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

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Articles

Charming Chickens

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Our created feathered friends

Have you ever eaten chicken wings? What’s on your plate doesn’t really show how big the complete wing was, but it does remind us that chickens are grown for food, including their eggs. They are bred to optimize the quality (and quantity, by unnatural accelerated maturing) of their meat, or for egg-laying, sometimes both. To a lesser degree they are kept by fanciers and as pets.

My wife and I have kept chickens for a few years and have observed some interesting chicken facts. And yes, we think their eggs taste better than supermarket eggs!

Flighty flappers

Domestic chickens are part of the Galliform order together with, for example, turkeys and pheasants—see [box](#).¹ The group, typically found at ground level, are accordingly known as ‘landfowl’. However, they can fly, including chickens! Sometimes, main flight feathers are clipped on one side, to prevent them getting proper ‘lift’.

But chickens are usually rather poor, even reluctant, flyers.² They are capable of covering a moderate distance after lift-off, which helps them avoid ground-dwelling predators. Chickens may even fly larger distances if they start from a high point, by flap-assisted gliding. However, they mostly prefer to keep their feet on solid ground, scratching and pecking around in the dirt. When roosting, they may perch higher up, e.g., in a tree.

Becoming airborne also requires considerable energy, and so also requiring a high metabolic rate and sufficient food intake. Wild “flightless birds have smaller pectoral [breast] muscle and slower metabolic rates than flying birds”.³

Could such a marvellous package, with so many ‘eggsacting’ requirements, possibly have originated by evolutionary ‘chance and necessity’?

Chickens reared for meat are fatter, and usually kept very close together—restricted space saves money. Unable to flap their wings properly due to their environment, the flight muscles grow weaker from lack of exercise. Their ability to fly drops—an *ecophenotypic*, i.e., not inherited, change.

A study of prairie chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*), a type of grouse, confirmed that wild ones were better at flying than pen-reared ones. A year after the latter were released into the wild, their flying ability had not yet fully caught up.⁴

Furthermore, hens bred over many generations for eggs divert more of their energy intake to egg-laying than to flight capacity.

Dazzling diversity

Chickens vary greatly in size, plumage, weight, etc., even among the domestic subspecies (*Gallus gallus domesticus*).

Chicken fanciers, interested in winning contests with their feathered friends, engage in artificial selection for this reason.

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A host of fascinating variations on the chicken theme have emerged across the world, many in the 1800s, though some go back much further:⁵

- Dutch Bantam**, considered to be among the first domesticated chickens in the world.
- Yokohama**, imported to Japan from China around AD 600.
- Leghorn**, capable of laying over 270 eggs per year.
- Cochin**, prized in the 1880s for its fluffy feathers.
- Booted Bantam**, with extravagant feathering on its feet.
- Brahma**, the ‘king of poultry’, one of the largest, and sought after for its meat.
- Poland**, a crested breed from, would you believe, Holland! Its heritage remains a mystery.
- Silkie**, which looks like its name.
- Frizzle**, also named for its looks and feathers.

Enthralling eggs

What causes a hen to prepare a nest? Nesting behavior is instinctive (genetically programmed).⁶ Internal motivation arises due to released hormones connected with ovulation.^{7,8} Given a choice, a domestic chicken prefers to lay her eggs in a nesting box ready-made with straw.

Most reptiles (such as turtles and lizards) dig a hole to bury their eggs and wander off—they don’t support their offspring. How does the mother hen know to sit on her freshly laid eggs? There is no apparent indication that the egg contains her offspring in need of care. It seems to be a created instinct since many modern commercial breeds have had this instinct ‘bred out’ of them.⁹

The eggshell’s design¹⁰ itself shows the Designer’s care for the chick inside. Features include:

- A porous shell that allows exchange of gases while conserving moisture.
- A mechanism to dissolve it from the inside, providing calcium for the embryo’s bones.
- Sufficient strength for protection, but still breakable when hatching time arrives.
- A coating called ‘bloom’ preventing pathogens from entering.

Various internal features of chicken eggs are equally vital; for instance, its membrane compartments (yolk sac, amnion, and allantois). Could such a marvelous package, with so many ‘eggsacting’ requirements, possibly have originated by evolutionary ‘chance and necessity’?¹¹

Some of these features are not merely nice to have, but essential for survival of the chick; if they weren’t implemented together from the beginning it would mean the end of the chick (likewise for all other species of birds). I marvel at our little chickens laying such sizeable nutritious eggs, sometimes numerous days in a row, but for their Creator God nothing is too complicated.

Chicken eggs have a range of colours, fixed in their genes, due to different pigments ‘added’ to the basic white shell. Brown eggs are laid by most common backyard breeds, e.g., Rhode Island Reds. White eggs are laid by e.g., Leghorns. Blue eggs are laid by e.g., Araucanas, a breed originally from Chile’s Araucanía region. Crossing breeds that are blue egg layers with brown layers can result in greeny-coloured eggs! The shell colour does not affect the nutritional value of the egg.

Resting roosters

Have you ever seen a chicken sit or sleep on a branch (roosting)? The chicken expends little effort to wrap its claws around its perch. It has been demonstrated that lowering its center of gravity into a perched position causes the limb tendons to close the claws automatically—what a grand design.¹²

Processing food

People have teeth to chew chunks of food into smaller bits. A chicken lacks teeth so it swallows food whole (or tries to break it by pecking or shaking it before swallowing). To aid digestion, it swallows small stones that descend into the gizzard. This is a muscular organ that grinds the chicken’s food and small stones—called gastroliths—together.¹³ As the gastroliths become smoother and smaller over time, they will eventually be excreted as waste products. Therefore,

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continued intake of gravel to replace worn gastroliths is normal.

In fact, for mutations in general to add useful information is about as rare as hen’s teeth!

Did chickens ever have teeth? Some evolutionists say, “avian teeth were lost at least 70–80 million years ago” and that “teeth have been independently lost several times” during evolution in other creatures too.¹⁴ However, the loss of teeth (or any other feature) by mutation doesn’t explain how they appeared in those creatures in the first place. Rather, it is the opposite of new information arising over time, that neo-Darwinism must explain. In fact, for mutations in general to add useful information is about as rare as hen’s teeth!

Whether toothless birds were created without teeth or lost them, a question for evolutionists to answer is: how did the first bird without teeth know that swallowing stones or gravel would be necessary? And how did the muscular gizzard just happen to evolve at the same time to accommodate them? Clearly, stones are not suitable as nourishment.

Do chickens bathe?

Chickens are observed to lie down and deliberately flick dirt all over their feathers. In fact, they do this to stay clean! Chickens have dust baths to remove excess oil, lice, and mites. Furthermore, it helps to keep their outer feathers water-repellent. Hens in battery cages have been seen to exhibit dustbathing behavior even without dirt. Even a mutant featherless strain engage in dustbathing.¹⁵ This suggests it is not a learned behavior, but a hard-wired instinct, and therefore a created design feature.

Who’s the boss?

