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

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Wool and Linen

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"You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together." —Deuteronomy 22:11

What is the strangest law in the Bible? For many, it is Deuteronomy 22:11, "You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together." This directive is repeated in Leviticus 19:19. The phrase "garment of different sorts" is from the Hebrew *sha'atnez*, literally "mixed stuff," which Orthodox Jews define as specifically wool and linen together, not any other mixture.

The Law of Sha'atnez, they feel, is a *chok*, a decree that the King has passed for His subjects, for which we do not know the reason. Rabbinic commentators believe that many of God's statutes are of that sort. He provides no reason and expects us to accept them on faith. One rabbi has said, "Why ask why?" Their point has validity, certainly, but is there

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really no reason for this edict? Can we discern God’s original point here, and does this mandate have any significance for Christians today?

We will consider several possibilities for God stating that we should not wear wool and linen together.

Possible Reasons

The great medieval Jewish scholar, Maimonides, wrote that ancient pagan priests used to wear wool and linen together while practicing the occult and idol worship. Therefore, he reasoned, we should stay away from *sha’atnez*. In contrast, a more recent, non-Jewish writer said the reason for this law was that both the priestly garments of the Old Testament and the Tabernacle weavings were a combination of wool and linen, so laypersons were prohibited from dressing the same way.

Both comments could be legitimate, but the second has a problem. That the priest’s white undergarment was made of linen and his vestment was made of wool is true, but they are two different articles of clothing, not one item of mixed fabrics. Deuteronomy 22:11 reads, “You shall not wear a [singular] garment of . . . wool and linen mixed together” (emphasis ours).

Another option offered by some is that mixing wool and linen upsets the environmental and/or metaphysical fabric of the universe. *The Jamison, Faucett and Brown Bible Commentary* asserts that

the observations and researches of modern science have proved that wool, when combined with linen, increases its power of passing off electricity from the body. In hot climates, it brings on malignant fevers and exhausts the strength; and when passing off from the body, it meets with the heated air, inflames, and excoriates like a blister.

This was written in 1871, so when the authors refer to “researches of modern science,” they are speaking of not-so-modern research. Lest we make light of the seeming absurdity of this statement, other sources support this view. Articles, easily found on the Internet, tout the healing properties of linen and, to a lesser extent, wool, not to mention scientific studies that have measured the respective electronic frequencies of the human body and different fabrics. The most beneficial was linen, while silk had none at all. Wool did well, but its benefits were not nearly as good as linen.

Another possibility for God giving this command involves the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4. According to Jewish tradition, for what it is worth, the offering they were to give was for Passover. These same traditions have Cain bringing flax (from which linen is made) and Abel, a sheep (and thus wool). After Cain killed Abel, it was decreed, the thinking goes, that never again should the two substances mix.

Moreover, Abel’s lamb resembles the paschal lamb, but Cain’s offering recalls Egypt, which is identified by its production and use of linen. One rabbi went so far as to write that linen is unrighteousness and wool is righteous. He clarifies that wearing linen by itself is not forbidden, just that it represents Egypt. Yet, Revelation 19:8 tells us that the resurrected saints will be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, which would seem to demolish the “linen equals Egypt” theory.

A “Christian” website reasoned along similar but exactly opposite lines when it opined that wool is Old Covenant or “works,” and linen is New Covenant and “grace.” It went on to state that the two can *nevermix!*

Our own website features a short article on the wearing of mixed fibers. Based on answers to questions sent in to the Worldwide Church of God many years ago, it explains Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:11 as a kind of “consumer protection law.” Clothing is made from two basic kinds of natural fibers. One kind is from plant cellulose fiber, such as linen and cotton. The other is from animal protein fiber, such as wool and silk. Since they differ markedly in strength, washability, absorption, and so forth, they should not be mixed. The article goes on to say that combining wool and linen produces a cheaper garment.

