

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

Spiritual Blindness

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(Charlotte, North Carolina)

PAGE 2 **Articles**

In regard to: The Two Triangles of the New Testament

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

PAGE 16 **Iron Sharpening Iron**

In regard to: The Two Triangles of the New Testament

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

and Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

PAGE 17 **Iron Sharpening Iron**

In regard to: The Two Triangles of the New Testament

Article by Avram Yehoshua
Comments by Avram Yehoshua
(Flagstaff, Arizona)

PAGE 20 **Iron Sharpening Iron**

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Articles

Spiritual Blindness
(Part One): The God of this World
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God created human beings in His own image (Genesis 1:26). While our bodies physically resemble the descriptions of God given in Scripture, His greater purpose is to form His character image in us. However, human nature leans toward creating God in *its* own image.

Depending on background and experience, people will identify with some of God’s attributes and actions while other aspects of His nature may seem foreign to them. Some who grew up in an environment where God’s judgment was overemphasized may have difficulty accepting God’s love for them, making a relationship with Him challenging. Conversely, those who have lived with constant reminders of God’s grace and love may squirm at biblical passages regarding falling away, eternal punishment, and God’s high standards

Above such personal biases stand verses like Isaiah 45:7, which proclaim that our concepts of Him in no way constrain God: “I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.” To worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) requires us to continually refine our concept of Him based on what Scripture teaches, which at times necessitates challenging our preconceptions.

Due to this reality, God’s actions at times make us uncomfortable. When a recorded deed or attribute of God does not fit our ideas, we tend to hurry past such disconcerting passages rather than allow the holy and pure Word of God to mold our minds.

One act of God that may seem ungodlike is that He blinds. More precisely, God exercises sovereignty over both physical sight and spiritual vision—that is, understanding. At times, He removes literal or metaphorical sight as He works out His purpose.

Biblical Examples of Blinding

The Bible’s first mention of blindness involves the restraining of physical eyesight, but in the environment in question,

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

spiritual sight is also absent:

But the [angels] reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door. (Genesis 19:10-11)

In this instance, the violent Sodomites, determined to assault Lot and his angelic guests sexually, were physically blinded. God used the two angels He had sent to deliver Lot as instruments to take the men’s sight.

Angels are not the only servants of God used to blind those who oppose Him. On occasion, His human servants have prayed for Him to restrain the sight of enemies, and He has answered. For example, Elisha asked for God to blind the Syrian army, and He did so temporarily (II Kings 6:18-20). In Acts 13:11, Paul called on God to blind Elymas the sorcerer for a time, which He did. Famously, Christ Himself struck Paul blind on the road to Damascus, and the apostle’s temporary blindness potently portrayed the spiritual blindness in which he walked to that point (Acts 9:3-9).

Exodus 4:11 underscores God’s sovereignty over human physical and spiritual abilities: “So the LORD said to [Moses], ‘Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?’”

In responding to Moses’ resistance to His summons to service, God declares that He is responsible for the organs that work and those that do not. Whatever speech difficulties Moses had were entirely in God’s hands. Moses had claimed he was “slow of speech,” and if so, God counterclaims to be the source of that impediment and also the potential solution to it. Such a minor problem could not impede God’s ability to work through him.

Likewise, whether one sees or is blind is in God’s hands. Although God refers directly to physical capabilities here, His sovereignty certainly extends into spiritual ones as well. He governs humanity’s ability to see (and hear) spiritually. As Solomon observes in Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter.”

Spiritual Incomprehension

John 9 records Christ’s healing of the man born blind, and the story teaches that blindness *can* be a result of sin, but at other times, blindness happens because God has willed it for another purpose He is working out. This principle applies to both physical and spiritual blindness.

As part of God’s warning to the Israelites against sin, He promises to hobble their ability to understand, reason, and think things through:

The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. (Deuteronomy 28:28-29)

God promises madness, blindness, and confusion of heart for disobeying His voice and failing to observe His commandments and statutes carefully (Deuteronomy 28:15). This curse shows the other side of the principle, that understanding comes with following His commandments (Psalm 111:10). Conversely, breaking the commandments destroys understanding.

The physical curses in Deuteronomy 28 are painful enough, but the mental blindness in verse 28 creates a dreadful situation. Amid the other curses, a person can at least analyze what is happening and perhaps find a way to deal with it. But this blindness—an inability to discern rationally—makes the person’s plight far worse! He cannot even understand what is occurring, let alone identify a real solution like repentance and returning to God.

The nations of Israel are suffering under quite a few curses right now, yet because they are blind to the cause-and-effect relationship, there is little—if any—thought that national immorality is the cause of their problems. Those God curses with “madness and blindness and confusion of heart” can only grope aimlessly for solutions, and those they choose cannot work because they exclude God.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

God’s willingness to take away understanding and wisdom makes many uncomfortable. They do not believe He would actually do such a thing. They do not believe He means what He says.

Some people have a similar and related disbelief regarding scattering, another curse of God (Leviticus 26:33; Deuteronomy 4:27; 28:64). God scattered the post-Flood people at the Tower of Babel because of their rebellion against Him (Genesis 11:8-9). He likewise scattered the children of Israel for the same reason, just as He had promised (Deuteronomy 30:3; I Kings 14:15; Psalm 44:11; 92:9; Jeremiah 9:16; etc.).

The modern church of God has also suffered scattering, yet many have concluded that Satan scattered it because of their discomfort with God acting this way. Assigning blame to Satan may provide a measure of comfort, for if Satan were the prime mover, members would all just be victims of Satan. However, an unstated implication of this notion is that Satan somehow outsmarted or outmaneuvered God.

Yet, it is God who promises and claims scattering. Because of His sovereignty, He is the only One who can bring about what happened to Babel, to Israel, and to His church. On the other hand, Satan can only do what He allows him to do (see, for instance, Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7).

Do we believe that God will respond today to immorality, presumption, and spiritual neglect as He did in the past? True, God’s chastening of His saints is of a different quality than His punishment of Israel, but the principle of cause-and-effect has not disappeared. God’s scattering of the church differs from Israel’s in that it has been organizational rather than geographical and catastrophic. Yet, we are still scattered because God is faithful to His Word. Rather than being immune to God’s chastening, the church is even *more* accountable because of its privileged position (see Luke 12:48; also the principle in Amos 3:2).

Scattering relates to blinding in that it illustrates why it is so critical to have a correct concept of God so that we can recognize the respective actions of God and Satan. God’s actions do not always match our assumptions. He says that He will cause madness, blindness, and confusion of heart when His people walk contrary to His way. We might think Satan would be the source of these works, yet God claims responsibility for them!

God’s Prerogative to Blind

The New Testament also demonstrates God’s willingness to blind the mind. As mentioned earlier, John 9 contains the story of the man born blind. After healing the man, Jesus says, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind” (John 9:39). The Pharisees and others of the Jewish leadership were confident that they could see, yet Jesus declares that part of His ministry was to make some blind while opening the eyes of others.

John claims for Jesus the same prerogative in John 12:37, 39-40:

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him. . . . Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.”