There is a hierarchy in a chicken flock; a so-called pecking order is established ... by pecking. This process can be fierce, especially for the lowest ranking hen which may get pecked by all the others. Once established, however, the chickens know their place and live in harmony. A top hen’s role is not just to be a bully. Often, she remains outside till last, ensuring all the other hens are in for the night. If one is missing, she calls her. They are social creatures.

When our lowest ranking hen became sick, the others chased her away from food and water (maybe so the others wouldn’t become sick). To save her life, we tried separating her, but she became more miserable and only wanted to return to the others. That ultimately caused her demise.

A hierarchy is not necessarily a bad thing and could well have existed pre-Fall. That is, it was a design feature, but the behavior became harsher following the corruption of the Curse. On the other hand, chicken death, sickness, harmful pecking—definitely bad things—were certainly not present originally.

Some final thoughts

Mankind was given stewardship over the earth ([Genesis 1:28](#)). God gave us permission to eat plants ([Genesis 1:29](#)). Only after the Flood was it permissible to eat chickens for food ([Genesis 9:3](#)). Chickens can be fascinating and fun to keep. Well-kept chickens are healthy animals, whose good quality meat and tasty eggs are enjoyed by people the world over. And even those birds which have been ‘retired’ after serving their purpose in more intensive egg farms can make excellent pets, as my family and I can testify. It’s fun to watch them loiter and scratch the dirt, and they continue to delight us by laying lovely eggs.

Chickens and the created kind

Most authorities believe domestic chickens descended from the red jungle fowl (*Gallus gallus*)—this is referred to as the monophyletic theory. However, some believe chickens had multiple ancestors—the polyphyletic theory—including the grey jungle fowl (*Gallus sonneratii*).¹

This is an ongoing controversy. In any case, evidence of interspecies hybridizations among these and other chickens (such as the Ceylon jungle fowl—*Gallus lafayetii*) confirms they all belong to the same created kind, not surprisingly.² All jungle fowls belong to the same family (Phasianidae) as pheasants, grouse, partridges, quail, peafowl, turkeys, and of course domestic chickens; the created kind likely extends to at least this family level. All these heavy ground-dwellers thus diversified from one type after the Ark. (In fact, the created kind may here even involve the entire galliform order, Galliformes.)³

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The Deception of “Heartburn” (Copyright) by David Antion (Pasadena, California)

What Your Doctor or Pharmacy Probably Won't Tell You

Have you noticed the number of antacids, acid blockers, and aids for indigestion on your local over the counter medicine shelf? They range from Tums to Rolaids, from Pepcid-AC to Tagamet, from Mylanta to Pepto-Bismol.

Americans are having a devil of a time with indigestion it appears. And why? Mostly because people eat "dead" foods. What do I mean by "dead foods"? Let's take the example of an apple. Place it on your kitchen counter and in a few days, it will begin to digest itself or spoil or rot. Why? Because it has living enzymes in it that cause it to ripen or digest itself.

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By contrast, place some bleached white flour on the kitchen shelf. It can remain unchanged almost indefinitely because all the enzymes have been removed. Therefore, when it is consumed, your body has to supply additional enzymes to digest it. And, because it has no bran, it becomes very difficult to eliminate from the body causing some constipation.

What Is Heartburn?

Heartburn is defined as the "burning feeling in the esophagus" when the hydrochloric acid (HCL) of the stomach is splashed into the esophagus. What causes "heartburn"? First let's ask what the stomach does and what the role of hydrochloric acid is.

The stomach's main job is to receive chewed food and to coat it all with HCL. But as we get older we sometimes produce less and less HCL. It is estimated that by age 50 the average person produces only half the HCL they did at age 15! Thus, the stomach has a more difficult job in coating all its contents. In order to do this, the stomach flips and churns the food more aggressively in order to coat it all with HCL. In this process some of it bumps against the valve that leads to the esophagus and spills onto the esophagus. Only a little acid can cause severe burning.

When that happens, an antacid such as Tums or Roloids or just plain baking soda will relieve the discomfort. But then, people get to thinking that their entire problem is caused by too much acid. They then reach for even stronger medicine in a misguided effort to further reduce the antacid supply.

Enter The Pharmaceuticals

The drug companies have figured it out! They are market-driven, more than willing to respond to what they realize is an enormous market to be tapped. They have come out with three different styles of drugs that prevent the stomach from manufacturing acid.

One type is the histamine H2 receptor antagonist – marketed as Axid, Pepcid, Zantac, etc. These cause the stomach to secrete less acid. But there are side effects such as dizziness, headache, diarrhea, diminished sex drive, hair loss. Some rare side effects include confusion, rash, sore throat, fever, irregular heartbeat, unusual bleeding or bruising, fatigue, weakness, and constipation.

A second type is the proton pump inhibitors – marketed as Nexium, Prevacid, Prilosec, Protonix, etc. These have common side effects such as diarrhea and stomach pain. Infrequent side effects include nausea, loss of appetite, headache, heartburn (the very thing it is supposed to prevent!), muscle pain, skin rash, and drowsiness. The rare side effects are weakness, unusual tiredness, sore throat, fever, sores in the mouth, bruising, bloody urine, difficult and frequent or painful urination.

The third types are the straight antacids like -- marketed as Tums, Roloids, etc. These neutralize some of the hydrochloric acid in the stomach rendering the acid ineffective. They also neutralize any HCL that splashes into the esophagus thus giving relief from the burning.

Why do we need HCL? What does it do?

Without HCL people will lose a taste for meat, will tend to have excess intestinal gas shortly after consuming proteins, bloating, bad breath, body odor, anemia, and have low mineral amounts in their blood. HCL helps in the absorption of calcium and iron plus many other minerals.

HCL also is the first line of defense when things enter the mouth. By having sufficient stomach acid, we are defended against germs entering the system through the mouth. HCL even stops the development of parasites. People with insufficient hydrochloric acid (HCL) are often protein deficient that can lead to a slowing of the immune system.

The Wrong Direction

Notice what is happening. People are beginning to think that any form of indigestion can be cured with an antacid, a histamine H2 antagonist or a proton pump inhibitor. Many who, shortly after eating, experience a bloating sensation reach immediately for an antacid like Tums. But if you are over 50 you probably already have lower amounts of HCL being produced. Taking an antacid or a drug that stops the production of HCL will only create more problems. Now the stomach is churning the food in order to coat it but there isn't enough acid so more flipping of the food takes place and sooner or later some small amount of acid splashes into the lower part of the esophagus causing burning. This convinces most

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people that their problems come from too much acid. It's just the opposite! It's probably too little acid!

Many older adults are creating health nightmares for themselves. They often do not feel well. They get insufficient protein. They absorb insufficient calcium and iron often leading to increased anemia and increased risks for osteoporosis.

Why Does Acid Bother Some?

It is true that when people are under severe stress, they may secrete more acid and eventually cause themselves some problems. But few doctors or laymen are aware of the assault on the stomach from alcohol, caffeine, as well as aspirin, ibuprofen, and other nonsteroidal pain relievers. In fact, most medicines and drugs are very hard on the stomach lining.

