

Who Were the Wise Men?

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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.

Who Were the Wise Men?

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The Christmas season is almost over for another year—but not quite! Traditionally, there are twelve days of Christmas, as the popular Christmas carol says, and as always, January 6 will again be the twelfth and last day of the season. Some churches keep January 6 as Christmas Day, but it is more commonly observed as the Feast of Epiphany, commemorating

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the visit of the wise men, known by many as magi, to the infant Jesus at Bethlehem.

This event, described in Matthew 2, raises many questions, a few of which true Christians should know the answers to. For instance, who were these wise men? Were they pagan Mesopotamian astrologers? What was the "star" that they followed? Where did they come from?

Researching and letting the Bible interpret itself will give us the answers.

A Difficult Scripture

Notice the account in Matthew 2:1-3, 7-12:

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. . . .

Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had 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 gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Of the gospel writers, Matthew alone mentions this episode. Mark and John do not comment about Jesus' birth, while Luke, who writes the most about the events surrounding His birth, leaves this scene out. Matthew's single, brief passage has sparked a great deal of imaginative speculation over the centuries, and we will deal with some of it as we answer some of our questions.

Were They Astrologers?

The first "magi myth" we should question is the tradition of "we *three* kings." The Bible nowhere states how many magi visited the infant Jesus. Although Matthew mentions *three types of gifts* they presented to the Son of God, there may have been two, three, or more wise men. Some have even speculated there might have been as many as twelve!

Regardless of their number, the question remains, "Who were they?" Because the wise men saw and followed a "star," many believe they were pagan astrologers. However, throughout Scripture, God soundly condemns astrology. Notice a few quite pointed examples:

» And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, and you feel driven to worship them and serve them. (Deuteronomy 4:19)

» If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the Lord your God gives you, a man or woman who has . . . gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven which I have not commanded, . . . then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. (Deuteronomy 17:2-3, 5)

» Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from these things that shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. (Isaiah 47:13-14)

In addition, the wise men who visited Jesus knew in advance who they would visit and that their visit was to worship Him (Matthew 2:2, 11). It is highly unlikely that heathen, idolatrous astrologers would go to the great effort to travel many,

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many miles to give honor to the son of a deity they did not worship. With this evidence, we can be certain that these magi were not pagan astrologers.

What Was the Star?

Many historians have attempted to determine the date of Jesus' birth by looking for records concerning comets, meteors, supernovae, conjunctions of planets, and the like.

What was the "star" that led the wise men to the young Jesus in Bethlehem? Was it a physical star at all? Whatever it was, the "star" (Greek *aster*) was definitely of miraculous origin; it was no ordinary, physical star. For instance, it had the ability to move. Matthew writes that the star "went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was" (Matthew 2:9). No star we have ever seen can do that! Even shooting stars—really meteors burning up in the atmosphere—cannot change directions and stop over a specific place!

"His star" (verse 2) was possibly—perhaps even probably—an angel. These spirit beings have a glorious appearance like a radiating star, and they can certainly move and change directions to show someone the way. Stars in the Bible often symbolize angels, for example:

- » [Where were you] when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:7)
- » His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven. . . . And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought. (Revelation 12:4, 7)

What Are Magi?

The Bible mentions two types of magi:

Heathen Magi

Jeremiah 39:3, 13 is the earliest of ancient records mentioning magi:

Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon. . . . So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers.

The word "Rabmag" is merely transliterated because the original translators did not understand its meaning, and even subsequent translations have left it untranslated. However, it has since been correctly deciphered as "chief magus."

The best translation authorities say that "magus" (a singular form of "magi") comes from an old Pahlavi Persian word *mag* or *mog*, meaning "priest" or "great one." Thus, a man by the name of Nergal-Sharezer was the "rabmag" or "chief magus" of the Babylonians at this time (about 586 BC) when they were conquering Jerusalem.

The magi of Babylon were heathen physicians, priests, and learned men, and it is said that from them descended a line of evil, perverted priests and sorcerers (said to include Haman of the book of Esther and Barjesus or Elymas of Acts 13). It is not at all likely, therefore, that the magi of Matthew 2, seeking to worship the newborn King of the Jews, could be included with the likes of these men!

God-fearing Magi

Daniel 2:48 gives us a quick glimpse of another kind of magi:

Then the king promoted [*rebah*] Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler [*shelet*] over the whole province of Babylon, and chief [*rab*] administrator [*cagan*] over all the wise men [*chakkiym*] of Babylon.

