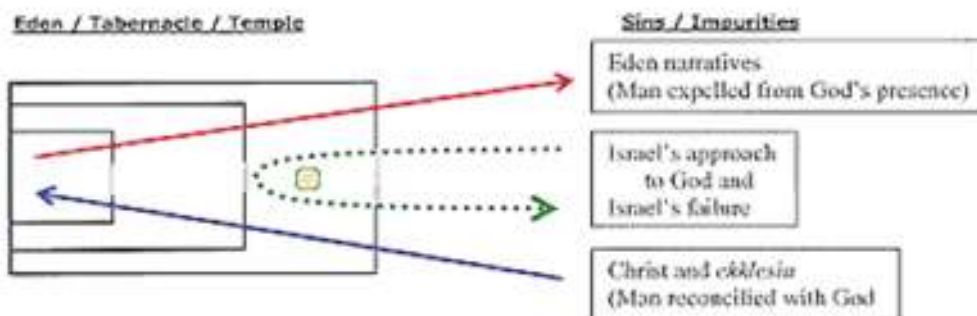
The relationships between the following schemes of progression can be understood by another diagram:



The top scheme has to do with God's relationship with various people. It relates to the ritual system. The Gentiles could only approach God through Israel (a kingdom of priests). This will be the case even in the Millennium when the Gentiles will come to God through Israel (Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-3). As a result, the Gentiles will not only recognize YHWH as their God, but they will begin to serve Him as well. Until Christ, Israel could only approach God through the Levites and the Priests. The Priests could only approach God at certain times and in certain places that God chose. That has

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ended and all requirements have been fulfilled in Christ, and God the Father can be approached, symbolically face-to-face.



For you and me the entire scheme is simplified. We can approach God directly with only one mediator, **“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (1 Timothy 2:5, see also Galatians 3:19–24 and Hebrews chapters 8 and 9). Barriers to God no longer exist for you and for me.

Temple symbolism is fulfilled in you, not in a place, or in a scheme of boundaries, or in days of the year, or in tasks to be performed, but simply in the person of the resurrected Christ Jesus. He alone brings us directly into the presence of God the Father through the Spirit of God, **“the Power of the Highest”** (Luke 1:35) which comes from the Father and Christ through you so that you are now a child of God:

**“You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**

• **Romans 8:15-17**

You have every right to act and relate to other people as the child of God that you truly are, acting with love and consideration for others. It is your inheritance — realize it, embrace it, live it. DWS

- 1 See the article “The Patterns of the Temple” (<http://www.askelm.com/temple/t031102.htm>) which shows the same word “pattern” (or model or diagram) first used in Exodus for the Tabernacle is used later in relation to the Temple. DWS
- 2 Consider that the Tabernacle/Temple symbolism lasted in some manner from the time of Moses about 1450 B.C.E to 70 C.E., with an interruption with the destruction of the Temple, the exile of the Jews to Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple in about 520 B.C.E. This is remarkably long period of some 1,450 years (1,520 years if you count the 70 years land’s rest and the people’s exile). Now the *ekklesia* of God is the Temple of God and the household of God (Ephesians 2:19–22; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:2–6, 1 Peter 2:5). DWS
- 3 In Hebrews 12:24 the blood that Jesus sprinkled in heaven is compared to the blood of Abel from Genesis 4:8.
- 4 For more information about the ark and the Cherubim that enfolded it, see the article, “The Cherubim Had Wheels” at [www.askelm.com](http://www.askelm.com). DWS
- 5 Note that not all the laws of the Ten Commandments recorded on the stones are applicable to spirit beings. Since God or spirit beings cannot commit adultery nor break the Sabbath, these laws on tables of stone are redundant for them. The Sabbath was made only for man (Mark 2:27) — and God always works on the Sabbath (John 5:17). Besides, the Ten Commandment legislation, though beautiful for the time it was intended, was recognized by Paul as **“the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones ... the ministry of condemnation”** (2 Corinthians 3:7, 9). **“The letter kills, but the spirit gives life”** (2 Corinthians 3:6). Such legislation as a system of government **“was to be done away”** (2 Corinthians 3:7). **“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”** (2



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Corinthians 3:17). *ELM*

- 6** Note God’s action, **“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ... And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”** Genesis 2:8, 15. Adam was in Eden. YHWH “took” and “put” Adam into the garden of Eden from outside. As Walter Vogels notes, the verb, **“‘took’ is used in many biblical texts to express the idea of a bringing out for the purpose of an entry (Dt. 30:4; Ezek. 36:24, 27:21; Is. 14:2). The verb contains at the same time the idea of election.”** See *God’s Universal Covenant: A Biblical Study* (University of Ottawa Press, 1986), p. 19. He notes that this idea of election no longer comes through in any of our translations. Vogels asks why,

**“Did this marvelous paradise and garden of God, with all the trees good for food (2:9), need to be cultivated? And what could be the meaning of ‘keep this garden’? Against Whom? The understanding can well become much easier when seen in the context of the covenant.”**

• *Vogels, p. 20*

To Vogels “covenant” means the entire ritual system including the Tabernacle and Temple. *DWS*

- 7** Isaac Hellmuth notes that the Rabbis considered the “face” or “presence of YHWH to be indicative of the Shekinah glory. See *Biblical Thesaurus, Genesis* (London, 1884), p. 49 on Genesis 3:8. *DWS*

- 8** Adam was to protect the Garden. When Adam was expelled, the Cherubim were assigned to guard the Garden, apparently transferred from where God was (in the midst of the Garden) to outside the garden. Umberto Cassuto in *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 122, notes that the Hebrew word *shamar* used to describe the function of the Cherubim, **“to keep the way of the tree of life,”** is the same word as in Genesis 2:15 when Adam is commanded while in the Garden of Eden, **“to dress it (Hebrew, *abad*) and to keep it (Hebrew, *shamar*)”**. *Shamar* means not only to keep, but also to guard and to protect. So too Noah was to “keep” the animals (Genesis 6:19–20, 7:3) and Abraham and Israel were admonished to “keep” God’s covenant. The priests and Levites were also to serve (*abad*), protect (*shamar*) and guard (another Hebrew word, *mishmereth*) the sanctuary from unauthorized people, with the sword if necessary. See Numbers 1:51–53, 8:26, 18:2–7, 31:30, 47; Joshua 22:27 and Ezekiel 44:8, 15. See Edmund P. Clowney, “The Final Temple” in *Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. 35 (Winter 1973), p. 160, available complete online at <http://www.beginningwithmoses.org/articles/finaltemple.htm> *DWS*

- 9** This was recognized by Edmund Clowney in “The Final Temple” in *The Westminster Theological Journal* v.35 (Winter 1993), p. 160. *DWS*

**“The gate of the garden was barred by ... the Cherubim [who held swords]. ... In the tabernacle and the temple, the sword [held by priests and Levites] continues to keep the gate. But the altar of sacrifice offers a victim ... so that the worshipper may come before God.”**

- 10** Solomon constructed the Temple according to the pattern King David received from God Himself (1 Chronicles 28:11–13). Psalm 92 (which talks about a future Sabbath rest for the righteous) evokes Eden-like symbolism. *DWS*

**“The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree [a date-palm], He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, They will flourish in the courts of our God.”**

• *Psalms 92:12–13*

- 11** Again, the cherubim are symbolically guarding the trees in the midst of the Garden, even in the Solomonic Temple. *DWS*

- 12** Joshua Berman notes in *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1995), p. 30 that Cherubim, in addition to guarding the way to the Tree of Life in the Garden. They also covered or guarded the tablets of the Law in the ark of the testament in the Holy of Holies in both the Tabernacle and Temple. Remember that touching the ark caused death (2 Samuel 6:7) just as the Cherubim threatened to do with their swords at Eden. They symbolized the inaccessibility of man to God.