After the stomach lining is assaulted by these drugs, normal production of HCL will often burn the unprotected part of the stomach and may cause pain akin to that associated with an ulcer (recent research has established that 90% of true duodenal ulcers and 70% of stomach ulcers are caused by a bacterium known as Helicobacter pylori. Approximately 40% of adults, as opposed to 10% of children have active H. Pylori bacteria in their stomach lining. Removal of H. Pylori infestations by use of appropriate antibiotics resolves the problem – antacids merely mask the symptoms).

Those who have experienced this pain wrongly tend to blame HCL and seek to reduce it, thereby creating more work for the stomach. But the truth is that hydrochloric acid is needed and essential for digestive function and may be in short supply. It is likely innocent of responsibility for the stomach discomfort. A more appropriate approach would be to eliminate the erosion of the stomach lining and H. Pylori infestations. Then be sure the stomach is not being overworked by an insufficient HCL supply.

Formal confirmation that one lacks HCL can include testing using a Heidelberg capsule, which is inserted into the stomach on a string and then withdrawn. Another way is to inspect a pressure point on the left lower rib, two inches from sternum where the last ribs meet right above the abdominal cavity, for extreme soreness. Also finding six or more minerals (excluding sodium and potassium) low on a hair analysis or blood test. or taking an Indican urine test can indicate low HCL levels. Cracked and peeling nails, and dry, thinning hair can also point to an HCL deficiency.

Dr. Jonathan Wright showed the importance of Hydrochloric Acid in health and digestion how its low levels are linked to diabetes, under and over-active thyroid, RA, chronic hives or shingles, lupus, weak adrenals, chronic hepatitis, vitiligo and rosacea, and gallbladder problems among other things.

What I Do

I do not have ulcers or stomach pain problems, but have to admit that, like many my age, I am HCL deficient. I therefore take supplemental HCL with at least one meal per day and generally two. Whenever I have a meal containing meat, I will usually take two hydrochloric acid tablets. Rather than causing indigestion, the HCL actually helps me digest my food better and get better absorption of protein, calcium, iron and other trace minerals. In addition, it keeps the intestinal tract healthy by maintaining a healthy acid balance. The chlorides are important for easy and proper elimination.

Realizing that after 50 I produce only half as much acid as I did when 15 (and I don't recall having digestion problems in my teens, do you?) it makes sense that I would need more not less acid!

Because I take the HCL with or following my meals, I experience almost no indigestion. I feel good as a result.

It is best when taking HCL to eat “live” rather than “dead” (refined or over-processed) foods. Also, be careful about foods and beverages known to afflict the stomach lining.

People are not generally told by medical practitioners the whole truth about digestion, how food is digested and what the stomach does. They are being allowed to assume that all their problems come from too much acid when the truth, in most cases, is that they don't have enough acid. In fairness, this failure is not malicious -- most doctors and pharmacists simply were not extensively trained in nutritional matters as part of their formal professional education.

At Guardian Ministries we try to guard the truth in every facet of life that promotes spiritual growth and understanding, a closer relationship with God and Jesus Christ, better health, better family and social relationships.

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It is with this hope and intent in mind that we present this article. May God help you to see, understand and act on the truth.

Resources:

For more on Helicobacter Pylori see seminal research by the Gastroenterological Society of Australia:

<http://www.nevdgp.org.au/geninf/gastro/Helicobacterpylori.htm>

For more on Heidelberg capsule analysis:

<http://www.healthy.net/library/books/textbook/section2/heidel.pdf>

For more on HCl

http://www.gnc.com/health_notes/Supp/Betaine_HCl.htm

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<http://vitaminlady.com/Articles/digestion.asp>

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The Crown of Life

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Some call the Tower of London "the Cradle of the English Race." It is well named, for it was there that England had her beginnings as a nation. It is the oldest palace, fortress, and prison in Europe, dating back 900 years. Housed within its walls in the underground Jewel House beneath the Waterloo Barracks are the Crown Jewels of England. The incomparable collection of crowns, scepters, orbs, swords, and other regalia is displayed in a specially designed vault and display case surrounded by heavy security. As one walks into the vault, one can see the sparkling light reflecting off the jewels in the crowns and onto the dark walls of the vault's interior. The gasps of "oohs" and "ahs" of the visitors getting their first glimpse at the Crown Jewels enhance the breathtaking sight of the dazzling, golden, jeweled crowns.

The most recognized is the *Imperial State Crown* worn by the king or queen for the annual opening of Parliament and

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other state functions. It is framed in gold with silver settings for the jewels. The crown weighs two pounds thirteen ounces and boasts 2,873 diamonds, 273 pearls, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, and five rubies, including one huge ruby and one huge sapphire. The jewels are of great antiquity and historical significance. The oldest jewel is Edward the Confessor's sapphire, believed to have been worn by him in a ring (c. AD 1050). It is now mounted in the cross atop the crown.

Another of the crown jewels is *St. Edward's Crown*, the crown used for the coronation of every king or queen of England since AD 1269. In recent history, the only time Queen Elizabeth II officially wore St. Edward's Crown was at the climax of her coronation. It weighs just under five pounds and is made of pure gold and various jewels. During the coronation ceremony, the Archbishop of Canterbury holds St. Edward's Crown aloft, and speaks these words, dating back to AD 973:

God crown you with a crown of glory and righteousness, that having a right faith and manifold fruit of good works, you may obtain the crown of an everlasting kingdom by the gift of Him whose kingdom endureth forever.

Notice that the blessing requested of God during the actual crowning does not ask for power and rulership. Instead, the Archbishop asks for a crown of glory and righteousness through a right faith and good works. The crown used at the climax of the coronation is less a crown of rulership than it is a symbol of righteousness, glory, and honor.

"Diadem" and "Crown"

Today, the terms "diadem" and "crown" are used synonymously. However, it is important to understand that the two words identify different things. The difference has spiritual connotations to the future glorified sons of God.

The diadem is a symbol of royal power and rulership. Originally, it was a linen or silk band around the brow, and over time, it changed to a flexible band of gold. The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, eleventh edition, remarks, "The [modern] crown seems to be an evolution from the diadem rather than the lineal descendant of the older crowns." *Webster's Dictionary* defines *diadem* as "crown: specifically a royal headband; regal power or dignity."

Conversely, *crown* means "a reward of victory or mark of honor; especially the title representing the championship in a sport." The verb form of the word, not only suggests the coronation of a monarch, but also "to recognize officially; to bestow something as a mark of honor or recompense; adorn." These definitions fit remarkably well with how "crown" is used in Scripture regarding our future reward. If we are faithful and producing the fruits of good works, by the grace of God, we will be crowned at Christ's return with the crown of life, *not* the diadem of life.

What does the "crown of life" represent? "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12). "Proved" comes from the Greek word *dokimos*, meaning "stood the test; tested to be trustworthy; of sterling worth, like metal which is cleansed of all alloy." *Dokimos* or one of its forms describes the successful testing of precious metals and coins, as well as the approval of the tested objects as genuine.

"Crown" is translated from *stephanos*, which in turn derives from *stepho*, meaning "to encircle, to twine or wreath." *Stephanos* describes the victor's crown, the symbol of triumph in the public games or a contest. It can also be the reward or prize given to honor a person. Though the word can denote a crown of royalty, its more usual sense is the laurel wreath awarded to a victor or a festive garland worn when rejoicing.