Using the *Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, we can define some of the key terms:

- » "promoted" (*rebah*)—to grow long, tall, or great; to increase; to make great.

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- » "ruler" (*shelet*)—to have power, to rule (over), to make ruler.
- » "chief" (*rab*)—(adj.) great; (n.) a captain, a chief.
- » "administrator" (*cegan*)—a prefect, a governor.
- » "wise men" (*chakkiym*)—(adj.) wise; (n.) a wise man

The verse tells us the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar elevated God's servant Daniel to the ranks of the great in Babylon. He made Daniel a ruler, an official of great power over his kingdom. This promotion made Daniel the chief or lord over all the other wise men (magi) of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar's act gave Daniel the power and the opportunity to change significantly how the magi operated in Babylon. He may have held this post for the rest of his long life, and such a lengthy tenure would ensure that many of his changes would endure. We could also speculate that understanding the Seventy Weeks Prophecy (Daniel 9:20-27), he could have passed along to the magi the need to watch for strange tidings in Judea around this time.

We should also remember that many Jews, Levites, and Benjamites still lived in Babylon and the surrounding areas, for only a small percentage of Judeans returned from exile to Jerusalem (Ezra 2:64-67). Some of them, following the example of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, may have been magi or governors. It is most probable, then, that the magi who visited the young Jesus would come under this second category of God-fearing, high-ranking rulers.

Of Orient Are?

Finally, where did these wise men come from? As explained in Francis W. Upham's book, *The Wise Men* (1869), there are two Greek expressions for "East" used in Matthew 2:1-2, 9.

Firstly, in verse 1: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem." "The East" is *ton anatolon*, the common Greek expression for "eastern regions," particularly those far distant.

Secondly, in verses 2 and 9:

"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." . . . When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

In both verses, "the East" is *te anatole*, literally, "the rising," which could mean either that the magi saw the star when it first appeared—at its rising—or that they saw it from their vantage point east of Jerusalem, the direction in which the sun rises. The latter is more natural and to be preferred. The magi, while in a place east of Jerusalem, saw the star, and it led them west.

The more important expression, then, appears in verse 1. The magi were from "the East," a land or lands far away from the Judea of 4 BC. This could not mean Arabia for two reasons: 1) The New Testament explicitly identifies Arabia in Galatians 1:17, so why not here as well? 2) Though we know Arabia is east and south of Palestine, the common expression of the time considered Arabia to be in the south, not the east. Further, any nearby country would have been named specifically and does not qualify as "distant."

In the distant east lay the Parthian Empire, little known today, but it rivaled the Roman Empire for world hegemony at the time. Parthia included all the conquered lands of Babylon, Persia, Bactria, and many other countries on the east side of the Euphrates River. It was to these lands that the Assyrians had exiled some of the ancient house of Israel, and many of their descendants had remained in the region.

The Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature by John J. McClintock and James Strong, in its article "Magi," says that some ancient magi claimed Abraham as their ancestor. If this were true, it would add evidence that the magi were Israelites who were desirous to honor the One who could be their rightful King, especially since the

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miraculous star made His birth so auspicious. (For more on the magi being Israelites from Parthia, please see *The "Lost" [Ten Tribes of Israel . . . Found!](#)* by Steven M. Collins, pp. 205-278.)

Altogether, this biblical and historical evidence indicates that the magi of Matthew 2 were not pagan astrologers whose observations of the heavenly bodies led them to the infant Jesus. Rather, they were probably God-fearing descendants of the exiled house of Israel who were led to Bethlehem miraculously, likely by an angel, just as they were "divinely warned" to flee back to their homeland after their visit (Matthew 2:12).

Once again, we see that if we are willing to break free of the bonds of the world's traditions, the historical evidence backs up the Bible record and leads us to the truth.

See Staff's other articles at:

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What and When is the Passover?

(Copyright 2017) by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

The confusion of which day is the Passover arises when some think of the Passover as the *meal* of the Lamb. The meal is not the Passover; the Passover is the lamb itself. Let's examine what the Scriptures say.

Exodus 12:11, "And thus shall ye eat it [the lamb]; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it [the lamb] in haste: it [the lamb] *is* Yehovah's passover."

Exodus 12:3, (10th day they select a lamb): "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:"
v 5 "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:
v 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it [the lamb] in the evening."

Then verse 6 above in part, should be rendered "...shall kill it *between the evenings.*" (i.e. within the 14th day). The English words 'it in' in Hebrew is beyn (bane) [H996] meaning 'between' or 'between the evenings [H6153] (plural). A new day starts with sunset, so if the lamb was slain after sunset, it would then have been slain on the 15th, not the 14th.

