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

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

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Bringing Gifts to God

Let's begin with God's instructions for this day. There is one thing we must keep in mind on God's Holy Days:

Leviticus 23:4 These are the **Feasts of the LORD**, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.

The Appointed festivals are **about** Jesus – because, unknown to the world, all the Feasts are about Jesus or have to do with Him and His work.

The real object of the Holy Days is Jesus Christ.

The Holy Days are not only intended to honor Jesus Christ, **but they all point to Him or His work in some way.**

Leviticus 23:27 Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and **offer an offering** made by fire unto the LORD.

Today, in New Testament times we take up an offering to God – or our **Gift** if you prefer.

Leviticus 23:28 And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. Leviticus 23:29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. Leviticus 23:30 And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Leviticus 23:31 Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

We are to perform **no manner of work** to indicate to God our total dependence upon Him—and not depend on our own deeds.

Leviticus 23:32 It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath.

What is a **proper way to greet a King**? Because that is what we are doing... Greeting our King all glorious.

Herbert W Armstrong brought gifts of **Steuben Crystal** to dignitaries around the world. In Matthew 2 we find a Biblical example of **where, what, and how** God is providing for His people – in this case, providing for His own Son, Jesus Christ's material wellbeing.

Matthew 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

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These Magi were from the earlier captivities of Israel that were taken to Babylon - - 12 representatives of the tribes of Israel.

Matthew 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Matthew 2:10 **When** they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Matthew 2:11 And when these [12 representatives of the tribes of Israel] were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him **gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.**

Those were proper gifts – expensive gifts! The Bible is very silent about Jesus’ travels and training as a young man. – We believe that He traveled extensively – even to England. Perhaps these valuable gifts were used for Jesus’ schooling and travels.

We’ll now have Offertory Music - - and take up our offerings – our gifts to our King all Glorious.

King all Glorious by: The Young Ambassadors
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xx7ikDwRh4>

Alternative Special Music
“O Lord thou art my God and King” p. 109

Atonement 101 - The Basics

Today we will be speaking on the **Basics of Atonement.**

Very, very few people know what the **Biblical** Atonement is all about.

It is good that we add some perspective to the subject.

It may surprise you, but...

There was a time when man had no need of reconciliation with God.

It was in the very beginning in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and **put him into the Garden of Eden** to dress it and to keep it.

Man was created by God in His own image with the goal that he would become an integral part of God’s spiritual Family forever more.

It was God Himself who declared that everything that He had created was **very good.**

At that time, mankind was privileged to have unlimited and unfettered access to God because, though he was in the flesh, God had created him “very good.” Man had not sinned.

Genesis 1:27 So God **created man in his own image**, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:

Genesis 1:31 And God saw **everything** that he had made, and behold, **it was very good.**

Man had at his disposal in the Garden absolutely everything he needed to become like God! I like to think of the Garden of Eden with all of its flowers, butterflies, birds, and tame animals... Fruit and vegetables – year round – in abundance...

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But it was much more than that.

There was **peace** and **safety** there. There was balance in nature. This was an area of the earth that God had prepared specifically for them. Adam and Eve were most brilliant and intelligent – greatly talented ...

Adam and Eve were taught by God. At that point in God’s creation history there was no need of atonement or reconciliation because there had been no rejection of God and His ways!

Even from before creation itself, God’s Plan had always been that man was to **live forever** with Him. God made that togetherness with man possible by providing the way to eternal life—represented by the Tree of Life in the Garden.

God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the other tree. If they did – they would **die**. But we know the story.

Man did **not** choose the Tree of Life. Our **iniquity** and **sins** have incurred the death penalty – because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

Leaving God out of the equation, Adam and Eve determined that they would decide for themselves what was best for them by eating of the tree which God had commanded that they should **not** eat.

That act of **confrontation, rebellion, ungratefulness, and disobedience** against God disrupted His Plan of bringing many sons and daughters to Glory (Hebrews 2:10).

The LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever:

Adam and Eve did not believe God's Word. They thought they knew better. In the pride of their limited understanding, they declared their independence from God and exercised their free moral agency **to sin** against Him.

God sent the couple out of the Garden – and placed guards at the entrance to keep them and their children from returning.

God makes it clear that He alone is the sole arbiter of right and wrong. For man to take that prerogative of deciding **good** and **evil** to himself was **sin**. We cannot imagine how **hurt** God was. The only way to build righteous character is to eschew sin and obey God.

Imagine if you had a benevolent provider and you ungratefully slapped his face and cursed him. That **sin** by our parents, Adam and Eve, created a **horrific breach** in the relationship between God and man.

Paul tells us that man is composed of **sinful flesh** (Romans 8:3) – what happened? How could that separation from God be mended? That is what this Day of Atonement is all about! Sin had entered the world. Sin must be **removed** from the world.

Somehow, **God’s Plan** of bringing many sons and daughters to Glory would have to be put back on track. How can those who have sinned – all of us – ever be back on good terms with God the Father.

Answer: Someone has to pay for our sins by **dying** in our place.

Man, certainly can’t repair that separation from God. (If you have killed someone, you cannot un-kill a person).

No! **Only God** can heal the estrangement, the separation between Himself and mankind.

Only God can restore a right relationship to Himself. **Only God** is able to reconcile this sinful world back to Himself. Atonement is the answer.

In order that man could attain eternal life, God came up with a process whereby His relationship with mankind could be restored. That is **Good News**—that is, in fact, Fantastic News!

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Atonement with God is so important that an entire annual Holy Day is dedicated to the meaning of the Day. And yet, there are so few people who have a glimmer of understanding of what this Day means.

Atonement means that we need to **humble** ourselves before our great and Sovereign God. **Fasting** today helps us realize that all good things originate with God. Even if it were only the water, soil, seed, and sun, He provides, we would not survive for an instant without God. We must realize that He alone possesses the Wisdom of what is good and right and choose His way over our own will. It is necessary that we yield to Him **in all things**.

That is the First Commandment of the Ten Commandments. **Nothing** ever is to come ahead of God and His perfect way. No excuses.

Deuteronomy 5:6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Deuteronomy 5:7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

Brethren, until we come to realize that we have been separated from God's presence because of our own **iniquity** and **sin**, we will remain literally detached from Him.

Sin brought the **separation** between mankind and God.

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have **separated** between you and your God, and your **sins** have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

We are told that our **iniquities** have separated us from our God, and our **sins** have hidden His face from us, that He will not hear us any longer. It is we who have severed the relationship with our Creator by our sins.

Here's the good thing... Here's the **great news!** Through the **death** and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ, **atonement** for sin can be made. This day is about the **work of Jesus** that God the Father did through Him.

God the Father took the initiative to bring about **reconciliation** with mankind, and He did so by way of His Son's death and resurrection. It is a most beautiful and loving story. Here it is in a nutshell. For the meaning of Atonement, let the **words of the Scripture** speak to you:

At least once a year, God requires us to **stop**, and take a look at our spiritual **journey back** to Him. To get our full attention, He has us **fast today** from food and drink, and pay attention to the full message He is telling us. Atonement has to do with **getting rid of this sinful body** we find ourselves in so that we may indeed **draw near to God**. Impossible to do? No! God tells us what must take place. We literally need to be recreated. Let's look at the larger picture of Atonement:

The Day of Atonement is about the covering and removal of sin because of the sinfulness of the people. To **atone** is to resolve the penalty for sin, "death," thereby removing the effects of sin from the repentant sinner and allowing him or her to be reconciled to God. It is possible, but it requires a lot of work on our part. Jesus Christ is the **only one** capable of carrying out the Atonement for all mankind.

The Day of Atonement pictures two things Jesus does for us: He **paid** the price of sin for us; He **removes** the guilt of sin from us so that we can appear before His Father. God the Father then declares us legally innocent of all charges. We are completely innocent and exonerated before the High Court of heaven.

That is how clean Passover leaves a Christian, and that is how clean the Day of Atonement will render mankind. Atonement pictures the complete cleansing of sin – making possible the reconciliation of all mankind to God. Its complete fulfillment, **yet in the future**, will be a very great day!

Atonement will make an intimate and thorough relationship with God possible for mankind.

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a **new creation**: old things are passed away; behold,

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all things are become new.

Spiritually, it is like the **new creation** relationship with God that Adam and Eve once enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. With Atonement, God is replacing our **sinful flesh** with a New Creation!

That is great news. And **God the Father** accomplishes this **new creation** in us by way of His Son, Jesus Christ.

2Corinthians 5:18 All things are of God, who has **reconciled us to Himself** [making Himself accessible to us] **by** Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

The ‘ministry of reconciliation’ means that our reconciliation to the Father **MUST** extend to **all the brethren** as well. A lot of people do not understand this. This is the great sin of the Church of God today – the separation of corporate organizations and the people of God from one another.

The “ministry of reconciliation;” or ministering of reconciliation, means that since God has been so gracious to restore a right relationship with us – it is incumbent that **we restore right relationships with others** – especially in the household of God.

Our reconciliation with the brethren is so important that God says, “Do not bring me any offerings until you get straight with your brother—because I will not accept it until you have done so.”

Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [you did something to him], leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

God is essentially saying, "First things first." If a reconciliation does not take place, God has no obligation to accept the offering. It has been made based on a corrupt relationship with a brother, making the offering unacceptable.

With reconciliation, God the Father **no longer** holds our sins against us – we are **justified** – made righteous in His sight – because our sins have been **laid on Jesus Christ**. It is Jesus who **bears** our sins.