In early times, it was a token of public honor for distinguished service. At other times, it symbolized the joy of a wedding or the gladness of a festival, especially at a king's coronation. These early crowns were woven as a garland of oak, ivy, parsley, myrtle, or olive branches. Later, these natural wreaths were imitated in gold.

Overcoming

In James 1:12, the apostle indicates that one who overcomes trials becomes an individual of sterling worth and emerges strong and pure spiritually. But what must be overcome? In Revelation, each of the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor contains the phrase "to him who overcomes." Later, in a summary statement near the end of the book, Christ says, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7). It is obvious that overcoming is a prime activity in a Christian's life

Paul writes that we are in a warfare against "spiritual wickedness" (Ephesians 6:12, KJV). He also asserts that "the carnal

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mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7) and that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (verse 8). Likewise, John states that those who "overcome the wicked one" are strong (I John 2:14), and then he says we are not to love the world or its lusts and pride (verses 15-16).

We have, therefore, three general areas in which to overcome:

1. We must overcome Satan, his demons, and their evil influence.
2. We must overcome this world and its ways.
3. We must overcome our fleshly, carnal, human nature.

The way Christ taught us to overcome is not only to avoid sin but also to do what is good and right. Paul explains this succinctly to the Christians in Rome: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). So, we see that the crown of life is a crown of righteousness, and *righteousness* can be defined simply as "right doing." An overcomer is victorious over sin!

When it is used in the Scriptures, *stephanos* does not emphasize rulership. Rather, the New Testament writers used *diadema* when they wanted to symbolize royal power, authority, or dignity. It is revealing to note where the Bible uses *diadema*:

» In Revelation 12:3, the Dragon, who is Satan, wears seven diadems. In other places, Jesus calls him "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

» In Revelation 13:1, it describes the ornaments of the "beast rising up out of the sea." The Beast is later shown to have "authority . . . over every tribe, tongue, and nation" (verse 7).

» In Revelation 19:12, *diadema* is used for the crowns that Christ wears when He returns as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (verse 16).

In each case, the diadem symbolizes power and rulership over others.

This does not mean that the saints will not have a position of rulership in God's Kingdom. The Bible clearly states in Revelation 20:4 that the saints "lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (see verse 6). Christ says to the church in Thyatira, "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations" (Revelation 2:26).

However, the emphasis of the "crown of life" is victory, righteousness, and honor. The apostle Paul writes that the crown of life depicts victory in I Corinthians 9:24-25:

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown [*stephanos*], but we for an imperishable crown.

In the days of the apostles, the crown of laurel leaves was the honor an athlete coveted most of all since it meant he had been victorious in the public games.

As Paul neared the end of his life, he looked back over his life as a Christian in a letter to Timothy:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (II Timothy 4:7-8)

The apostle had endured strong temptation and terrible persecutions. He had been faithful and had dedicated his life to doing good works, specifically preaching the gospel among the Gentiles. He was certain that he had indeed overcome and would be given his crown of victory and honor when Christ returned.

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The crown of life consists of eternal, imperishable living! It represents victory over our earlier, perishable life of sin. In the Millennium and for all eternity, we will wear our crown of life as an emblem of victory, righteousness, and honor as befits those who have been obedient and faithful to Christ.

As we continue in our lives of trial and overcoming, we can be encouraged by the words of Paul in Hebrews 12:1-2:

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

If we follow this advice, we *will* be given the crown of life!

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Questionable Articles

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

Learn to Give an Answer!

Pentecost's Connections

(Copyright) by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)

In the previous edition of the *Echoes of the Word*, we considered the origins of what is commonly called “the LORD’s Supper” having been derived from the Passover memorial observed by Jesus and His 12 disciples. Not every denomination is candid with that fact, though they see what they do as an essential expression of faith. That association is further obscured by the times when it’s thought to be ‘observed’: weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually. An example of each can be found in the present array of practices. One group even provides a situation where the worshipper can go to the back to a “communion table” during any service and personally avail himself of the elements (bread & wine) at any time!

Another common observance is similarly practiced, that of the Day of Pentecost. Though a number of methods are employed in determining just when this important anniversary ought to be kept, as in the above observance, few worshippers are aware of its Old Testament origin, and even fewer, its connection with Passover.

Like with Passover – or some variant of its observance – with Pentecost there’s a similar reluctance among the main-stream religious world to recognize its direct Old Testament association. The bias against the Holy Days of the LORD, all of which are clearly spelled-out in the Pentateuch, remain high on the list of unacknowledged facts in ‘accepted’ religions. That is not a new thing. It goes back to the time of Constantine in the early fourth century, when the apostatizing Christian religion purposely chose to sever itself from its Jewish heritage. It isn’t all that different today!

While Pentecost is known for being the anniversary of the establishment of the New Testament Church – a widely accepted premise – its association with another significant milestone of Biblical history is not well advertised. You see, it’s understood as being the anniversary of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai some 50-days after the beginning of the Exodus from Egypt. Pentecost is not just associated with the event that formally established the New Testament Church. It was a factor in the Old Covenant as well!

Though we don’t know for certain just when the weekly Sabbath occurred during that original week of Unleavened Bread, the time it took the Children of Israel – (they weren’t Jews!) – to fully exit the Land of Egypt, there was a weekly Sabbath within those seven days. It’s that weekly Sabbath that establishes the ‘morrow’ that starts the count which determines which day is to be observed. By its very name, Pentecost is the result of a fifty-day count, and that count begins with

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another key observance: the Wave Sheaf Offering. The name we use is a Greek word meaning ‘fifty count’! In the Old Testament era, it was more commonly known as the Feast of Weeks (as seven whole weeks had passed), or the Feast of Firstfruits.

Where the connection with Passover occurs is with that Wave Sheaf Offering. While not a modern observance, (bringing a sheaf of ones’ own harvest to the Priest on the morrow after the Sabbath), the readiness of said first-ripe barley was a milestone on the calendar which determined which month would be the ‘first month’ in which Passover could then be properly set. There we have the connection between Passover and Pentecost. You don’t determine the day for one without the other! For that matter, the seven days of Unleavened Bread are also drawn-in, as Pentecost is counted from the morrow after one of those seven days. So, Pentecost depends upon the full spectrum of spring Holy Days, from the Wave Sheaf to Passover and the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, with each having a significance to personal salvation.

Overlooked by the mainstream religious culture is the FACT that Jesus Himself fulfilled the Wave Sheaf Offering, being ‘accepted for us’ on that very occasion in the year of His resurrection. We know when the weekly Sabbath was in that year. He was ‘waved’ – not symbolically, but actually – before the Father on that Sunday morning, the morrow after the Sabbath, just hours after His resurrection. That very morning was the true Wave Sheaf occasion, though the Jewish world of that day had already observed it earlier. That is evident based on when the fifty-day count had been ‘fully’ counted out. (Acts 2:1)

We can know what was said to Jesus at that Wave Sheaf presentation from Psalm 110:1 with a description of that scene given to us in Daniel 7:13 & 14. It’s significant to note that Jesus, toward dawn, as His trial was falling apart, blended these two passages to provoke the needed condemnation for His death declaration which resulted in His timely crucifixion on that very day! Both of those passages refer to the Wave Sheaf occasion while seriously contradicting the belief system of the era! As we read in Matthew 26:65, the High Priest completely freaked out hearing those passages being uttered in such a context! They had serious ‘issues’ with the idea of there being a Second Person in the Godhead!

