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

An Unpopular Truth About Salvation (Copyright 2023) by Dave Rothwell (St. Joseph, Missouri)

What exactly is required for salvation? There can be no more important question. It is, after all, quite literally a matter of life and death.

I imagine that most of you reading this think that you know the correct answer to this vital question. But do you? How certain are you? You may be shocked to find that Scripture does not support what was commonly believed in the WCG, nor what is commonly believed in any of the various COGs that sprang from it.

The COGs are quite certain that they have rejected the false teachings of mainstream Christianity and that they are the repositories and purveyors of "The Truth." But with regard to this most important of questions, they have unwittingly accepted the false teaching of Protestantism.

So, what is the Protestant teaching on the subject of salvation? Although there are many different flavors of Protestantism, the various Protestant beliefs about the requirements for salvation are all really just variations on the same theme. Put quite simply, the Protestant belief is that salvation comes by forgiveness alone. One cannot earn salvation, they say. But is that really any different than what the COGs teach? More importantly, is that what the Bible teaches?

What Does Scripture Teach?

A fundamental passage on the subject of salvation is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived..." Be not deceived! Is it possible that the COGs have been deceived? Do they not teach that the unrighteous will in fact inherit the kingdom of God? Ask any lay member or any minister of any COG group if a true Christian will still be sinning at the return of Christ (or at the end of their physical life, whichever comes first) and almost invariably the answer will be a confident, "Yes." The belief that we cannot overcome all sin in our life is bedrock for the COGs.

But isn't sinning the very definition of being "unrighteous"? If one probes a little further and asks the same COG member how they expect to be given eternal life if they are still sinning at Christ's return, the answer is always, "Because God will forgive me." Is this any different than the belief that salvation comes by forgiveness alone?

"But wait just a minute," I can hear you say. "We must overcome some sin. We won't be able to overcome all sin, but we must try hard enough and overcome enough that God deems us worthy." Okay, that's fair. Of course, no one knows how much we have to overcome to be accounted worthy of eternal life, but it is true that the COG teaching about salvation is nuanced by the addition of the need to try very hard to overcome. But it's also true that at the end of the day it still comes down to forgiveness.

Jesus was asked this very same question about what is required for salvation. We're all familiar with the account of the rich, young nobleman who asked what he must do to gain eternal life, so we all know that Jesus did not tell the man to "try" to keep the Commandments. He didn't say, "You won't be able to keep the Commandments, but that's okay, if you try hard enough God will forgive you." Now you may say, "It's humanly impossible to keep the Commandments perfectly." And I would agree with you. The disciples also understood that what Jesus was requiring is humanly impossible. They were in fact "exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" Jesus answered, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

And this is the key to understanding what God is doing and understanding what is required for salvation. This is not a work of men. This is the work of God. True, our cooperation and effort is required. We are co-workers with God, but at the end of the day it is the work of God in us. Sadly, most people, even those in the COGs, do not believe that God is capable of creating His perfect, righteous character in us. I am reminded of two passages inspired to be written by the prophets. "I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you" (Habakkuk 1.5), and "Who hath believed our report?" (Isaiah 53.1). Almost no one, it would seem.

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This subject is enormous, and I will not attempt to fully cover it in one article. I will instead confine this article to examining two foundational ideas contained in Scripture that shed light on what God is doing. But first let me briefly describe my observations on the condition of the COGs today. Where did we come from? And how did we end up here?

The Current State of The COGs

To give you some context of my perspective on the COGs, I grew up in the Worldwide Church of God. Actually, it was still the Radio Church of God when my parents were baptized and began attending. I was five years old at the time, so I have a perspective that spans more than sixty years. I went to Imperial School in Pasadena from first grade and then attended Ambassador College. I worked for the WCG for eight years, much of it on the fourth floor of the Hall of Administration. So, I've seen some things.

And one of the things that I have seen is people largely giving up on the idea of overcoming. When I was a young person in the WCG, the subject of overcoming sin was a common theme of the sermons preached and uppermost in the minds of the membership. But as the 60s became the 70s and then the 80s, and we came up against the hard reality of our own nature, we were forced to admit to the fact that we were not overcoming sin. Instead, we found that we were held captive by our own human nature; ingrained ways of thinking and habitual patterns of behavior which seemed impossible to dislodge. The idea that we were to just continue to try really hard felt exhausting.

And what was the end result of decades of trying really hard to overcome? We were overcome with fatigue. Most of us gave up and negotiated an internal compromise which included coexisting with a certain amount of sin in our life. We assuaged our guilt by telling ourselves that we had at least overcome some sin. We said things such as, "God knows my heart." Unfortunately, that statement is all too true. God does know our heart. The truth is that we had overcome as much as we humanly could. In other words, we had done what we could on our own. We may have thought that we were using the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome, but were we really?

What I saw in the WCG was the Holy Spirit being described as a sort of turbo-charger that gives us an extra boost to resist the power of sin and the pulls of the flesh. We thought of overcoming in terms of sitting on and squelching the "old man." But the harder we tried to sit on our own nature the more it squirted out in all directions and informed every part of our thoughts, words, and actions. The Holy Spirit was touted as the means to bottle up our evil, carnal nature. But we found that we could not contain our own nature. And what we should have realized is this: that is not how the Holy Spirit works.

The Holy Spirit is not an afterburner. It's not some superpower that enables us to bottle up our sinful nature. It is the presence of God within us. And God dwelling within is an agent of purification and of change. The conversion process is a process of change. It is a process of transformation. It is the process of our heart and mind being transformed into something new. It is the process of God's Law being written in our heart. The Christian walk is not one of trying to bottle up our unrighteous nature, it is a process whereby our unrighteous nature is little by little removed and replaced with God's righteous nature until we have fully taken on HIS righteousness. As you know, Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and *his righteousness*" (Matthew 6.33). God has chosen the elect to be partakers of *the divine nature* (2 Peter 1:4). It is only when we understand this truth that we can begin to make real progress on the path of Life.

So, it is with this reality in mind, and for the purpose of trying to wake up the COGs to this reality, that I am writing. As I said before, the subject is enormous, so I will limit this article to a brief examination of just two ideas in Scripture that illuminate this process, this work that God is performing in the hearts and minds of true Christians.

Free From What?

The first idea I want to examine is the concept of freedom from sin. Jesus famously said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Jesus said this to a group of Jews who believed on Him, and they responded by claiming that they were already free men. And Jesus then said something truly significant. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (verse 34). Consider what Jesus is saying here! Being forgiven of sin does not make you free from sin. If you are forgiven of all past sins, but then continue to sin, you are not free! You are still a slave to sin. The only way to be truly free from sin is to stop sinning. But isn't it impossible to stop sinning? That's what we've been told. But Jesus says otherwise. Jesus says that we can be set free. Not just free from the penalty of past sins, but free from sinning!