What we generally know about clothing agrees with this. A 100% wool suit is of higher quality than one of mixed types. A 100% silk tie is preferred over a blend, and so on. This short piece on our website ends by pointing out that wearing such materials in not a sin in itself. Rather, God does not want manufacturers producing shoddy materials in order to take advantage of their customers. A wise principle to follow in selecting either a pure or mixed garment is to purchase the best quality one can afford—it will last longer and fit better than inferior, less expensive clothes.

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Which of these possible reasons for this law is correct? Are all of them right? Is this a *chok*, a law whose logic is not evident? Each of these options has some merit.

Note the Context

Before coming to a conclusion, we need to look at the context in which God gave this statute. A quick scan of Leviticus 19, which the *New King James Bible* heads as “Moral and Ceremonial Laws,” will be helpful.

Verse 1 informs us that God spoke directly to Moses and that he was to share all of this with the children of Israel. In the next verse, God says, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” *Holy* means “sacred” and “set apart.” The points that follow are designed to set Israel apart, and if observed, these statutes and judgments would keep Israel undefiled.

Verses 3 and 4 cover the first, second, fourth, and fifth commandments, and the following four verses deal with sacrificing. Verses 9-10 handle harvesting procedures and leaving something for the poor. Verse 11 covers the eighth and ninth commandments, while verse 12 rephrases the third commandment. Verse 13 gives counsel on dealing with neighbors and employees, and verse 14, with the handicapped. Verse 15 encourages us to judge righteously. Verse 16 condemns gossip, and verses 17-18 concern familial relationships.

After this, verse 19 begins: “You shall keep my statutes . . .” The Hebrew word underlying “statutes” is *shamar*, “to hedge about, guard, protect, attend to, preserve, observe, and to treasure up in your memory.” God covers a great deal of ground in the first 18 verses, so at the chapter’s half way mark, He inserts a reminder that these laws and life principles, this huge amount of wisdom, is to be guarded, protected, attended to, preserved, and observed. He closes the chapter in verse 37 with the same reminder.

Notice the three matters listed in verse 19: “You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.” Sandwiched between His admonition to bear no grudges and love your neighbor (verse 18) and the penalty for adultery (verse 20), we have these three directives.

Are they on a par with some of these others? No, of course not. Nor is idol worship (verse 4) comparable with gleaning the fields (verse 9). The chapter ends with God commanding us to observe “all My statutes and all My judgments.” We have to discern what this means.

Not Done Away

Some of these verses deal with the Ten Commandments. Do any of us doubt that these are still in force and to be kept? Even so, few of us farm the land anymore, so what does mixing livestock or seed have to do with us? For that matter, how many tailors do we have today? What do we know of mixing fabrics? It is possible that pagan priests wore this mix; that one fabric signifies the Old Covenant, and the other, the New; that it was simply a consumer protection law; or that all of the above are true, which is likely. But what does it mean for us today?

Verse 27 admonishes us not to shave around the sides of our heads or “disfigure” the edges of our beards. These were things Egyptians did, and perhaps some of the Israelites had adopted those practices. From this distance in time, we do not really know what they were doing with their beards and hair, but God tells them, “No, don’t do that. You are a special people. Come out of Egypt.” So, although we do not have to worry about our beards or hair as much in this regard, we still have to be aware of the “Egypt” around us and come out of her.

This same principle applies to mixing wool and linen. Note that this prohibition does not stand alone because in the same verse, God also forbids mixing cattle and seed. It is the principle of clean and unclean, righteous and unrighteous, Christian or pagan, Egypt or God.

In Matthew 5:17-18, Christ says:

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

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Even the smallest point in the Old Testament is not “done away” until “all is fulfilled,” until “heaven and earth pass away.” Has that happened yet? Of course not. Some of the physical rituals—such as circumcision, the various washings, sacrifices and offerings—may not have to be performed anymore, but the spiritual intent lives on.

The Old Covenant emphasized physical things as a means of righteousness, but the emphasis under the New Covenant is on spiritual elements in our relationship with God and each other. Under the New Covenant, we become a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), and that sacrifice begins in our mind. This change from the Old to the New forces us to make spiritual use of the laws already written. They are not done away; we just have to figure out how they apply to us now.