After three-and-a-half years and countless miracles, the Jews maintained a high level of disbelief, particularly among the religious leadership. Notice that the source of their doubt was God Himself! Isaiah’s prophecy says *He* had blinded their eyes, and *He* had hardened their hearts. The reason for this is that if they turned to Him, He would heal them, which may also strike us as odd if we assume that it is *always* His will to heal.

Perhaps His actions seem unkind or mean-spirited to us, but this passage shows that it was not His will to heal the nation at that time (see also Matthew 13:11-15). The people were still disobeying His commandments and statutes and thus still under a curse. To heal them without repentance would reward their wickedness. God’s curse of blindness was so effective that, though Jesus declared them to be blind, they were confident that they saw clearly (John 9:40)! They had no reason even to consider repenting, and therefore, the blindness and other curses continued.

In his letter to Roman Christians, the apostle Paul explains more about Israel’s blinded condition:

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and *the rest were blinded*. Just as it is written: “**God** has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.” And David says: “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a recompense to them. *Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and bow down their back always.*”...

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that *blindness in part has happened to Israel* until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (Romans 11:7-10, 25; emphasis ours throughout)

Paul explains the fundamental reason for God’s current blinding of Israel: God is working with the elect in a way He is not working with Israel yet. Thus, He has blinded Israel until He calls those Gentiles that He has determined to convert. Israel was disobedient, so He scattered and blinded her, intending to regather her and restore her understanding in the future. Then she will recognize her Savior and learn what a relationship with Him truly entails.

The God of This Age

The following passage, II Corinthians 4:3-4, is commonly quoted with little consideration as to who it is truly describing:

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, *whose minds the god of this age has blinded*, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Considering the verses and principles we have already seen, who did this blinding? Because the translators use a lowercase *g*, we assume that Satan receives the title of “god of this age” or “god of this world.” But could this be another case of mistaken identity?

On a technical note, many translations use the phrase “god of this *world*,” but the NKJV is more accurate with its rendering of “god of this *age*.” The word is *aion*, which refers more to time (for example, “eon” or “age”) than to place.

We have seen clear and definitive scriptures in which God declares that He will blind and that He has blinded.

The Bible contains additional scriptures on blindness, as well as ones about eyes being closed, that consistently show that the true God closes and opens eyes (see Deuteronomy 29:4; Job 17:4; Matthew 11:25-26; Luke 10:21; 19:41-42). He blinds, and He also heals the blindness that either He has caused or that men have chosen. But in no other place in Scripture is Satan said to blind or is shown blinding or closing eyes. If II Corinthians 4:4 is about Satan, it is a significant anomaly.

Rather than blinding, Satan deceives. He works to distort vision (rather than take it away) to influence people to sin, but the Bible never shows him opening or closing eyes, physically or metaphorically. Some may argue that this is a distinction without a difference. However, deceiving and blinding are indeed distinctive. Satan’s deceptions are active *oppositions* to truth, while God’s blinding is usually a temporary state in which He chooses to withhold complete understanding. God embodies truth, but He does not give all truth all at once. He is under no obligation to do so. He blinds, either temporarily or for judgment, but Satan actively opposes and distorts the truth.

In addition to God blinding men, numerous verses show that people can blind themselves, as Part Three will examine. As we have all experienced, the truth can be discomfiting, and if we are not resolutely devoted to it, we will close our eyes to those parts to which we do not want to submit.

II Thessalonians 2:10-11 speaks of those who lack love for the truth and God sending them strong delusion. In other words, these people prefer a state of blindness, and God gives them what they want. So, while we cannot open our eyes to greater truth without God’s involvement, we can close our eyes to what truth is available to us and thus blind ourselves.

“No God Besides Me”

A second reason Satan does not fit in II Corinthians 4:4 is that nowhere else is Satan referred to as the god of anything. Undoubtedly, Satan fits within the general classification of false gods, referring either to idols or the demons behind them, or both (see I Corinthians 10:19-20). However, even though people may worship those idols and demons as gods,

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

Scripture also maintains that these so-called gods are not truly gods:

- » “. . . so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of things *that are not gods?*” (II Chronicles 13:9)
- » “Has a nation changed its gods, *which are not gods?* But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit.” (Jeremiah 2:11)
- » “Your children have forsaken Me and sworn by those *that are not gods.*” (Jeremiah 5:7)
- » “Will a man make gods for himself, *which are not gods?*” (Jeremiah 16:20)
- » “But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which *by nature are not gods.*” (Galatians 4:8)

In I Corinthians 8:5, God inspired Paul to call the demons—which would include Satan—“so-called gods”: “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords) . . .” He then clarifies his description with a contrast in the next verse: “. . . yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” In other words, even though people worship demonic principalities—whether deliberately or inadvertently—the perspective of God and His servants is that they are not gods.

Paul tells the Gentile Galatians in Galatians 4:8 that, prior to their conversion, they served “those which *by nature are not gods.*” He immediately describes them as “weak and beggarly elements” to which they were again turning (verse 9). Did this same apostle then bestow upon Satan the title “god of this age” when writing to the Corinthians? God answers this in Isaiah 45:5: “I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.”

Of course, Isaiah 14:14 records Satan as saying that he wants to “be like” (or even “to be”) the Most High. The translators of II Corinthians 4:4, perhaps uncomfortable with God’s attributes and guided by Reformation tradition, may have given Satan his desire to be called a god. Similarly, Ezekiel 28 is about the prince of Tyre, a type of Satan, and God’s controversy with the prince is that he had set his heart as the heart of a god (verse 2). He is far greater in his own estimation than he is in reality.

But the true God never names the Devil as a god of anything. If II Corinthians 4:4 is about Satan, it is a highly significant exception to the pattern, and exceptions invite us to dig deeper. So, how does Scripture characterize him?

Instead of calling Satan a “god,” the gospel accounts consistently call him a “ruler.” He is “the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15; see Ephesians 6:12), and three times in the book of John, Jesus calls him “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Paul calls him “the prince [or *ruler*; it is the same Greek word] of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). The Devil has authority, intelligence, and capabilities far above man, and we should never underestimate him (see Matthew 24:24). Yet, he in no way approaches God’s level, except in his own mind! While God rules supremely, the highest title Satan can legitimately claim is “ruler” over something but never “god.”

As mentioned, the word *aión* in II Corinthians 4:4 refers to this *age* rather than this *world*. God has not made Satan a god over this age—only a ruler with limited authority. Ephesians 1:21 declares that Christ is far above all principality and power, which includes Satan. Contrariwise, as we saw, Satan could only afflict Job with God’s permission, and likewise, he had to ask Jesus if he could sift Peter like wheat (Luke 22:31).

Part Two will cover scriptures that show Jesus Christ is sovereign over *all* ages. It will also examine the context of II Corinthians 4:3-4, which is about the same blinding that we have already observed in Romans 11:7-25 and John 12:37-40. Finally, it will relate the revealing history of interpretation of II Corinthians 4:4, which may have influenced the translators to use “god” instead of “God.”

Spiritual Blindness (Part Two): The God of this Age (Copyright) by David C. Grabbe (Charlotte, North Carolina)



Part One presented God’s sovereignty as being over both physical and metaphorical sight (understanding or comprehension). God states that He blinds, whether as a punishment for sin or simply because He deems it necessary in working out His purpose.