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But how is this accomplished? The key to understanding how we are to be set free from sin -- from sinning -- is the phrase, "You shall know the truth..." Jesus was not talking about intellectual knowledge here. Knowing the truth in an intellectual sense is valuable, but knowledge by itself will not save you. The kind of "knowing" that Jesus is talking about is the knowing that comes from an intimate personal relationship. Jesus was talking about knowing *Him*. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus is the Truth. And it is through an intimate relationship with Him -- knowing Him -- that we are to be set free from sin.

It is no accident that the Bible uses the word "know" to convey the idea of the intimate nature of the physical union between a man and his wife. "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived." The husband and wife relationship is a picture of the heavenly. Adam "knew" his wife, and they became "one flesh." Even so we as Christians can become one with God. Notice Jesus' words in John 14:23: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." And now John 17:21: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

It is through this oneness with God, this intimate relationship of God dwelling in us that we are able to become free from sinning. That is, in fact, how Jesus was able to live a sinless life. Jesus plainly tells us this. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Jesus said that it was the Father dwelling in Him who did the works. And it is clear from the context that "works" here is not just the miracles. The "works" were His words, His actions, how He lived.

And that is how we can live, too. Again, Jesus plainly tells us this. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:56-7). We must not underestimate the importance of Jesus' plain statement! We can live the same way that Jesus lived! As Jesus lived by the Father dwelling in Him, even so we are to live by Jesus dwelling in us!

This is essentially the same message conveyed through Paul in Romans chapter 8. The carnal mind is not, and cannot be, subject to the Law of God; so as long as we are "in the flesh" we cannot please God, we cannot obey God's Law (v7-8). But we are not "in the flesh" if we are led by the Spirit of God dwelling in us (v9). When we walk where the Spirit leads, the righteousness of the law is then fulfilled in us" (v4).

Understand that we do not become free from sin immediately. It takes time and experience to learn to walk as the Spirit leads. But over many years of this intimate relationship with God dwelling in us through the Spirit we are little by little transformed to become like God. Have you ever noticed that if you spend a lot of time around another person you begin to take on some of their mannerisms, pick up some of their words and ways of saying things? In a way that is an analogy of what happens to us when we spend time in relationship with God. We begin to take on more and more of the characteristics and nature of God, until one day, when God has completed His work in us, we now think like God thinks, our words and actions now reflect the nature of God. In other words, God will have reproduced His nature and character within us.

The Symbolism Of Healing

This brings us to the second concept I want to examine. And that is the symbolism behind the miracles of physical healing that Jesus performed. I think that this symbolism is not widely understood.

Notice Matthew, chapter 13, beginning in verse 10. The disciples asked Jesus why He spoke to the people in parables, and Jesus said it was because it was not given to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He cited the prophet Isaiah's description of a people who would hear but not understand and see but not perceive (verse 14). And then Jesus made this remarkable statement. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

But had He not healed them? If we go back just a few verses to chapter 12, verse 15, we find that "great multitudes" followed Jesus, and that He "healed them all." I'm not aware of even a single instance in the gospels where Jesus did not heal the sick who came to Him. But here He says that He had not healed them. So, what kind of healing is He talking about? We read of Jesus making the deaf to hear, the blind to see and the lame to walk. He cleansed the lepers. He even raised the dead. But the one thing that all these miracles have in common is they are restoring the physical body

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to health. None of these miracles address the spiritual condition of the human heart. But they all symbolize the process of healing the human heart.

All of man's problems could be summed up as a heart problem. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deut 5:29). Jesus said it is not that which goes into a man that defiles him, but that which comes out of his heart. True healing, also known as "conversion," requires a transformation of the heart. We might call it spiritual healing.

Spiritual healing begins with God opening our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Before God does this, we cannot see or hear with understanding. We were spiritually blind and spiritually deaf. And just as the lepers were cleansed, God is cleansing our heart. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). And just as Jesus healed the lame man so he could walk, God sets us upright on our feet and enables us to walk in the path of righteousness. "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Psalm 23:3). He has raised us up from being spiritually dead that we should "walk in newness of life" (Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 6:4).

At the Feast of Tabernacles, we typically read the passage found in Isaiah 35:5-6. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Although it is wonderful to think of a future world in which there will be no sickness, this passage is not primarily speaking of physical healing. It's primarily talking about the spiritual healing of the human heart, which will occur because God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh and write His Law in their heart. It's talking about the same kind of spiritual healing that God is offering to the elect, those who are the forerunners and the firstfruits of the New Covenant.

I wonder if you have noticed the connection in the gospels between belief and healing. Notice Matthew 9:27-30. Two blind men came to Jesus wanting to be healed, and Jesus said, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Why did Jesus ask the two blind men this question? Is it because God is unable to physically heal a person unless they believe He can? No, God is not limited in the physical realm from doing anything He chooses to do. Our unbelief does not make Him powerless. For example, when God chose to destroy the world in a great flood, He did not require that the people believe He could do it. He simply commanded and it was done. When Jesus healed the high priest's servant, whose ear had been cut off, He did not ask if he believed. He simply touched the man, and his ear was restored.

So why did Jesus ask this question? The answer is that Jesus wanted us to see the connection between belief and spiritual healing. Unlike physical healing, spiritual healing does require our belief. Unlike physical healing, which is a unilateral action by God, spiritual healing is a joint effort between God and the individual who is to be healed. It requires our cooperation, and thus our belief. We are co-workers with God. God does the heavy lifting, but we are required to do our part. If we do not believe that God can accomplish the miracle of healing our heart, we will not be willing to make the necessary sacrifices, we will not stay the course. We will quit when the going gets tough. Witness the example of the ancient Israelites.

The Israelites were gathered at the entrance to the Promised Land, but the people heard the report of giants in the land, and they were afraid to go in. As a result, God was sorely displeased with them, and even though they later changed their mind, God prevented them from entering the Promised Land. Now all these things were recorded for our learning. This is a lesson for us. We, too, are poised to enter the Promised Land. And we, too, know that there are giants that must be slain. The giants of course represent the sin that stands between us and our Promised Land. Do we believe that God can conquer all the sin in our life? Or do we believe that the giants are too big, too strong? Will we trust God and move forward with Him to slay the giants and take the land, or will we turn back from lack of faith and lose out on our Promised Land?

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:7-12).

The subject of salvation is far too large to fit into one article, but I hope that what I've presented has at least given you food for thought. In a future article, God willing, I will address some of the most widely misunderstood passages on the subject. Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8-9 especially come to mind. Until then, I will leave you with these words of Jesus: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

“And the Waters Assuaged” (Genesis 8:1) **(Copyright) by Samuel S. Martin (Jerusalem, Israel)**

Note: I want to shift gears a little bit and talk about some research I did about ten years ago. I hope you find it interesting, and I am definitely looking for feedback (or feed forward) on this subject.