Two lambs in the Old Testament were offered each day, one in the morning and one in the evening (or between the evenings) according to Exodus 29:38-39 and Numbers 28:3-4; but we are concerned with just the 2nd lamb in this study.

There is a difference of opinion of what this time frame is between the Karaites and the Samaritans on one hand and the Pharisees and Rabbinitists on the other. The latter believe it is the time from when the sun begins to decline until sunset while the former believes it is after sunset and before deep twilight. Thankfully the gospel writer Mark in Mark 15:34-37 records for us that Yayshua, the real paschal Lamb, died according to how the Pharisees and Rabbinitists understand the time; at about 3 pm in the afternoon.

A confirmation that sunset is the end of any particular day is from Leviticus 22:6 "The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even [h6153], and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water. 7 And when

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the sun is down [be fallen, etc. H935], he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things; because it is his food." In other words when the sun is down it is the start of a new day as Genesis 1:5 shows.

Which 'between the evenings' was the lamb killed? As the 13th was coming to its end or was it when the 14th was coming to its end? Passover is observed on the 14th day as Numbers 28:16 requires, "And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of Yehovah." So, if the Israelites killed the lamb before sunset of the 13th, then Passover happened on the 13th and not the 14th as required.

Exodus 12:21 "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover." The lamb *is the Passover*.

Exodus 12:7 [Regarding the Passover lamb] "And they shall take of the blood and strike *it* on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." **[from the above example this would be done late afternoon of the 14th]** **8** And they shall eat the flesh in that night, **['that night' then would be the start of the 15th of the 1st month]** roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it."

Exodus 12:15 says, "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses:" **[from the start of the 15th after the 14th had ended at sundown through the 21st day]**

Ezra 6:19 says, "And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. 20 For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them *were* pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21 And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek Yehovah Elohim of Israel, did eat, 22 And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for Yehovah had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of Elohim [God], the Elohim of Israel." **[killing of lamb/Passover and 7 days of unleavened are tied together. I.e. killed lamb on afternoon of 14th and ate it that night on the start of the 15th. It is also known as the night to be much observed from Exodus 12:42]**

The Book of John is generally regarded as being written after the other gospel writers had written theirs and kind of sums up what went on. The foreword of my Bible says John is believed to have written his book about the year A.D. 90.

In Matthew, Mark and Luke the way the wording of the meal is written, it does make it sound like they were going to eat a Passover meal; however, a different intention is very likely according to what the Apostle John wrote which also confirms the timing of events from the Old Testament.

John 13:1 "Now before the feast of the passover, when Yayshua knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;"

John 18:28 "Then led they Yayshua from Caiaphas [the Sanhedrin High Priest] unto the hall of judgment [a roman building]: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover [i.e., yet that evening coming up or the end of the 14th]."

John 19:14 "And it was the preparation of the Passover [during the 14th], and about the sixth hour [6am Roman time]: and he [Pilate] saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!"

Mark 23:45 tells us that there was darkness until the ninth hour or 3 pm which was when Yayshua died.

John 19:30 "When Yayshua therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. 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." **[i.e. the preparation day was the 14th before the start of the 1st day of Unleavened bread and the Passover meal of the 15th.]**

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In Summary:

The *start* of the 14th day was when the Messiah taught his disciples the new symbols of the bread and wine representing His soon to be broken body and his shed blood and the New Covenant He was in the process of making. John calls it the Master’s supper.

Then as the 15th day started and the Savior was now in the grave, the Passover meal by the people of Israel was eaten and the start of the seven days of unleavened bread began. This put our Savior in the grave for three days and three nights until He arose just when the regular weekly Sabbath was ending, and the 1st day of the week was starting. **Sometime on Sunday during the day portion He presented Himself to His Father which fulfilled the wave sheaf ceremony of Leviticus 23:11.**

The apostle Paul confirms the timing when he said, “...for even Messiah our Passover is [i.e. was] sacrificed for us. Therefore [i.e. now] let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened of sincerity and truth.” [Using the example of the 7 days of unleavened bread, which starts on the 15th of the first month (Exo.12:15)] (1 Corin. 5:7-8). Paul is saying the lesson he wants to get across is that the Messiah was killed or sacrificed for us and we should do our part in honoring our Messiah’s sacrifice and stop sinning.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:20-34 (just like the apostle John did in John 13:2), called the meal our Messiah and his disciples had at the start of the 14th and prior to the crucifixion, the *supper* or evening meal. Paul did not say this was the Passover meal.