A Principle of Separation

So as to not mixing wool and linen, there could well be health benefits, just as there are health benefits to circumcising baby boys on their eighth day. But if mixing these fabrics is not a sin, what is the point for us?

The point is that a spiritual principle is involved, and it is nothing more than the principle of separation. Just as God wanted the physical nation of Israel to be kept separate from the nations around it, we are to maintain spiritual separation from the sin that surrounds us.

Deuteronomy 14:2 says essentially the same thing to the children of Israel: “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth” (see Exodus 19:5). For this reason, Israelites were not to mix wool and linen, nor mix physically with those around them.

With this understanding, we can bring the principle to the New Testament and apply it under the New Covenant:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (II Corinthians 6:14-16)

The part that Paul quotes at the end—“I will be their God, and they shall be My people”—is found in at least a half-dozen Old Testament verses (Jeremiah 24:7; 31:33; 32:38; Ezekiel 11:20; 37:23, 27; Zechariah 8:8). More importantly, the apostle clearly indicates that the principle still applies! Except now it is God’s church that is separated out.

Further, Paul writes in Titus 2:14, speaking of Christ, “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Recall the “Christian” website mentioned earlier that asserted that wool stands for works and linen represents grace, and the two can *never* be mixed. But does not the apostle Paul do just that in this verse? Christ gave Himself for us, to redeem us from sin, which is grace. Then he goes on to say that Jesus did this to purify us, to set us apart, to make us a people “zealous for good works.” He redeemed us by grace so we could strive to live a sinless life, which we fail at repeatedly. But we try. The laws of God give us our borders, our limits. Without them, there would be no sin (Romans 3:20).

I Peter 2:9, describing the church, the apostle Peter writes, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Where does this leave us in terms of Deuteronomy 22:11 and Leviticus 19:19? Just as not circumcising one’s baby boy would not be a sin, since it is not a sign under the New Covenant, so with mixing wool and linen. However, there are proven health benefits to circumcision. God is not capricious that way; there is great good in following His instructions, even if they are no longer binding under the New Covenant. It would not be surprising if there are health benefits to not mixing these fabrics as well. Certainly, all of one or the other produces a better quality garment.

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For us today, however, the takeaway is to keep *ourselves* spiritually pure, to concentrate on not mixing with the sin of this world, for we are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood a holy nation, His own special people.”

See Mike Fords other articles at:

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

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Symbolism Of Oil

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

When oil is mentioned in the Bible it *always* means olive oil unless specifically excepted (**Esther 2:12** for instance). So, what we’re really asking is what does *olive oil* represent. And honestly, church people overthink things.

When asking what the symbolism for oil is, they go all over the place and try to stitch together verses to prove a point like “holy spirit”; but if they just thought like a little child, and asked “what *is* oil”, they would know instantly: Oil is the FRUIT OF THE OLIVE TREE.

Why are we still talking about this? All we need to know is what an olive tree represents; and that’s easy:

Psalms 52:8 *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

This was a prophecy of Christ speaking about the judgment of Satan (compare the rest of the Psalm to **Isaiah 14**). Now Christ’s body, in OC times Israel, in NT times the church, is also pictured as an olive tree:

Romans 11:17 *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;*

As we all know, this is explaining how Gentiles can be grafted into the nation of Israel and partake of the blessings God promised Abraham. It says that the Israelites were branches in this olive tree, but those branches were cut off so that the Gentiles could be grafted into that tree (**verse 24**).