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- 13** Ezekiel 28 is filled with imagery from both Eden and the Temple. For example, Berman in *The Temple*, p. 26, notes that the 9 precious stones listed in Ezekiel 28:13 are 9 of the 12 stones present in the High Priests breastplate depicted in Exodus 28:17–20. In fact there are several points where the Eden of Genesis identifies with the Eden of Ezekiel 28: both have a garden, both have miraculous trees within the garden, both have at least 1 cherub associated with them, both are in mountains, both have creatures that transgress, both contain phrases that closely resemble each other ("**in the day ... created,**" "**walking**" in the Garden), both have the guard being the transgressor, both transgressors are expelled and both are made to be examples for others.
- 14** Mercea Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, trans by Wullard Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1959) p. 13.
- 15** In *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George F. Mendenhall*, ed. By H.B. Huffman, et al. (Winona Lake, IN, 1983), pp. 207–219.
- 16** By the way, these diagrams, schemes and models are for illustration only.
- 17** There are differences, of course, between Eden and the Tabernacle/Temple. The Garden has no elements like the pot of manna, the ark, the table of shewbread, altar of incense or lampstand. The proportions and sizes of the Garden are not given to us.

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**Have Patience with Me**  
**(Copyright) by Annie Poonen (Bangalore, India)**

"Have patience with me," cried the slave as he begged his fellow-slave for mercy (Matt.18:29).



This is also the unspoken cry that comes to us as housewives and mothers from many of those with whom we have to do each day. But we need to be sensitive in our spirits if we are to hear that cry - for it is unspoken.

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It may be that our children are slow at learning something that we have repeatedly been trying to teach them, and we are sorely tempted to become impatient with them. If we could hear their unspoken cry, saying, "Have patience with me, I am trying my best to do it right," then it would be easier for us to overcome the temptation to get irritated with them.

Perhaps the servant who helps us with our work around the home is somewhat clumsy, and not as clean as we want her to be, and we are tempted to be hard on her. But her unspoken cry is, "Have patience with me. Give me another chance and I'll improve" - and we are presented with another opportunity to be more gentle.

Or it may be that our aged parents, being old and infirm, are now dependent on us. Their feeble, unspoken cry is also, "Have patience with me. I don't want to trouble you, but I need your help now." If we are sensitive to their feelings, we will hear their cry and help them, without depriving them of their dignity, and without letting them feel their dependence.

Perhaps the behaviour of our fellow-sisters in the church is a trial for us. Their unspoken cry is also, "Have patience with me. I still lack a lot of wisdom." Then we realise that they also, like us, are struggling towards perfection.

In such situations, we all find a tendency in our flesh to be like that unmerciful slave. Yet those are the very times when we need to remember afresh how much we have been forgiven by God, and how patient others have been with our own follies.

So, we should have our spiritual ears attuned at all times to hear the cry for patience that comes to us from our fellow-slaves - both young and old.

*Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* (James 1:4).

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## Nature's Sports Car

(Copyright) by David Rives (Lewisburg, Tennessee)



The fastest land animal in the world makes its home on the Savannas in Africa alongside elephants, hippos, and rhinos. A very small population of a sub-species also lives in eastern Iran. That mammal, of course, is the

## **Cheetah.**

**This Cheetah is famous for its speed. While hunting it can reach top speeds of 45 to 70 miles per hour in just three seconds. Even though they're the fastest, their prey is often able to escape because antelope and gazelle can change direction very quickly and have greater stamina than a Cheetah's short bursts.**

Cheetahs always look like they're crying but that dark tear mark, called a malar stripe, serves a useful purpose. It attracts sunlight and keeps the sun's glare out of the Cheetah's eyes. The long tail of the Cheetah serves as a rudder and their semi-non-retractable claws act as cleats, giving them extra grip. Everything about them is streamlined for speed.

Due to habitat loss, Cheetahs, like most African mammals, are endangered with only a few thousand remaining in the wild. Cheetahs produce more offspring than other cats, but many of their baby's become food for lions, hyenas, or other African predators.

As many as 90% of Cheetah kittens won't make it past three months of age due to predators and death from illnesses. Cheetahs don't have much genetic diversity, so they often have weak immune systems.

Cheetahs probably belong to the cat kind, along with lions, cougars, tigers, bobcats, house cats, and more. But researchers aren't quite sure if they do because there isn't good evidence of interbreeding with other cats. It could be that they belong to their own kind or that they're members of the cat kind. More research will have to be done to figure out for sure.

But what we do know is that Cheetahs bear testimony to their Designer who built them for speed and who delights in what he has made.

I'm David Rives...Truly, the heavens declare the glory of God.

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## **Holy Day Articles**

### **Rethinking Easter**

**(Copyright) by Wayne Schatzle (West Chester, Ohio)**

Supposedly the holiest time of the year is the Easter season. It is interesting that the very word Easter, in fact has nothing to do with Christ at all. It is a name of a pagan fertility goddess of the spring, also called Astarte, or Ishtar. Actually, God instructed His people to not even have the names of other gods on their lips {Joshua 23}.

Even the various trappings of colored eggs and rabbits are additional tokens of fertility and reproduction, which we ignorantly teach to our unsuspecting children. But doesn't it all point to Christ's resurrection?

If the truth were known, it actually *takes away* from the specific instructions Christ revealed to His followers. In the actual story we read in the bible, Jesus instituted the New Testament Passover at the beginning of the annual Passover and substituted bread and wine instead of the lamb. He instructed His followers to do that ritual as a memorial to the covenant between He and His followers. Oddly enough there was no instructions to celebrate His resurrection. In fact, He rose and walked through the rock unbeknownst to anyone. The angel rolled the gravestone away so people could look in and see He was gone- not let Jesus out.

Another thing that smacks of paganism is sunrise services- again totally unbiblical and even referenced in the eighth chapter of Ezekiel how people had their backs to the temple and worshipped the rising sun in the East!

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Scholarly commentaries will show that Jesus was probably entombed at the going down of the sun at the beginning of the high holyday, which that year would be a Thursday, and was resurrected at the setting of the sun that following Sabbath. If that being the case, Jesus would have fulfilled the ONLY sign that He was the Messiah by being in the tomb exactly 3 day and 3 nights {Matthew 11:40}, totally opposite to our traditions of keeping a “good Friday” crucifixion and Sunday morning resurrection. To muddy the water even more: today we observe the beginning of days at an unobservable twelve midnight instead of the biblical sunset.

Years ago, I talked with a pastor of a large church about these traditions and pagan trappings that have influenced this most solemn occasion. Surprisingly he knew full well of all this but confided that the people wanted it that way and would surely cause a division in his church over scripture truth. I was reminded of the words of Paul to Timothy of the last days when people would not accept sound doctrine but according to their own desires will turn from the truth and accept fables {2 Timothy 4}.