From Scripture the Passover was killed between the evenings, which according to the daily sacrifices must be sometime in the afternoon; not at dark as some advocate. Therefore the Passover is the lamb and it was killed between noon and sunset sometime on the 14th and eaten on the 15th; not as some claim that it was killed between sunset and dark at the beginning of the 14th and eaten on the 14th as well.

See James Steinle’s other articles at:

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Questions

(Copyright 2024) by Vance (Terryville, Connecticut) and Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Vance writes:

As I get older, I have many more Questions than answers, what did Jesus mean in Matthew 19:4...have you not read that he made them male and female I noticed he did not include himself sounds like he is talking about the father.

Laura writes:

Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,** (KJV)

In Mat. 19:4 Christ is speaking as in a “third person” which is a way a lot of writers write.

In third-person point of view, the most common choice for writers, the narrator refers to all characters with third-person pronouns like 'he', 'she', or 'they'... In other words, the narrator is not a character in a story and is a separate entity. (From the Internet)

Christ is quoting from:

Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (KJV)

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In context Gen. 1:27 is talking about how God made one male and one female to be joined together in marriage. This is how God meant for marriage to be from the beginning.

As far as who he is in either verse, it is Christ in both, because Christ is the creator God.

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

Vance writes:

Acts 2:22...a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst...I noticed God is working in him.

Laura writes:

Act 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: (KJV)

God is in Charge, but Christ did the miracles. God the Father and Christ are one in purpose.

Vance writes:

Reading 1Corinthians 15 reading the chapter the son will be subjected to the Father 2Corinthians 5:19 that is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself...

Laura writes:

2Co 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (KJV)

The Father is in Christ just like he is in those who have been called through the Father's Holy Spirit.

Vance writes:

One chapter and verse that blows my mind is this one and I could keep on going. He completed his mission rose from the dead then says this in John 20:17 ...I am ascending to my Father and your Father and my God and your God. What if he meant exactly what he said to me he is saying the Father is God.

Laura writes:

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.** (KJV)

Yes, the Father is God and Christ is God, two God beings.

Vance writes:

One more thing in John 1:1-9 our so-called king James bibles say he. I had a Geneva bible which I gave away from verse 1 through 9 says it not he until verse 10. My question is who was the translator that translated it into he.

Laura writes:

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

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was that Word, and that Word was with God, and that Word was God. **Joh 1:2** This same was

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in the beginning with God. [Joh 1:3](#) All things were made by it, and without it was made nothing that was made. [Joh 1:4](#) In it was life, and that life was the light of men. [Joh 1:5](#) And that light shineth in the darknesse, and the darknesse comprehended it not. [Joh 1:6](#) There was a man sent from God, whose name was Iohn. [Joh 1:7](#) This same came for a witness, to bear witness of that light, that all men through him might believe. [Joh 1:8](#) He was not that light but was sent to bear witness of that light. [Joh 1:9](#) This was that true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (Geneva)

I think what you are zeroing in on is verse 3 and 4.

From the internet:

The King James Bible was first published in 1611, the King James Bible spread quickly throughout Europe. Because of the wealth of resources devoted to the project, it was the most faithful and scholarly translation to date—not to mention the most accessible.

The Geneva Bible - During the religious persecutions of Queen Mary's reign, English Puritans sought refuge in Geneva, Switzerland, and wanted to produce an annotated Bible for the use of their families while in exile. In 1557, William Whittingham completed a New Testament, which included copious notes in the margins. It used Roman type instead of the traditional "Black Letter" for the first time in English Scriptures. Also for the first time, it had numbered verse divisions, following earlier French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew editions.

I do not know who changed "him to it" or "it to him", however the most accurate translation of the bible is supposed to be the Codex Sinaiticus and it agrees with the King James Bible. The only bible I found other than the Geneva Bible which used the word "it" instead of "him" was the Bishops Bible.

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him came into being not one thing that is in being. **4** In him is life, and the life was the light of men. **5** And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. **6** There came a man, sent from God; his name was John: **7** this man came for a testimony, that he might testify of the light, that all through him might believe. **8** He was not the light but came that he might testify of the light. **9** That was the true light, which, coming into the world, gives light to every man. (Codex Sinaiticus)

Vance writes:

You have info that was very good, thank you. What's your take on this.