When God the Father looks upon us – He does **not** see our righteousness – but the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus’ righteousness is imputed to us.

Romans 4:24 But for us also [it was written], to whom [righteousness] shall be imputed, if we believe on Him [God the Father] that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Here is how it works...

2Corinthians 5:19 God [the Father] was **in** Christ, **reconciling the world unto Himself**, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto **us** the word of reconciliation.

We have a big part in being reconciled to God the Father and Jesus Christ. God’s churches refuse to reconcile with each other. Shame on us! When God the Father no longer counts people’s sins against them, (Atonement) how can we not do the same with all our brothers and sisters in Christ?

God has given to us the **ministering** of reconciliation, and the **word** of reconciliation – and we had better be taking advantage of it.

God the Father is sending to us the message that we are **restored in good favor** with Him. Hallelujah – praise God – what a joyful day!

2Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you

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in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Notice closely the meaning of this Day:

2Corinthians 5:21 For He [God the Father] has made Him [Jesus Christ] **to be sin** for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made **the righteousness of God** in Him.

Man sinned – we know that. We need to ask ourselves, “When and how does the removal of sin take place?” When Jesus died, He paid the death penalty in our stead.

Galatians 1:4 [Jesus] **gave Himself for our sins**, that He might **deliver** us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Having our sins paid for by Jesus Christ does **not** automatically grant us **eternal life** – No it doesn't. Eternal Life is a **gift** of God.

Both the **death**, and then the resurrection to **Life** of Jesus **are required** for our **reconciliation to God** and man (2Corinthians 5:18). Paul reiterates that it is **none other** than **Jesus** by whom we receive the needed **atonement** or **reconciliation**.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now **justified** by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the **death** of his Son, much more, **being reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life.

By Jesus' **resurrection to Life**. (That is why it is so important that the *Azazel* goat lives (Leviticus 16:10)). Through the **Death** and **Life** of Jesus we are ultimately saved! Continuing in ...

Romans 5:11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **we have now received the atonement**.

That is the only occurrence of the word atonement in the New Testament.

Another translation of Romans 5:11 reads...

Romans 5:11 Not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now **received reconciliation**.

Christ's sinless sacrifice resulted in our reconciliation with God. His sacrifice enabled God to justify us, that is, to consider us as sinless in a legal sense. We are still sinful, but because we accepted Christ's sacrifice, His blood covers us.

Thus, under His righteousness, we are allowed now to have access to God.

Having access to God the Father, we can be forgiven by Him and be made clean. Because of that, we have the opportunity now to have **eternal life**, and we are saved, then, **by His life** being lived in us.

John 14:23 ...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we** [God the Father and Jesus Christ] will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

I think that about half the people in the world **know** that Jesus died for our sins. And because of that – they think that they will go to heaven...

Let's get the picture straight in our minds.

1Thessalonians 4:14: tells us that Jesus **died** and rose **again**.

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1Thessalonians 4:14 If we believe that Jesus **died and rose again**, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

I would like to harken back to Leviticus 16, in the Old Testament. In today’s sermon we are answering the question:

Who Bears the sin of the World? — Satan or Jesus Christ

To **properly** represent Jesus Christ, the Messiah, in Leviticus 16, in the Old Testament, it was necessary that an animal be sacrificed to represent Jesus Christ that could both **die** and then **live** again.

The first goat in Leviticus 16 – selected by the LORD - represents Jesus Christ **dying** for our sins.

This is very clear...

Leviticus 16:9 And Aaron [the High Priest] shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and **offer him for a sin offering**.

That first goat offered, represents Jesus Christ **dying** for our sins.

Please remember that Jesus **died** and rose again.

That is most important if we are going to see the picture God is presenting to us.

The **first goat** being offered is **only a part** of the picture – the part the world understands - Jesus died for our sins.

To **properly** represent Jesus Christ, the Messiah, in Leviticus 16, it was necessary that an animal be sacrificed to represent Jesus Christ that could both **die** and then **live** again.

Where do you get an animal like that? The answer is, “You don’t.”

Unfortunately, there is no animal that could meet those qualifications.

The solution to this dilemma was to use **two** precisely similar goats for a **single sin offering**.

Leviticus 16:5 [Aaron the High Priest] ... shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel **two** kids of the **goats** for a **[single] sin offering**...

Now let’s take a look at the **second** goat.

Leviticus 16:10 **But** the goat, on which the lot fell to be the **azazel**, shall be **presented alive** before the LORD, to **make an atonement** with him, and to let him go for an **azazel** into the **wilderness**.

The Wave Sheaf offering shows Jesus being presented alive before His Father in heaven (Leviticus 23:11).

Please pick up on the fact that the second goat is presented **alive**.

The **wilderness** by the way, is exactly where Israel was wandering for 40 years.

Jesus is not the Atonement unless he both **died** and rose again. Jesus fulfilled both roles.

The **first** goat which was sacrificed (died), was fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Jesus’ death paid for our sins. He **died** for our sins.

The **second** goat, the **azazel**, is also none other than the **resurrected** Jesus who **bears**, expiates, takes away the sin of the world. No one else does that—**only** Jesus takes away the sin of the world.

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More on Jesus **bearing**, expiating, taking away the sin of the world in a moment.

Leviticus 16 is about Christ’s fulfillment of **both** goats, as well as His **work as High Priest**. Now Brethren, here is a warning to us.

For thousands of years Satan has been trying to hijack the **Day of Atonement** to be **about himself**, even as being the one who bears the sins of mankind. O yes, Satan brings harm, he brings temptation, he brings anguish, and he brings condemnation, but Satan does **not** bear our sins.

Satan does **not bear** our sins. That is a carnal and false misconception. **It is a huge lie**—because **Only** the Messiah was **prophesied to bear our sins**, and only Jesus Christ did so (John 1:29, Isaiah 53:11-12).

Paul says it so clearly:

Romans 5:11... we also joy in God through our Lord **Jesus Christ, by whom** we have now **received the atonement**.

We will turn to those prophecies of Isaiah in a moment. The Day of Atonement is just that—it is about the atonement we have because of **Christ’s work**.

Atonement is not a Feast that focuses on Satan’s actions.

Satan is **not** mentioned, referred to, or even alluded to in Leviticus 16! There are a few translations that are wrong and spurious, like The James Moffatt Translation—but they are not of God—and you need to mark them as wrong.

Properly understood, then, the Day of Atonement is **about Jesus Christ**. That is our sole focus on this Day of Atonement.

Brethren, the Day of Atonement is about how every one of us was as good as dead because of our sins. Let me show you that. We were totally **cut off** from God the Father!

Atonement shows how we are cleansed of our sins and restored to a **right** relationship with our Father.

Paul wrote that it was by the grace of God that the Church brethren have been saved:

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were **dead** in sins, God has made us **alive** together with **Christ**. [Christ is **alive**.]

Paul says that over and over again in his letters. “Jesus died, and He is alive again!” There is however, a difference in the timing of atonement for Church brethren, and those in the world.

Christians are atoned for **at their baptism** and the receiving of God’s Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

What about the rest of mankind in this miserable sinful world? The Day of Atonement is to the entire world what Passover is to faithful Christians.

God in His perfect love will reconcile the **entire world** unto Himself. That is what the Day of Atonement is all about.

When will the world’s salvation and reconciliation to God arise?

The answer is the world has not permanently lost out on salvation because God so **loved the world**, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whomsoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world **through Him** might be saved (John 3:16-17).

“Whomsoever believes in Him” will be living according to the very words and actions of Jesus, including those in the Old Testament (like keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days of the Lord), and His words in the New Testament (Like keeping the Passover (1Corinthians 11:23-26)).

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That reconciliation **for the world** will begin to be made possible on a soon coming Day of Atonement. Atonement is a **spiritual** Feast Day, a Sabbath of rest without work – a day of fasting without food or water.

The Day of Atonement pictures the complete cleansing from sin, and the reconciliation of all mankind to God the Father through the **work of Jesus Christ alone**. The Day of Atonement looks to the time of universal **reconciliation of all** who have ever lived. But, let me add a warning caveat here: There will be those recalcitrant souls who will never submit to God’s perfect way.

Let’s look at the Bearing of Sins and Iniquities

John the Baptist while preparing the way for the coming Messiah announced that Jesus Christ was the one who would **bear the sin** of the world in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecies:

John 1:29 The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, who **takes away** (*airo*) **the sin of the world**.

Because John the Baptist was paraphrasing Isaiah, this verse should have been translated this way... Behold the Lamb of God, who **bears away** (*airo*) **the sin of the world**.

John 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as He walked, [John the Baptist] said, Behold the **Lamb of God!**

Important Note: **It is none other than Jesus** who **bears**, expiates, takes away (*airo*), the sin of the world. The Messianic Prophecies attest to this:

Isaiah 53:4 Surely [the Messiah] has **borne** our griefs, and **carried** (*airo*) our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Jesus Christ died while carrying our sins. A few more select verses:

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has **laid on Him** the **iniquity** of us all.

“His own way,” alludes to the fact that we each have sinned on our own. “The LORD has **Laid on Him**.” Brethren, you may wish to compare:

Leviticus 16:21 And Aaron [the High Priest] shall lay both his hands upon the head of the **live** [*azazel*] goat and confess over Him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat.

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for **He shall bear** their **iniquities**.