So clearly, this tree represents the body of Christ, the church; Christ is the head, and we the members; a similar parable, this time casting Jesus as a grapevine, is told in **John 15:1-8**. **Now the goal of this vine or olive tree, like all trees, is to bear FRUIT (John 15:16).**

And olive oil is, by definition, the fruit of the olive. So, if the olive tree pictures, in various metaphors, Jesus’ own body, His metaphorical OC/NC church body, or, by extension, *the branches/members of that body...*

Then olive oil can only picture **the fruits of Jesus, and the fruits of His followers.**

WATER INTO OIL

Jesus told us plainly in **John 7:37-39** that the holy spirit is pictured as a river of living water, like the one in **Genesis 2** or **Revelation 22** or **Ezekiel 47**. The purpose of a grapevine is to take *that water* and turn it into wine; yes, there is also sunlight (light, truth) and nutrients from the soil (bread, meat), but approximately 85% of a grape is *water*. So, when Jesus said, “I am the vine”, it is not surprising at all that He literally “turned water into wine” as a man; **because that’s what vines DO!**

Now the olive tree also represents Jesus. Its branches represent Christians. And the FRUITS of those branches – the

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fruits of those Christians – is the oil. Remember, think of this as a little child would: **what does an olive tree do? It converts water into oil.**

Some fertilizer is used of course, but the vast, vast majority of any plant’s consumption, by weight, is water. So, the oil is literally made out of the water of that river of life; just as our fruits are only made possible by the spirit of God.

In **Ezekiel 47:12**, God specifically says that this tree brings forth fruits BECAUSE of the waters flowing out of the sanctuary. So, the fruits represent the PRODUCT of the tree which took the water and turned it into these “fruits”.

Likewise, the purpose of an olive tree is to take *that same living water* and turn it into olives. Thus, the oil *cannot* be “the holy spirit” because the oil is MADE OUT OF that holy spirit! The oil is, quite literally, *the FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT*.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

While oil is a finished food product on its own, it had many different uses; most importantly, *oil was also the primary source of light in Biblical times.*

Exodus 27:20 *And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.*

The olive oil causes the lamp to burn within the tabernacle. The seven-candled lamp. This oil brings light into the dark tabernacle. Now can it be an accident that it is OUR FRUITS in OUR OWN TABERNACLES which are the light of the world?

Matthew 5:14-16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

WE provide the oil that burns in that lamp! Yes, we get the source for our power from the Father, the river or husbandman; through Christ, the trunk of the tree or vine; but ultimately it is OUR FRUITS that light the candle of the church of God! **Because no olive tree bears fruits directly from its trunk, but rather, through the branches!**

So, the world sees our light from the burning of **our OWN** oil and glorifies God BECAUSE OF OUR GOOD WORKS! Just as Jesus said in **John 15:8**: “*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*”.

Judges 9:9 (BBE) *But the olive-tree said to them, Am I to give up my wealth of oil, by which men give honour to God, and go waving over the trees?*

This clearly says that men give honor to God by the oil of olive trees; *by our fruits*. And since those fruits were *created* from the river of life, they were *made from the spirit of God*. Which means that your fruits, if any, are *literally* the fruits OF THE SPIRIT.

God’s holy spirit is the energy; the energy is then converted into righteous character in us; and the oil feeds the flame of the candles in the temple of God. **Which temple we are! (1 Corinthians 3:17).**

USING THE KNOWLEDGE

Now that we have the basics down, let’s use this explanation in other areas and see if it fits. For instance, oil could not be offered with a sin offering:

Leviticus 5:11 *...then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering.*

Also, if a man was suspicious of his wife, he could bring her to the priest and make her take a potion which basically said that if she was an adulteress her body would rot off, and if she wasn’t she’d be fine. But the interesting part is that no oil could be offered because this offering brought sin to remembrance!

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Numbers 5:15 *Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.*

I have found no offerings that involved sin where oil was offered, and in fact it was specifically commanded *not* to be offered with the ones I have found. So why couldn't oil be offered in a sin offering? Simple. A sin offering requires a CLEAN sacrifice. Only the sacrifice of Christ can forgive sin.

But the oil is the FRUIT of the people of God. It's not a product of God personally, it's a product of the fruit of His branches; and as such, it is the product of people who are (or at least, have been) tainted with sin. Which is why it cannot be used as a sin-offering since it is not pure. Simple; obvious. If you approach the scriptures as a child would.