Church history reveals a slow departure away from bible truth to man’s traditions usually as a means to garner converts among the heathen who associated with pagan customs and secondly to separate themselves from the Jews. The Catholic and Jewish encyclopedias both reveal that the reason for the convoluted timing and observance of Easter was to separate themselves from anything resembling Jewish. History points to a pagan emperor Constantine, centuries after that first new testament Passover {or called on occasion the Lord’s supper}, finally decreed in favor of Easter, rather than the biblical Passover that Christ kept. That trend has continued even to this day. Churches today are in competition for the dwindling number of people willing to attend church. Not surprisingly, churches have lowered the bar and now teach traditions as doctrines. The deception is complete. Satan has convinced the world that evil is good- and good is evil.

Make no mistake, the pagan religions were very enjoyable to fleshly-minded people, and it was always difficult to tear people away from that to embrace a religion of self-denial and moral uprightness. Nevertheless, God hates these seemingly innocent ways and thunders “Learn NOT the way of the heathen” Jeremiah 10.

The road to truth is a rocky one. Reform is looked at as being pharisaical. Some few ministers have stopped using the name Easter- in favor of “resurrection day”. Even that small step in the right direction is looked upon by many as being legalistic.

For many years this ministry has warned of deception and encouraged personal bible study. Easter is actually one of the easiest deceptions to identify for the novice bible student and casual reader of history but very hard for people steeped in worldly traditions to separate from.

As always, it is our prayer that our great God will light the path that leads to Life, and He would grant the strength to stay on that narrow way {Matthew 7:14}.

**Questionable Article**

**Tell us why you believe this is a true or false doctrine and why?**

**Learn to Give an Answer!**

**Considerations on WHEN a Day Begins?**

**(Copyright) by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)**

- Morning & evening: both are parts of a “full day” [Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23 & 31] The ‘evening (mentioned first) is an integral part of the whole “day”.
- Three meanings of “Day”: 24-hours / daylight portion / era of time
- Which part of the day does the night portion fall within? Before or after? If it’s the second part of the 24-hour “day” interval, that creates numerous problems.



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- Entombment completion: rushed to finish before sundown. [Lk.23:54; Mk.15:42] Their burial efforts were hastened on account of the approaching Sabbath. That wouldn't be the end of the night, but the end of the daylight portion of that day.
- Sabbaths draw on (are about to begin) as the daylight part of the day was ending: [Lk.23:54] In this case, Jesus was hastily placed in the tomb. 24-hour “days” begin at the onset of “evenings”.
- Entombment interval (3 Days & 3 Nights): Entombment is the stated interval. You can't count Friday daylight or Sunday daylight. That then means: Saturday night + Saturday day + Sunday night (He was raised before Sunday morning) leaving Two Nights and One Day! (That's if using the Friday crucifixion approach.) Note: the 3 Days +3 Nights idea counts from entombment, not from His death, not including time on the cross.
- When was the watch set? [Mt.27:62] For the verse to mean during the next daylight hours, then that would be a High Sabbath (the First Day of Unleavened Bread) and/or a weekly Sabbath. Either these two Sabbaths coincided or were separated by another “Preparation Day” in between. Question is, did they approach Pilate on an annual Sabbath or a weekly Sabbath? He gave the WORK of sealing the tomb to them, he only supplied the watch-soldiers. So, did the Jews do the physical labor of sealing the tomb on a High Sabbath (which it had to be) or possibly even a ‘double Sabbath’, which was in fact Their Passover Day! How likely would they have done this on their High Sabbath considering **John 18:28. [see Mt.27:62-66]**
- Women buy spices, but not on a Sabbath day: The latter is well demonstrated by the women's experience of buying spices on ‘the Preparation Day’, preparing them, and then resting on the weekly Sabbath. THAT Sabbath on which they rested could only have been the weekly Sabbath. [cp. Mk.16:1 with Lk.23:56] The ‘preparation day’ mentioned [Lk.23:56] was the Friday of that week. Fridays were often referred to as the preparation for the (weekly) Sabbath: The Sabbath ‘according to the commandment’ (the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment). Now, we're faced with a question. Did they purchase such aromatics and oils BEFORE His death or after? The text indicates AFTER! They had no awareness of His pending death before it happened, which is another important consideration. So, the purchase and preparation of said items (having seen the burial situation the previous evening [Lk.23:55]), was with realization that more was needed. This explains their actions. What this detail establishes is that there were TWO Sabbaths in that week. In either event, there HAD TO BE, as a High Holy Day always follows the Passover. So, either there were TWO occurring concurrently, or TWO in succession. The spice buying occasion establishes that there was another ‘preparation day’ between these TWO! That's why that little detail was included, to ‘clue-in’ those attending to detail.
- Start of a Sabbath: traditionally at sunset: This was known from Creation, faithfully preserved by the Jewish religion to the present day. No one takes serious issue with Jewish Tradition on this. Even the secular world identifies the start of a new day being during the night portion of the day, but at midnight rather than at sunset.
- Passover sacrifice: slain just as the sun had set: [Deut.16:6] That would be the onset of the fourteenth, not ‘at even’ as the daylight portion of the fourteenth was just ending.
- Passover occurred at midnight of which day? [Ex.12:29]
- Jesus and His disciples KNEW when Passover was. It was during the night portion of the fourteenth, illustrated by what is erroneously (unbiblically) called “The Lord's Supper” (to obscure the fact) that they used the term “Passover” for their observance exclusively ten times! Many Sadducees kept it as they did, but the Pharisees advocated a fifteenth Passover, erroneously calling the whole week of unleavened bread Passover. The “passing over” occurred at midnight during the fourteenth, with preparations for the first day of Unleavened Bread during the daylight part of the fourteenth. That was the ‘preparation’ referred to in Mark 15:42. This was the preparation day for the first annual Holy Day which always followed next after the Passover. The ‘Sabbath’ referred to in this verse was the annual Sabbath! The daylight portion of the fourteenth HAD TO BE followed by a High Holy Day, as John points out. [Jn.19:31]
- Atonement Day interval (like any Sabbath) is from sunset to sunset: [Lev.23:32]
- Unleavened Bread interval: ‘even to even’ [Ex.12:18] evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> thru the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>. The fourteenth at even is the beginning of the fifteenth: which is day one of the seven days thru to the end “even” of the seventh day,

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the twenty-first.

- Legal death: Three full days (Lazarus' example). This was by Roman Law. Same with Lazarus [Jn.11:17] to remove any doubt that he was dead. He'd been dead long enough to stink. [Jn.11:39]
- Wave sheaf bound at sunset / presented in the morning: Traditional practice had this being done. The ceremony is explained in great detail in Edersheim's Book: "The Temple, Its Ministry and its Services", 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1998, Hendrickson Publishing. They would never have considered doing so IF they thought a 24-hour day began with dawn. But the next item is an even greater proof of their persuasion on this.
- The New Moons: An observation practice essential to the religious calendar was the monthly sighting of the first visible crescent to confirm the beginning of the new lunar month. This was essential to their calendar and to determine the dates for the annual Holy Days. As the current month was winding down, calendar priests would convene and await the appearance of the first sighting of the emerging crescent just above the western horizon a few minutes after sunset. Upon a confirmed sighting, the beginning of the new month would be declared. This event marked not only the day which began that new month but was at the start of the new day. This further establishes that days began in the evenings as the sun had just set. The lunar calendar is not all predetermined, as we're used to. It required numerous judgment calls and verifications by confirmed sightings to establish accuracy. The first month (influenced by the Abib (first ripened barley)) was an added factor in establishing the first month. The seventh month was also important as it established the dates for the fall Holy Day season, which are all within the seventh month. Nothing would better verify that days were considered to begin at sunset than this, from the time of the Exodus and well before. [Ex.12:2].
- Why, "if inspired" would believers be in full agreement with the daughters of the Great Whore system? They, nearly all, hold to a Friday crucifixion belief. (Though few if any advocate sunrise as the beginning of a 24-hour day.)