“He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” God the Father will see and accept the suffering of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and **He bare** the **sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors.

As it says in:

Leviticus 16:22, the *azazel* goat was to **bear** on itself **all their iniquities**.

The *azazel* goat’s primary role was the **bearing of** sins – and that is solely Jesus’ role.

When we understand **Christ’s fulfillment of both goats**, as well as His work as **High Priest**, the Day of Atonement is just that—it is about the **atonement we have because of Christ’s work**.

What then, should be our focus?

Properly understood, the **Day of Atonement is about Jesus Christ.**

See Warren Zehrung's other articles at:

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

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I - Messages

(Copyright 2023) by David Antion
(Pasadena, California)

What are I-Messages and how do you use them? Many people have heard of the term, "I-Message" because it has been very popularized in books and articles dealing with child rearing and marriage counseling.

However, most people know little about when to use them and even less about how to do so.

Criticism

The most used procedure for getting people to change some behavior is *criticism*. Universally, around the world people hold to the common belief that if you want someone to change, all you have to do is criticize them.

What is *criticism* anyway? Generally, we think of criticism as something harsh. But here we may define it as merely pointing out a fault. It can be as simple as telling a person their shoe is untied or as severe as calling them a name as a result of their behavior --"cry baby".

Thus, if you want your son to work faster, you say, "You're too slow" or "Slow poke!"

If you want your daughter to lose weight you just call her "fatso" or "tubby" or "fat pig". People really believe that *criticism* is the way to get people to change their behavior or habits.

How does this belief in criticism perpetuate itself?

First, it works -- *sometimes!* Almost everyone has changed something as a result of criticism at some time in their life. Let's take a typical example. Suppose you are wearing an article of clothing that has a tear in it. Your mother, spouse, or friend says, "Your pants have a hole in them." As a result of that statement, you will probably go and make a change. Or, if a person says, "You've got a leaf in your hair." You'll probably brush it out. And one of the most common ones is this: Sitting across from you at dinner a person points to his/her own face to let you know you have food on yours and immediately you will wipe your face clean and probably even ask for more help to be sure you got it all off.

These forms of criticism work. As a result, people feel it will work in other areas. But notice, all these forms work well because they are in areas where a person is more than willing to change.

Forms of Criticism

Name calling is one form. But there are other forms of criticism. For instance, a specific command is a form of criticism. "Go and change that shirt." "Don't put your feet on that couch." While these are expressed as commands they are forms of criticism.

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Lectures and logical arguments are forms of criticism. "Now, Johnny, you know it isn't right to put your feet up on the couch." Or "Johnny, can't you see how dirty the couch will get if everyone were to put their feet on it?"

Moralizing is also a form of criticism. It goes something like this: "Johnny, you know you *shouldn't* put your feet on the couch. It's not the right thing to do."

The most destructive forms of criticism are ridiculing and blaming. "You are a *sinner*, and do you presume to teach us?" Or, "You are just plain stupid to have done that."

There are other forms of criticism, but these are enough examples for you to get the general picture.

Stopping the Change

When criticism is used too often it is not only not effective it actually can stop the change it was meant to bring about.

Think back on your own experiences. When a person tries to get you to change by constantly pointing out your faults, do you really change? Probably not.

There seems to be a psychological mechanism working in us that wants others to see that we are trying to be good and for the most part we are willing to do good too. But when another person tries to change us, we often refuse to do what they are pointing out. This is so, partly because we know we will get absolutely no credit ourselves.

Another reason we rebel is that we don't want to be someone else's puppet -- pulled around by the strings any time they choose.

I-Message vs. Criticism

Social scientists have found when you want another person to change his or her behavior, there are words to say that have the highest probability the person will change and the lowest probability that the relationship will be hurt. After all, one of the concerns you have in talking to a person about their behavior is whether they will get upset at you or not.

Many people are so afraid of upsetting their friend or relative that they won't say anything about that person's behavior even though the behavior is bothering them greatly.

Thus, to find a way to say things that has a high probability that the other person will change with a low probability that they will become upset and end the relationship ought to be a welcomed discovery.

When to Use I-Messages

An I-Message is most effective when the other person's behavior has some practical effect on you. It is least effective when the other's behavior has no tangible effect on you.

For example, suppose your spouse has gone to bed and you have stayed up watching TV for a while. When you finished you come back to the bedroom where there is another smaller TV and decide to turn it on while you get ready for bed. Even though you turn it down low, it wakes up your spouse.

Your spouse is rightfully angry and says, "Shut off that TV!". Now notice that this is not an I-Message. It is a command. How would you feel if your spouse said that to you?

Or "You are the most inconsiderate person in the whole world!" This is not an I-Message either. It's a blaming, name-calling message. This type of response from your spouse is likely to make you feel angry and defensive. You might end up saying to yourself, "I am not the most inconsiderate spouse...you ought to be married to So and So and you'll see what inconsiderate is!"

But what if your spouse gave you a three part I-Message?

Part one: The non blameful description of what just happened. For example: "When you come into the bedroom and turn on the TV after I've gone to sleep, it wakes me up..."

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Part two: How you feel. For example: "...and I feel upset and angry..."

Part three: The practical effect. For example: "...because I will be awake for hours and I'll be tired and inefficient at work tomorrow."

Putting the whole I-Message together, we have *"When you come into the bedroom and turn on the TV after I've gone to sleep, it wakes me up and I feel very upset and angry because I'll be awake for hours and will be tired and inefficient at work tomorrow."*

Notice, please, what the I-Message does *not* say. It does not say to shut the TV off. It does not say that you are a bad person, or ridicule you in any way.

It leaves the solution up to you. It gives you the credit for being a reasonable and responsible human being.

Do I Messages Always Work?

Hardly anything always works. However, when stated like the above I-Message it usually works. Ask yourself how you would feel if you had been given the above I-message? You would probably say you are sorry and that you behaved thoughtlessly and inconsiderately and ask for forgiveness. You might even offer to do whatever you could to help your spouse get back to sleep as quickly as possible -- including a massage or rubdown.

However, what if you were to ignore your spouse's I-Message? Suppose you just said, "That's tough!" or "Too bad." or "I don't care if it wakes you up!"

Tell me, then, how much would you care for your spouse if you reacted like that? You are really saying that you do not care enough about your spouse's welfare to change your behavior at all.

I don't know about you, but I'm sure there are plenty of people in this world who do not care about me. But I don't have to be married to one of them. Would you want your spouse simply to ignore you when you explained how his/her behavior was hurting you in some practical way?

Decent people do not want their actions and behaviors to hurt another person. Think of how you do when you walk into the middle section of a movie theater. You may have to pass a number of people and step in front of them. Now and then you may tramp on someone's foot and even before they can say, "Uhhh!" you may say, "Oh, excuse me." or "Pardon me."

I-Messages Take Practice

You can learn how to give I-Messages by practicing them regularly. Just take a note pad and each day write down ten I-Messages. Believe me, you will find all kinds of occasions when you could use an I-Message.

Here are just a few practice I-Messages:

"Mary, when you take folders off my desk without telling me, I get really frustrated, because I spend valuable time looking all over for them."

"Sam, *when* you put your briefcase on my car, I get so concerned I can't concentrate on what you're telling me because I'm afraid the case will scratch my new paint job."

"Sue, when you tell me you'll pick me up at work and show up 2 hours late, I really get upset and frustrated because I just had to sit there and waste time."

Definitions of Parts

A practical or tangible effect is when the behavior affects your health, time, money, reputation, your possessions, children, spouse, job.

A feeling is just how you feel. Perhaps you don't know many feeling words -- here are a few: upset, irritated, hurt, excited, frustrated, confused, flustered, exasperated, blue, down, angry, tripped out, fired up.

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The non blameful description is just a way to describe what the other person's behavior is without putting labels like "stupid, dumb, crazy, inconsiderate, born in a barn, bad, wrong, evil, rotten" etc.

Please review again the examples given and do your best to practice the I-Messages. You can use them whenever another person does something that has a negative practical effect on you.

Whenever there is not practical effect to another person's really frustrated because I spent valuable time looking for them.

"Joe, *when* you park behind me and put your keys where I can't find them in the morning, I become irritated and upset because I become late for work and get written up."

When They Don't Work

I-Messages are not likely to work well when there is no tangible effect. It is hard to get others to change when their behavior has no effect on you.

For example, "When you wear red sweaters, I really get upset and angry because..." Now what is the practical effect? How does a *red sweater* hurt your finances, health, reputation, possessions, loved ones, etc.?

Therefore, the other person is likely to say, "If you don't like it, just don't look at it." Or "I'm not hurting you and I have a right to wear any color I choose."

Positive Loving Uses

You can use the first two parts of the I-Message to share loving messages of warm feeling. For example: "When you hold my hand, I feel really close and loving to you." Notice the non-blameful description starting with the word "when" and how you feel.

Another example: "When you call me during the day, I feel loved and cherished." Again, only the two parts but used in a positive way to appreciate positive behaviors!

Put I-Messages to use in your life. Make more peace and harmony around you as a result.

See David Antion's other articles at:

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

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The Making of Jewels
(Copyright 1996) by John R. Bair
(Pensboro, West Virginia)

Introduction:

Twenty-five years ago, I was sent overseas to Thailand during the Vietnam War. I was assigned to a tour of duty in B 52's called "Arc Light." I had been married only eight months, and to help cope with the loneliness of being apart, I learned a new hobby: lapidary. This art of cutting gemstones was being taught by local Thai craftsmen at the air base where I was stationed. I was sure this would be useful, especially from my wife's point of view.