The book of Genesis is one of my favorite books in the whole Bible. When I first began to do serious research into the Bible, Genesis was the place I started and the things that I have learned about Genesis, particularly in the early sections, really amazed me (and continue to do so today). I hope someday in the near future to be able to bring out more of my own research on the early sections of Genesis even beyond the subject of how the ancients lived such long ages and the mark of Cain that I have already mentioned.

One of the most interesting subjects in the Bible is that of the Flood of Noah. This event is really a mystery to many people about the details of how it happened. No doubt, people are really interested in this issue. If you do any research at all, you will find dozens of opinions on the Flood and how it happened, and these opinions will cover a whole range of different opinions. Numerous books, articles and websites are devoted to this important issue. [By the way, the book “The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church’s Response to Extrabiblical Evidence” by Davis A. Young (1995: Eerdmans) is one that I have in my library, and I enjoyed it very much. It is heavy reading, but if you are interested in the Flood of Noah, this is one book that I recommend. It is a scholarly book.]

In studying this issue, I believe that my father’s work on the Flood represents a solid biblical approach to this issue. (I would urge interested parties to go to the following links for a number of articles on this very big subject)

<http://www.askelm.com/secrets/sec097.htm> –
<http://www.askelm.com/secrets/sec099.htm> –
<http://www.askelm.com/secrets/sec098.htm> –
<http://www.askelm.com/secrets/sec003.htm>)

To sum up on his views on this subject, he believed the following (and I share his views).

1. The Flood of Noah took place exactly as the Bible indicates it did.
2. The Flood was caused by the disruption of a ring system made up of various substances suspended in water that came down to the earth at the time of the Flood. The waters of the Flood came from outer space, not only from water sources present on earth when the Flood happened – in this regard see Hecht, Jeff; "Snowballs from Space 'Filled Earth's Oceans'," New Scientist, p. 38, May 12, 1988.
3. The Flood was worldwide in scope, but when the Bible says the “mountains were covered”, it in no way means that they were “submerged.”
4. The Bible indicates that about 276 inches of water descended upon the earth during the event of the Flood. Therefore, the mountain tops were not covered “from 15 cubits and upward” as the King James Version seems to tell us, but rather that the total amount of rain that descended “from above” (as the Hebrew text of Genesis 7:20 clearly teaches) was 15 cubits or 276 inches.
5. All life on earth at that time, except what remained inside the ark, died.
6. According to the Bible. new animals and even a new creation that had not been seen before were created after the Flood.

These ideas may sound fantastic, (even ‘Buck Rogers’ as my father once termed them) but I would urge those of you who might not be familiar with dad’s views on this fascinating subject to study these papers in light of what the Bible

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reveals concerning this issue. Many of you may (or may not) know that prior to even getting interested in the social sciences of history, theology and the Bible, my father had a very strong scientific background being trained in college and in the United States Air Force as a weather forecaster. Because of this training, he had a unique perspective and a strong ability to integrate scientific data into his Biblical research. (Those of you who know of his work on the Star of Bethlehem will certainly know what I am talking about.

– Importantly, dad’s work has also been prominently referenced in the standard work on Biblical Chronology produced by the late Dr. Jack Finegan – The Handbook of Biblical Chronology – available widely - <http://www.centuryone.com/3143-9.html>).

For me, the issue of the Flood was one which occupied a great deal of study about ten years ago. Around that time, I learned some things which even my father did not reference in his own works. The Bible is such a rich book of treasures that it always seems that there are more things to learn.

The title of this section is “And the waters assuaged.” (Genesis 8:1) So lets talk about this seemingly unimportant passage because it is in this passage that much interesting information is contained. Honestly, when we study Genesis or other sections of the Bible where we have very little information, we have to take what we do have seriously and look very carefully at the information provided and do our best to understand what it meant to the writer who wrote it, who in this case was Moses. We want to know the meaning that Moses wished to convey if we can.

Now, why is this section important? It is because a careful examination of what this passage teaches helps to further augment the ideas put forth in the whole argument presented by my father concerning the Flood.

We in the modern world have been influenced wrongly by epic films and artistic depictions about biblical subjects concerning many issues including the Flood.

My father talked about a concept that I urged him to develop in one of his books on the Secrets of the Bible. It was a term that he chose to describe the influence of motion picture films on our modern conceptions of the Bible. He coined the phrase: “Hollywood Theology.” “Hollywood Theology” refers to religious conceptions that are influenced and guided by motion picture films. Here is a quote from pages 16-17 of his book “101 Bible Secrets that Christians Do Not Know” (available at www.askelm.com) which demonstrates what I am talking about here.

“The Hollywood producers and directors have truly displayed magnificently absurd scenes in some of the most prestigious of films. It is not Hollywood, however, who deserves "Oscars" for foolishness in trying to depict what the Bible teaches. Hollywood actually has been deceived by the false teachings of the professional preachers, priests and theologians who have been their technical advisors. These first few "secrets" can show "Hollywood Theology" at its best.

When Cecil B. DeMille produced the movie "The Ten Commandments," Charlton Heston who played Moses brought down from the mountain two huge stones that surely must have weighed a good hundred pounds each (I saw these "stones" years ago when I toured one of the movie studios and they were actually made of foam rubber). But is this an accurate depiction of the stones on which the Ten Commandments were written?

The truth is, the Bible shows that Moses was able to carry both stones in one hand (Exodus 32:15). No, not in one arm. He carried both stones in one hand. The stones were actually quite small - about pocket size in dimension. They were small slate-like stones that could be carried in the palm of one hand, though to keep them from rubbing together he often carried them in both hands (Deuteronomy 9:15).

And another point that is usually not understood. Each stone had the Ten Commandments written on both its sides, not on one side alone (Exodus 32:15). And something else, many scholars now believe that the two stones were actually duplicates of one another. The second stone was an exact copy of the first. In other words, Moses was given one stone with the full Ten Commandments written on it (front and back) and he was given a second stone, which was an exact copy of the first. The reason for this? These two duplicate stones were designed by God to be a double witness to the Israelites (to meet the requirement that at least two witnesses had to be in evidence in life and death matters –see Deuteronomy 17:6,7). For legal purposes, it looks like God gave Israel two identical sets of the Ten Commandments as a dual testimony to their seriousness.

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This shows how far off Hollywood can be when it comes to depicting biblical events. But why should we blame Hollywood? The movie industry has only been showing what Christian painters and sculptors (under the influence of past theologians, priests, and church leaders) have erroneously concocted as biblical teachings over the centuries. (Kline, Meredith, G., "The Two Tables of the Covenant," Westminster Theological Journal (1960),22, pp.133-146).