Acts 2 provides evidence that their Jewish counterparts had observed their determined Pentecost on a fixed calendar date (as is their usual custom) while the Disciples observed it when “it was fully come”. That phraseology reveals that there had been a prior observance among those of that other persuasion. In fact, there was! Jews of Pharisean persuasion had observed it on Friday that year (waving the sheaf on the morrow after the annual Sabbath) while the Disciples, and then the early New Testament Church after them, observed it on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, resulting in a fixed day of the week rather than on a fixed calendar date. And that also meeting the requirement that it be the morrow after the 7th Sabbath.

But both persuasions, including the modern religious world, (even Catholics) realize that Pentecost is an annual observance, not a random ‘anytime’ occasion as is done with the other observance: Passover, or its various forms. Passover is more correctly an annual occasion also. When religion allows Passover to be identified with its proper name, then it becomes obvious, which explains the reluctance to associate it by that name directly despite the profound similarities.

Pentecost illustrates the completion of the first harvest, explaining its association with the name: “the Feast of Firstfruits”. Those ‘firstfruits’ being the first-ripened and harvestable Saints for God’s Bride. The very name suggests that there will be yet another subsequent harvest, which is the subject of the later Holy Days given in the Old Testament. There is to be a ‘firstfruits generation’ selected from among those not just called, but ‘chosen’ for their faithful endurance, with Jesus being the first among them as we read in 1st Corinthians 15:20 & 23. “*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the **firstfruits** of them that slept... But every man in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.*” This particular harvest is strongly associated with the resurrection of those Saints as these verses show. (This reference to a ‘first resurrection’ alludes to there being another one later.) And we see another aspect of the ‘fulfilment’ of Pentecost associated with the Second Coming!

But the more significant present aspect of this observance – more than its illustration of the completion of the first harvest – is the common availability of the Holy Spirit on a major scale, something not possible prior to the fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf Offering. (And still, they had to wait for it!) An extraordinary thing happened on that 50th day. An audible and visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit left no doubt as to the significance of this Convocation. Without that Spirit, there is no possibility of spiritual growth acceptable for His harvesting. At least, not at this time. What would have been the

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situation with His disciples had they not been there on the right day? A question relevant to each of us.

Where mainstream religion commonly practices their Pentecost observances with a certain degree of accuracy and understanding, unlike with their reflection of Passover, it's important to realize that these observances have a connection to one another that's all-important. Their Old Testament association should not be pointedly disregarded if we're to fathom their important intended meanings. It's the participants in the Covenant-Renewing experience (Passover) who are the '*firstfruit*' Saints in question.

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Saving Knowledge Kills

(Copyright) by Nathaniel Burson (Big Sandy, Texas)

Do you have saving knowledge? Do you know everything you need to know to be saved?

Nearly every Christian in the world just shouted a resounding “absolutely!”

And all of them are dead in their sins. Because saving knowledge does not exist. It's a myth. It's as likely to save you as the Easter Bunny.

You believe that you have the right doctrines for salvation; and you couldn't be more wrong. Salvation actually has very little to do with *beliefs*, and everything to do with *belief*. And almost nothing to do with doctrines.

Revelation 2:24-25 *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.*

Why didn't God care more about making sure they had all the “necessary doctrines for salvation”? It wouldn't have been that hard, so why didn't He care? **Because knowledge doesn't save you. What does knowledge do?**

1 Corinthians 8:1 *Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

Knowledge puffs you up. Knowledge makes you proud, makes you boast above what you are worth (**2 Corinthians 12:7**). See, pretty much everyone has the wrong idea about the true religion. They think there are a finite number of things you have to *know* to be saved. A recipe of sorts, a checklist God marks down.

For example, you have to know about the resurrections, then you have to keep the sabbath and holy days, unclean meats, and be baptized. And if you know all of “the basic doctrines” and practice them until you “die in faith”, you're saved. Bang, boom, that's it.

This is a hugely popular doctrine because it's extremely comfortable and very flattering. It's comfortable because it means that once you figure out what's expected of you – the routines of church, pray, tithe, fast, feast, volunteer, raise kids so they can rinse and repeat – once you do that, you've got it made.

It means that you have found the special formula for heaven, the magic incantation that, when recited correctly for a lifetime, requires God to give you immortality. And it's flattering because *you're part of the only church who knows it*. And everyone else is dead in their sins because they lack this special recipe for deity!

This belief is absurd – you *already* know it's wrong, you just haven't thought about it. If true, it means that *you're saved*

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by works. That you are saved because you knew, and practiced, the correct “works”. What else could it mean? You had “saving knowledge” which led you to do all the correct “saving rituals”, therefore you are “saved by works”.

Is that what you believe? Do you believe that everything God has to say *that matters* can be understood in a matter of a few years?

So, you see, you don't believe the core assumptions in the statement “we have saving knowledge”, so how can you persist in believing you have saving knowledge?

SAVED BY DOGMA

Do doctrines save you? Does God save people who know all the right dogmas? All the right observances, all the right facts?

Philippians 3:5-6 *Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

You probably couldn't be more perfect, doctrinally, than Paul was. **And the funny part is, his dogma actually was TRUE – it came from Moses. But it wasn't the whole answer! Because no one has the whole answer, which is why we PRESS ON to find it!**

Paul, before his conversion, was so certain that he had ALL knowledge necessary for salvation that he *murdered* people who disagreed with church dogma! It took an enormous attitude adjustment for God to get it through his head that he didn't. Is that what you want? It took decades for Paul to realize...

Philippians 3:11-14 *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, ...I count not myself to have apprehended: ...I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Most people who have saving knowledge haven't even read the entire Bible. Therefore, their “saving knowledge” is based on knowing *doctrines*, not the word of God, but *special conclusions, dogmatic beliefs, drawn by other people*.

Paul had been in the third heaven, taught personally by Jesus, and knew hundreds of times more than you do about God and the Bible, and HE still pressed on, growing in grace AND KNOWLEDGE, in the hopes that he MIGHT win!

So, the statement “We have saving knowledge”, is among the most arrogant statements ever to pass human lips. And what's more, completely wrong, since no such thing exists.

WHAT SAVES YOU

You might try to rephrase your belief at this point, and say “well what I mean is, if I died tomorrow, *I know everything I have to know to be saved*”. Again, you've missed the point. *You aren't saved by what you know.*

You aren't saved because you know Jesus is returning, or because you know the dead will live again.

You aren't saved because you know to be baptized or because you know not to keep Christmas.