However, translators of II Corinthians 4:4 use a lowercase *g* in the phrase, “the god of this age,” to signify that Satan has blinded the world. If the translators are correct, it creates two significant scriptural anomalies:

- 1) Satan is nowhere else said to blind; blinding is squarely in God’s domain.
- 2) Neither God nor His servants ever call Satan a god of *something*—at most, he is one of the “so-called gods” that “are not gods” (I Corinthians 8:5; Galatians 4:8).

Rather than blinding, Satan deceives, distorts, and twists the truth. At times, we may use the terms “blinding” and “deceiving” interchangeably, which can have similar effects on understanding. However, the critical distinction is that it comes down to intent. God is absolutely committed to truth—to what is real. Jesus declared Himself to *be* the Truth. God desires His children to understand and walk in truth. However, without the necessary spiritual faculties, a person can find truth overwhelming, even painful, just as a diseased eye may find bright light excruciating. God hides and reveals truth according to His will as He moves His creation toward everlasting light.

In type, we do the same thing with our children. We recognize that some knowledge would be harmful to them before they are mature, so we limit their exposure to some of the realities of life. We also determine what knowledge they are responsible for, according to their capability.

God does the same thing with His children. In their natural state, humans cannot deal with God’s knowledge and understanding, so He opens their eyes according to what is appropriate. He also closes their eyes, either as a judgment (see Deuteronomy 28:28) or out of mercy. In the Parable of the Faithful Steward, the man who does not know the master’s will is disciplined less because he is accountable for less (Luke 12:47-48).

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

Because God has hidden some truth for now, He has concluded humanity in unbelief so that He can have mercy on all (Romans 11:32, KJV). In this age, He is not working with all mankind the same way, so He closes the minds—blinds the spiritual eyes—of those He will work with in later ages. As Solomon teaches, part of His glory is to conceal matters (Proverbs 25:2).

Satan, though, is not committed to truth; he is instead the father of lies and liars (John 8:44). God has not granted him authority to open or close eyes, so instead, he plays fast and loose with the truth with ultimate skill. He is not devoted to God’s reality but to his own agenda. He lies, exaggerates, acts, distracts, downplays, and employs any other subterfuge in his pursuit of superiority. He will use some truth, but he couches it in self-serving ways that do not reflect reality. Scripture never shows him opening eyes or taking away understanding God has given. However, he will twist and distort truth, encouraging human nature to deceive itself about the truth that is available.

Some truth is readily available to all. Mankind is without excuse when it comes to the truth of God’s existence (see Romans 1:18-21). Satan has not closed men’s eyes to this reality. Instead, Paul says, *people* have suppressed that truth, closing their own eyes, and Satan has aided them along the way.

Similarly, the serpent “helped” Eve reinterpret what God had said in a way that seemed to benefit her. In fact, the world’s disintegration began with Eve seeking knowledge that was not appropriate for her yet: Adam’s and Eve’s eyes were opened through eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan neither opened nor closed their eyes, but he offered an alternative narrative that eased their rejection of what God had said.

Cultivating a love for truth thus becomes paramount, for that love stands as a hedge against falling away. *When we value personal comfort or interpersonal harmony more than living by God’s every word, we close our own eyes.* When we so choose, we alter our beliefs and can no longer see what we saw before.

Dualism

As mentioned above, a significant difficulty with interpreting II Corinthians 4:4 to be about Satan is that he is nowhere said to be the god of anything. Many proponents of him being “the god of this world” say that the world’s people have him as their object of worship. It is a true statement, but the verse is not saying that.

The word for “God,” *theos*, is used in a general sense in just a few places, such as Paul’s description in Philippians 3:19 of people who set their minds on earthly things—he says their “god is their belly,” an abstract and rare usage of *theos*. But II Corinthians 4:4 is not abstract; it speaks of someone specific rather than a general concept.

In addition, the verse refers to “this *age*” (emphasis ours throughout) rather than “this world.” The word here is *aion*, which refers to a span of time. A search about how the Bible’s writers use *aion* clarifies who is God *in*—and thus *of*—every age. Hebrews 1:1-2 is a ready example:

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the *worlds* . . .

At the end of verse 2, “worlds” translates *aion*, which should be rendered as “ages.” God is sovereign over the ages because He created them through His Son. The Faith Chapter begins similarly: “By faith we understand that the worlds [*aion*] were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). The Word of God framed or prepared the ages. In other words, God is sovereign over the divine timeline; He has not given any part of it to the Adversary.

This aspect of God’s sovereignty is critical because of a widely held first-century idea called *dualism*. Part of dualism is the belief in an ongoing, cosmic struggle between light and darkness, good and evil. In popular application, dualism maintains that God and Satan hold parts of the creation in a rough balance, and they are battling for the souls of humanity. Notice, though, that this puts God and Satan on essentially equal levels, as though Satan is somehow a match for God.

Paul skewers this idea in Ephesians 1:20-21:

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

. . . which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, *far above all principality and power and might and dominion*, and every name that is named, *not only in this age but also in that which is to come*.

The apostle claims that Jesus Christ is “far above” everything “in this age” [*aion*]. He is above every principality and power, which includes all the angels, even the rebellious ones like Satan. He is not only preeminent in this age but also in the next. In other words, *Christ is the God of this age*, just as He is the God of the next age—only the Father is higher. Similarly, when writing to Timothy, Paul refers to God as “the King eternal” (I Timothy 1:17). This Greek phrase, *tō basilei tōn aiōnōn*, is literally “the King of the ages.”

Are both Christ *and* Satan “God/god of this age”? Certainly not! Even though Jesus allows Satan to rule, He also limits him, and the Devil must seek permission to do things such as afflict Job and sift Peter. Jesus possesses “all authority,” in both heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18-20). Many may inadvertently worship Satan, and a few deliberately deify him, but he is not the deity of this or any age. Again, neither God nor His servants give him that honor or designation.

The Perishing Blind

The context for II Corinthians 4:4 begins a couple of chapters earlier, and it shows what this enigmatic verse is about:

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. (II Corinthians 2:14-15)

Here begins the thought that finishes in chapter 4. Paul writes about the true knowledge God has dispersed through His servants. Verse 15 presents two general classifications of people, those who are being saved and those who are perishing. The word “perishing” (*apollymi*) is central to the overall thought, and it deals with being destroyed or lost. Jesus used this word when He referred to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”—the “lost sheep” were perishing sheep. In Luke 13, He tells His audience twice that unless they repent, they will perish (verses 3, 5). John 3:15-16 informs us that those who believe will not perish but have everlasting life.

Thus, God gave true and precious knowledge in the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Some people responded positively through belief and repentance, but most did not. Hence, the Jews comprised a major contingent of those who were perishing. Jesus describes the Pharisees as “blind leaders of the blind” (Matthew 15:14). When we understand why the Jews (with few exceptions) rejected the gospel, we will understand the blinding of II Corinthians 4:4.

The theme continues in II Corinthians 3:7-8:

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

With Israel still in his sights, Paul moves on to a brief discussion of the covenants. He notes that the Old Covenant had a glory, but the ministry of the Spirit is even more glorious. He refers to the incident when God’s glory glowed from a human face, and even that reflected glory was too much for the Israelites to bear. Out of consideration, Moses wore a veil.