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## Letters

**Letter from Curtis Dahlgren (December 29, 2022)**

Thanks for publishing. Good!

### Iron Sharpening Iron

(Agree or Disagree with Something Printed)  
New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)  
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

## In regard to: Black Citizens of America

Article by Ray Daly  
Comments by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

I offered Scripture. You responded without Scripture proving my references wrong. I used history that any can search out if they went on the net. You did not go to the net.

What more do you want. Are you afraid of the Truth or something????

## **In regard to: Black Citizens of America**

Article by Ray Daly

Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

I offered Scripture. You responded without Scripture proving my references wrong. I used history that any can search out if they went on the net. You did not go to the net.

What more do you want. Are you afraid of the Truth or something???? Ray Daly

The scriptures you were using did not prove that John the Baptist wrote the book of Revelation. If you believe the three scriptures you provided in your Iron Sharpening Iron in Issue #99 prove this then, I and Darwin are just not seeing the connection. Perhaps you need to use scriptures that are clearer.

If you used history to prove your points as you are telling me, then where were your references to books and/or internet pages? If you write an article and you get your history from a book then you need to list the book, author and even the page number. If your history came from a web page, then you need to provide the link to that web page so people can go there and look at the item you are referring to.

Of course, people can go to the internet and look things up on their own, but do you have any idea how many different web pages are out there? Chances of anyone reading your article and then landing on the exact web page you got your information off of are nil to none. That is why it is the authors/writer's responsibility to provide any information as far as books and web links that he has used to write his or her article.

And I did go to the internet and found a web page which did not say what you said in Issue #99. It said the opposite of what you said, and not only did I copy and paste part of what the website said, but I also provided a web link to the site so people could go look if they wanted to.

You said of me: **"You did not go to the net."** That is an outright lie. It can be proven that you lied by going here: <https://church-of-god-bismarck.org/newsletter/black-citizens-of-america-ezp-558?chapter=903> and here: <https://www.church-of-god-bismarck.org/linked/12-24-2022-issue-0099.pdf> and reading page 13 and 14.

What more do we want? When you openly lie once, you have probably done it numerous times. You have an inability to understand scripture let alone put it together in a truthful way. In my opinion you should not be teaching. If you do continue to write articles, they should contain your sources, for example, names of books, authors, and web pages, you are getting your information from.

We are definitely not afraid of the truth here and so therefore we try very hard to provide all people including yourself with correct information when we feel we are being handed a line of blarney as you have done here.

I am sorry Ray, but most everything you submit for print is filled with inaccuracies that we cannot ignore. And when people ask questions in regard to what you have written you absolutely need to be able to provide specific answers for what they are asking and not bring in a multitude of subjects that do not pertain.

## **In regard to: Considerations on WHEN a Day Begins?**

Article by Rich Traver

Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

**Laura Lee writes:**

I believe that what Rich is trying to prove here is that a day is 24 hours long and starts at even and that Christ was three days and three nights in the grave. The reason he is trying to prove this is because there are people within the Church of God that believe a day starts in the morning and that Christ was crucified on a Friday and resurrected on a Sunday

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morning. Unfortunately, these and other false beliefs do run rampant in the Church of God.

Even with Rich’s intent to prove that certain doctrines are false, which is what we should all be doing, so people are directed to the truth of what scripture says, we feel there is much error in this article so for that reason we will go through all of the points Rich brings in and you can decide for yourself. Just remember you need to be able to prove what you believe through scripture and not through some lone historical document that was written in the 1980’s which no one ever heard of before.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Morning & evening: both are parts of a “full day” [**Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23 & 31**] The ‘evening (mentioned first) is an integral part of the whole “day”.

**Laura Lee writes:**

We are in agreement that days begin with the evening part of the day and go from even to even. The reason God set it up this way may be because the earth started with darkness.

**Gen 1:2 ... and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Gen 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. Gen 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. Gen 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (KJV)**

Another consideration for a day to start at even is because life starts with darkness also. Babies are in their mother’s dark womb for nine months before finally being born and seeing the light of day.

New birth always starts in the dark and ends with seeing light.

To me there is a symbolic reason why God chose to start His days at even.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Three meanings of “Day”: 24-hours / daylight portion / era of time

**Laura Lee writes:**

What Rich is saying here is similar to the definition of Passover. Day in scripture is referred to as 24-hours, daylight and even eras of time, so too is the Passover referred to as the day of Passover, the Passover meal, and also the Passover sacrifice. These definitions are not hard to see but some people mistakenly put the wrong definition to both of these at times while reading the scriptures. For example, if you are reading scripture talking about the Passover meal and you mistakenly believe it is referring to the Passover sacrifice it will throw the meaning of the scriptures you are reading off and cause you to believe something which is perhaps not even true. This is why all scripture needs to be read in context of what it says. You cannot take one scripture and build an entire doctrine out of it.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Which part of the day does the night portion fall within? Before or after? If it’s the second part of the 24-hour “day” interval, that creates numerous problems.

**Laura Lee writes:**

Rich is right on here. For one thing, if you are not answering this question correctly and you actually believe that the night portion of the day is at the end of the day instead of at the beginning of the day then you will have problems with the timing of the Holy Days. For example, Atonement is to be kept from even to even and the Passover meal is to be eaten at even.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Entombment completion: rushed to finish before sundown. [**Lk.23:54; Mk.15:42**] Their burial efforts were hastened on account of the approaching Sabbath. That wouldn’t be the end of the night, but the end of the daylight portion of that day.

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**Laura Lee writes:**

**Luk 23:54** And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. (KJV)

**Mar 15:42** And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, (KJV)

If you read both scriptures in context you will find they are both referring to the point of time that Jesus was taken off the stake and about to be placed in the grave. We know that Christ was crucified with the Passover lambs on the daylight portion of the fourteenth of Nisan/Abib. The day Christ was crucified was also the preparation for the high Holy Day of Passover/1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread, so after they removed Christ from the stake, they had to rush to get Him in the grave before the Holy Day began at even on the fourteenth going into the fifteenth of Nisan/Abib.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Sabbaths draw on (are about to begin) as the daylight part of the day was ending: **[Lk.23:54]** In this case, Jesus was hastily placed in the tomb. 24-hour “days” begin at the onset of “evenings”.

**Laura Lee writes:**

We are in agreement with this statement. See the previous point.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Entombment interval (3 Days & 3 Nights): Entombment is the stated interval. You can’t count Friday daylight or Sunday daylight. That then means: Saturday night + Saturday day + Sunday night (He was raised before Sunday morning) leaving Two Nights and One Day! (That’s if using the Friday crucifixion approach.) Note: the 3 Days +3 Nights idea counts from entombment, not from His death, not including time on the cross.