Laura writes:

This is my take on it, I hope it helps.

See Laura Lee's other articles at:

[Lee, Laura – The "New" Church of God Messenger \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](#)

Web Site:

<https://church-of-god-bismarck.org/>

Have Great Sabbath!

The Full Knowledge of God (Copyright 2023) by David Sielaff (Portland, Oregon)

"Epignosis" of God Will Be Our Possession

In the epistle [a letter] to the Colossians the apostle Paul tells us about our future ability to know the "full knowledge" of God. Read the text of this passage phrase by phrase. Paul is writing to the individuals of the *ekklesia*. He wants them [and us] to know important information:

"Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear [those in the *ekklesia* heard; and that includes you and me],

- **do not cease praying for YOU and requesting**
- **that YOU may be filled full with the REALIZATION of His will,**
 - [1] **in ALL wisdom and**
 - [2] **spiritual understanding,**
- **YOU to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing,**
- **bearing fruit in every good work, and**
- **growing in the REALIZATION of God;**
- **being endued [endowed] with all power, in accord with the might of His glory,**
- **[Why?] for all endurance and patience with joy; at the same time**
- **giving thanks to the Father, Who makes you competent**
- **[Why?] for a part of the allotment [inheritance] of the saints, in light."**

• **Colossians 1:9-12¹**

Note the two uses of the highlighted word "realization." This noun means (in all its forms) a *full knowledge* of a subject that will be totally known and understood by us. Paul uses the same word in Colossians 2:2, where it refers to the secret of God Himself:

"... that their hearts may be consoled, being united in love, and to all the riches of the assurance of understanding, unto a REALIZATION [epignosis, full knowledge] of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed."

• **Colossians 2:2-3**

This word *epignosis* also is used by Paul in his epistle to his young associate Timothy. In this passage Paul tells what the realization, the full knowledge about **God's** two-fold **will** for mankind truly is:

"... for this is ideal and welcome in the sight of our Savior, God, Who WILLS that all mankind [1] be saved and [2] come into a REALIZATION of the truth."

• **1 Timothy 2:3-4**

The word "realization" or "full knowledge" (King James Version) in First Timothy means that we will know all the truth about **"our Savior, God."**

¹ All quotations are from the *Concordant Literal New Testament*.

Summary and Restatement of Paul's Teaching of Epignosis

After we are glorified at Christ's return, we will be taught many things fully and completely, as quickly as our glorified minds can learn. There will be learning, but we will acquire knowledge almost immediately with instant and total recall.

In our lives now, we are learning **through our experiences and our decisions**, EXACTLY what God wants us to learn **NOW**.

1. In Colossians 1:9 they (and we) will be "**filled full with the REALIZATION [epignosis] of His will.**" WE will have a full knowledge of God's will.
2. In Colossians 1:10 they (and we) will be "**growing in the REALIZATION [epignosis] of God.**" WE will have full knowledge of God, as much as our glorified minds can grasp.
3. In Colossians 2:2 they (and we) can access and receive "**assurance of understanding, unto a REALIZATION [epignosis] of the SECRET of the God and Father, of Christ.**" WE will have full knowledge of the secrets of God, Who is our Father and Christ's Father.
4. In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul says "**God WILLS that all mankind [1] be saved and [2] come into a REALIZATION [epignosis] of the truth.**" WE will learn the "full knowledge" of God's will regarding His detailed plan of salvation for every human being.

Yes, "Salvation" and the "**REALIZATION [epignosis] of the truth**" go together. All mankind, EVERY PERSON, will not only learn and know that all will be saved, but eventually EVERY PERSON will have full knowledge of the truth of God.² We will learn the prophecy by Jesus, "**you WILL know the truth, and the truth WILL be making you free**" (John 8:32), was meant not just for His disciples then, but eventually for every person made in the image of God. If this does not happen, then Paul is either a liar or misinformed. Perhaps God is not able to communicate to His children through His Son and apostles, or ... He is unable to fulfill His own will. But if so, what Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:9-11 is not true:

"... making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ — both that in the heavens and that on the earth — in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is OPERATING ALL in accord with the counsel of HIS WILL."

I trust and have faith in God, His Son Christ Jesus, and their Holy Scriptures — but I reject man's theology of a trinity, an immortal soul,³ eternal torment, and a limited salvation.

See David Sielaff's other articles at:

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

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² Here are all instances of *epignosis* ("realization," Concordant Version): Ephesians 1:17, 4:13; Philippians 1:9; Colossians 1:9-10, 2:2; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:25, 3:7; Titus 1:1; and Philemon v. 6.