You aren't saved because you call Jesus your Lord, believing He died and rose again, believing He loves you... *none of these save you!*

No, you've missed the entire point of salvation and – ironically – *proved that you don't have saving knowledge!*

1 Corinthians 13:2 *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

You believe you have already attained perfect knowledge – or at least, are pretty darned close to it. You're wrong, but

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even if you weren't, *you wouldn't be saved because knowledge doesn't save you!*

Because you can have *all knowledge* and yet be *as nothing*. Therefore, knowledge doesn't save you!

Likewise, you can have *all faith* and be *as nothing*. Therefore, faith doesn't save you! (**James 2:17**).

Knowledge, works, even faith is not what saves you. But a certain amount of knowledge, like a certain amount of works, and a certain amount of faith is required to be saved. John never moved a mountain, yet was saved (**John 10:41, Luke 7:28**).

Yet you could have *all faith, and all knowledge, and be “as touching the law, blameless” and still not find salvation!* So, what is the key to salvation?

1 Corinthians 13 implies that you are saved by your “love” ... which is correct, but misleading. It gives absolutely everyone the absolutely wrong idea. They all conclude that if you're just a “loving person”, you don't have to keep the law, or have knowledge, or have faith – you'll just be saved.

You can't understand **1 Corinthians 13's** answer unless you pair it with **1 John 4:8** – “God is love”. Adding **Romans 13:8-10**, we see that “love is the fulfilling of the law”. And if you add that to **Genesis 1:26**, you have the complete answer.

Genesis 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Confused? If you had saving knowledge, like you think you do, you wouldn't be.

Of course, you wouldn't be saved because you had that knowledge, but you'd know what you'd have to be like to be saved. And that's why knowledge is required.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO BE LIKE

God didn't create salvation to send men to heaven to live forever. He isn't doing this to heal the sick, raise the dead, or convert the sinners. If He was, He'd be here Himself, *doing the job right and not trusting your church to do it!*

Salvation isn't a prize God gives people who are “good enough”. Salvation is the first step in the purpose of all creation, which is to create incorruptibly righteous beings *who look like God AND act like God – and then are “saved”, when they are made of the same materials as God is!*

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

So, in order to **be like Him, we have to act like Him**. Since He embodies love, love is the most basic rule of His nature. And since whoever keeps the law has shown love, then the law – kept in its fullest sense – is love.

God didn't give us the law as the price we must pay for salvation. Everyone believes the doctrines, laws, and dogmas from (or sort-of-from) the Bible are the price God asks for salvation **and that isn't true.**

God gave us the Bible to help us see what He was like, *so that we could practice being more like Him*. He gave us the holy spirit so we could understand it better and become even more like Him.

2 Corinthians 3:18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

It is “being like Him”, that merits salvation. Not keeping the right day, being baptized in the perfect manner, or knowing the precise instant the holy day begins. **It's not what you do but changing who you are to be like He is, to act like Him in every situation!**

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NOT SO FAST

That does *not* mean that you don't need to do those things right. It means that *doing those things right won't help* unless you act like God while you're doing it. **And one thing God *wouldn't* do is say “I have all the knowledge I need to be saved”!**

It also doesn't mean that you can stick to the “basics of faith” and ignore the rest of the Bible. **Because God *wouldn't* do that! *And the purpose of this is to learn to act like God!***

2 Peter 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.*

God commanded us to “Grow in grace and knowledge”, to “hunger and thirst after righteousness”, and does saying “I know enough for salvation right now” reflect a hunger for more knowledge? Or does it reflect complacent self-satisfaction that you are good enough for God right now?

Colossians 1:10 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

Are you really INCREASING in the knowledge of God? Yes, I'm sure you are – in the same way a glacier moves down the valley. But NOT the way an Olympic athlete runs towards the finish line!

The common attitude in the church is “I'll do whatever I have to do, as long as I get there, I don't care; I just want to do whatever I have to do to get there”.

See how much emphasis there is on *do* and not *become* in that sentence? “I'll DO whatever rituals You want, God. I'll put in the time, whatever You ask, I don't care.” *If that's your attitude, you've missed the point!*

If your son comes to you and says, “I can't take any more studying, I don't care how good I do, I don't need to understand how math works, *I just want to memorize the answers so I can pass!*” ...Would you say, “sure son, you know enough right now to pass the test and get a D – so go out and play!”

Would you really? Any parent who loved their children would tell them that memorizing the answers is not the point! If that's all you want, if you're that person who wants to do the bare minimum to squeak by into salvation – then you would HATE the Kingdom of God, because you are **nothing like God!**

Can you imagine God is the sort of person who aims for the bare minimum? Salvation is not about putting in time, finding the right rituals, the perfect prayer, the holiest church, the most selfless sacrifices. This is about **changing who you are. One piece at a time, line upon line and precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:10).**

And you can never stop doing that if you expect to be saved. You have no idea the depths of evil that still lurk in your heart which you have to overcome. You don't know where it will strike next, or how much more work you still have to do. You won't know that until you look in the Bible and compare it to your actions.

How do you know that understanding the symbolism of the temple won't show you a deep flaw in your character? How do you know that fully understanding the meaning of **Leviticus 16** won't provide you with an essential key to overcoming your selfish nature?

How do you know that fully understanding **Psalms 69** won't totally revolutionize your understanding of the nature of Christ – and therefore, completely revise your idea of what God wants you to be like?

Dismissing anything you don't know as “not necessary for salvation” is like burning all the books because you already know how to read.

“BUT I'M NOT A SCHOLAR”

“That's no big deal, you've only been coming to church for a few weeks, these things take time. The Bible is a big book.”

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Oh... you've been coming to church for 30 years. Umm... that's different because it's not *that* big of a book. What have you been DOING with your time?"

Hebrews 5:12 *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

"I don't care about knowing the deep things in the Bible, I'm not a scholar"; "I disagree with you, but I can't prove it because I'm not a scholar", "I don't know chapter and verse, but I know what it says". I can't even count the number of times I've heard this in the church. Solomon heard it too, and said...

Proverbs 26:16 *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*

You believe that the basic principles of the doctrine of Christ are "saving knowledge". But Paul said those are only the merest foundation, the jumping-off point of "perfection". **And anyone who settles for them is lazy, conceited, and arrogant.**

Hebrews 6:1 *Therefore LEAVING the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*

Every church I've ever attended has a few dozen topics they rehearse over and over, week after week, time after time. Faith, brotherly love, forgiveness, salvation, thankfulness, reconciliation, mercy, you know the drill. These are all the most basic doctrines.

How long are you planning to hang around in those comfortable basic principles, hearing them read and re-read every week, until you "go on to perfection"? Your entire church should have moved beyond these – and every member should have been ready to teach them to others – YEARS ago! Because there is SOOOOO MUCH more to know!

Isaiah 28:9-10 *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:*

You CAN'T understand what you need to know without moving BEYOND these kindergarten doctrines! You act like you have the "saving knowledge" to graduate college... but you aren't even ready for the first grade because you still suckle milk week after week!