Both Hollywood films and television specials have been guilty of another falsity regarding the biblical periods that is so evident to anyone having studied the History of Western Civilization. They often show riders on horses which have saddles and stirrups. There have been some great film masterpieces that Hollywood has produced about the life of Jesus or the period when the apostles lived which often show Roman soldiers riding horses with saddles on them. This is fine enough, but the saddles are often shown with stirrups to hold the feet of the riders. After all, our modern saddles have to have stirrups because Hollywood directors do not want their members of the cast falling off their horses. But Hollywood is wrong again. Stirrups on saddles were not invented earlier than the mid-fifth century after Christ (and some evidence suggests their invention was two centuries later). (The New Columbia Encyclopedia, article "Stirrup," p.2625.)

Now, what difference does it make? The point is films (and by extension photographs, television and paintings) influence dramatically people's opinions about all kinds of things and the Bible is no exception. Look at the Hollywood films about the Flood. They seemingly follow the Biblical narrative, and you see people climbing up to the tops of mountains to escape the Flood; you see the ark floating on huge oceans of water and torrential downpours; you see rain for forty days and forty nights; you see the water covering the tops of the mountains and so on. However, are these really accurate descriptions? According to Hollywood, yes; but according to the Bible, no!

One of the points that I have referenced here is the idea that many who speak about this issue advocate for the fact that the Bible teaches that the mountains were submerged by water. Yes, that is what many advocate for, yet my father has presented a very strong argument against this idea.

However, there is one verse which I am focusing on in this short paper which seems to indicate this idea pretty clearly. It is the following which are the last few words of the passage in question: "And the waters assuaged." (Genesis 8:1)

When you read this passage, you get the feeling that the waters that were submerging the whole mountains were somehow miraculously removed from the earth by a divine agency. This is what you feel on the surface when you read the last section of Genesis 7 and the first verse of Genesis 8. It seems so clear that this is what it means. But is it?

When we look at the Hebrew word for "assuaged" which is יָשַׁוּ - *yascu*, this word needs some defining. Yes, it can mean "assuaged" or "receded," however in this context many ancient commentators point out something else.

Rabbi Raphael Hirschinson in his excellent commentary on Genesis says the following: "וישאו – *vayascu* (root שכך) The use of this expression indicates that the action of the water of the flood was not merely mechanically destructive but also chemically dissolving. According to one remark in Sanhedrin 108b (quoting here from the Babylonian Talmud – one of the ancient authoritative works on Jewish law and Bible interpretation – see http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_108.html), they were רותחין, seething. שכך is the reverse of boiling and bubbling up of a torrent." (pg. 155). Continuing, Rabbi Hirschinson shows that to understand this verse it is essential to refer to a passage in the book of Esther chapter 7, verse 10, which says:

"Then the king's wrath was pacified."

The word for "pacified" in Esther 7:10 and the word for "assuaged" in Genesis 8:1 come from the same root. The point that arises out of these passages when we begin to dig deeper is that the Floodwaters themselves were boiling hot. Rabbi Hirschinson references a key passage in the Babylonian Talmud in this regard and it is good to show here what those ancient commentaries said about this verse. Note if here:

R. Hisda said: With hot passion they sinned (speaking about those in the pre-Flood period), and by hot water they were punished. [For] here it is written, And the water cooled; (Genesis 8:1) whilst elsewhere it is said, Then the king's wrath cooled down. (Esther 7:10) (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 108b)

You can see that this ancient commentator clearly understood that the waters of the Flood were hot water and he even

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translated the word as “cooled.” When we think about it, depending on our perspective, it could very easily mean that the waters indeed “cooled off” rather than “assuaged” or “run off” from a higher point to a lower point. What we find here is that those individuals who translated the word “assuaged” may have been influenced by their opinion of what took place in the Flood through means other than looking at the ancient sources (like religious art, paintings in churches, stained glass windows or icons) and comparing the information we find in the Biblical texts.

Hot water during the Flood? Yes. In fact, we have many ancient nations producing Flood type narratives and “a Finnish story of the Deluge (the Flood) is of hot water.” (Hastings: Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. IV, p. 548)

What has to be understood is the whole conception of what took place in the Flood needs to be reexamined. I believe that this is what my dad was trying to do through his publications on this subject. Even the word for “flood” (מבול - *mabul*) does not always specifically mean “flood.” Note that in passages in the New Testament where the Flood is referenced, the Greek word used is κατακλυσμος (*kataklusmos*), from which we get the English word *cataclysm* or *cataclysmic*. The point is, while all floods to one degree or another can be cataclysmic in effect, not all *cataclysmic* events are necessarily floods. It is important to note that the Hebrew word (מבול - *mabul*) only appears in the Hebrew Bible 12 times, 11 of which are in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. (the remaining time is in Psalm 29:10) We even find in the first passage where this word is referenced that the Lord says: “I do bring a flood (מבול – *mabul* – “a cataclysmic event”) of waters ...” (Genesis 6:17) It seems to indicate that to limit the description of this event to that of a “flood” is to miss the intent and power of this word. What took place in the early chapters of Genesis was a complete destruction of everything alive on earth and it looks like that while water was involved, that water was not only very hot, but that it also had corrosive qualities to it.

What I hope to show through this short article is that there is much to learn in these early sections of Genesis. While the language is terse and brief, we have to remember that this is what the Lord has provided for us to know about the early earth. Let us take these passages, believe them and be willing to study them carefully asking the Lord to guide our path. There is still much teaching to be had from that good old Book.

See Samuel S. Martin’s other articles at:

Martin, Samuel S. – Church of God, Bismarck (church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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God Loves Us Unconditionally

(Copyright 2023) by Zac Poonen (Bangalore, India)

Satan asked permission from God to sift Peter as wheat (*Luke 22:31*). And God permitted him to do so - because Peter had a more important ministry than all the others who were not thus sifted. Jesus only prayed that Peter's faith would not fail (*Luke 22:32*). Peter denied the Lord thrice. But, as a result, he was thoroughly broken and humbled and wept bitterly and repented (*Luke 22:61,62*). Thus, God's plan was accomplished and all the chaff of pride in him was sifted away. God used Satan to accomplish that. That is one reason why God has not destroyed Satan as yet. Praise the Lord.

“God loves to the highest degree, those disciples who have forsaken everything to follow Jesus - God loves them as much as He loved Jesus Himself ”

After the resurrection, God sent a special message through the angel at the tomb saying, “Go and tell His disciples **and Peter** that Jesus is risen and going in front of you” (*Mark 16:7*). That phrase “...and Peter...” is so typical of our Lord. Wasn't Peter also a disciple? Why did the Lord make special mention of him? Because Peter was the one who might

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have felt that the phrase “His disciples” could not possibly include him *any longer*, because of his terrible failure. So that phrase was meant to tell him that the Lord still considered him as His apostle.