Continuing in II Corinthians 3:12-16:

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. *But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted* in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Paul says Moses kept them from looking at “the end of what was passing away.” Romans 10:4 says that Christ is the end

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

(meaning “the goal” or “aim”) of the law. This reality is vital to us because we should be able to look at all the sacrifices and rituals and see Christ’s glory, for He was their object. His light was too bright for the Israelites because their carnal minds could not receive it. So, Paul uses the metaphors of blindness and veils. Moses’ veil was out of consideration for a carnal people who could not handle the light—either physically or spiritually—because of their natural state (see Deuteronomy 29:4).

Blinded Because of Disobedience

But it was not Satan who introduced the veil! Who blinded Israel? God Himself declares that *He* blinded and hardened the hearts of the Israelites, just as He promised He would if they persisted in disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:28):

- » And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; *keep on seeing, but do not perceive.*’ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and *shut their eyes*; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.” (Isaiah 6:9-10)
- » For *the LORD* has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and *has closed your eyes*, namely, the prophets; and He has covered your heads, namely, the seers. (Isaiah 29:10)
- » Therefore, behold, *I* will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for *the wisdom of their wise men shall perish*, and *the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden*. (Isaiah 29:14)

Because of Israel’s hardness of heart and rejection of God, part of Isaiah’s unusual commission was to make Israel’s self-inflicted blindness even worse (Isaiah 6:9-10)! God successfully used Isaiah, such that when Jesus came on the scene, the nation was still blind except for the few to whom He chose to grant spiritual sight. When Jesus came to His own, God withheld an incredible blessing, such that the Jews, in general, could not see their Savior. Recall Jesus’ prayer in Matthew 11:25: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that *You have hidden these things* from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.” His people saw Him physically, yet most did not recognize Him spiritually. God did not withhold this understanding out of vindictiveness but because they had rejected Him all along.

On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples’ eyes were restrained (Luke 24:16). Jesus, beginning with Moses’ writings, showed them all the places in Scripture that spoke about Him. He opened their eyes to see the things they could not comprehend before. The *true* God had closed Israel’s eyes—the God of this age had blinded them—and He was now opening the eyes of those few He was calling so that He could heal their minds.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul underscores Israel’s spiritual blindness and clearly identifies who was and is responsible for it:

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and *the rest were blinded*. Just as it is written: “**God** has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day.” (Romans 11:7-8)

He uses somewhat different terminology, but the essence of his words unmistakably matches II Corinthians 4:3-4:

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the [G]od of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

For those who are perishing, the gospel of the Kingdom of God is veiled. They can understand some aspects of it, for which God will hold them accountable, but He has equipped only the elect with the Holy Spirit to understand the deep things (I Corinthians 2:10). Even with what His elect do understand, they still see dimly and await being face to face (see I Corinthians 13:12).

Everybody else will have his or her chance in the resurrection. God holds them responsible for much less than He does the elect. He has consigned them to disobedience so that He may show mercy. When the time is right, He will open the eyes of those whom He has blinded for now.

Scholarly Interpretations

Since the Scriptures testify that Christ is the God of this age and that He blinded Israel (in particular), how can Il

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

Corinthians 4:4 be applied to Satan simultaneously, especially in the absence of any biblical support?

Consider the ideas that affect the interpretation of these verses. Rightly dividing them begins with an accurate concept of God and accepting what He says He will do and has done, even those things that may make a Bible student uncomfortable. To understand them, one must recognize how God and the apostles consistently refer to Satan instead of how he views himself and influences men to believe. Proper discernment depends on using the whole counsel of God rather than rationalism (which appears to have been the starting point for finding Satan in II Corinthians 4:4, as shown below). True interpretation rests on understanding God’s plan, His calling, the resurrections, and the falsehood of any dualistic contest between God and Satan for human souls, as the Devil is powerless before God. Finally, an absolute belief in God’s sovereignty undergirds a correct understanding of II Corinthians 4:4.

This verse’s interpretation has an intriguing history.¹ It is far less important than correctly piecing together the Bible’s consistent revelation, but it nonetheless sheds light on why translators have used “god” instead of “God.” First, however, notice the principle in Proverbs 18:17: “The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him” (*English Standard Version*). The translators of II Corinthians 4:4 have “stated their case first” in their use of “god,” so it has seemed right to us. Are we willing to examine their case?

The comments of writers closest to the apostolic era reveal that they believed II Corinthians 4:4 to refer to the Eternal God, not Satan. No recorded disagreement about this verse appears until the second century when a heretic named Marcion (of Sinope) twisted it to support his gnostic interpretation of God. He believed that many of the teachings of Jesus were incompatible with the actions of Yahweh, the LORD in the Old Testament. To reconcile these things, he taught that Yahweh, the Creator, was an inferior, vindictive being whom he called the Demiurge.

In contrast, Marcion taught that the New Testament revealed Jesus as a superior, loving, and universal God, using II Corinthians 4:4 to support his idea of a vindictive Demiurge. His writings attracted enough attention that numerous writers of the next couple of centuries wrote against Marcion—especially against his thoughts on this verse—including Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyons), Tertullian of Carthage, Origen, Ambrosiaster, John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Pelagius, and Theodoret of Cyrus. All these early writers saw the true God, not Satan, in II Corinthians 4:4.

After the controversy over Marcion died down, the common view for the next 1,200 years was that this verse refers to the Eternal God, not Satan. During these twelve centuries, all the discovered writings show nearly universal agreement that the true God blinds, as the rest of Scripture testifies.

However, this view changed during the Protestant Reformation. This time, the main and loudest proponent of the contrary view was John Calvin. Erasmus, who not long before had translated new Latin and Greek translations of the New Testament, may have influenced him, but Calvin led the charge in changing the prevailing view on this verse. He wrote boldly, “Nobody of sound judgment can have any doubt that here the apostle is speaking about Satan.” And again, “. . . if all these men [the early writers] had read Paul’s words with a calm mind, it would never have occurred to them to twist them into a forced meaning in this way.”

Calvin ignores the fact that God Himself takes responsibility for blinding. He simply asserts, like a rationalist, that if one cannot see Satan in this verse, it is due to not having sound judgment and a calm mind. Calvin was so influential, and his words in general given such gravity, that his assertions went unchallenged. As a result, the prevailing view became that Satan was responsible for all the blinding.

In this theological environment, the Bible began to be translated into English. John Calvin became “the one who states his case first”—and few have been willing to cross-examine such an esteemed and calm theologian and rightly proclaim Jesus Christ as the true and unconstrained God of this age.

Endnotes:

¹ For a thorough examination of the historical interpretation of [II Corinthians 4:4](#), see the doctoral thesis of Ivor Gerard Poobalan at https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/item/19639/thesis_hum_2015_poobalan_ivor_gerard.pdf

Spiritual Blindness **(Part Three): Choosing a Curse** (Copyright) by David C. Grabbe (Charlotte, North Carolina)



Parts *One* and *Two* examined God’s blinding of humanity, physically and especially spiritually. In some instances, He spiritually blinds people because the time is not suitable for individuals or large groups to have spiritual understanding; their opportunity for understanding lies ahead. In other cases, He blinds as a curse because of sin. Notice Deuteronomy 28:28-29:

The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you.