Hebrews 5:13 *For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Polishing a mirror for a telescope involves taking a lumpy, opaque, and scarred piece of glass and scratching it in a very controlled fashion. Once you have it consistently rough scratched, you scratch it with dozens of ever-finer grits, until to the naked eye it's flawless. But it's not flawless, not even then – it's usable, even "good", but it's not flawless – just flawless to your human senses.

Your Christian life is not a short checklist of "must-do" acts and "must-know" doctrines, and "must-believe" articles of faith you must confess. That's what false Christianity is – a list of things to do, know, and confess.

Instead, your Christian life is about changing to be more like God with every moment. That means your life is an unending chain of revelation, and each new piece of understanding must be compared to your actions *and then you must change accordingly.*

Each new piece of understanding must be allowed to correct you, and change you, **and this process will never stop.** Each new piece of understanding is truly life-threatening, for at any point if you say, "I'm good enough now, this last piece doesn't matter", **then that piece matters more than any other piece ever has.**

God doesn't care which doctrines you believe in. Doctrines are there to help you act like Him, nothing more. Because of

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that, the right doctrines are very useful – because they point the way to God. But keeping the *doctrines* won't save you, it just makes it a little easier to see what you must be like to be saved.

God doesn't care how much you know. He cares how well you *obey what you already know*, and how eagerly you *seek to know more*. As long as God is convinced that you will continue diligently searching for knowledge indefinitely and will gladly embrace *any* correction you find in that new knowledge... that's all He needs.

Genesis 22:12 *And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*

Because Abraham had done this, God knew there was *absolutely and literally nothing* Abraham wouldn't do to obey the truth – and therefore, that Abraham was **completely like God**.

Not in doctrine, not in faith, not knowledge... **but Abraham acted completely like God would have acted under those circumstances.**

Knowledge and salvation are as connected as oil and automobiles. Sure, you need some oil to keep a car running – but to say you have oil, therefore you can make an automobile is idiotic. So is everyone who says they have the necessary knowledge for salvation.

There is no such thing as saving knowledge because the knowledge that is required for salvation...

Is the very next thing God teaches you.

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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: Pentecost's Connections
Article by Rich Traver
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Article by Rich Traver says:

You see, it's understood as being the anniversary of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai some 50-days after the beginning of the Exodus from Egypt. Pentecost is not just associated with the event that formally established the New Testament Church. It was a factor in the Old Covenant as well!

Laura writes:

The following scriptures prove a Sivan 6 Pentecost. These commands were given at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.

#1--They arrived at Mount Sinai on Sivan 3. (Exd. 19:1)

#2--They had 2 days of preparation, Sivan 4 & 5. (Exd. 19:10)

#3--They were to be prepared for the 3rd day, Sivan 6, on which they received the law. (Exd. 19:15-16)

Exo 19:1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.

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In other words, in the third month “Sivan” on the 3rd day of the month of Sivan they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

Exo 19:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

It is speaking of two days of preparation for the giving of the law, Sivan 4, and Sivan 5.

Exo 19:15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your wives'* **19:16** And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

In other words, the 3rd day since arriving in the wilderness of Sinai or to the point Sivan 6 which was the day the law was given at Mount Sinai.

These scriptures prove a Sivan 6 Pentecost and also that the count to Pentecost started on the wave sheaf day of Nisan 16 the morrow after the annual Sabbath of Passover.

Article by Rich Traver says:

Though we don't know for certain just when the weekly Sabbath occurred during that original week of Unleavened Bread, the time it took the Children of Israel – (they weren't Jews!) – to fully exit the Land of Egypt, there was a weekly Sabbath within those seven days. It's that weekly Sabbath that establishes the 'morrow' that starts the count which determines which day is to be observed. By its very name, Pentecost is the result of a fifty-day count, and that count begins with another key observance: the Wave Sheaf Offering. The name we use is a Greek word meaning 'fifty count'! In the Old Testament era, it was more commonly known as the Feast of Weeks (as seven whole weeks had passed), or the Feast of Firstfruits.

Laura writes:

The children of Israel left Egypt on the last day of unleavened bread. They had to travel all the way across the Sinai Peninsula in order to cross the Red Sea. The Sinai Peninsula was part of Egypt at that time.

By starting your count to Pentecost on the day after the weekly Sabbath you are counting the way the Sadducees counted. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection or in angels or any kind of spirit, so why would you follow them in anything? Has common sense flown the coop.

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

The children of Israel also included the tribe of Judah which became known later as the Jews. Judah is only one of the original 12 tribes of Israel. One tribe was later also split into two tribes making the total 13 tribes.

Article by Rich Traver says:

Overlooked by the mainstream religious culture is the FACT that Jesus Himself fulfilled the Wave Sheaf Offering, being 'accepted for us' on that very occasion in the year of His resurrection. We know when the weekly Sabbath was in that year. He was 'waved' – not symbolically, but actually – before the Father on that Sunday morning, the morrow after the Sabbath, just hours after His resurrection. That very morning was the true Wave Sheaf occasion, though the Jewish world of that day had already observed it earlier. That is evident based on when the fifty-day count had been 'fully' counted out. (Acts 2:1)

Laura writes:

Common sense should tell people that if a person is dead and, in the grave, He will be unable to keep both the Passover and the Wave Sheaf on the right days and at the right times. Biblically and historically the Passover and the Wave Sheaf at the time of Christ was being kept on Nisan 15 and 16 respectively.

Jos 5:10 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. **Jos 5:11** And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover,

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unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day.

They could not eat these things if they had not done the wave sheaf offering first. They are eating these things the day after Passover and not the day after the weekly Sabbath.

Acts 2:1 says nothing about the apostles and the Jews keeping two different Pentecost's

Act 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And in Acts 2:46 they all went to the Temple. Why would the Apostles go to a Jewish Temple if they were keeping Pentecost differently than the Jews?

Act 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

This whole article is riddled with falsehoods.

Article by Rich Traver says:

Acts 2 provides evidence that their Jewish counterparts had observed their determined Pentecost on a fixed calendar date (as is their usual custom) while the Disciples observed it when “it was fully come”. That phraseology reveals that there had been a prior observance among those of that other persuasion. In fact, there was! Jews of Pharisean persuasion had observed it on Friday that year (waving the sheaf on the morrow after the annual Sabbath) while the Disciples, and then the early New Testament Church after them, observed it on the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, resulting in a fixed day of the week rather than on a fixed calendar date. And that also meeting the requirement that it be the morrow after the 7th Sabbath.

Laura writes:

There is nothing in Acts 2 stating they were keeping two Pentecost's that year or any other year. In fact, it states they were all there in one accord.

Act 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Article by Rich Traver says:

What would have been the situation with His disciples had they not been there on the right day? A question relevant to each of us.

Laura writes:

I did not agree with most of this article, but I do agree with his question, “What would have been the situation with His disciples had they not been there on the right day?”

Everyone should think about that question long and hard because the Bible says we will be resurrected on Pentecost at some point in time. Will you be there to meet Christ when he comes on the right Pentecost or will you be keeping Pentecost as mainstream Christianity keeps Pentecost, not at all or on the wrong day?

In regard to: Saving Knowledge Kills

Article by Nathaniel Burson

Comments by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Will summarize what he says about teaching a supposed “new doctrine”.