But in spite of that message, Peter was still so discouraged that he decided to go back permanently to his old profession of fishing (*John 21:3*). So, the Lord went and called Peter back to his apostleship, personally. Such is the love of the Lord. He will keep on coming after us. It was thus that Peter came back and his “*faith did not fail*”. It was not because Peter never failed or made a mistake.

So, if we are truly born again and have become disciples of Jesus, we must believe that God has accepted us in Christ and loves us *unconditionally* - *because God IS LOVE*. There are two types of believers:

1. Those who believe that their heavenly Father's love is unconditional.
2. Those who believe that their heavenly Father's love is conditional.

Those in category 1 will be at rest because they believe the *truth*. The others will remain in perpetual unrest because they believe they must perform well in order for God to continue to love them. Every false religion in the world teaches that God's love is conditional - that His love is “*performance-love*” - a love that is based on how well we perform! Jesus came and taught the opposite. Yet most believers are still *heathen* in their thinking. We must expose Satan's lie. Because the truth is that God loves *His children unconditionally*. We can reject that love and fall away from God and be lost. But His love for His children is still unconditional. The story of the father's love for the prodigal son illustrates this perfectly.

It is true that there are different degrees in God's love for people. God loves all the people in the world to a certain degree (*John 3:16*). But God loves His born-again children to a greater degree. And among His children, He loves some more than others, because they fulfill certain conditions - as Jesus said in *John 14:21*: “*He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father*”. And beyond those, God loves to the highest degree, those disciples who have forsaken everything to follow Jesus - *God loves them as much as He loved Jesus Himself* (See *John 17:23*).

But yet God's love itself is *unconditional*.

One distinguishing mark of God's love is expressed in *Luke 6:35* as “*expecting nothing in return*”. Human love always expects respect, love, and gifts in return. But Divine love expects nothing. It has no inward demands on those it loves. God makes the sun to rise equally on the good and the evil and is kind and merciful to the evil and the ungrateful. Only if we live in this Divine love can we be saved from all Phariseeism.

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

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Road Rules for The New Year
(Copyright 2023) by Santosh Poonen (Bangalore, India)

“As for the days of our life, soon they are gone and we flyaway. So, teach us to number our days that we may present to You a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:10,12)

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We are approaching the end of another calendar year. This is a good opportunity to remind ourselves through the words of this psalm, how short our time on this earth is, and how important every single moment in life is. As you think about the road ahead in the new year, here are *FOUR* very simple Road Rules to live by:

1. Stop at the red lights

Our tendency is to rush through life, assuming that we only have green lights. Instead, whenever we come to an intersection where we have to make a decision, let us stop and acknowledge God there. If we ask Him to show us which way to proceed, He will reply with directions (Read *Isaiah 30:21*), and He will make the road ahead of us straight (*Proverbs 3:6*). On the other hand, if we do not wait for God to turn the light to green, we will end up in an accident.

2. Don't stop at the green lights

Every opportunity we get to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Jesus is a green light that we must always go through without waiting. Every situation in which we can build a bridge to repair relationships with someone is a green light, and we must always go through that without waiting (*Romans 12:18*). One of the proofs that we have truly been made new in Christ is that we have become "reconcilers" (*2 Corinthians 5:17-20*). When we have the opportunity to apologize and set things right with someone, if we delay – because of our pride, or by defending ourselves, or by blaming the other person – that would be like not moving forward at a green light. We will be blocking traffic, and eventually, we will get into an accident. Instead, let us always be quick to go through the green light of being peacemakers (*Matthew 5:9*).

"If we don't wait for God to turn the light to green, we will end up in an accident."

3. Don't drive off the road

As we travel along the road of our journey with God, the devil will constantly try to get us to drive off the road. Along the side of the road are many flowers and trees, (the opinions of other people) that can distract us. If we allow the desire to please others, or the fear of what they will think of us, to distract us (*Galatians 1:10*), then we will soon drive off the highway and end up in a crash. My father used to tell me frequently, "*You have the choice of either **impressing** people or **blessing** them. Choose to **bless** them always.*" To *impress* people, you need to be talented – and the **more of "you"** the better. But if you want to really help them, however, you need the power of the Holy Spirit - and then **the less of "you"**, the better (*John 3:30*)!

4. Stay in your lane

Unfortunately, many people have the habit of not staying in the lane marked on the road, and this often leads to accidents. In our Christian life also, God has drawn lanes for our protection. Staying in our lane means minding our own business always (*1 Thessalonians 4:11-12*) and never being a busybody in other people's matters (*2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Peter 4:15*). When we get involved with matters that do not concern us at all, that is like crossing over the line into someone else's lane. This will eventually damage our own life as well as the lives of others around us.

And finally: Let us ***not drive slowly*** and drag our way along this journey. But instead, let us drive at full speed to win the heavenly prize (*1 Corinthians 9:24*)!

We wish you all a very blessed New Year, full of God's richest blessing every day.

See Santosh Poonen's other articles at:

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

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Why Do We Sin?

(Copyright 2022) by James McBride (United Kingdom)

Some folk harbor the notion that if you are a ‘Christian’ you will never sin—a position countered by the apostle John: ‘...*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*’ (I John 1:8). The misconception may stem from the fact that when we do sin—and confess it to God, with repentance (v.9)—that sin is covered, obliterated, ‘...*as far as the east is from the west*’—and only by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. But how does sin arise?

‘The devil made me do it’ cry some. But what do the Scriptures tell us? ‘...*out of the heart come forth reasonings, evil things, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, lies, blasphemies. These things are the things defiling the man*’ (Matthew 15:20). (Note: Jesus lists these sins in the order of the ten commandments! cf I John 3:4) As wrote Jeremiah (ch 17:9): ‘...*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*’.

On the other hand, the righteous person has laid up in his memory store the wholesome teachings of the Creator: ‘...*The good man out of the good treasure of the heart puts forth good things. And the evil man out of the evil treasure puts forth evil things. The things which come out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and these defile the man*’ (ch 12:34-35). We must choose wisely what we ‘feed’ on: ‘*garbage in, garbage out*’.

Polluted Inheritance

Every human being has inherited from Adam a moral downward tendency: ‘...*the carnal [normal] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*’ (Romans 8:7). It is the universal ‘law of entropy’: ‘...lack of order or predictability; a gradual decline into disorder.