The history of Israel demonstrates God’s faithfulness to this curse, for He provided records of national and individual madness, blindness, and confusion of heart. This curse is particularly devastating because it hobbles the ability even to understand the real problem so that finding a solution proves all but impossible.

The problems in our nations continue to mount, yet the citizens and leaders cannot identify the actual cause. In the divided United States, the Republicans blame the Democrats for all the problems and vice versa. Partisan media casts aspersions on the President, who retaliates in kind. The populace demonstrates its blindness by focusing on this circus, as though they can find the solution in the right policies, people, and party. But until the nation recognizes that the true problem is that they have left God out of the picture, we will continue not to prosper.

The few public figures who dare to suggest that sin lies at the root of our problems are scorned and vilified. The nation has degenerated even further from where it was in 2001, when leading evangelicals drew a line between the September 11 attacks and national immorality. They were shouted down so quickly and overwhelmingly that they regretted speaking the truth.

Yet, with the nation blind to the reason for its predicaments, it certainly cannot turn things around. Proverbs 14:34 states simply, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Part of the reproach that accompanies sin is blindness. It is easy to recognize this principle on the national level, but we must also accept that this holds true for the

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

individual—and even for the converted.

Clouded Judgment

Psalm 111:10 teaches that “a good understanding have all those who *do* His commandments” (emphasis ours throughout). If we sow obedience, in time we reap understanding. But if we sow disobedience, we reap madness, blindness, and confusion of heart. Psalm 19:8 shows this same relationship: “. . . the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.” When we uphold the commandments, our understanding becomes more precise. But the inverse is also true: When we break the commandments, our eyes become darkened, yet like the Pharisees, we may still proclaim, “We see” (John 9:41).

This cause-and-effect relationship underscores the seriousness of sin. We know that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), but the above verses teach that sin also degrades a sinner’s understanding. This principle illustrates the foolishness of thinking one can sin now and repent later, banking on God’s forgiveness. Yes, God forgives sins that are not willful, removing the death penalty, but He may not remove other effects of sin right away, if at all. Among these effects is sin’s influence on the mind. *Repentance does not restore everything to where it was before the sin.*

The natural law in these verses also illuminates why the Bible refers to sin as a snare: It is far easier to get into a snare than out. When we sin, we lose some measure of understanding, at least for a time. This blurred state of mind makes it easier to make another wrong decision. That next sin then further blinds or clouds our judgment, making it easier to stumble yet again—and on it goes because sin has a terrible power to draw one in deeper. Because of our relationship with God, we have tremendous help in overcoming, but sin still entangles and blinds even the converted because that is sin’s nature. Sin causes blindness, and blindness causes sin.

Allowed to Choose

In Romans 1, the apostle Paul expounds on another pattern to help us comprehend spiritual blindness: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who *suppress the truth* in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and [divine nature], so that *they are without excuse*, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but *became futile* in their thoughts, and *their foolish hearts were darkened*. Professing to be wise, *they became fools*, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore, *God also gave them up to uncleanness*, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason, *God gave them up to vile passions*. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise, also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as *they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind*, to do those things which are not fitting . . . (Romans 1:18-28)

Verse 18 gives us the context, the proclivity of mankind to suppress the truth. Some translations say they suppress the truth “by” (rather than “in”) their unrighteousness, reinforcing the link between blindness and disobedience. God has given all humanity a measure of understanding, at least about His existence, but most turn away in favor of something false that seems more reasonable to them. Even though Satan and his demons whisper their deceptions in the background, *the people blind themselves* through their choices. Satan forces no one; as with Eve, he adds fuel to an already-kindled fire of carnality and resistance to the truth.

People choose to close their eyes, and as Paul writes in verse 24, God responds by giving them over to that choice. He does not approve of or accept what they do but allows it to play out. At some point, they will understand the futility of rejecting God’s way.

Paul states this principle again in verse 26: God gives them up to what is in their hearts, not realizing that they have *curled themselves* by their choices. Ironically, they probably feel relief and liberation, having cut themselves off from bearing any accountability to uphold God’s standards.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

What begins with suppressing the truth in verse 18 ends with a debased mind in verse 28. As part of His judgment, God gives people over to the dominion of their choices' consequences. These verses depict God essentially taking His hands away to allow people to mess up their lives still further. However, other scriptures show God actively amplifying sin's effects; sometimes, God makes the spiritual plight of those rebelling against Him even worse.

A Devastating Curse

In Amos 8:11, God calls for a famine of hearing His Word. It is a different metaphor but still analogous to blinding in that He diminishes the understanding of the people. The famine of hearing is a devastating curse because God takes away the very thing that could help the nation: The ability to hear His truth. His action may seem cruel, but the fault does not lie with Him but with the peoples' previous choices. We have a saying today, “Be careful what you wish for.” Israel yearned after her neighbors' paganism and so did not heed the revelation He had given to her, thus He began to take away her understanding.

A well-known prophecy of the last days shows a similar response from God:

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, *because they did not receive the love of the truth*, that they might be saved. And for this reason, *God will send them strong delusion*, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned *who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness*. (II Thessalonians 2:9-12)

The people described here perish because they do not love the truth. God responds by sending strong delusion—sending more of what they already treasured!—for the purpose of condemnation. Some may consider God to be mean-spirited in doing this, but the people choose this blindness. God essentially gives them more of their hearts' desire.

This pattern also gives us a glimpse into what God did with the Pharaoh of the Exodus, a challenging account because of its implications for humanity's free-moral agency. On one hand, Pharaoh hardened his heart (Exodus 7:13-14, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 34-35), but on the other, God hardened the man's heart (Exodus 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27). In fact, God promised to harden Pharaoh's heart *before* he hardened his own (Exodus 4:21; 7:3).

Hardening the heart is a type of spiritual blindness. This divine act may also seem unfair because it appears as if God took away Pharaoh's free-moral agency, so he had no choice but to follow the path to destruction. In this nation, we cherish our freedom to choose so intensely that the thought that God denied Pharaoh a choice makes some quite uneasy.

However, Pharaoh *did* have the opportunity to choose. The story does not begin with God hardening his heart; it begins much earlier, when he chose to continue the oppression and affliction of Abraham's descendants, begun by his predecessor. He made that choice, free and clear—God did not intrude on his decision at all. He had multiple decades to decide how to treat the Israelites, and he freely chose to afflict them.

However, Pharaoh *did not get to choose the consequences*. He failed to consider the desolation his choice would bring on his family and nation. God had promised to curse those who cursed Abraham, and his descendants are included (see Genesis 12:3; 15:13-14). When Pharaoh chose to continue to afflict Israel, God cursed him with a form of “madness and blindness and confusion of heart”—with a heart that would continue to make bad choices, ending in his destruction. His desire to dominate and control God's people became a snare that he chose and which he could not later escape.

Pharaoh's example teaches the gravity of choices, even ones that do not seem significant at the time. Not only is God justified in striking dead any sinner at any time, so He is also on record as promising and carrying out the curses of madness, blindness, and confusion of heart for any sin. When we are tempted to sin, we must consider this very real consequence.