S.P.S.:

Just recently I was intrigued by the use of an analogy to this gem making process in an oft quoted millennial verse found

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in Mal. 3:17. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Imagine - God making us His jewels, His special treasure! What incredible symbolism there is to be found in the qualities that make a jewel valuable and, in the process, it takes to fashion one. Let's begin by noting the qualities that make a gem valuable.

Body:

First and most obvious to the eye is the natural beauty of the stone that comes from its light dispersing quality. This may be the inherent reflected color of the stone, or it may be produced by refraction as light passes through the stone and is separated into colors. This can be the result of the natural structure within the stone as is the case with opal, or the cut of the stone such as a diamond. But regardless of how it is dispersed, it is the effect of light that brings out the gem's beauty. That light doesn't arise from within the stone.

Our beauty, as well, doesn't arise from ourselves. It's the effect of the light we reflect. I John 1:5 tells us God is light. In John 8:12 Christ states, "I am the light of the world".

Now some may recall in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:14) that Christ tells his disciples "you are the light of the world". But we should always realize where our "light" comes from, and that is Christ himself (Eph. 5:14).

A second quality that makes a gem valuable is its durability or hardness. Obviously, for something to be valuable it must last. Here diamond sets the scale at 10, a sapphire is 9, glass is 7, but an opal is less than 6, which is why it is considered only semiprecious. This I know only too well as I've cut a replacement opal for my wife's ring at least five times before we decided on a triplet opal, which has a clear sapphire cap.

Here, again, for us to be valuable to God, we must be able to last, to "endure to the end", according to Matt 10:22. To be durable, we must resist the abrasion and stress of this life without wearing out or cracking and still remain faithful. "He who overcomes and keeps my works until the end" will be given power over the nations. (Rev. 2:26)

A third quality that contributes to the value of a gem is its rareness; simply put, how difficult is it to find. We see at this time only a few being called. We're told we are a "little flock", and according to Matt 7:14, "narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are few who find it". That makes us special to God now, because we are few in number.

A final quality that makes a gem valuable is the absence of any flaws or imperfections within the finished stone. This means no cracks, inclusions, even color distribution, as well as precise cutting. It is the job of the cutting and polishing process to remove flaws and in that we also find a beautiful analogy.

We're told in Matt 5:48 to "become perfect". How is this accomplished? By carefully noting the cutting and polishing process, we can see what God is endeavoring to accomplish in us.

First, the natural rough stone is selected from "out in the world" where it was produced. It is interesting to note that the more valuable stones underwent the most intensive heat and pressure to produce them. During this selection process, it is necessary to "see" into the stone past the dull, rough exterior. This may require rough grinding, cutting, or breaking the stone, but almost invariably, water is used in the process to wet the surface to examine the inside. (In some cases, such as star sapphire, mineral oil is also used to determine proper orientation.) We immediately see a comparison with God's Holy Spirit in our selection or calling. (John 7:37, 38)

The next step in the process is rough grinding to remove all non-gem material, imperfections, and to size the finished stone. Here again water must be constantly applied in just the right amount to keep the stone from cracking due to the heat, and to wash away the debris produced during grinding.

II Cor. 4:16 tells us, "even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day". We see the analogy of "water" again being applied daily to help us through our trials, which according to James 1:2-4 are to help, perfect us.

The final step in the gem making process is the polishing. Here jeweler's rouge (cerium oxide) is mixed with water to

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make a paste. The stone is dipped in this mixture and then pressed against a felt buffing wheel. This shines the exterior to allow light in (and out). We can see in our "polishing" the chance to put into practice the light we've been given, to reflect it to the world. Rom. 12:2 tells us to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" which is exactly what this gem making process has accomplished in us. We're transformed into something beautiful. We become valuable to God - jewels to attract others to the light we reflect.

Conclusion:

Now let's see the end of the matter and note what these jewels become. Rev. 21:19 describes the foundation of New Jerusalem (the bride of Christ according to verse 9) as adorned with all kinds of precious stones and, as always, God is the only source of light.

Who then will be there? Verse 27 tells us: those written in the Lamb's "book of life", which brings us back to the verse before Mal. 3:17 - where a similar "book of remembrance" is also mentioned. And what were these future "Jewels" doing that God took such note? They "spoke to one another"! They were sharing their faith, "not forsaking the assembling together", and obviously "about their Father's business"!

So, let's get back to the "old grind"; the finished jewels are definitely worth it!

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Romona Martin's Death
(Copyright 2023) by David Sielaff
(Portland, Oregon)

"The Sleep of Death" (Psalm 13:3)

Ramona Martin died Tuesday, August 22, 2023. She was 88 years old and worked until January 2023. She took over as President of ASK upon the death of Dr. Ernest L. Martin in January 2002.

Upon Dr. Martin's death Ramona phoned me and asked me to work with ASK as a contract worker. Ernest told Ramona before he died that I would know what to do. That began my working relationship with Ramona, as we spoke several times a week in the early months of our collaboration. She was under a great deal of pressure, and alone. I went to Portland from Southern California several times, but she remained strong.

Ramona and I got along very well. Ramona handled the office duties, with many of her own systems and reasons for doing things, usually as Ernest wanted them done. Her systems worked.

Anyone who phoned found someone who would try to give as much time to listen to your problems as possible. I know for a fact that more than a few times she spent 2+ hours on the phone with individuals. She was not a counselor, but she was a great listener. The problems of other people were very important to her, and she had the wisdom to give her time, even when it cut into her personal time. And she prayed.

Some people forgot that ASK is in the Pacific time zone. At times she received phone calls VERY early in the morning from the east coast. This was more problematic when she moved to an apartment with an extra bedroom that was her home-office. She operated out of that "sanctuary" of home/office for 14 years.

After my wife Robin and I moved to Beaverton, Oregon, a western suburb of Portland, Ramona and I laughed a lot

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as we would go over the ASK mail twice a week, review the news of the world, and reminisce. She told stories about the Seventh Day Adventists, her family background, her foster child experiences growing up, and later adoption into a stable SDA family. I reminisced about the Worldwide Church of God people and experiences, most of which Ramona did not know.

We would talk about such matters at the end of each month as we “stuffed envelopes” for those we send snail mail versions of the ASK Newsletters and Articles each month.

Ramona had a great sense of humor and she laughed at my jokes, and then added to the humor with her own stories and experiences. Ramona traveled widely even before she married Ernest Martin. They also traveled after they were married. They took trips to Israel when Ernest met with scholars, particularly Professor Benjamin Mazar and his family members, at least two of whom were publicly known archaeologists in their own right.

Ramona also experienced long-term physical pain. For years, more acutely after Ernest died, she had an increasingly painful disk problem. After a decade of constant pain, she was persuaded to seek updated medical advice and she decided to take a chance on surgical techniques developed since her increasingly painful back problems began. She decided to have an operation on her back.

After her surgery and a hard recovery, she was grateful to experience a 90-95% reduction (her own estimate) in her back pain, a relief that lasted for the remainder of her life. Yes, she sympathized with others who endured chronic physical pain for much of their lives.

I know many of you have your own stories about how Ramona listened to them. Thank you for every one of your encouraging written notes and prayers on Ramona’s behalf. I read each one to her.

Ramona is now in “**the sleep of death**” as the Psalmist (likely King David himself) who wrote and likely sang in Psalm 13:

“[To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.]

**How long will you forget me,
O YHWH? for ever** [Hebrew, *olam*, the age]? **how**

long will You hide Your face from me?

**How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having
sorrow in my heart daily?**

How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

**Consider and hear me, O YHWH my God:
lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep **THE SLEEP OF DEATH**;**

**Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those
that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.**

**But I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart
shall rejoice in Your salvation.**

**I will SING unto YHWH, because He has dealt
bountifully with me.”**

**• Psalm 13:1–6, KJV and most
modern translations**

I will miss Ramona — until I see her again, rising with many of us in the clouds to meet and be with the returning Christ Jesus to help reconcile all creation to God.

Death is the end of life ... but only until God our Father brings you back to life, which He shall do for all of us. Then

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we all “will sing unto YHWH.” Eventually, all humanity will do likewise.

See David Sielaff’s other articles at:

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

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<https://www.askelm.com/>

More Old Materials Received!

(Copyright 2023) by Craig M. White
(Australia)

More gaps in the history of the WCG in Australia are being filled in.

I received a box of goodies from a GCI elder who used to be pastor in Sydney many years ago. The box contained items kept by the long deceased May Stanley, a pioneer member of the Church – she received her first Plain Truth in Jan 1957.

The GCI elder wrote a few days ago:

>After a number of further interruptions, I've been able to go through the collection for you. There's too much to just scan & send so I'll send what you want via ordinary parcel mail. I've checked as much as possible with other interested parties & none wish to have any of it. So, you're welcome to keep whatever I send to you. <

I have scanned a few sample items for your reading pleasure. Much more to scan in due course but you can view a lot of items scanned over the years [here](#)! One is a letter from Gerald Waterhouse to her 21 Jan 1960 for a Bible study held 23 Jan. 12 were in attendance and this was 72 days after Mr Waterhouse landed in Australia according to her notes. Also, a letter written to her 23 Sept 1958.