Our first parents were created as perfect beings, mature and with freedom of choice—for the consequences of which they were responsible. By our inherited nature we choose our own path— with consequences: ‘...*there is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*’ (Proverbs 12). As wrote the apostle Paul: ‘...*the wages of sin is death*’ (Romans 6:23). We have a choice: if we truly love [*i.e.* serve] God we will hate evil [all unrighteousness] (Psalm 97:10).

Deadly Influences

As Ezekiel (ch 18) points out we each have personal responsibility for our own behaviour no matter what our background. We throughout our life face differing challenges, summed up by the apostle John as ‘the world’: ‘...*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*’ (I John 2:15-56). We don’t face judgment for our back story but for what we do with what we have and are.

That ‘world’ (*i.e.* all its inhabitants) is one that has been deceived by the Devil (Revelation 12:9). Throughout history he has manipulated mankind through ‘influencers’ who in every field of human thought have dreamed up philosophy’s contrary to the will of God—in education, entertainment, business, economics, psychology, human health and in religion. Such people are sure to be far removed from righteousness, from the perfect will of our Creator as He reveals Himself.

The devil and his cohort of sinful spirits have over the millennia honed their skill to manipulate, to deceive, to bamboozle the human race. Not content with their God-appointed role of serving mankind they continue to covet the forbidden role of Sonship with the Father (Hebrews 1:5). But by actively applying God’s guidance in the Scriptures, we can avert these ‘*fiery darts of the wicked one*’ fired through the world and its godless influencers and institutions.

Our sin stems from ‘the world, the flesh, and the devil’. How we respond is our choice.

See James McBride’s other articles at:

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

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Increasing Number of Doomsday Shelters and Bunkers Built by Wealthy (Copyright 2024) by Richard Markland (London, Ohio)

Seeking a safe haven is going to be of greater concern as dangers increase in the days ahead. The wealthy are heavily invested in sophisticated underground shelters and bunkers. With the threat of nuclear war, violent terrorist attacks, cyberattacks upon the nation's infrastructure, civil unrest, and the threat of economic collapse, America is facing an ominous future. Americans, overall, are becoming more unhinged as dangers mount. There's one major flaw in the most well-made plans for self-protection. What if any given person is not at the location they had originally planned to be when a catastrophe strikes, due to the suddenness of any given calamity?

Mat 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Mat 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

See Richard Markland's other articles at:

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

World Peace in Our Time or a World in Pieces? (Copyright 2023) by Richard Markland (London, Ohio)

In Matthew 24:22, it says, "... unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones" (NLT). Because Weapons of Mass Destruction will become the ultimate nightmare if Christ did not intervene, and establish the Kingdom of God on earth, every man, woman, and child would not survive the coming nuclear holocaust. The return of Christ is an absolute promise. There is hope beyond the hopelessness many people feel about a coming World War III. God will not allow the world to end in nuclear annihilation.

See Richard Markland's other articles at:

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

Future European Military in Planning (Copyright 2024) by Craig M. White (Australia)

This 20 minute video [on YouTube](#) is well worth a watch. The complexities must be understood and grasped by any Bible prophecy student and the timeline that this has and will take. It won't happen overnight.

See Craig White's other articles at:

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

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Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: God Loves Us Unconditionally

Article by Zac Poonen

Comments by Darwin & Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

It is true that we should love others without expecting anything in return. For example, if you give a gift to someone who does not like you and does not talk to you, give the gift happily without expecting even a thank you in return. There is nothing wrong with that kind of love and we should all do it. We need to also give and practice that sort of love with our families and our friends.

Luk 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

God also gives that kind of love to everyone. Remember Christ loved everyone so much that he gave His life for all of us. However, there are other scriptures that show God does expect something in return, that is that we love Him. That is all we can give Him. Everything else is already His. One of the ways we love God is to keep His Commandments.

Joh 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

So, God does expect you to keep His commandments if you love Him. Yes, God will still love you even if you do not keep His commandments, so in that sense God's love is unconditional but if you want to be with God and live forever you have to keep His law. Meaning you would have to repent and stop sinning.

If on the other hand you totally refuse to keep God's law and you want to continue to sin, God loves you so much He will not let anyone suffer in a life of perpetual sin and that person will simply be destroyed.

Everyone has "Free Will" so they can decide to love God or not to love God and they will suffer the consequences of their own decision, whether that choice is to keep the law of God and live forever or to want to continue in sin and be destroyed.

Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

γέεννα
geenna
gheh'-en-nah

Of Hebrew origin ([H1516] and [H2011]); *valley of* (the son of) *Hinnom*; *gehenna* (or *Ge-Hinnom*), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: - hell.

Luk 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Iron Sharpening Iron In regard to: Is Yayshua God? (Part 2)

Article by James & Patt Steinle

Comments by Avram Yehoshua (Tulsa, Oklahoma), Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota) & Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Avram writes:

THE GOD FAMILY

With Yeshua speaking of Himself as the Son of God, and also, saying that God was His Father, we have a family relationship between the Two, and also, two of the three people needed for a core family. The Three divine Beings are the God Family, just as Adam, Eve and Cain were the original human family. Because there are already two male figures with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit must be female—the Mother in the divine God Family of Father and Son.

The first verse of the two verses of the Shema (Dt. 6:4-5) lends itself for us to realize that the term 'one,' in the last phrase, "Yahveh is one!," actually speaks of the Three divine Beings in Their oneness. An accurate translation of the Hebrew text for Dt. 6:4 states, 'Hear, Oh Israel! Yahveh*4* is our God! Yahveh is one!'"*5*

The word for 'one' in Hebrew is אחד eh'had, which can speak of two or more humans being 'one.'*6* It's the same Hebrew word for a man and his wife, two people, being one flesh (Gen. 2:24). Therefore, it's more than reasonable to see the term 'one' in the Shema presenting the divine Trio as One (God); one God Family. Using the specific and personal name of the God of Israel, Yahveh, like the last name for the God Family—the Three divine Persons are:

1. Father Yahveh,
2. Mother Yahveh (the Holy Spirit), and
3. Son Yahveh (Yeshua).

All Three are Yahveh, just as father Smith, mother Smith and baby Smith all have Smith as their last name and are one family, distinguished by their first names. The Shema speaks of the unity of Father Yahveh, Mother Yahveh and Yeshua (Son) Yahveh as One God Family, just as Adam, Eve and Cain were one family, and obviously "one." Having a Father and a Son in the God Family scripturally means that the Holy Spirit has to be the Mother. Having a third Man in the God Family, as the Western Church teaches for their Trinity, is not only unreasonable, it's absurd and truly unbiblical.

The Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son are the God *Family*. This is established from Scripture from the use of the family terms, father and son. The God Family created Adam (Gen. 1:26), and from Adam, Eve literally came into existence, and from their union they had a son (and many other children, but the initial picture of the three is what we'll center on for now).