Jesus on Spiritual Blindness

Everybody starts with a measure of truth, even if it is “only” the truth that a Creator God exists. In the book of Amos, God holds even the Gentile nations accountable for things they do. He does not judge them on details found in Leviticus but on acts that anyone should recognize as wickedness. As Romans 1 shows, God's wrath unfurls when people reject the truth. That choice is a form of self-blinding, to which God, according to His judgment and purpose, may give them over

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

or perhaps make worse by sending strong delusion or causing a famine of hearing.

During His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ teaches on spiritual eyesight and blindness:

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:21-24)

This passage contains metaphorical usages of the heart, the eyes, and light and darkness, teaching us about spiritual blindness. Jesus’ basic theme is our focus—the things we set our eyes or hearts on or the thoughts to which our minds continually return.

We should understand the word “mammon” broadly and not limit it just to money. Because Jesus presents only two options here, we can define *mammon* as “*anything* other than God”! Mammon can be anything “under the sun” and thus include countless things that we cannot necessarily hold in our hands yet are still of the flesh. We may feel good about ourselves for being content with a middle-class lifestyle and not pursuing wealth. However, if our hearts pursue praise, popularity, position, power, or prestige, we are still serving mammon. These are still cares of the physical life rather than the conduct of the new life.

Jesus teaches that our clarity of vision depends on our focus—on what gets our attention. Whether healthy or diseased, our spiritual eyesight is directly related to what we treasure and whom or what we serve. Having the wrong treasure or serving the wrong master equates to having a bad eye and walking in darkness. His illustrations mean that blinding ourselves can be as simple as letting God slip from our view or not retaining God in our knowledge, as Romans 1 mentions.

We stumble and sin when we lose our focus on God and what matters to Him. Then, our understanding begins to regress, if only a little. We may start down that pervasive path of sinning, further damaging our understanding, and sinning again.

Perhaps this scenario seems overblown or excessively dire. However, it seems so only because we think of it like a sped-up, time-lapse video of a seed that germinates, grows, blossoms, and fades in a matter of seconds. In real life, this process of darkening our own eyes takes substantially longer, during which time we face many opportunities to choose differently.

Jesus’ brother, James, also describes this process quite simply, beginning with an enticement or desire (James 1:13-15). The temptation is the equivalent of the earthly treasure, the mammon, taking one’s eyes off God. He writes, when “desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (verse 15).

This process sounds like it progresses rapidly, and in some relatively rare instances, like with Ananias and Sapphira, death can result in a matter of hours. In other cases, as with Judas, that wrong focus—a form of blindness—may persist for years before the internal suppression of truth breaks out in an act that God may allow to happen as a judgment. That does not mean we are lost, unlike Judas. It means we could have taken a better road and kept ourselves—and maybe others—from extra grief and regret.

Blindness in Laodicea

As a final example of blindness among the converted, recall the letter to the church in Laodicea, in which Jesus points out their blindness, of which the members are blissfully unaware (Revelation 3:17). Their mammon, whatever it may be, fills their minds and keeps them so distracted and comfortable that they do not realize their actual condition or their vacuous relationship with Him. We can easily apply the ringing words of Elijah here, as though the Head of the church is asking His people, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if mammon, follow him. Be hot or be cold; you cannot serve both.”

Consider that the letter to Laodicea applies to us, which it probably does at one time or another. We know that the

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

blindness Christ speaks of is primarily our doing because He expects us to anoint *our own eyes* (Revelation 3:18). He has not caused this blindness, though He may give us over to it in His chastening. Nor has Satan caused this blindness. We are responsible for this condition, and we must cooperate with God to turn it around. We must work to clean up our vision and return to God with a singleness of focus. But how?

Getting out of this condition is a mighty challenge by itself, but perhaps a more significant challenge is first discerning *whether* we are blind and thus whether we need to take that well-worn letter to heart. God gives us help here as well. I John 2:11 says that he who hates his brother has been blinded. This verse proves the connection between commandment-breaking and blindness mentioned earlier, including breaking the spirit of the law.

In II Peter 1:5-9, the apostle provides a list of attributes, concluding that if we lack them, we are approaching blindness:

But also, for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. *For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness*, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

To reiterate, if we lack faith, there is blindness. If we lack virtue, meaning good character, there is blindness. If we lack knowledge, self-control, or perseverance, there is blindness. If we lack godliness, brotherly kindness, or love, we are shortsighted, even to blindness. If we do not see God as clearly as we should, it will show up in these areas and others. Peter's list indicates we are suppressing truth somewhere or in some way resisting God's presence in all our thoughts.

As Passover approaches, we examine ourselves, which is right and good. But those who are married know that if we were to take stock of our relationship with our spouses only once a year, our marriages would be in a shambles. Similarly, the letter to Laodicea is about a massive relationship problem, one which the members are blind to. But if we can glimpse in ourselves a lack of faith, self-control, kindness, love, or other godly traits, we can recognize that our relationship with God is not as strong as it could be.

These are areas we can analyze and search for what mammon—what fleshly thing—is interfering with seeing God more clearly. God wants to help us overcome this blindness because He wants to dine with us (Revelation 3:20)—He wants to have such a close relationship. But first, we must choose to seek Him and submit to the truth despite the cost, that our eyes may remain open throughout our long walk to His Kingdom.

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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: The Two Triangles of the New Testament
Article by Avram Yehoshua
Comments by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

This "response" is referring to the article by Avram Yehoshua on pg. 8 of the latest Newsletter, Issue #62, titled "The Two Triangles of the New Testament". He makes it out to become three points, but I will basically respond to the first two. Dealing with Christ's message to the "Israelite" believers, and the second to the "Gentile" believers.

Consider the first point of Jesus message coming to the Israelites. Specifically, the 'twelve and like followers'. Only a

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

couple of hundred at the beginning. The question is just what message was it that Jesus taught. It obviously was not the "message of Moses", since if he had delivered on that message, the ruling Pharisees would have welcomed his message.

Thus, it seems that Jesus preached what his Father gave him to preach. That being, the message that his father had originally given to Israel at Mt. Horeb. The "Ten Commandment" covenant. The "voice from heaven" which all there heard said that the people should listen to Jesus Christ's message. Note that they already knew Moses law.

Thus, if Christ was sent to deliver The Almighty's message to all peoples on earth (via his faithful followers), then does it not make sense that Jesus only championed the message of the Ten Commandments. And he ordained the twelve to carry out his message to all of Israel. Also keep in mind that Moses' book of the law was that which represented the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that was in the Garden. That which Eve ate of and got Adam to eat of. Thus, does it not make sense that Jesus message of the Ten Commandment's covenant represents the Law of the Tree of Life?

Now, on to point #2. That being the message being carried out to the Gentiles. What they heard, and a few responded to, was the same message that the apostle Paul, and his followers taught. The message of the Ten Commandments.

But the point is, that at the time when Christ sits on his throne to rule, the message he will teach will be that of the "Two Tablets of Stone" which will be beneath his Mercy Seat Throne. The original Ten Commandment's given by his Father from Horeb. As says in one place, "The Law shall go forth from Zion [the Ten Commandments], and the word of the LORD (an Angel) shall go forth from Jerusalem". Or the latter being the book of the law, which will go out to all that have not yet been called to the Law of the Ten Commandments. In Other Words, all the earth will have a "choice" as to whether they will follow the "LAW, or the law".