**Laura Lee writes:**

Many people believe that Christ was crucified on a Friday (Good Friday) and was resurrected on Sunday morning (Easter/Resurrection Sunday). That would mean Christ was only in the grave for 1.5 Days and not the total three days which scripture speaks of.

**Mat 12:39** But he answered and said unto them, **An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: Mat 12:40** For as Jonas was **three days and three nights** in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth.

The conclusion here is that a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection is a false doctrine according to scripture.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● When was the watch set? **[Mt.27:62]** For the verse to mean during the next daylight hours, then that would be a High Sabbath (the First Day of Unleavened Bread) and/or a weekly Sabbath. Either these two Sabbaths coincided or were separated by another “Preparation Day” in between. Question is, did they approach Pilate on an annual Sabbath or a weekly Sabbath? He gave the WORK of sealing the tomb to them, he only supplied the watch-soldiers. So, did the Jews do the physical labor of sealing the tomb on a High Sabbath (which it had to be) or possibly even a ‘double Sabbath’, which was in fact Their Passover Day! How likely would they have done this on their High Sabbath considering **John 18:28. [see Mt.27:62-66]**

**Laura Lee writes:**

**Mat 27:62** Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, **Mat 27:63** Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. **Mat 27:64** Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. **Mat 27:65** Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. **Mat 27:66** So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. (KJV)



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**Joh 18:28** Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. (KJV)

To answer the questions Rich brings in. The watch (guards) was set to guard the tomb on Passover/1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread. See Mat. 27:62 above. Setting the watch and sealing the stone were all done on the daylight portion of the Passover/1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread.

How likely were the Jewish Priests and Pharisees to seal the stone and set the guard on a high (annual) Holy Day? According to my research it would be highly likely and probably would not have broken any of their rules and regulations.

Pilate gave them the guards to set up the watch. Once they had the guards, all they had to do was walk to the sepulchre. See Mat. 27:65 above. None of them had to do any rock lifting, pushing, or rolling because the stone was already in front of the opening to the sepulchre. See Mark 15:46 below.

**Mar 15:46** And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock and **rolled a stone** unto the door of the sepulchre. (KJV)

When they were finished laying Christ in the sepulchre, they rolled a stone unto the door. In other words, they closed the entrance of the sepulchre with a stone. And according to Matthew it was a large stone. See Mat. 27:59-60 below.

**Mat 27:59** And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, **Mat 27:60** And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. (KJV)

Carefully read the following verse:

**Mat 27:66** So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, **sealing the stone**, and setting a watch. (KJV)

Many people believe that the stone itself was the seal, but that is not what scripture says. The watch is set, and the stone is in place, so all the Priests and Pharisees had to do was seal the stone in front of the door to the sepulchre. So, what was the seal? Some commentaries cover what the seal on the stone was.

#### **Vincent's word studies**

**Sealing the stone and setting a watch** (**σφραγίσαντες τὸν λίθον, μετὰ τῆς κουστῳδίας**) Lit., *having sealed the stone with the watch*. Rev., *Sealing the stone, the guard being with them*. This is rather awkward, but the rendering rightly corrects the A. V. The idea is that they sealed the stone in the presence of the guard, and then left them to keep watch. It would be important that the guard should witness the sealing. The sealing was performed by stretching a cord across the stone and fastening it to the rock at either end by means of sealing clay. Or, if the stone at the door happened to be fastened with a cross beam, this latter was sealed to the rock.

#### **Robertson's word pictures**

**Sealing the stone, the guard being with them** (*sphragisantēs ton lithon meta tēs koustōdias*). Probably by a cord stretched across the stone and sealed at each end as in [Dan 6:17](#). The sealing was done in the presence of the Roman guard who were left in charge to protect this stamp of Roman authority and power. They did their best to prevent theft and the resurrection (Bruce), but they overreached themselves and provided additional witness to the fact of the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus (Plummer).

#### **B. W. Johnson**

**Sealing the stone.** A cord was stretched across the stone door and sealed at each end with wax. The seal would have to be broken to remove the stone.

#### **John Gill**

**So they went**,.... From Pilate's palace, to the garden of Joseph, and to the sepulchre there; which whether more than a sabbath day's journey, or two thousand cubits, may be inquired; and if so, then they broke one of their own traditions, which allowed a person to go no further on a sabbath day; See Gill on [Act 1:12](#).

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**And made the sepulchre sure;** in the following manner, **sealing the stone;** that was rolled to the door of it, it may be with some public seal, with Pilate's, or with the Sanhedrin's; as the stone at the mouth of the lions' den, in which Daniel was put, was sealed with the king's signet, and with the signet of his lords, [Dan 6:17](#), that there might be no change of the sentence upon him, and by which it appeared, that his deliverance was by no human assistance: so the stone at Christ's sepulchre was sealed, that it could not be removed without breaking it; which would show, whether any fraudulent methods were taken to remove the body:

**and setting a watch;** a guard of soldiers, to observe and prevent any person coming near it; or "with the watch": they made sure the sepulchre with the watch; or sealed the stone, the watch being present; all which was overruled by the providence of God, for the greater confirmation of the truth of Christ's resurrection: by the methods taken, it clearly appears, there could be no fraud in the case; the body was laid in a tomb, where no corpse had ever been before; in a tomb hewed out of a rock, to which there was no access, but at the door; where a great stone was rolled; and this had a seal upon it, and a guard of soldiers about it; and hereby there were more witnesses of Christ's resurrection, than otherwise would have been; as the soldiers, though they were afterwards bribed to tell another story; and even the chief priests and Pharisees were convicted that he was risen, or they would never have taken such a method with the soldiers, as they did.

**George Haydock**

*They departing.* See how beyond the possibility of contradiction these precautions prove the reality of Christ's resurrection, and how the inveterate enemies of Christ become unwilling witnesses of it; for, since the sepulchre was guarded, there was an impossibility of any deceit on the part of the disciples. Now, if the least deceit was utterly impracticable, then indeed Christ our Lord was infallibly risen; and to remove every, the least possibility of deceit, Pilate would not permit the soldiers alone to seal up the monument. (St. Thomas Aquinas) --- The high priests made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone at the entrance of the monument with the public seal, *Greek: sphragisantes ton lithon*, proof against all fraud, either of corrupt guards or of designing followers, as Darius did, ([Dan 6:17](#)) that no violence might be offered him. All this diligence, on the part of the enemies of the Christian faith, was permitted by divine Providence, that our faith in Christ's resurrection might be more certain, his glory greater, and the minds of the people better disposed to believe. (Jansenius)

**Albert Barnes**

**Sealing the stone** - The sepulchre was made sure by affixing the large stone to the entrance in such a way that it could not be removed without detection. It was sealed. In what way this was done cannot now be certainly told. The cave in which Daniel was cast was fastened in the same manner, and sealed with the king's signet [Dan 6:17](#), perhaps by fastening the stone in its place with cords, and bringing them together and uniting them with wax, and impressing on that the seal of the king. In this way, letters and books were anciently sealed. Possibly on the sepulchre of Jesus was impressed in this manner the seal of Pilate - the seal of office - making it doubly sure; or it may be that the stone was fitted into the tomb with clay or cement, and on that was impressed the seal of Pilate.