Laura writes:

Again, your trinity is no different than the trinity most people hold to. The only difference is that in your version you believe the Holy Spirit is the wife of God and mother of Christ and is a separate person from both.

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Numerous times I have told you we do not believe in the trinity doctrine, no matter what version you present to us and we do not teach a trinity doctrine because it is not in scripture. You have presented no verses which say the Holy Spirit is a person and there is nothing in scripture which says God the Father has a wife which is the Mother of Christ. You are either making it all up, or getting it from someplace else, based on not understanding the nature of the Holy Spirit or what scripture says.

Avram writes:

THE FEMALE HOLY SPIRIT

This biblical understanding of the Three Persons being a Family, reflected in Yeshua speaking of Himself as the Son and the Father as His Father, as well as God (Elohim; literally Gods) making Man (Adam and Eve) in His/Their image, presents the Holy Spirit as the female Person of the God Family. Western Christianity teaches that the Holy Spirit is a Man—a Gentleman, if you will, but what’s wrong with this God Family if the Holy Spirit is a Man?

If there are Three Men in the God Family, what would the Holy Spirit’s relationship with the Father and the Son be? Would the Spirit be a Brother to the Father, and hence, an Uncle to the Son? I hope you can see how foolish that is because there isn’t any earthly family with three males at its core. There has to be a wife/mother in order for a child to be born and for it to be a family with a father and a son (for our example; a son instead of a daughter); not a father, another man and a son.

We know from Scripture that God created Man as Adam and Eve, not as two men, but a man and a woman, and every human family must have a woman as the wife/mother, not a man. Also, with the use of Adam, Eve and Cain as the earthly reflection of the God Family, it’s clearly revealed that the Holy Spirit has to be the Wife and Mother in the God Family. If this is not the case, then we have three Men as the God Family—which is a biblical and natural absurdity. As for Laura’s “essence” of God being the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit must be a Person for there to be both a Father (God) and the Son (God). There can’t be the Father and the Son...and an essence, for Adam and Eve (and Cain) to be a reflection of the Godhead. MAN was made in God’s Image and Likeness:

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our Image, according to Our Likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the Earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26)

We know from both New Testament and Old Testament*7* Scripture that there is a Father and a Son, so the Holy Spirit must be the female in the God Family. Western Christianity is wrong about the gender of the Holy Spirit. Four more points will bear witness to the Holy Spirit being the divine female of the God Family: Hebrew and Greek grammar in both Testaments, Proverbs, the Eastern Church, and Paganism.

Laura writes:

This is pretty much all nonsense. The Holy Spirit is the Essence/Power of God. The Holy Spirit is not God’s wife or Christ’s mother. It is not in scripture.

Avram writes:

HEBREW AND GREEK GRAMMAR

Grammatically, whenever the Hebrew term for Holy Spirit (Ru’ach HaKodesh) or Spirit (ru’ach) is the subject of a phrase it’s always feminine in the Old Covenant, not masculine. It’s a feminine noun and consequently, all its corresponding verbs and pronouns, etc., are also feminine. From the Greek New Testament, translated into Hebrew for Israelis today, whenever Spirit or Holy Spirit is the subject of the phrase it’s always feminine too. For example, in Luke 3:22 it speaks of the Holy Spirit descending upon the Messiah in the form of a dove:

“And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a Dove upon Him, and a Voice came from the Heavens, which said, ‘You are My beloved Son. In You I am well pleased.’” (Luke 3:22)

The Hebrew verb descended is ירדה (yar’dah), a third person *feminine* verb, and so the Hebrew is saying, ‘And the Holy Spirit, *She* descended upon Him.’*8* For those of you who know Hebrew the sentence reads:

וְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ יָרַד עָלָיו בְּדְמוּת גֹּשְׁמִית כִּיּוֹנָה, וְקוֹל הָיָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם: אֵתָהּ בְּנֵי אֱהוּבִי, בְּךָ חֲפָצָה.

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All English New Testaments though, translated from the Greek New Testament, speak of the Holy Spirit as a 'He' (e.g. Jn. 15:26). Wrongly translating the Scriptures is not new. For instance, the revered King James Bible, which some say is inerrant or without a single error, fails to translate Hebrews 4:9 accurately. It states,

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Hebrews 4:9)

The problem lies with translating the Greek word as "rest." The Greek word is Sabbatismos, and one needn't be a Greek scholar to see "Sabbath" in the word. So, as most English translations have, it's "Sabbath rest;" not just "rest:"

"There remains therefore a **Sabbath rest** for the people of God." (Hebrews 4:9 NASB)

Did the KJV translator make a mistake? No. He intentionally avoided "Sabbath rest" because to him, the Sabbath had been "done away with Jesus" at the Cross. He was projecting into the sentence his theology, which is called eisegesis. "Eisegesis is the process of interpreting text in such a way as to introduce one's own presuppositions, agendas or biases." Welcome to English translations of the New Testament about Mosaic Law being God's New Testament lifestyle for all Christians. Christians are to walk in all Mosaic Law that applies to them; just as Jesus and all His Apostles did all their lives.

Today there is considerable debate in the scholarly world about the Holy Spirit being feminine or masculine, causing many theologians to reassess the gender of the Spirit. For instance, Greek scholar and theologian Daniel Wallace believes that the Holy Spirit is feminine in the Greek New Testament, and says,

"it is difficult to find any text in which πνευμα (pneuma; Spirit) is grammatically referred to with the masculine gender." *9*

This affirms what we saw with the God Family and the Creation account.

Laura writes:

Please pay attention, you are taking scriptures and trying to get them to say things they do not say so I believe this applies to you:

"He was projecting into the sentence his theology, which is called eisegesis. "Eisegesis is the process of interpreting text in such a way as to introduce one's own presuppositions, agendas or biases."

It's a quote from what you just said here.

Avram writes:

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Just as a godly mother prepares her daughter for marriage, so too the Holy Spirit prepares the Bride of Messiah for the heavenly Marriage with Yeshua (Rev. 19:7, 9; 21:2, 9, 17; cf. Eph. 5:22-25). This Comforter or Helper, like Yeshua, was sent to Israel in Acts 2:1f. Yeshua also spoke of the Holy Spirit being in every believer:

"the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Her nor knows Her, but you know Her, for She dwells with you and will be in you." (John 14:16-17; cf. Acts 9:31; Eph. 2:18) *10*

Laura writes:

Look at this, now you are dividing the Mother into pieces and giving the pieces to others. Do you yet see why the Holy Spirit cannot be a person? You can't divide people into pieces because soon there would be no pieces left.

On the other hand the Power/Essence of God can be put into many people and God never loses a piece of His person. Think about it.