While we're on the subject of oil, there is another fun thing we can do with the concept. Oil is what burns in our lamps. And when you have an oil fire, can you put it out with water? No! Water only makes the oil fire spread. It jumps from place to place, splatters, and becomes even larger than before!

So also, if you drop the holy spirit (water) on a fire of our fruits (oil), it cannot extinguish it; it only makes it grow, splatter, jump, and become more powerful than before!

So, if you want to put out an oil fire, what do you use? Baking soda! **LEAVENING!** And so, if you want to put out a fire in the church of God, if you want to stymie the fruits of active Christians, you must LEAVEN them with tares! For only hypocrisy can *quench the flame of the spirit* (**1 Thessalonians 5:19**).

TEN VIRGINS

But let's plug it into another parable and see if it makes good sense there too; this is one we've all heard over and over again. See if "fruits" doesn't fit better than "holy spirit" or "truth" (**although, "truth" was much closer to the answer than "holy spirit"**).

Starting in **Matthew 25:1**, Christ tells the parable of the Ten Virgins. Five were wise, five foolish. Five took an extra container of oil with their oil-lamps, and five didn't. None knew exactly when the bridegroom was returning. His arrival was announced suddenly, and those who took no extra oil realized to their shock that they had run out!

Matthew 25:8-9 *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

And of course, while they were out trying to find more oil, the groom returned and was married to the five who had brought extra oil along, just in case. The others found that the groom was no longer interested in them. And Jesus said the point of this story was...

Matthew 25:13 *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

This parable came in the midst of a series which had the same thread; that *"in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"* (**Matthew 24:44**). The POINT of these stories was always the same; that some people thought that by obeying Christ JUST ENOUGH to get by, they'd be alright when He returned.

They had made some fruits in the beginning, kept the Sabbath and unclean meats and such, and thereby saved up a little oil; but when the time wore on, they got lazy, complacent, and said... *"My lord delayeth his coming;"* (**Matthew 24:48**); **which is natural enough, when they've been told He's coming in "three to five years" for seven decades!**

So, they naturally got bored, distracted, and did things they would NEVER have done if Jesus really was returning "soon"! (**Verse 49**). Then when they realized Christ's return was imminent, they all started behaving better, getting their act in a pile – trimming their lamps (**verse 7**).

But they were just too far behind – they just couldn't catch up fast enough to get their lamp burning by the time the

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bridegroom was coming! Because if the righteous will scarcely be saved... **where will the seat-warmer and the Churchian appear? (1 Peter 4:18).**

THE SYMBOLISM OF OIL

So no, oil does not represent the holy spirit, and it never did. It represents, as any child could see, the fruits of the olive tree; the end product of being a part the true body of Christ. **The fruits of the true Christian.**

And by fruits, I don't mean the pillow-fluffing and helping of old ladies across the road; but the changes they've made in their nature. An abundance of oil, and a lamp brightly burning in the world, is the result of a sincere Christian changing themselves into the likeness of God daily **(2 Corinthians 3:18).**

It is the result of comparing ourselves to that spirit and becoming more like it. Oil pictures the fruits of that process of turning the water of God's holy spirit into the flame of fire; **oil pictures, self-evidently now, the fruits of the spirit.**

Ephesians 5:8-9 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)*

The light is produced by OUR works. Our righteousness, not God's righteousness. Yes, yes, yes, it is only possible because of His spirit, *but if we do not produce the light OURSELVES that shines before men, then it doesn't shine from us, whether He gave us His spirit or not.*

So, the question is... do you have enough oil? I doubt it. And I certainly wouldn't risk it **(1 Corinthians 10:12).** **But that's for you to decide; the oil is, after all your fruits, and yours alone.**

See Nathaniel Bursons other articles at:

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

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Ezekiel 9:1-6 – What Mark is in Your Heart?