I have some 1960s regional director letters, Australian Feast brochures etc, but there are a number in this collection which I don't have. The collection also does not include Church of God Australia News vol. 1, no. 1 or others from 1961, but perhaps the letters to Australian members were regarded as such for that year?

Many years ago (1986 onward for a very long time) a minister persecuted me terribly for wanting to get a book published on the Origin of Nations and that is a long story.

These internal persecutions led me to continue my archiving as well as undertake ever more research and writing on a number of areas of Biblical and related matters. The wolf pastors in the area later left the faith and have no regard for God's truths or laws. From their entire time in the church, they tore apart people and congregations, leaving a trail of destruction.

Some years later one of these false pastors left the truth of God and eventually decided to get rid of his library of Church of God literature which he had no need for, given that he no longer followed his calling. Circuitously it was offered to me by a member who was given this library by someone else! I had no hesitation in taking it and it appears that over 90% of the library was given to me. It was rather strange how this came about but one could call it “poetic justice.” Though I had most of the items in the library, they were well looked after, and the magazines nicely bound.

Of this stunning matter, I wrote the following to friends on 11 March 2013:

“A WCG minister who has gone along with the Tkachian apostasy gave away his old WCG literature to someone who offered it to another member who then offered it to me! So, I drove

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down to Melbourne to pick it all up recently. Almost all of the literature are duplicates to what I have, but that’s okay – I can help someone else fill in the gaps to their own library.

So, if anyone would like these old WCG booklets, PTs, GNs, WNs, Tomorrow’s World magazine etc. do let me know and I am happy to give them to you.

Btw, I have copious diary notes of the ongoing, year after year abuse and harassment by this false minister and his best friend in the ministry – they were very much opposed to my getting my history books published and they heard through the grapevine my being opposed to the Tkachian apostasy.

This false minister would have a heart attack if he knew his literature somehow found their way into my hands! 😊 He, he, he, he, he ...”

One person responded how ironic this was. Indeed!

And concerning them leaving the Way of God the Scriptures state:

“What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”” (II Pet 2:22. See also Prov 26:11)

I shall advise once I have scanned these items. Of course, it cost me postage like others have over the years (inc. a large amount last year). The time sorting, scanning, uploading and \$\$\$ involved is worth it in the end.

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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The Mysterious Mister Trump
(Copyright 2024) by James Lloyd
(Medford, Oregon)

The Bible addresses several “mysteries,” yet very few Christians ponder how **Donald Trump** appears destined to resume power, regardless of what is thrown at him, as the attached humorous cartoon demonstrates. Meanwhile, most Christian prophecy figures have yet to realize that Mister Trump is a pivotal figure in prophecy, regardless of his Spiritual condition. Just like *Nebuchadnezzar* whose dominion was toppled by God, then returned to him so long ago, his life was foreordained because he was chosen by God, for better or worse.

“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven” (*Daniel 4:37*).

Most Christians that back Donald Trump do so because they identify with his conservatism, but they are unaware that a **Bible Prophecy** ministry put forth the assertion Trump fits a largely unknown sequence that is actually found in the Bible! Using a system called *Sequential Recapitulation*, the maverick ministry the **Christian Media Network** has actually predicted many of the recent events in America, but the Christian “establishment” is censoring prophecy information that contradicts their consensus.

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Although they know that **Jesus Christ** is indeed the LORD, the bulk of Protestant and Catholic believers in America do not understand the **Holy Bible** predicted this time of “Strong Delusion” (*II Thessalonians 2:11*), when the *sequence* of end times events has been misrepresented. All say they “just want the truth,” but obviously with so many doctrinal divisions, *somebody* is deceived. However, *Christian Media* is aware of the Biblical prophecies that forecast each step of the path we’re on, but the censorship is just as fierce in “Christian” circles as it is in political venues.



The fact is the Christian infrastructure inadvertently suppresses prophecy information – and this in itself was predicted in the Bible. For its entire 30 years of existence, the *Christian Media* ministry has remained unincorporated, and regularly harassed by the **IRS** as “not qualifying” as a legitimate church, even finding themselves repeatedly kicked off of broadcast stations, having bank accounts closed, and consistently blacklisted and censored. Yet using the Bible, **James Lloyd**, the leader of the **Christian Media Network** ministry has successfully predicted, *in writing*, events including political elections, military clashes, monetary events, and even the length of the tragic British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in **2010** (before it ended, he called it at 5 months to the very *day*) that polluted the gulf coast. As far back as **1992**, he published a written prediction of the assassination of **Yitzhak Rabin** of Israel – an important prophetic event in an important place, which was fulfilled in **1995**. There are also many more current prophecies concerning America and Israel's current military activity.

See James Lloyd's other articles at:

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

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<http://www.christianmedianetwork.com/>

Thank You!

Need Bibles (Copyright 2024) by Kasuba Manad (Zambia)

Warmest Christian greetings to each one of you, your beloved families and all the dear brethren at your Church in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Myself, my beloved families, the Orphans under my care and all the dear brethren at our home church are greeting each one of you with so much Christian love!

How are you and your beloved families? It is my sincere hope and prayers that our good Lord Jesus Christ continues to bless each one of you for the good work you are doing in expanding God's work. Thank you so much for your kindness in sending us your newsletter. May the ALMIGHTY GOD continue to bless you more abundantly for the good work you are faithfully doing.

I am here humbly asking you in the Precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ when God bless you with enough funds if you can buy us Bibles in local language for the aged and those who cannot read English and English Bibles for those who can read English. Your kind understanding will be highly appreciated.

I will continue to pray for you, your beloved families, all the dear brethren at your Church and God's work you are faithfully doing. Please continue to pray for me, my beloved families, all the dear brethren at our Church, the Orphans under my care and God's work I am doing here.

See Kasuba Manad's other articles at:

[Manad, Kasuba – The "New" Church of God Messenger \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

Editor's Note: We do not collect money from anyone and so we do not have the money for your needs. If others want to help you out, they are welcome to do so. We are glad you appreciate our newsletter; we will continue to send it to you.
Laura Lee

Woman Eats Only MEAT for 13 Years: This Happens (Kelly Hogan Carnivore Diet) (2024) Sent by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZ-qwRGNgjo> 1 hr. 19 min.

What changes this woman has made from 262 lbs. down to slim and trim. Very interesting!

"Is eating only meat healthy? Does a carnivore diet promote weight loss? Today's guest is Kelly Hogan, a 13 year Carnivore, has an important story that you need to hear because it will help you. Kelly Hogan struggled with weight her entire life. At age 25, she suffered from frequent boils, weighed 262 pounds, and was at a loss of what more to do. Her family physician saved her life by telling her to avoid carbs and eat meat. She lost 120 pounds, was able to conceive and deliver three children. Her mission for the past 13 years has been to share the same message that was shared with her by her doctor and to offer hope to those that suffer from inflammation, sugar addiction, obesity, and diet-related illnesses."

Pass this information on to those who might be struggling. By the way, this email went out to all kinds of people.

See James Steinle's other articles at:

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

Prayer Makes

(2024) Sent by Lorena Haar
(Vancouver, Washington)

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer Climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above,
Restraining prayer, we cease to fight,
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees,
The weakest saint upon his knee's

See Lorena Haar's other articles at:

[Haar, Lorena – The "New" Church of God Messenger \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

Iron Sharpening Iron

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

In regard to: Sunday – The Catholic Sabbath

Article by Avram Yehoshua
Comments by Avram Yehoshua (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

Laura is right. There is no place in the New Testament that literally says that "Christ's resurrection was on Sunday," but the Apostle Paul strongly implies this when he states of Yeshua:

"But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep...But each one in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." (1st Corinthians 15:20, 23)

"Firstfruits" is the literal name of the Sunday of Passover Week. Contrary to how the Rabbis calculate it, which I won't get into now, Firstfruits (also translated into English as First Fruits; First Sheaf; first grain; cf. Lev. 23:4-14, esp. vv. 9-14), has a specific ceremony for the first grain of the springtime being offered up to God, at God's command. Yeshua is the first to rise from the dead and according to Paul, is the Firstfruits to resurrect. Paul would not have used that word for Yeshua, as the **Firstfruits** to rise from the dead if Yeshua hadn't risen on Sunday. He would have said something like, Yeshua was the first to rise from the dead. "Firstfruits" is a technical term for the Sunday of Passover Week.

Although Wednesday is a common held time by many, when Yeshua is said to have died and been buried, making it

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three days/nights to the Sabbath, Sunday is the day Yeshua rose because Sunday is also the first day of the old Creation (Gen. 1:1-5) and God copies or uses that as a model for the first day of the New Creation. I believe that Yeshua died on Thursday afternoon, was put in the Tomb on Thursday night, and rose on Sunday AM. I have an article or two on that also, but for now, three days and three nights?

Nights: Thurs/Fri/Sat
Days? Fri/Sat/Sunday

Yeshua dies as the Passover Lamb on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and is raised on the Sunday of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread, as the First Fruits to rise from the dead, aligning Himself with the ceremony of First Fruits (and the first day of Creation). On the day of Firstfruits in Yeshua’s time, the High Priest of Israel held in his hand some finely crushed barley grain (symbolic of Yeshua; the Bread or Grain of Life being crucified/crushed), with olive oil in it (symbolic of the Holy Spirit within Him being poured out from His crushing/death), and incense (prayer), and he stood before Yahveh on that Sunday. He said, “Yahveh, You are a faithful God! You promised our Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, descendants as many as the stars of the Heavens, in this Land, and that You would provide food, etc., for them, which is life. Here I am, a descendant of our Fathers, in the Land you have given us, with the Firstfruits to rise from the Earth, symbolic of all the food You will give us this year.” He would then throw a portion of the grain on the Altar fire, sanctifying all the food to come, and Israel’s ability to now eat of the new barley grain. They could not eat of the new grain until this ceremony, picturing Yeshua’s death and resurrection, had been performed.