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Avram writes:

Theologians refer to the Holy Spirit as the Paraklete παράκλητος (literally; parakletos, i.e. paraklete), the One *like* Yeshua, who was sent to take His place; the ‘Helper’ (Comforter, Counselor), which is what the Greek term Paraklete means. This speaks of the Spirit being both deity and a Person.

The *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament* states that Paraklete means, “one who appears in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper.” *11* Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament says it means, “a helper, succorer, aider, assistant; so of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to a deeper knowledge of...truth.” *12*

Walter Bauer’s, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, says that because of the use of the Greek word Paraclete, *the Holy Spirit is seen as the **complement** to the Lord Yeshua Himself:*

“The Spirit is more closely defined by...John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13 (in these three places *the Spirit of Truth is the Paraclete promised by Jesus* upon his departure).” *13*

Interesting to note is that ‘helper’ (or help-mate) is what God spoke of Eve for Adam:

“So, Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.” (Genesis 2:20-21 NKJV; ASV and KJV: help meet; NASB, NIV and NRSV: helper)

The Holy Spirit is the divine Helper, comparable to Yeshua, as Eve was to Adam. The Spirit is the Helper, Life Giver, Comforter, Counselor for the Bride of Messiah, of which Yeshua is the Bridegroom. This though, isn’t the first time that the Holy Spirit has walked in Her role of Helper. She was also a divine Helper of Papa God (and Yeshua) in Creation, and again, is akin to Eve in her relationship with Adam, as they ‘made their world,’ filling it with human beings, as they were ‘fruitful and multiplied,’ being the progenitors of the human race. In other words, Eve ‘helped’ Adam in that and of course, in the Garden (Gen. 2:15, 18).

The word for helper is עֶזֶר (ezer), and even though we know that God would give Eve as the one who was that helper, comparable to Adam, ezer is a masculine noun. So, the sentence is literally saying that God would make Adam a male helper like himself, but we know that’s not true because God made Eve, a woman, to help Adam.

The Holy Spirit is the Helper, comparable to Yeshua (another Helper; Jn. 14:16), that is given to us. This, along with מְנַחֵם Menachem (the masculine Hebrew word for Comforter), reveals that it’s not unusual for the Greek masculine noun for Comforter (Parakletos) to be used of the Spirit (four times in John), or that a masculine pronoun (aekaynos; ‘he’) is used twice in John to refer to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. The point is that in Hebrew the Holy Spirit is feminine, yet the masculine noun ezer is used to describe how Eve, a woman, would be used in Adam’s life, and the masculine Hebrew noun Menachem is used for Comforter in John 14:16). In other words, even though the Greek Paraclete (Comforter) is masculine, it doesn’t mean the Holy Spirit is masculine.

All believers are Born Again, of the Spirit and the Water. Hence there are many ‘children’ of God just as there were many children to Adam and Eve. More on this in the section, *What Waters?*

Only deity can be in more than one place at one time. This is understood for both the Father and the Son, and also for the Holy Spirit, who dwells within every Christian. Also, with the Spirit being sent ‘in place of Yeshua,’ Her deity and Personhood is established.*14* Therefore, just as Eve was one with Adam and yet, separate, distinct, comparable to him *and* female, so too the Holy Spirit, for She is a divine Person in Her own right; separate and distinct from Papa God and Yeshua; the feminine divine Helper for the Bride of Messiah.

Laura writes:

The Holy Spirit is not a person. Sometimes it looks like you don’t even know in your own false doctrine whether the Holy Spirit which you say is a person, is male or female?

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FOOTNOTES

*4*The name Yahveh is the personal name of the God of Israel, used 6,823 times in the Old Testament (Tanach).

*5*The KJV has, “The Lord our God is one Lord,” and realizing that the KJV Lord is actually the personal name of the God of Israel, Yahveh, it reads, “Yahveh our God is one Yahveh” which doesn’t make any sense. There are other translations that try and emphasize either that there is only one God or that Israel shouldn’t worship any other gods, but they have to add ‘alone’ to their translation, so that it reads, “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone” (NRSV), but ‘alone’ isn’t in the Hebrew text.

*6*R. L. Harris, editor; Gleason Archer, Jr. and Bruce Waltke, associate editors, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, vol. I, p. 30 (Accordance Bible Software). In the Shema of Dt. 6:4, the term ‘one’ presents the idea of diversity within unity and has theological implications. Some scholars have felt that, though ‘one’ is singular, the usage of the word allows for the doctrine of the Trinity. The concept of unity is related to the Tabernacle, whose curtains are fastened together to form one unit or one Tabernacle (Ex. 26:6, 11; 36:13). Adam and Eve are described as ‘one flesh’ (Gen. 2:24), which includes more than sexual unity. In Gen. 34:16 the men of Shechem suggest intermarriage with Jacob’s children in order to become ‘one people.’ Later, Ezekiel predicted that the fragmented nation of Israel would someday be reunited or ‘one’, as he symbolically joined two sticks (Ezk. 37:17). Once again Judah and Ephraim would be one nation with one king (37:22). Abraham was viewed as ‘the one’ from whom all the people descended (Is. 51:2; Mal. 2:15), the one father of the nation.

*7*Psalm 2:7: “I will declare the decree: Yahveh has said to Me, ‘You are My Son! Today I have begotten You!” Proverbs 30:4: “Who has ascended into the Heavens, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the Earth? What is His name, and what is His Son’s name, If you know?” Is. 49:1, 5 speaks of Messiah coming from the womb and matrix of His Mother: Is. 49:1, 5: “Listen, coastlands, to Me! Take heed, you peoples from afar! Yahveh has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My Mother He has made mention of My name...And now Yahveh says, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him so that Israel is gathered to Him. For I shall be glorious in the eyes of Yahveh, and My God shall be My strength.”

*8*For a more detailed article on the Holy Spirit being feminine ask me for The Holy Spirit is a Lady. Contact me by email through my HomePage of The SeedofAbraham.net.

*9*Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of New Testament Greek (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), p. 332.

*10*In the Hebrew New Testament for John 14:17, all the verbs for Comforter or Helper are feminine, and so all the pronouns should be feminine, too (e.g. ‘She’ instead of ‘He’).

*11*Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (third edition, 2001), p. 766.

*12*Thayer, Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Accordance Bible Software), paragraph 7302.

*13*Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 677.

*14*Thayer, Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, πνεῦμα, paragraph 7775: “In some passages the Holy Spirit is rhetorically represented as a Person...John 14:16f., 26; 15:26; 16:13-15 (in which passages from John the personification was suggested by the fact that the Holy Spirit was about to assume with the apostles the place of a person, namely of Christ)...1 Cor. 12:11; what anyone through the help of the Holy Spirit has come to understand or decide upon is said to have been spoken to him by the Holy Spirit...Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:4” (cf. Is. 63:10).