³ See my article (based on Dr. Martin's writings), "[The Pagan Immortal Soul and 'Double Doctrine'](#)."

Where Did All This Coal Come From?

(Copyright 2023) by Doug Velting (Grand Rapids, Michigan)



People have used coal for energy for several centuries now, and we continue to use it in vast quantities. But we haven't even come close to running out yet. Where did all that coal come from?

It is common knowledge that coal formed during the worldwide flood when plants were buried and then, by heat and pressure, turned into coal. The world has used up a lot of the coal reserves to date, but the USA has more than an estimated 471 billion tons yet to be tapped into. Canada, Australia, China, and other countries also have huge reserves.

Many times, coalfields aren't just found in one bed but multiple coal beds stacked between other rock layers. With the world having already used so much coal for so long and still having huge amounts in reserve, how did we get it all?

Here are the problems

If all the plant material living today were converted to coal, it would amount to an estimated 3% of the earth's coal reserves. If we still have all of this coal, then where did all the vegetation needed to form coal come from?

Today, more than half the world's land surfaces can't support much plant life, if any. There are ice fields, mountains, and deserts. If you look at a globe, you will find that the continent of Antarctica is massive, along with Greenland and the Arctic. Look at Africa's Sahara Desert and central Australian deserts. Look at the area the Himalayan mountains cover.

We know that the earth's surface is about 30 percent land and 70 percent ocean. However, it is quite possible that God had originally created a much larger land surface on Day 3 of creation week (Genesis 1:9-10). It was only after the flood that the continents were formed into what we see today.

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Plus, there is fossil evidence that plants were once larger than what we see today. The fossil finds of pre-flood plants give us a view of how different early vegetation was thousands of years ago.

Researchers have studied coal seams and discovered they are often made from lycopod trees (giant relatives of today's tiny plants called club mosses), giant ferns, conifers, and giant rushes. Many of the plants that grew pre-flood don't exist in our modern world. Many of these plants had hollow stems and roots and were not designed for growing in soil but for floating on water. It is possible that before the flood, there were huge floating forest ecosystems.

Today we have a tiny equivalent when we see mats of spongy bog vegetation that floats over lakes. It's possible that the pre-flood world had huge floating forests that grew out from the coastlines.

If half of the planet was once a single massive land mass surrounded by floating forest mats that covered large portions of the ocean, and plants were larger than we have today, we can find an answer to the question: where did all this coal come from?

When the worldwide flood of Noah's day came, it swept over the land, burying the vegetation in beds between rock layers. The pressure and heat at these depths converted these beds of plants into coal within a matter of months.

When we see coal, we are reminded of God's judgment of the flood, but we also know that God provided an important energy source that we use today.

Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for mankind! Psalms 66:5

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

In regard to: What and When is the Passover
Article by James Steinle
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

This is one of the most excellent articles in regard to the Passover that I have ever read, and the scriptures brought in as proof are awesome. And of course, if I am writing this, I probably do have a dispute, but it is a small one.

In the article, James makes the following statement - **Sometime on Sunday during the day portion He presented Himself to His Father which fulfilled the wave sheaf ceremony of Leviticus 23:11.**

Lev 23:11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD **to be accepted for you.** On the next day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Please read Lev. 23:11 carefully. The wave sheaf offering does not represent Christ, it represents the ecclesia, the called out ones, the church. For more information in regard to the wave sheaf, read my article "**Leviticus 23**".

Also, the wave sheaf offering is not done after the weekly sabbath, it was always done on Nisan 16 the day after the

Passover/1st Day of Unleavened Bread.

Other wise this was an excellent article and I hope everyone who is sitting on the fence or keeping the wrong day will read this article and study the scriptures given as proof.

In regard to: The Full Knowledge of God

Article by David Sielaff

Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

I do agree that all mankind will know all the truth about God and His ways, but because of "Free Will" some will reject God's way and perish. We have a great example of this where the angels are concerned. All of the angels would have had full knowledge of God and His way and yet approximately a third of them rejected God's Way and will now all perish. The angels also had "Free Will" to choose God's way or to reject it.

God has always wanted everyone to choose "Life or Death". That is "Free Will". It is not a failure on God's part that some will perish in the end. People have always made their own choices throughout time and will continue to do so. Some like Satan like sin so much that they will in the end reject God and will cease to exist any longer. They will perish just as Satan will perish in the end.

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

Notes