At that time, Yeshua was saying to Mary, not to touch Him, for He needed to ascend to His Father (cf. John 20:17). He had obviously resurrected, but in ascending to His Father He must have said something like this: “Father, You are a faithful God! You promised Israel a Messiah, a Savior; One who would forgive their sins and One who would give them eternal life, and here I am.”

This all happened on the Sunday of First Fruits, and this, Yeshua being called the Firstfruits to rise from the dead, and Sunday being the first day of the Old, and New, Creations, is why I believe that Yeshua rose on Sunday; not the Sabbath. The Sabbath speaks of the End of Creation, not the Beginning.

I used to believe it was the Sabbath that Yeshua rose on, but I came to see that Paul wasn’t generalizing when He spoke of Yeshua being the First Fruits to rise from the dead, but specifically calling Yeshua that as it aligned with the Sunday of Passover Week and that’s Who Yeshua is: the Firstfruits to rise from the dead.

Note also that Yeshua said that the Holy Spirit couldn’t be sent to Israel unless He went away (died). This made it possible for Israel of God (cf. Gal. 6:16) to be transformed into new creatures (2nd Cor. 5:17), able to house the Holy Spirit (and the Father and the Son).

“Nevertheless I tell you the Truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

Also, the Lord was speaking of Himself as the Grain from Heaven when He said:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and **dies**, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain.” (John 12:24)

In regard to: Sunday – The Catholic Sabbath

Article by Avram Yehoshua
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

Laura is right. There is no place in the New Testament that literally says that “Christ’s resurrection was on Sunday,” but the Apostle Paul strongly implies this when he states of Yeshua:

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“But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep...But each one in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (1st Corinthians 15:20, 23)

Laura writes:

1Co 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. 1Co 15:21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1Co 15:23 But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.** (KJV)

1Co 15:20 But now Christ has risen from *the* dead, *and* has become the firstfruit of those who slept. (MKJV) The New King James Bible has translated this verse to say “firstfruit” instead of “firstfruits”. Christ is the firstfruit (singular) of many that will be resurrected at a later time.

There is nothing in 1 Co 15:20-23 to imply that the resurrection was on Sunday. In context it is talking about Christ being the firstfruit of the elect that will be resurrected and changed in the firstfruits resurrection.

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

“Firstfruits” is the literal name of the Sunday of Passover Week. Contrary to how the Rabbis calculate it, which I won’t get into now, Firstfruits (also translated into English as First Fruits; First Sheaf; first grain; cf. Lev. 23:4-14, esp. vv. 9-14), has a specific ceremony for the first grain of the springtime being offered up to God, at God’s command. Yeshua is the first to rise from the dead and according to Paul, is the Firstfruits to resurrect. Paul would not have used that word for Yeshua, as the **Firstfruits** to rise from the dead if Yeshua hadn’t risen on Sunday. He would have said something like, Yeshua was the first to rise from the dead. “Firstfruits” is a technical term for the Sunday of Passover Week.

Laura writes:

The day after Passover is the wave sheaf day where the firstfruits of the grain are waved. The wave sheaf can happen on other days of the week than Sunday. You are not telling us where you got the idea that the first Sunday of Passover week is called firstfruits and the only reference I could find to it is that Easter Sunday became known as firstfruits day which is logical since they like you believe Sunday is the day that Christ rose from the dead.

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

Although Wednesday is a common held time by many, when Yeshua is said to have died and been buried, making it three days/nights to the Sabbath, Sunday is the day Yeshua rose because Sunday is also the first day of the old Creation (Gen. 1:1-5) and God copies or uses that as a model for the first day of the New Creation. I believe that Yeshua died on Thursday afternoon, was put in the Tomb on Thursday night, and rose on Sunday AM. I have an article or two on that also, but for now, three days and three nights?

Nights: Thurs/Fri/Sat

Days? Fri/Sat/Sunday

Laura writes:

May I ask you why you do not believe what scripture says? Most of what you are saying here is no place in the bible, so you either have to be making it up or you are getting it from another source which is leading you astray.

Even you believe that Thursday was a Holy Day the year Christ was crucified. In particular it was the First Day of Unleavened Bread. The Bible tells you exactly when Christ died and was buried.

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

Mar 15:43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. Mar 15:44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. Mar 15:45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. Mar 15:46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

That preparation day spoken of was for a high day, in other words the first day of Passover Week, Days of Unleavened

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Bread. See below:

Joh 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. **Joh 19:32** Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. **Joh 19:33** But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

Yeshua dies as the Passover Lamb on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and is raised on the Sunday of the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread, as the First Fruits to rise from the dead, aligning Himself with the ceremony of First Fruits (and the first day of Creation). On the day of Firstfruits in Yeshua’s time, the High Priest of Israel held in his hand some finely crushed barley grain (symbolic of Yeshua; the Bread or Grain of Life being crucified/crushed), with olive oil in it (symbolic of the Holy Spirit within Him being poured out from His crushing/death), and incense (prayer), and he stood before Yahveh on that Sunday. He said, “Yahveh, You are a faithful God! You promised our Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, descendants as many as the stars of the Heavens, in this Land, and that You would provide food, etc., for them, which is life. Here I am, a descendant of our Fathers, in the Land you have given us, with the Firstfruits to rise from the Earth, symbolic of all the food You will give us this year.” He would then throw a portion of the grain on the Altar fire, sanctifying all the food to come, and Israel’s ability to now eat of the new barley grain. They could not eat of the new grain until this ceremony, picturing Yeshua’s death and resurrection, had been performed.

Laura writes:

In the above scriptures it clearly says Christ was crucified and died on the preparation day for the high day. It does not say he was hanging on the stake on the high day or that he was buried the night of the high day. There is good reason why people believe that Christ died on Wednesday and was buried just before sunset on Wednesday and that He rose 3 days later on the Saturday Sabbath just before sunset and that is because evidence for that is found in the Word of God, the Bible. What you are teaching here is not in scripture.

Christ was accepted by the Father as soon as he died. That is why the veil ripped in two.

Mat 27:50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. **Mat 27:51** And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

At that time, Yeshua was saying to Mary, not to touch Him, for He needed to ascend to His Father (cf. John 20:17). He had obviously resurrected, but in ascending to His Father He must have said something like this: “Father, You are a faithful God! You promised Israel a Messiah, a Savior; One who would forgive their sins and One who would give them eternal life, and here I am.”

Laura writes:

I believe you should study your Bible a little more. Christ did not ascend to heaven until 40 days after His resurrection. John 20:17 is not saying what you believe it says. Check other bible versions, commentaries etc.

Act 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them **forty days,** and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

This all happened on the Sunday of First Fruits, and this, Yeshua being called the Firstfruits to rise from the dead, and Sunday being the first day of the Old, and New, Creations, is why I believe that Yeshua rose on Sunday; not the Sabbath. The Sabbath speaks of the End of Creation, not the Beginning.

I used to believe it was the Sabbath that Yeshua rose on, but I came to see that Paul wasn’t generalizing when He spoke of Yeshua being the First Fruits to rise from the dead, but specifically calling Yeshua that as it aligned with the Sunday of Passover Week and that’s Who Yeshua is: the Firstfruits to rise from the dead.

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Laura writes:

Your story is not in scripture.

Avram’s Iron Sharpening Iron:

Note also that Yeshua said that the Holy Spirit couldn’t be sent to Israel unless He went away (died). This made it possible for Israel of God (cf. Gal. 6:16) to be transformed into new creatures (2nd Cor. 5:17), able to house the Holy Spirit (and the Father and the Son).

“Nevertheless I tell you the Truth. It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

Also, the Lord was speaking of Himself as the Grain from Heaven when He said:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and **dies**, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain.” (John 12:24)

Laura writes:

In John 16:7 Christ was talking about departing from them to go to heaven so He could send the Holy Spirit to them.

In conclusion, Avram, I know you can do better by getting your information from scripture. You have to know that the Word of God the Bible is truth. What you are trying to teach here is not in scripture.

In regard to: Atonement 101 (Day of Atonement 2023)

Article by Warren Zehrung
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

I believe he is right about the two goats, but he is wrong about the Wave Sheaf:

Warren states in his article:

The Wave Sheaf offering shows Jesus being presented alive before His Father in heaven (Leviticus 23:11).

Christ did not fulfill the wave sheaf offering because the wave sheaf offering does not represent Christ. The wave sheaf offering represents the ecclesia, the called-out ones. Read what Edersheim and others have to say about what happens with the wave sheaf. There is a certain amount of grain gathered for the wave sheaf and then it is put through the fire and then through many sieves for refining. Those who are called are put through the fire and refined many times. Then in the end only part of the grain gathered for this offering is used. Many are called but few are chosen. The wave sheaf offering in no way represents Christ. It represents the ecclesia, the called-out ones.