But as to the faithful Gentiles which will be amongst the faithful Israelites that will be resurrected at the time when Christ will sit on his throne. Note what it says in Mat. 25:32, where it says that one of the first things Christ will do when he returns is "to separate the nations". Meaning he will have all nations to return to their original homes given them after their leaving Shinar. Each of the sons of Japheth will go to their lands. As with Ham and Shem. Those of "mixed bloods" will not be among those of original DNA. The "mixed" races will go to the "four corners". At least until the time they become "pure again".

What does the above mean for the Gentiles? Well, the "faithful Gentiles" who are in the first resurrection will go to "their Gentile families" to witness the Gospel message. In other words, all Israelite saints will witness anew to Israelites, and all Gentile saints will witness to their Gentile families.

As to point #3 brought out in the article. While Moses will be taught, it will only come through Jerusalem, and not Zion. And "all nations" will be given the opportunity to either continue to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Moses law) or the Ten Commandments (The Almighty's Law).

Spiritual salvation is a personal point and must be chosen by each individual. The only "ordained ministers" will be those in the first resurrection. Both Israelites and Gentiles. For the second "judgment", that of the 100-year period of the 8th millennium, those that believe and accept the Ten Commandment Covenant during the 7th 1000-year period, they will do for all that have ever lived, that which the faithful of the first resurrection will do for them.

In regard to: The Two Triangles of the New Testament

Article by Avram Yehoshua

**Comments by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)
and Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

Ray Daly writes:

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The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

two. Dealing with Christ's message to the "Israelite" believers, and the second to the "Gentile" believers.

Consider the first point of Jesus message coming to the Israelites. Specifically, the 'twelve and like followers'. Only a couple of hundred at the beginning. The question is just what message was it that Jesus taught. It obviously was not the "message of Moses", since if he had delivered on that message, the ruling Pharisees would have welcomed his message.

Laura Lee writes:

Jesus taught the law/message of God. Moses taught the same law/message that Christ taught. The Pharisees also taught the law/message of God when they sat in Moses' seat.

Mat 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, **Mat 23:2** Saying, **The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: Mat 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.**

Ray Daly writes:

Thus, it seems that Jesus preached what his Father gave him to preach. That being, the message that his father had originally given to Israel at Mt. Horeb. The "Ten Commandment" covenant. The "voice from heaven" which all there heard said that the people should listen to Jesus Christ's message. Note that they already knew Moses law.

Laura Lee writes:

The law/message of God is the same law/message that Moses delivered. Jesus was the God of the Old Testament, so Jesus was on Mt. Horeb talking to all first and then for 40 days to Moses.

1Co 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;**1Co 10:2** And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; **1Co 10:3** And did all eat the same spiritual meat;**1Co 10:4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ (Jesus).

Ray Daly writes:

Thus, if Christ was sent to deliver The Almighty's message to all peoples on earth (via his faithful followers), then does it not make sense that Jesus only championed the message of the Ten Commandments. And he ordained the twelve to carry out his message to all of Israel. Also keep in mind that Moses' book of the law was that which represented the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that was in the Garden. That which Eve ate of and got Adam to eat of. Thus, does it not make sense that Jesus message of the Ten Commandment's covenant represents the Law of the Tree of Life?

Laura Lee writes:

This is nothing but pure nonsense. There is only one law of God, and it is the same law that Moses recorded for God in the first 5 books of the Bible. Moses never had his own law apart from God's Law.

And Eve did not get Adam to eat from the tree of good and evil. Adam chose to eat of it all on his own even though he knew better. **1Ti 2:14** And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Ray Daly writes:

Now, on to point #2. That being the message being carried out to the Gentiles. What they heard, and a few responded to, was the same message that the apostle Paul, and his followers taught. The message of the Ten Commandments.

Laura Lee writes:

There is a lot more to the law of God then the ten commandments. God's whole law can be found in the first five books of the bible.

Ray Daly writes:

But the point is, that at the time when Christ sits on his throne to rule, the message he will teach will be that of the "Two Tablets of Stone" which will be beneath his Mercy Seat Throne. The original Ten Commandment's given by his Father

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

from Horeb. As says in one place, "The Law shall go forth from Zion [the Ten Commandments], and the word of the LORD (an Angel) shall go forth from Jerusalem". Or the latter being the book of the law, which will go out to all that have not yet been called to the Law of the Ten Commandments. In Other Words, all the earth will have a "choice" as to whether they will follow the "LAW, or the law".

Laura Lee writes:

This is pure nonsense. There is no "law" there is only God's Law and no other. And if you are saying Christ is an angel, that is also pure nonsense.

[1Co 10:1](#) Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; [1Co 10:2](#) And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; [1Co 10:3](#) And did all eat the same spiritual meat; [1Co 10:4](#) And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ (Jesus).

Ray Daly writes:

But as to the faithful Gentiles which will be amongst the faithful Israelites that will be resurrected at the time when Christ will sit on his throne. Note what it says in Mat. 25:32, where it says that one of the first things Christ will do when he returns is "to separate the nations". Meaning he will have all nations to return to their original homes given them after their leaving Shinar. Each of the sons of Japheth will go to their lands. As with Ham and Shem. Those of "mixed bloods" will not be among those of original DNA. The "mixed" races will go to the "four corners". At least until the time they become "pure again".

Laura Lee writes:

Where on earth are you getting this nonsense from because that is exactly what it is.

God considers all people to be equal: [Gal 3:28](#) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ray Daly writes:

What does the above mean for the Gentiles? Well, the "faithful Gentiles" who are in the first resurrection will go to "their Gentile families" to witness the Gospel message. In other words, all Israelite saints will witness anew to Israelites, and all Gentile saints will witness to their Gentile families.

Laura Lee writes:

Do you have a scripture to show this?

Ray Daly writes:

As to point #3 brought out in the article. While Moses will be taught, it will only come through Jerusalem, and not Zion. And "all nations" will be given the opportunity to either continue to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Moses law) or the Ten Commandments (The Almighty's Law).

Laura Lee writes:

Moses Law and God's Law are the same law and includes the ten commandments as well as the statutes and judgements etc. There is only one reason why anyone would separate the law of God like this and that would probably be because they don't want to keep the Law of God.

Ray Daly writes:

Spiritual salvation is a personal point and must be chosen by each individual. The only "ordained ministers" will be those in the first resurrection. Both Israelites and Gentiles. For the second "judgment", that of the 100-year period of the 8th millennium, those that believe and accept the Ten Commandment Covenant during the 7th 1000-year period, they will do for all that have ever lived, that which the faithful of the first resurrection will do for them.

Laura Lee writes:

This whole response by Ray Daly is pretty much all nonsense and cannot be backed up by scripture which is why he

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

generally doesn't use scripture to back up his points.

The bible speaks of only two ways: God's way which is defined by God's law. Anything outside of God's law which is being taught by Ray and many others is Satan's way. God's way is life and Satan's way is death and the Bible asks everyone to choose life and not death. And yes, we are all to work out our own salvation, but let's make sure that when we do that it is in the Bible, because if it is not, you are on your way down the path of death and not life.

There are many nice people in the world but if they are not teaching from scripture, they are leading you down the wrong path and you will end up in the ditch with them.