**Setting a watch** - That is, as large a number of soldiers as they judged necessary to secure the tomb. We cannot but be struck with the wisdom of God in ordering the circumstances of the Saviour's burial in such a manner as to avoid the possibility of deception. Had all this been done by his "friends," it might have been said that they only pretended to secure the tomb, and only pretended that he was dead. But he was adjudged to be dead "by the Jews themselves;" Pilate was satisfied that that was the fact; they had their own way about his burial; he was buried alone; the place of his sepulchre was made sure, "expressly to prevent his being removed;" and they placed around him a guard, in their own judgment large enough to prevent his being taken away by force or strength. His very enemies, therefore, took every possible precaution to place his resurrection beyond the possibility of suspicion of fraud and imposture, and those precautions were the very means of furnishing the most striking proof that his death, burial, and resurrection were not impositions, but most affecting, awful, and yet cheering realities.

**Rich Traver's Article:**

● **Women buy spices, but not on a Sabbath day:** The latter is well demonstrated by the women's experience of buying spices on 'the Preparation Day', preparing them, and then resting on the weekly Sabbath. THAT Sabbath on which they rested could only have been the weekly Sabbath. [cp. [Mk.16:1](#) with [Lk.23:56](#)] The 'preparation day' mentioned [[Lk.23:56](#)] was the Friday of that week. Fridays were often referred to as the preparation for the (weekly) Sabbath: The Sabbath 'according to the commandment' (the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment). Now, we're faced with a question. Did they purchase such

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aromatics and oils BEFORE His death or after? The text indicates AFTER! They had no awareness of His pending death before it happened, which is another important consideration. So, the purchase and preparation of said items (having seen the burial situation the previous evening [Lk.23:55]), was with realization that more was needed. This explains their actions. What this detail establishes is that there were TWO Sabbaths in that week. In either event, there HAD TO BE, as a High Holy Day always follows the Passover. So, either there were TWO occurring concurrently, or TWO in succession. The spice buying occasion establishes that there was another ‘preparation day’ between these TWO! That’s why that little detail was included, to ‘clue-in’ those attending to detail.

**Laura Lee writes:**

**Mar 16:1** And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, **had bought sweet spices**, that they might come and anoint him. (KJV)

**Luk 23:55** And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. **Luk 23:56** And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and **rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.** (KJV)

I was in agreement with you until I got to this statement “**as a High Holy Day always follows the Passover**”. Passover is a High Holy Day. In the year that Christ was crucified it happened this way:

**Wednesday Afternoon**

Nisan/Abib (14<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon) = Christ was crucified with the Passover Lambs between the two evenings. The first evening was noon and the second evening was sunset. Christ died about 3:00 PM which was between the two evenings. Christ was buried just before sunset. (This was the preparation day for Passover/1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread)

**Wednesday at Even (Sunset)**

Nisan/Abib (15<sup>th</sup> at even “sundown”) = Passover and the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Unleavened Bread started at even “sundown”. The Passover meal was eaten.

In Old Testament times the death angel Passed over at midnight.

**Thursday Day Time**

In Old Testament times the Israelites left Rameses on the morrow (archaic for tomorrow) after the Passover.

**Num 33:3** And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. (KJV)

At the time of Christ = The stone at the tomb was sealed and the guard was set.

**Friday**

Nisan/Abib (16<sup>th</sup>) = The women bought and prepared spices. This was the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath. The wave sheaf was also done on this day.

**Saturday**

Nisan/Abib (17<sup>th</sup>) = This was the weekly Sabbath. Christ was resurrected just before sunset. This would make 3 Days and 3 Nights in the grave as scripture says.

For more details see “The Spices and the Visits to Christ’s Tomb” in Issue #69 or go to the web page:

<https://church-of-god-bismarck.org/newsletter/the-spices-and-the-visits-to-christs-tomb-ezp-147?chapter=879>

It is not just Sunday keeping Christians keeping and promoting a Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection, some in the Church of God are doing it also. Shame on you if you are one of them. You should know better.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Start of a Sabbath: traditionally at sunset: This was known from Creation, faithfully preserved by the Jewish religion to the present day. No one takes serious issue with Jewish Tradition on this. Even the secular world identifies the start of

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a new day being during the night portion of the day, but at midnight rather than at sunset.

**Laura Lee writes:**

We are in agreement with Rich here.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Passover sacrifice: slain just as the sun had set: **[Deut.16:6]** That would be the onset of the fourteenth, not ‘at even’ as the daylight portion of the fourteenth was just ending.

**Laura Lee writes:**

**Deu 16:6** But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover **at even, at the going down of the sun,** at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. (KJV)

We part ways here again. This verse is not talking about the early part of the fourteenth of Nisan/Abib as Rich is claiming here. Notice it says “...at even, at the going down of the sun,” When does the sun start to go down? It starts to go down at “NOON”. Noon is the first evening (even) and sunset is the 2<sup>nd</sup> evening (even). You can still find this written in some old or older dictionaries by looking up definitions for “evening”.

This verse is talking about the Passover sacrifice which was killed between noon and sunset on the latter part of Nisan/Abib 14.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Passover occurred at midnight of which day? **[Ex.12:29]**

**Laura Lee writes:**

**Exo 12:29** And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that **was** in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. (KJV)

In case you didn’t notice, there is no date given in this verse, however I did state it above. The death angel passed over at midnight on Nisan/Abib 15 and the Israelites were high tailing it out of Rameses only a few hours later on the morrow after the Passover.

**Num 33:3** And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. (KJV)

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Jesus and His disciples KNEW when Passover was. It was during the night portion of the fourteenth, illustrated by what is erroneously (unbiblically) called “The Lord’s Supper” (to obscure the fact) that they used the term “Passover” for their observance exclusively ten times! Many Sadducees kept it as they did, but the Pharisees advocated a fifteenth Passover, erroneously calling the whole week of unleavened bread Passover. The “passing over” occurred at midnight during the fourteenth, with preparations for the first day of Unleavened Bread during the daylight part of the fourteenth. That was the ‘preparation’ referred to in Mark 15:42. This was the preparation day for the first annual Holy Day which always followed next after the Passover. The ‘Sabbath’ referred to in this verse was the annual Sabbath! The daylight portion of the fourteenth HAD TO BE followed by a High Holy Day, as John points out. **[Jn.19:31]**

**Laura Lee writes:**

Most of what Rich says in this point we are not in agreement with.

You are absolutely correct, Jesus and His disciples KNEW when Passover was, and they clearly did not keep it on the fourteenth of Nisan as the Sadducees did. Again, the Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread was the first annual High Holy Day of the year. Why do you think that Christ died with the Pharisean Passover Lambs if He actually believed Passover should be kept on the fourteenth of Nisan/Abib with the Sadducees? You and everyone else should know better.

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**Act 23:8** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. (KJV)

There it is right there in scripture. Why would Jesus be doing anything according to the Pagan Sadducees who bought their way into the places of power in the Temple? The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection or in angels and the verse adds that they did not believe in spirit. One could conclude from that that they did not believe in God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit as all are spirit. Why would anyone follow their practices, especially Christ?

Just as Pentecost is known as Feast of Weeks, Feast of First Fruits and as Pentecost, so too is the week of Unleavened Bread also referred to as the Feast of Passover.

**Luk 2:41** Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the **feast of the passover**. (KJV)

**Joh 13:1** Now before the **feast of the passover**, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (KJV)

Rich tells us “...Pharisees advocated a fifteenth Passover, erroneously calling the whole week of unleavened bread Passover.”