Scripture backs this up:

Lev 23:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a **sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest**: **Lev 23:11** And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, **to be accepted for you**: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

In other words the wave sheaf is the firstfruits of the grain and it does not say it will be accepted for Christ. It says it will be accepted for you (the children of Israel), the firstfruits. Christ has no need to be refined but those who are being called do have a need to be refined.

Iron Sharpening Iron In regard to: Is Yayshua God (Part 3)

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

Avram writes:

PROVERBS

In Proverbs, as well as other places of Scripture, *15* Wisdom is not just an abstract noun but seen as a personal noun—the *personification* of the Spirit of God. *Wisdom is always feminine* in Hebrew (Hoch'ma) (and also in Greek: Sophia). Wisdom is seen as a divine female Person. Here are some examples:

"Yahveh possessed Me at the Beginning of His way, before His works of old (i.e. Creation). I have been established from everlasting, from the Beginning, before there was ever an Earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water." (Proverbs 8:22-24)

"Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." (Proverbs 8:30)

"For whoever finds Me finds life and obtains favor from Yahveh." (Proverbs 8:35)

Theologian John Goldingay, quoting another theologian named Camp, speaks of Wisdom in Proverbs as a woman, saying,

"Proverbs' *portrait of wisdom* has taken many forms: 'she is as awesome as a goddess, as playful as a small child, as comfortable as a *mother's arms*, as challenging as a prophet, as satisfying as a table laden with food, as mysterious as a lover hidden among the lilies' (Camp)." *16*

The description of Wisdom in Proverbs is a very apt description of the Holy Spirit as the Wife/Mother in the *God Family*.

Laura writes:

The Holy Spirit is not a person and wisdom is just that wisdom.

Avram writes:

THE EASTERN CHURCH

The Eastern Church in Syria, from ancient times, has taught that the Holy Spirit has a *feminine* nature. The Holy Spirit is seen as the life-bearer of the faith, which speaks of a woman having a child (life) within her (believers). Clement of Alexandria, who lived from 150-215 AD, knew the Gospel of John, was exceptionally learned in the Greek classics, and spoke Greek fluently, having been born, raised and trained in Athens, Greece. *17* In other words, Clement knew Greek better than American Greek scholars today, who translate the Greek New Testament into English and give the Holy Spirit masculine pronouns like "He." Clement wrote that *She, the Holy Spirit*, is an indwelling *Bride*. *18*

The Syrian language, which was in use around 300 AD, is derived from Aramaic. In documents produced in Syriac by the early Miaphysite church (which later became the Syrian or Eastern Orthodox Church) the grammatical *feminine* gender for the Spirit gave rise to a theology in which the Spirit was considered feminine. *19* Writers in Syrian, both orthodox and Gnostic, used maternal images when speaking of the Holy Spirit. While scholars generally agree that grammatical gender is not necessarily correlative to personal gender, Eastern Orthodox theologian Susan Harvey considers the grammatical gender to have been significant for early Syrian Christianity:

'It seems clear that for the Syrians, the cue from grammar—ru'ach as a feminine noun—was not entirely gratuitous. There was real meaning in calling the Spirit 'She.'" *20*

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The biblical symbol of the Holy Spirit is not a lion, nor an ox, but a dove.*21* A lion tears its prey apart, and symbolically, this is what will happen to all the foes of Yeshua, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah,*22* when He returns, but the dove is gentle, which is a quality of every godly woman (vs. being aggressive and domineering).

Paul writes,

“But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23)

The Spirit’s responsibility is to foster those divine qualities within the Bride of Messiah, not the war-like qualities of King David. We are of “another Kingdom” (cf. John 18:36). To love your enemy was not in David’s vocabulary.

Those who argue against the Holy Spirit being feminine because ‘language shouldn’t determine gender,’ fail to realize that it’s not only grammar that makes the Spirit female. Having the Spirit masculine places three men in the God Family, which is ridiculous because the God Family is pictured in the first earthly family, and Yeshua speaks of His Father and He is the Son. The Holy Spirit has to be the feminine Person because of those two reasons, and also, the Spirit is the divine counterpart and Helper to God the Father, just as Eve was to Adam:

“And Yahveh God said, ‘It is not good that man (Adam) should be alone. I will make him a helper *comparable to him*.’” (Genesis 2:18)

We know that Adam’s helper was Eve, a female. The Holy Spirit is the feminine Helper *comparable* to the Father, and not “an essence” of the Father because it speaks of the Holy Spirit coming forth from the Father *as Eve did from Adam*. In both Aramaic/Syrian and Hebrew grammar the feminine gender of the Spirit correctly represents the feminine reality of the Holy Spirit.

Laura writes:

First of all we are not of the “Eastern Orthodox Church” and whatever made you believe you could teach us the pagan doctrines of another church is beyond me.

Here is the first half of His Trinity Doctrine:

Trinity^[edit]

Eastern Orthodox Christians believe in a [monotheistic conception of God](#) (God is only one), which is both [transcendent](#) (wholly independent of, and removed from, the material universe) and [immanent](#) (involved in the material universe).^[5] In discussing God’s relationship to his creation, Eastern Orthodox theology [distinguishes](#) between God’s eternal essence, which is totally transcendent, and his *uncreated energies*, which is how he reaches humanity.^[5] The God who is transcendent and the God who touches mankind are one and the same.^[5] That is, these energies are not something that proceed from God or that God produces, but rather they are God himself: distinct, yet inseparable from God’s inner being.^[6]

Eastern Orthodox Christians believe in a single God who is both three and one (triune); the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, “one in essence and undivided”.^[5] The [Trinity](#), three distinct, divine persons ([hypostases](#)), without overlap or [modality](#) among them, who each have one divine [essence](#) (*ousia*, Greek: οὐσία)—uncreated, immaterial, and [eternal](#).^[7] The [Father](#) is eternal and not begotten and does not proceed from any, the [Son](#) is eternal and begotten of the Father, and the [Holy Spirit](#) is eternal and proceeds from the Father.^[5] Eastern Orthodox doctrine regarding the Trinity is summarised in the [Nicene Creed](#).^[8] The essence of God being that which is beyond human comprehension and cannot be defined or approached by human understanding.^[9] [Eastern Orthodox theology - Wikipedia](#)

Avram writes:

PAGANISM

Some might say that Christianity cannot have a Wife/Mother Goddess because paganism has a wife/mother goddess, along with its husband/father god and son-savior god. The pagan trinity was worshiped all over the ancient world, having

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different names for the three gods for each culture or country; from Babylon, Greece, Rome and Egypt to Mexico, Peru, Europe and China, etc.*23*

One could say, ‘The pagan trinity, with its female goddess, is pagan,’ and of course he would be right, but the question arises:

“Why would Satan have a wife/mother goddess as part of his trinity if the God Family didn’t have a female?”

Was it Satan’s perversion of the Three Men in the (Christian) God Family?, or the Two Men in Laura’s God Kingdom? The reason why Satan has a trinity with a female goddess is because Satan *counterfeited* the heavenly God Family right down to its feminine deity. After all, Satan is the Master Counterfeiter, and a counterfeit *is only as good as the Real Thing that it mimics*.

For example, there are many counterfeit \$100 bills in the USA, but there aren’t any counterfeit \$40 bills because there aren’t any real \$40 bills. No one would accept a \$40 bill because they know that no real ones exist. When we realize that both the satanic trinity and the true God Family have three in them, and that they both have a father and a son, and that Satan has a wife/mother goddess, how can it be that the Western Church’s God Family has three Men?! and Laura’s God Family, for that is what the terms “Father” and “Son” speak of, a God Family, have only Two Men? What kind of a family is that?! Even Satan knew enough not to have three men in his trinity family, or only Two Men!

Alexander Hislop writes of the many gods and goddesses that proliferated paganism but says that initially there was only a supreme father god, and from him came the wife-mother goddess, and from them, their son. Sound familiar? This is the satanic version of how the true Holy Spirit and the Son came forth from God the Father, and also of course, how Eve and Cain came from Adam. Speaking of the primary wife-mother goddess, Hislop states:

“Fundamentally, there was but one goddess—the (pagan) Holy Spirit, represented as female...that all the children of God are at once begotten of the Father and born of the Spirit, and under this idea, the Spirit of God, as Mother, was represented under the form of a dove, in memory of the fact that the Spirit, at the creation, ‘fluttered’—for so...is the exact meaning of the term in Genesis 1:2—‘on the face of the waters.’ This goddess was called Ops, ‘the flutterer,’ or Juno, ‘The Dove.’” *24*

Much of paganism is a perverse reflection of the true religion. The pagan trinity then, is not a liability to the Holy Spirit being feminine, but actually an asset and yet another affirmation. Paganism confirms that the true God Family consists of a Father, a Mother and a Son. *25*

Satan has counterfeited all of God’s concepts and symbols of salvation, sin, how to deal with guilt, and eternal life, etc., and so we need to discern the difference between what has been counterfeited by Satan and is a reflection of God and His ways, and what he has come up with on his own (e.g. his use of the five pointed star inside a circle). Satan has both in his Kingdom of Darkness. For instance, one of the symbols of the pagan holy spirit is the dove. *26* This obviously, is the pagan counterpart to the Holy Spirit as a dove. *27* Should Christians give up the symbol of a dove because Satan has taken it? Of course not. We have to be aware of it though, much the way we have to be aware that there are tares among us (Mt. 13:24-30). The point is that we can’t unequivocally say that every concept or symbol of Satan is wrong. This is especially true when it comes to the feminine person/goddess of the false and pagan Holy Spirit, which is a counterfeit reflection of the true Holy Spirit.