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One Identifies you with God, the other with the Devil. Ezekiel Vision, 9:3-6 “The glory of the God of Israel” moved to the threshold of the temple. “The Lord called to the man clothed in linen who had a writing kit at his side and said to him, ‘Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a Mark on the foreheads of **those who - grieve and lament - over all the detestable things that are done in it.**” Verse 5 “As I listened, he said to the others, ‘Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, young men, and maidens, but **do Not touch anyone who has the mark.** Begin at my sanctuary.’ Begin with Christian Leaders and Rabbis.

Today most Christians and Jews have missed the “mark” They do Not **“grieve and lament”** over all the More Detestable things that are **done and Honored in America.** Christian and Jewish Preachers will Not Call on the nation's Leaders, and Judges who make Law Honoring what God proclaimed is Evil and Vile, to **Repent.** In America: Homosexual Perversion, must be honored by Law, and is being force fed to our children, and that does Not offend most Christians or Jews? It should offend you **if Christ is in you.** If Honor for Sexual Perverts and, fear of “being Unkind” to them by calling what they do Evil, and calling on them to repent, is in your heart: That is **Devil Worship.** Judgment Day will Condemn you.

Most Christians and Jews Today: Have the **Homophobia - MARK - of Satan instead. Planted in their hearts:** By Devil Media, Politicians, Education, and some Pastors. **Homophobia Really is:** Fear of being criticized for Not Worshipping

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the Devil by Honoring, Sexual Perversion, that God proclaimed is evil and vile. **Devil Worship is: Exalting what God proclaimed is sin.** Honor, Liars, Murderers and thieves, God considers you the same. Honor Sexual Perverts God considers you a sexual pervert; you will be numbered among them in the **Judgment**. Some who claim to believe in Messiah Yeshua are in the same darkness today, that the sons in laws of Lot were. Genesis 19:14 “His sons in laws thought he was joking” when he warned them to leave the city, **they died a fiery death**. Many who claim faith in Christ: Are at Home in Sodom America!

To those who know God’s Judgment against homosexual perversion and “close their eyes” bury God’s truth. Matthew 25:24-30 “The Man who received one talent said: “I was **afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground.**” Verse 26 “You wicked and lazy servant”. Verse 27 interpreted: You should have shared God’s truth without apologies, and by so doing you will have planted seeds of truth, God will provide the increase. Verse 28-30 “Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does Not have, **even what he has will be taken from him**. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Isaiah58:1 “Shout aloud, do Not hold back.” Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion.” **Some ridicule truthful and honest words of being “rants and name calling.”** And prefer a diplomatic, apologetic approach to preach God’s word. Would they accuse Christ also? Jesus warned leaders of his day. Matthew 23:33 **“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?”** How diplomatic and PC was that? Is telling the truth “Name calling”? Another warning with “examples” Read Luke 13:1-5 that Concludes with **“Repent or perish.”**

Many use, defeated in spirit speech: Personal acceptance of the wicked, and **apologetically** telling the truth is their useless approach. Why would someone repent when **God Loves you preaching?** And No calling what they practice, evil and vile, and warnings of, eternal Judgment, if they do not repent? Ezekiel 3:18-19 “When I say to the wicked, you will surely die, and you do Not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil way - in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood.” **Do you have blood on your hand’s preacher?**

America is in great darkness today: Why? Great preachers Preached Christ over many years. But None have shined the Light of God’s word in the faces of Presidents, Congress, judges, and Politicians, Publicly; for the evils they make Law and force all to bow the knee in honor.

National Leaders, Brothers, and sisters: Is your heart filled with what the world honors, or the Word of God? There is No room for Both in the promised “kingdom of God. Repent, the Day of your death is Judgment Day: You will Not remember being dead.

Praise God and Honor his Word Only: Our Father in heaven promised Life that is Not subject to Death and paid our debt of sin. Praise Him! Jesus Christ Crucified is Light that shines beyond the Grave.

See Richard Frates other articles at:

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

National Day of Prayer

(Copyright 2010) by Bill Buckman (Port Austin, Michigan)

What does the United States of America need to repent of?