What we learn from his message is most all church goers, (mainstream and Church of God sabbath keepers) are sinners and won't make it into the Kingdom of God, because they don't know what the true “saving knowledge” really is.

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He reveals what that “saving knowledge” is at the end of his message. As if the Churches of God don’t know what that is. So, I will start with his end conclusion and work backwards on things he says that “reveals new truth” to all his readers.

Four of his main points are:

1. “Saving knowledge is, ‘doing’”. (His end conclusion).
2. “Saving knowledge is a myth”.
3. “Salvation has little to do with doctrine”. [Wrong but, I (Darwin) say, “Any teaching of any given subject is a doctrine. So, teaching to put love in action is a doctrine” and that to salvation.]
4. “Knowledge makes you proud”.

My overall response is the following:

1. So, according to his theology, “if you have knowledge”, you are all proud. However, God inspired the “wise guy” (Solomon) to write this, “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.”) **Proverbs 1:7 (KJV)** If knowledge makes one automatically become proud the writer of that article is in trouble with the rest of us! Yes, knowledge can and often does make one proud. It’s what I do with that knowledge and how I view it that can make me proud or stay humble with it, which any person can chose to view knowledge one way or the other. There is no way God would say, “get knowledge” knowing that it would automatically puff you up. How absurd!
2. Christ said it this way, **Matthew 7:21 (KJV)** *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* **Matthew 19:17 (KJV)** And he said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* **Revelation 21:8 (KJV)** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.
3. The Churches of God have always taught to put love into action. That is nothing new. Of course, it’s up to the individual to do or not to do. That includes to love like God reveals to us what love is. **Matthew 22:37-40 (KJV)** Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*
4. Christian fellowship is part of that including on the Sabbath, going over any doctrine or all including the doctrine of how to love.
5. Any part of living God’s law is putting love in action because His law is the law of love as that of His own character. **John 14:15 (KJV)** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* The church of God ministry has always stressed this as long as I have been a part of God’s church.
6. So, when you fellowship with other brethren, you put love in action, not just in words. As certain one’s claim. **Heb 10:25** “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”. Yes, love is living the commandments, all of them including keeping Holy days, meat laws, giving to the poor, helping a fellow church member in need and others. Nothing in this so called “new doctrine of meat” isn’t something the church hasn’t discovered till now as somehow revealing new truth to the Church. That basic teaching has always been in most churches, and I am sure all. Yes, it’s the doing that is new to those who are being called into God’s church at his or her baptism. There is not one Church of God that does not teach that, that I am aware of. This is old “stuff”! Milk of the word if you will.
7. By the way, the working of the law, “works of the law does save you”. Now, don’t let that confuse you. I am not saying that the works of the law pays for the penalty of sins death penalty. Paul made that clear in many of his writings. Sins death penalty has been paid by Jesus’ suffering and dying in our stead on the cross (grace-pardon for our death sentence for breaking the law). No amount of law keeping can pay that debt off! Paul said this about grace, **Romans 3:31 (KJV)** “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law”. If you are working the law, you are loving as God says to love. If you don’t steal your neighbor’s stuff, you love, if you feed him-her, you show love whether they need food or just in enjoying a meal together. God’s law is love.

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If we do “the law”, we will be saved. **James 2:18 (KJV)** “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works”. What works was he talking about? Anyone want to guess what works that might be? Go ahead and keep breaking God’s law and see if He will save you!

8. Works of the law is acting on or being compliant by doing as Jesus said, **Matthew 7:21 (KJV)** **Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**
9. Volunteering in work projects is an act of love. Many deeds can be considered an act of love and if you are acting on the definition of love, you are incorporating the love God is, and becoming more like Him. **Malachi 3:16 (KJV)** “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name”. What better time to do that than at Sabbath gatherings? What other better time to encourage someone than at Sabbath gatherings? The Church of God is well mentioned numerous times of brethren gathering at meeting places on the Sabbath in the Bible. Love is fellowshiping with other brethren in peace and that is part and partial to love as well as not stealing his stuff.
10. The New Testament abounds with scripture of how to put love in action in many, many ways. The Churches of God have not failed in teaching the concept of putting love in action-deed, as his, “saving knowledge” article claims.
11. There are people that literally gave up their physical lives for someone. That is the ultimate form of love. Christ did it. Would you? God knows who is working to be love as He is love. Therefore, we need not take a brush broadly, swipe, and consider the “church” (except me) not fulfilling the law of love.
12. His message is one of, “church of God people are not doing, they are full of sin”, only he and a very few limited numbers are God like. His attitude is, “me and God will make a happy couple”!
13. Be careful when you judge others. God may have this to say about you, **Isaiah 65:5 (KJV)** “**Which** say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These *are* a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day”. With an attitude like that, how can you not be filled with pride with all your “Saving Knowledge”?

Announcements

Announcement from Alan Ruth (January 15, 2023)

Friends:

This Email is a brief review of Biblestudy.org for 2022. First, however, thank you for your support! I also wish to thank the site's five direct Christian advertisers for continuing to use Biblestudy.org to promote their study materials.

In 2022, Biblestudy.org drew 8,707,494 visitors, a 706,000 or 8.8% increase from 2021. The site's study materials were also viewed (page views) a total of 17,174,552 times, which is 1.76 million more, or an 11.4% increase, compared to the previous year.

The site, last year, also received 795 Emails requesting answers to Bible questions. These questions were tackled by the site's hard working Email Evangelists (Rick Beltz, Al Murrey, Eric Snow and Margaret Vidal) who make the personalized answers service possible.

Last year the site was also able to send out 20 issues of its newsletter. The publication, now in its sixth year, is expertly formatted and designed by my longtime friend Nanci.

As always, the site continues to enhance and expand its studies, with 96 new articles added in 2022. This compares to 123 materials added in 2021 and 368 in 2020.

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Last year's additions included the updating and expanding, by Norm Edwards, of our "[How to Start and Run a Church](#)" series. The site also expanded its [Plainer Truth section](#) which showcases articles by our friend Bill Hillebrenner. Biblestudy.org now houses 1,745 articles on a wide variety of topics.

In closing, all credit goes to God, on my 60th birthday, for graciously "hiring" me fulltime, twenty-one years ago this month, to work directly and solely for him and for blessing the site. He is the greatest employer one could ever have as the benefits he offers are eternal. May God richly bless you in 2023.

* Alan Ruth
January 15, 2023

Announcement from William P. Goff (January 17, 2023)

Greetings Brethren,

The January 17, 2023 Kenya Update is now posted at:
[Khofh.org](#)

Thank you.
Bill Goff

Announcement from Laura Lee (January 17, 2023)

Sometimes we get backed up on research and need help from others. This is such a time. If there is someone out there that can write up a short article explaining the following, we would greatly appreciate it.

1. Did people eat meat before the flood?
2. In Genesis did Adam and Eve wear animal skins or something else?
3. Is anyone familiar with the following book: Lost Cities of Ancient Lemuria and the Pacific by David Childress (If so, can we get a book report in regard to this book.)
4. Can someone explain the following scriptures? Exodus 23:20-23

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