Laura writes:

The Bible is the authority that teaches us about God the Father and Christ His Son. Again, we do not believe in a trinity, and we certainly do not believe the Holy Spirit is a person. When you take the Power of the Holy Spirit away from God the Father and tell everyone that the mother which you believe to be the Holy Spirit is the one that is in charge of giving everyone a piece of the Holy Spirit you make God of no effect and put the mother in charge. You can read from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find even a hint of a wife for God the Father or a mother for Christ the son as being a person mother which is the Holy Spirit. I have no idea what you are reading but it sure is not the word of God.

Go back up to the part where Avram talks about Proverbs and see this part:

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In Proverbs, as well as other places of Scripture, *15* Wisdom is not just an abstract noun but seen as a personal noun—the *personification* of the Spirit of God. *Wisdom is always feminine* in Hebrew (Hoch'ma) (and also in Greek: Sophia). Wisdom is seen as a divine female Person. Here are some examples:

Now read this:

In Gnosticism, Sophia is a feminine figure, analogous to the human soul but also simultaneously one of the feminine aspects of [God](#). Gnostics held that she was the *syzygy* (female twin [divine Aeon](#)) of [Jesus](#) (i.e. the [Bride of Christ](#)), and [Holy Spirit](#) of the [Trinity](#). She is occasionally referred to by the [Hebrew](#) equivalent of *Achamōth* (Ἀχαμώθ, [Hebrew](#): חכמה *chokhmah*) and as *Prunikos* (Προύνικος). In the [Nag Hammadi texts](#), Sophia is the lowest Aeon, or anthropic expression of the emanation of the light of God. From: [Sophia \(Gnosticism\) - Wikipedia](#)

Now go up and read what Avram is telling us under the heading of Proverbs about Wisdom, then come back and read this:

Jewish Alexandrine religious philosophy was much occupied with the concept of the Divine *Sophia*, as the revelation of God's inward thought, and assigned to her not only the formation and ordering of the natural universe (comp. [Clem. Hom. xvi. 12](#)) but also the communication of knowledge to mankind. In [Proverbs 8](#) Wisdom (the noun is feminine) is described as God's Counsellor and Workmistress (Master-workman, R.V.), who dwelt beside Him before the Creation of the world and sported continually before Him. [Sophia \(Gnosticism\) - Wikipedia](#)

Avram writes:

WHAT WATERS?

Many think that the waters spoken of in Gen. 1:2 are either of this planet (wrongly believing that the Earth, being 'without form and void,' refers to the Earth already existing), or another planet before this one that God created and then destroyed, but that isn't what Scripture is saying. The Earth being 'without form and void' reveals that the Earth had not yet been created. Any physical object, like the Earth, that is without form, doesn't exist. Something that is void, in this case referring to the Earth, is Scripture's way of emphasizing (without form and void) that the Earth hadn't yet been created.

Laura writes:

We also do not believe in or teach a "Gap Theory".

Avram writes:

The Earth wouldn't be created until Day Three (Gen. 1:9).

Genesis 1:1, stating that God created the Heavens and the Earth, simply means that verse one is the 'chapter heading' for the beginning of the Bible. Verse two and following tells the Story. Obviously then, the waters of Gen. 1:2 cannot be any waters of the Earth, for the Earth didn't exist in verse two. The waters*32* before Creation, of Gen. 1:2, are God the Father (cf. Psalm 24:1-2; 29:3; 104:3; 148:4). The Spirit of God was hovering over God the Father (the Waters), and then the Father speaks of Light (v. 3), and Yeshua *comes forth from the Father and the Spirit*, similar to how Cain came forth from Adam and Eve.

Laura writes:

All garbage. Do not believe what he is saying.

Avram writes:

Now we know why Yeshua was immersed/baptized in water, saying to John that all righteousness should be fulfilled, when John the Baptist spoke of needing to be immersed (baptized) by Yeshua. Yeshua wasn't immersed 'to identify with sinful Israel,' nor any one of a number of other Christian guesses. When we see Yeshua immersed in the Jordan and coming forth from the waters, we see a living pictorial reenactment of Genesis 1:2-3—the Word of God, Yeshua, *coming forth from the Father and the Spirit as the Light and literal living Word of God*. Confirming this understanding is that when

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Yeshua comes up from the waters of John’s Baptism, the Father’s Voice is heard, and the Spirit is seen as a Dove (Mt. 3:16-17). Three Persons. The Three are there as it was on Day One of Creation Week.

Laura writes:

We feed doves at our house, two different kinds and I can assure everyone that doves are birds, they are not people. Do you have any idea how foolish you sound when you keep saying that doves are people?

Avram writes:

Baptism in water for Christians signifies their coming forth as a new creation from the Father and the Spirit due to the life-transforming blood of Yeshua. When Yeshua spoke to Nicodemus and said, “unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God” (John 3:5), Yeshua was speaking of the miracle of the re-creation of Man; of being Born Again in the image of Yeshua (Rom. 6:5), through God the Father, represented by the Waters, and the Holy Spirit.

Laura writes:

Man is not born again until he becomes sinless and is changed into a spirit being.

Avram writes:

The Hebrew New Testament uses the article ‘the’ before water, literally waters, as that is always the case in Hebrew, and grammatically this makes Waters a proper noun. This more than suggests that Yeshua was speaking of the Father as the Waters. Yeshua spoke Hebrew, not Greek, and so the article would be there.

Laura writes:

I have news for you, God the Father and Christ the Son can speak any language there is on earth or in heaven. Do not limit our awesome God.

Avram writes:

This is the reason why being a ‘good person’ is not good enough on Judgment Day. Only this spiritual reality of being Born Again allows one to become a new creature “in Christ” that will be able to stand in the fiery presence of God the Father, forever and hence, to be able to live in His Kingdom. This is why it’s very important to be water baptized. It’s a spiritual identification, showing the person and others that he is a member of the Family of God and that his sins have been washed away (Acts 2:38).

The following are Scriptures where Yeshua speaks of *coming forth* from the Father, and note also, how Yeshua speaks of His Father, which means that the Father is not the Son, and so there must be a Woman in this God Family:

“Yeshua said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I *proceeded forth and came from God*, nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.’” (John 8:42)

“for the Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me, and have believed that *I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father* and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” (Jn. 16:27-28)

“Now we are sure that You know all things and have no need that anyone should question You. By this *we believe that You came forth from God.*” (Jn. 16:30)

“For I have given to them the words which You have given Me and they have received them, and have surely known that *I came forth from You* and they have believed that You sent Me.” (Jn. 17:8)

No prophet or king of Israel ever spoke like this. Prophets speak of being sent by God, which Yeshua speaks of too, but no prophet ever spoke of coming forth or proceeding from God. Truly, Yeshua is God the Son. Yeshua also speaks of *the Holy Spirit coming forth from the Father*, which allows us to understand how the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) was on the scene in Genesis 1:2:

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, *who proceeds from the Father, She will testify of Me.*” (John 15:26)

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And just as Adam and Eve had many more children than just Cain, so too has God many more sons than just Yeshua:

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become Sons of God, to those who believe in His name, who were *born*, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*.” (John 1:12-13; cf. 1st Cor. 12:12, 20)

FOOTNOTES

*15*Job 28:12, 18, 20, 28; Prov. 1:41; 8:1-36; 9:1f., etc.

*16*John Goldingay, Proverbs, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition; ed. D. A Carson, et al.; Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), p. 591.

17http://orthodoxwiki.org/Clement_of_Alexandria.

18http://www.pistissophia.org/The_Holy_Spirit/the_holy_spirit.html.

19<http://www.theology.edu/journal/volume3/spirit.htm>.

*20*Harvey, Feminine Imagery, p. 136.

*21*Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32 (cf. Gen. 1:2; 8:8-12).

*22*Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5; cf. Luke 1:32; Rev. 22:16.

*23*The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop, pp. 12-17, 20, 60, 117, etc.

*24*Ibid., p. 303 in Hislop’s book; p. 241 in The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop.

*25*For more understanding on the feminine reality of the Holy Spirit, ask for the article, The Holy Spirit is a Lady through the website, The Seed of Abraham.

*26*For a greater understanding of just how vast Satan’s counterfeiting of God’s Kingdom is, read Alexander Hislop’s The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop pp. 14, 60-61, 84-85, 97, 109-111, etc., for the pagan holy spirit being a dove (and a goddess).

*27*Luke 3:22; Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; John 1:32.

*28*For example, Mt. 8:29; 16:13-16; 26:63-64; Mk. 1:1; 5:7; John 10:36; 12:26-28, 49-50; Acts 8:37; 13:33; Rom. 1:3; 1st Cor. 1:9; 2nd Cor. 1:19; 2nd Tim. 1:2; Heb. 4:14; 1st John 1:3, 7; 2:22; 3:23; etc.

*29*For example, John 5:19, 30, 36, 45; 6:32, 39; 8:28, 49; 10:17, 36; 11:41; 14:6, etc.

*30*Matthew 3:16-17, etc.

*31*John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

*32*The term water is always plural in Scripture; waters, just as the word heaven is always plural; heavens.

Holy Days 2024

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

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 23-29, 2024

Pentecost – June 12, 2024

Trumpets - October 3, 2024
Atonement – October 12, 2024
Tabernacles –October 17, 2024, to October 23, 2024
Last Great Day – October 24, 2024

Notes