In regard to: The Two Triangles of the New Testament

Article by Avram Yehoshua
Comments by Avram Yehoshua (Flagstaff, Arizona)

One of many problems with Ray Daly's response to my article, The Two Triangles of the New Testament, is that Ray doesn't once speak of where my reasoning is wrong about any of the six Scriptures that make up the Two Triangles. Ray gives us a lot of his own opinion about End Time events, but I won't go into it in this venue because there are too many outrageous and unbiblical fallacies within it, and this isn't the place to even begin to address the errors. Mr. Daly's response is an all-too-common problem I find among many Christian pastors and people alike. They love to play Whack A Mole. Have you ever played it? If so, you understand my use of it, but if not, it's a game found in restaurants where kids put 50¢ in, here is a level platform area with about 12 large holes. A mole suddenly comes up from one of the holes and you have to whack it with a mallet to get points. If it goes back into the hole before you whack it, you don't get any points, but immediately after it goes back into the hole, another mole springs up from a different hole, and so the game goes on and on until the 50¢ is used up. It's a great game for reflexes, but it's not what a Scripture response should be because presenting Scriptures and opinions that don't address the six Scriptures can go on forever.

For example, I brought up six Scriptures that fit into Two Triangles, which contain three Scriptures each and form a conceptual presentation on how the Lord Jesus wants all Christians to walk out their faith in Him. Today, and for more than 1500 years, the Church teaches illicit SEX, which is an acronym for Sunday, Easter, Xmas, which also includes the eating of unclean animals and a contempt for Mosaic Law. On the other hand, what I've come to see as God's Will for us is the walking out of our faith in Christ through all the laws of Moses that apply to us (e.g. the 7th day Sabbath and the Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread; Lev. 23:5f., apply to all of us [see 1st Cor. 5:6-8 where Paul exhorts his Gentile Corinthians to keep the Feast [of Passover/Unleavened Bread]], but the laws of menstruation only apply to women, and the laws for farming only apply to farmers, etc.). In other words, we're to walk out our faith in Jesus the same way He walked out His faith in His Father. There is no Jew or Gentile difference when it comes to our faith walk, for the Gentile is part of the Olive Tree (i.e., Israel), and part of the Commonwealth of Israel (see Eph. 2:11f.), and Jesus said the Two Flocks would be One Flock. How can we be one Flock if there are different rules/commandment/laws for Jew and Gentile?

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16 NKJV)

Mr. Daly thinks the only laws we need to keep are those of the Ten Commandments, and even that is optional for Mr. Daly, but what of the two Great Commandments that Jesus Himself spoke of? Neither one of them is found in the Ten. As a matter of fact, Jesus says that all the other laws, rules, commandments, etc., of Mosaic Law actually define HOW to love God and Man:

"Then one of them, a Scribe, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Rabbi, which is the great commandment in the Law?' Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'" (Matthew 22:35-40 NKJV; the Two great Commandments are found in Dt. 6:4-5 and Lev. 19:18c, respectively)

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

Obviously, Jesus didn't think that the word "law" meant only the Ten Commandments, but Mr. Daly does (quote from Mr. Daly's response: "The Law shall go forth from Zion [the Ten Commandments].") Actually, the Hebrew word for "law" there is Torah, whether in Isaiah 2:3 or Micah 4:2, where the phrase is seen repeated. Torah is Hebrew for Mosaic Law, not the Ten Commandments. No one who knows Hebrew would say that Torah means the Ten Commandments. Mr. Daly is quite wrong here, and in most of his response, but I really don't want to deal with that now. Back to Jesus and God's definition of love of Him and Man.

Jesus defines love as obeying Mosaic Law: "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:40). In other words, the REASON for all the other commandments and rules of Moses is God's Way of defining what love is. If we had a divine Tree with only two branches; one branch would say to love God and the other branch would say to love Man. Hanging from those two branches would be all the other laws and rules of Moses, helping Israel to define love God's Way. For example, if you love God you will keep His Sabbath day holy, for even as Jesus said, He is Lord of the Sabbath: "Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28), and you'll keep His Passover holy; not just "communion" whenever, but Passover once a year, on the 15th night of the first biblical month. This is God's Truth for us, and for all Christians who walk contrary to the Way that Jesus walked. It's really simple to see this unless one is blinded by the Christian Tree of Tradition that nullifies the Divine Forest beyond it. You might like, Law 102 at <http://seedofabraham.net/Law-102.pdf>, where I speak of the Vision of Peter in Acts 10, which Christians use to justify the eating of unclean animals, any one of which would have made Jesus a sinner, and also Paul's word in 1st Tim. 4:4-5 ("all animals are good"), and what many Bibles wrongly attribute to Jesus in Mark 7:19 ("thus He declared all foods clean"), but the KJV has it right: "Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?" It's not just the Sabbath and the Feasts of Israel. Please think of it: If it was sin for Jesus, how could it not be sin for His followers...those who are supposed to imitate Him? (cf. 1st Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1)

Christianity interprets the Vision in Acts 10 literally, but since when are visions or dreams in the Bible (or anywhere else for that matter) literally interpreted, for if they were, Pharaoh's dreams of cows eating other cows would have meant just that, but even Pharaoh knew it didn't mean that (Gen. 41ff.). How can Christians, filled with the Holy Spirit and having many Bibles in their homes, interpret Peter's Vision literally, especially as Peter himself gives us the interpretation of the Vision, and it's confirmed by the Elders in Jerusalem in the next chapter; Acts 11:

"Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." (Acts 10:28 NKJV)

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." (Acts 10:34-35 NKJV)

The Vision had nothing to do with eating unclean animals, but of God using Peter as a Bridge of Fellowship into the Gentile community, for Cornelius and Friends were the first Gentiles to come into the Kingdom of Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). Acts 10 is seen by Christian theologians to have taken place about 8 to 10 years after the Resurrection or about 38-40 AD.

"When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." (Acts 11:18 NKJV)

Another scriptural article that reveals that Christians should be keeping the rules of Mosaic Law that apply to them as their Christian lifestyle, is The Feasts of Israel and the Church <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Feasts-of-Israel-and-the-Church.pdf>. It's only two pages long, but a Gem from Above.

By the way, I'm not your average Christian as you can see, nor a Messianic, nor a Hebrew Roots or One Law movement person. I teach The Hebraic Perspective (the biblical perspective). I teach that Jesus wants us to walk out our faith in Him through all the laws and rules of Moses that apply to us after we've been Born Again, just as Peter, Paul and John did all their Christian lives: "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also TO WALK JUST AS HE WALKED....Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND the faith of Jesus" (1st John 2:6; Revelation 14:12 NKJV). That's the Word of God, not Christian tradition that nullifies God's Word. For more on

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
April 23, 2022 --- Issue No. 64
Special Edition

this please see Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church at <http://seedofabraham.net/Grace-Holiness-and-the-Pharisaic-Church.pdf>.

Holy Days 2022

Passover – April 16, 2022 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Unleavened Bread – April 16-22, 2022

Pentecost – June 5, 2022

Trumpets - September 26, 2022

Atonement – October 5, 2022

Tabernacles – October 10-16, 2022

Last Great Day – October 17, 2022