Apparently, God was totally wrong in what He caused to be inspired in the Bible according to Rich Traver who claims the Pharisees erroneously called the whole week of unleavened bread Passover.

The book of Ezekiel was inspired to be written they believe in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century before Christ. So, there were no Pharisees at that time and yet God inspired this to be written:

**Eze 45:21** In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.

Everyone knows that the Feast of Unleavened Bread starts at even as the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan turns into the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, so we have the time frame of this verse and look what it says, “...the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month...” “in” is probably the clue that it is talking about the latter part of the day. Then it goes on “...ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days...” The verse is clearly saying it is a Feast of seven days (not eight which it would have to be if you started with the early part of the 14<sup>th</sup>). And it ends with “unleavened bread shall be eaten.” This verse does not even mention the Feast of Unleavened Bread instead it says to keep Passover a Feast of seven days where you will eat unleavened bread. Again, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Passover is the same week.

Passover is referred to as a Feast in several scriptures. The words of the Bible were inspired to be written by God so you can't just throw these scriptures out because you don't believe them or because you don't like them or because they don't fit into your pet doctrines.

If you truly love God and He presents new information to you, you need to study it through scripture and if you find you have been wrong in what you believed even if you believed it for fifty years you need to change your belief system understanding that it was you who were wrong and not God.

**Rich Traver's Article:**

● Atonement Day interval (like any Sabbath) is from sunset to sunset: [Lev.23:32]

**Laura Lee writes:**

We agree that all Sabbaths and Annual Holy Days are kept from sunset to sunset.

**Rich Traver's Article:**

● Unleavened Bread interval: 'even to even' [Ex.12:18] evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> thru the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>. The fourteenth at even is the beginning of the fifteenth: which is day one of the seven days thru to the end “even” of the seventh day, the twenty-first.



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**Laura Lee writes:**

**Exo 12:17** And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. **Exo 12:18** In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. (KJV)

Yes, Unleavened Bread starts at even as the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan/Abib changes to the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan/Abib. So, the fourteenth here means the end of the fourteenth of Nisan/Abib.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Legal death: Three full days (Lazarus’ example). This was by Roman Law. Same with Lazarus [**Jn.11:17**] to remove any doubt that he was dead. He’d been dead long enough to stink. [**Jn.11:39**]

**Laura Lee writes:**

I am not sure this is relevant to this discussion, because since Christ was sealed in the tomb and rose on the third day who would even be close enough to know if Christ stunk or not. Everyone already knew he was dead so there was no reason to prove he was dead.

This is the example Christ gave to us:

**Mat 12:39** But he answered and said unto them, *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:* **Mat 12:40** For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

**Rich Traver’s Article:**

● Wave sheaf bound at sunset/presented in the morning: Traditional practice had this being done. The ceremony is explained in great detail in Edersheim’s Book: “The Temple, Its Ministry and its Services”, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1998, Hendrickson Publishing. They would never have considered doing so IF they thought a 24-hour day began with dawn. But the next item is an even greater proof of their persuasion on this.

● The New Moons: An observation practice essential to the religious calendar was the monthly sighting of the first visible crescent to confirm the beginning of the new lunar month. This was essential to their calendar and to determine the dates for the annual Holy Days. As the current month was winding down, calendar priests would convene and await the appearance of the first sighting of the emerging crescent just above the western horizon a few minutes after sunset. Upon a confirmed sighting, the beginning of the new month would be declared. This event marked not only the day which began that new month but was at the start of the new day. This further establishes that days began in the evenings as the sun had just set. The lunar calendar is not all predetermined, as we’re used to. It required numerous judgment calls and verifications by confirmed sightings to establish accuracy. The first month (influenced by the Abib (first ripened barley)) was an added factor in establishing the first month. The seventh month was also important as it established the dates for the fall Holy Day season, which are all within the seventh month. Nothing would better verify that days were considered to begin at sunset than this, from the time of the Exodus and well before. [**Ex.12:2**].

**Laura Lee writes:**

**Exo 12:2** This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. (KJV)

I actually don’t know of any Sabbath Keepers that would disagree that Nisan/Abib is the first month of the year, however I would strongly disagree with many of your above statements. For example, the new moons are not essential to the calendar. Years ago, someone sent us a document called Maimonides and told us that this document would prove we were wrong for using a set calendar instead of moon sightings. This document proved just the opposite. It proved that the only reason they took witness observation of the moon sightings at the Temple was to make sure their mathematical calculations were correct.

From Maimonides page 3

4. The court used to employ methods of calculation of the kind employed by astronomers in order to ascertain whether the new moon of the coming month would be seen to the north or to the south of the sun, whether its latitude would be wide or narrow, and in which direction the tips of its horns would point. And when witnesses appeared in order to testify,

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the court used to examine them as follows: Where did you see the new moon, to the north or to the south? In which direction did its horns point? How great was its altitude, in the estimate of your eyes, and how wide its latitude? If their testimony was found to conform with the results of astronomical calculation, it was accepted; but if it was found not to conform, it was rejected. From: [Maimonides-P.pdf \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](#)

If you do not study the Hebrew Calendar, you will not understand it. There is nothing wrong with the Hebrew Calendar as preserved by the Pharisees (Now Orthodox Jews). Even in Temple times the moon sightings were secondary to the calculated calendar. All they used the moon sightings for was to make sure that their calculations were correct.

I can clearly see that you have not studied the Hebrew calendar, or you wouldn't make statements like the barley influenced the first part of the calendar and feast of Trumpets influenced the last part of the calendar. What are you using, two different calendars to determine Holy Days?

Here is the problem, many people lack understanding of what scripture actually says and how the Hebrew Calendar is put together. The chief month on the Hebrew Calendar is the 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Tishri or Feast of Trumpets. Many seem to get all bent out of shape because many see the sliding of Tishri one as something that should not be done. Tishri One is how the Hebrew Calendar is set. Some years it has postponements and other years it does not. The reason for postponements and sliding days is to make sure that there is always a Full moon on the first day of the Feast of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and then again on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Hebrew Calendar now based solely on sanctified calculations since the fourth century is the most accurate calendar ever made.

There are also people who believe the calendar was always set by the sighting of the first barley in Israel. Perhaps the Sadducees did it that way anciently, I don't know but the recent movement to do this comes from the Karaite Jews with such people as Nehemiah Gordon and Brian Convery pushing it into the belief systems of some. Just because the first month of the year is named Abib does not mean you get your Holy Day Calendar from going to Israel and looking for a certain kind of barley. We need common sense in the church, and this is not common sense.

There is a lot more that goes into a really great calendar than hopping on a plane and crawling around on the ground looking for barley and a lot more than looking in the sky once a month for a moon you can't even see on cloudy days. Do you honestly believe that God did not leave us a calendar with which to keep the Holy Days. I have been looking in scripture and presenting these studies publicly for over 20 years now and I still don't know why people want to follow all these false doctrines. Every Holy Day Date can be found in scripture and everyone of those dates found in scripture backs up the calculated Hebrew Calendar.

Do any of you realize that in order to make it into the first fruits resurrection and the Kingdom of God we all have to be on the exact same page with God? Look at the root of where it was you got your calendar from. I know some of you are claiming that Christ followed the Sadducees in the count to Pentecost and in keeping Passover on the early 14<sup>th</sup>. Think about that. Why would Christ be following the Sadducees in anything?

I will repeat this again:

**Act 23:8** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. (KJV)

There it is right there in scripture. Why would Jesus be doing anything according to the Pagan Sadducees who bought their way into the places of power in the Temple? The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection or in angels and the verse adds that they did not believe in spirit. One could conclude from that that they did not believe in God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit as all are spirit. Why would anyone follow their practices, especially Christ?

I will leave you with that thought. All I want you to do is look at the root of your beliefs and do a deeper study of your Bibles. Everything God wants you to know is in your Bible, so you need to look there first.

**Rich Traver's Article:**

● Why, “if inspired” would believers be in full agreement with the daughters of the Great Whore system? They, nearly all, hold to a Friday crucifixion belief. (Though few if any advocate sunrise as the beginning of a 24-hour day.)

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**Laura Lee writes:**

Why would any of you be in full agreement with the Sadducees in regard to anything?

We do believe that all days start at even and end at even. We also believe that Christ was in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights just like scripture says. We also believe that God left us the Hebrew Calendar as preserved by the Pharisees (Now Orthodox Jews). If you can prove what I say in this or anywhere in this newsletter is wrong by using scripture, please do not be afraid to show your proof to me. I will always look at it no matter how many times and ways you present it to me.

**In regard to: Rethinking Easter**  
**Article by Wayne Schatzle**  
**Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

In this article Wayne refers to a New Testament Passover and an Old Testament Passover. There is no such thing as an Old Testament Passover and a New Testament Passover. Passover has always been kept at even on Nisan 14 as it turns into Nisan 15, or in other words at the beginning of Nisan 15. There is no scripture anywhere in the Bible telling us that God changed the date of Passover from the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan to the early part of the 14<sup>th</sup>. If you can find such a scripture, I would like to see it.

Once Christ was crucified there was no reason to kill and eat Passover Lambs as Christ was our Passover. Instead, what Christ did introduce instead of the lamb was the bread to represent his body and the wine to represent his blood which was shed for us. He also added foot washing to Passover.

The Feast of Passover as mentioned in several places in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are the same feast, starting and ending on the same day. **See Eze 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.**

**Announcements**

**Announcement from Zac Poonen (December 25, 2022)**

It was 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Sister Annie, on 25<sup>th</sup> Dec.

**SISTER ANNIE POONEN - 80 YEARS COMPLETED**

On 25 December 2022, Sister Annie Poonen, completed 80 years. She has been married to Brother Zac Poonen for 54½ of those years and has been his faithful co-worker in his ministry in CFC churches around the world. As a medical doctor, she has also helped hundreds of CFC sisters freely through medical advice and treatment during the entire 47-year history of CFC. Brother Zac has testified of her, saying, “*I have never seen her make a mistaken diagnosis of any sickness in anyone or give wrong medical advice to anyone – in all these years*”. We praise the Lord for her service to CFC churches.

Find in this issue an article she wrote some time ago, that exemplifies the life she has lived.

Here is the link; where sister Annie was speaking in a sister’s meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U70lrCawn5c>

by God’s mercy she is keeping good health.

Continue to pray for her.

CFC Bangalore

<https://cfcindia.com>

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**Announcement from Zac Poonen (December 29, 2022)**

**MESSAGES**

Memorize a verse every Sunday in the new year 2023: Here is a very good habit for the new year: Memorize a verse of Scripture every Sunday. Get your children also to do that.

Begin on January 1, 2023:

Here is a plan that you can follow. This plan contains promises and commands (we need BOTH) for alternate Sundays: <https://rlcf.church/memory-verses/plan/2023>

Many CFC churches around the world will be following this plan during 2023.  
May the Lord enable us all to be established in His word in this new year.

“How blessed is the person who delights in God’s Word and meditates on it day and night. Then, in whatever he does, he will prosper”. (Psalm 1:1,3)

Begin the New Year 2023 with this habit also: Listen every day, to Daily Devotions (about 10 minutes) by Zac Poonen

In English: <https://www.cfcindia.com/daily-devotion>

In Hindi: [https://youtube.com/channel/Uck0B6V1XqXWGOmBx\\_142Yow](https://youtube.com/channel/Uck0B6V1XqXWGOmBx_142Yow)

In Malayalam: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRnhKIRzq9yepI9QPrj\\_2iQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRnhKIRzq9yepI9QPrj_2iQ)

In Tamil : <https://www.youtube.com/@cfcdailydevotiontamil9121>

In Telugu : <https://www.youtube.com/@cfcdailydevotions.telugu>

In other languages: In the English video, to see the script of the messages, click on “Watch on YouTube” (left hand bottom corner). Then in the YouTube version, click on “CC” at the bottom. A red line will appear under “CC”. For other languages, click the round star (next to the “CC”); then click “Subtitles CC”; then click “Auto-translate”; then select the language you want.

May you and your family have a new year that is richly blessed by the Lord.

CFC Bangalore

<https://cfcindia.com>

## Other Items

(Poems, Jokes, Questions etc.)

## Christmas, really?

(Copyright) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

The world has been deceived about what Christmas is all about. There may well be something special about Dec. 25th. What might it be? There is a video that covers this subject very well; in fact the most thorough I have ever seen! You will find things you never knew or realized. And it is important.

<https://www.gucw.org/enews/nuggets-12-23-22.htm> (Approximate Time 1 Hour and 3 Minutes)

## Died Suddenly – Not Blood, Blood Clots

(Copyright) by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)

This is a phenomenon that's occurring widely. Something not seen in the past. These 'not blood' clots are being

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encountered by embalmers all over, with all saying the same, they have never seen such a thing. They are not made of blood compounds, but some other strange 'stuff'. An undertaker here in Grand Junction, Colorado did a news piece for local TV having encountered the same. That was quickly removed from airing.

This is real and is something that the 'vaxxed' people should be aware of. Add this to the myocarditis effect, and we have a real situation.

<https://citizenfreepress.com/breaking/world-premiere-died-suddenly/> (Approximately 108 Minutes long.)

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<https://www.goldensheaves.org/>

## Ads

**Ad from David Rives Ministries (December 25, 2022)**



**Join David Rives in South Africa - June 6-15, 2023**

- Have you always dreamed of getting up close and personal with giraffes, zebras, rhinos, and amazing birds?
- What about seeing cheetahs, elephants, even LIONS in the wild?



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- Experience an authentic boma barbeque cooked by gourmet chefs around a campfire in the African bushveld while gazing at millions of stars in the sky.
- Do you deserve a vacation like no other that will also amaze and inspire you to praise God?

Here's the best way to plan a family trip for 2023... Have us plan the itinerary for you and join a world-famous creation leader for a personal tour through Africa.

**Note from David Rives:**

*Don your hats and get ready for the adventure of a lifetime! I only lead these once every two years, and now is your chance to register. We're going to South Africa. Register right away and give yourself or your family something so much better. A gift experience that you will be talking about for YEARS TO COME!*

*Just text "AFRICA" to 931-212-7990 to get a link to a brochure.*

*I'll see you soon!*

**Learn More**

## **Holy Days 2023**

**Passover – April 6, 2023 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)**

**Unleavened Bread – April 6-12, 2023**

**Pentecost – May 26, 2023**

**Trumpets - September 16, 2023**

**Atonement – September 25, 2023**

**Tabernacles –September 30, 2023 to October 6, 2023**

**Last Great Day – October 7, 2023**