Our supposed president Barack Obama has declared today, May 6, 2010, to be a National Day of Prayer. What should we pray for? Our nation is going through a lot of trials at the present time. Are these trials because there are a lot of "bad

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guys" out there who are our enemies? Should we pray for God to strike down those enemies because we are the "good guys"; because the United States is a righteous nation?

Or are we really not a righteous nation as a whole? And is God the one who has raised up these enemies to correct us? I believe what we most need to pray for is national repentance. What do we as a nation need to repent of?

We need to repent of all our false gods. I believe God is beginning to show us who our false gods are; by letting them fail and fall. Perhaps the first false god we need to forsake is god "gov". Have we come to look to the government to supply our needs, instead of our Maker? Does our national congress as a whole really care about the common people or have they proven themselves to be "elites" who live in a different world from the rest of us? Maybe it is time to repent of supporting Republicans or Democrats and begin to elect truly biblically righteous leaders.

Have we made the Federal Reserve System a false god to protect our economy? Maybe it is time to repent of letting the Federal Reserve issue "money" that is immediately a debt and rather make congress "coin" debt-free currency based on what we actually have already produced as a nation. But then we would also have to repent of becoming a non-producer nation and bring our jobs back home. We need to repent of using our minds and our hands just to get the "almighty dollar", instead of serving the real Almighty. Do we already have the "mark of the beast" and don't even know it? (Deut 6:8)

We need to repent of putting garbage into our minds and bodies (the temples our Creator gave us); as in a lot of unreal (junk) food, drugs (legal and illegal), "American Idol"atry, Hollywood "pop" culture, pornography, and many other ungodly things. Hollywood culture has ruined and continues to ruin the lives of many who are caught up in it.

We need to repent of corrupting the seeds God gave us to grow our food and not try to patent what is His patent. We need to repent of stealing from our farmers, as in not paying them a fair price for what they do produce and a fair wage for their labor, so they can continue to survive as farmers. And farmers need to repent of raising food crops for quantity and not quality.

We need to repent of the fornication and adultery that is filling our land. We need to repent of rejecting the heterosexuality that our Creator designed us for. We need to produce godly offspring and not destroy them before they are even born.

There is much more we as a nation need to repent of. Yes, there are a lot of bad guys out there. But we are not the good guys. And our heavenly Father is going to take care of all the bad guys. He loves us so much that He not only sent His son Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus the Christ) to shed His blood to cover our sins; but He is going to continue to work in every one of our lives until He has cleansed all of our sin out of us and made us truly righteous. I believe He is beginning to show us that He is the only true and all-powerful and loving God. He will reveal all our false gods for what they truly are, and will draw all of us to Himself in His good time and His good way.

We need to pray a prayer like Daniel did as recorded in chapter 9 of his book and cry out to Him to grant us repentance (Rom 2:4). Then our God will make our enemies to be at peace with us (Prov 16:7) and will give us righteous rulers (Ez 34:23-24). He will make us so we can enjoy eternity with Him and His Son as he intended from the beginning.

Tis the season for vote buying and lying; smarty pants on fire
(Copyright) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

"If a political party does not have its foundation in the determination to advance a cause that is right and that is moral, then it is not a political party; it is merely a conspiracy to seize power." – Dwight Eisenhower

"The lie in the Soul is a true lie."
– Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893)

This life's five windows of the soul

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**Distorts the Heavens from pole to pole,
And leads you to believe a lie
When you see with, not thro', the eye.**

– William Blake (1757-1827)

To lapse in fulness

Is sorer than to lie for need, and falsehood

Is worse in kings than beggars.

– Wm. Shakespeare (1564-1616)

DISCLAIMER: Can't say I've never told a lie. Didn't call it a "talking point" though. Shakespeare wrote:

"The web of our life is of a mingled *yarn*, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not . . . Dare to be true: nothing can need a lie; a fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby."

"The people never give up their liberties but under some delusion . . . Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle." – Edmund Burke (1729-97)

I was just given a book, "YOU SAID WHAT? Lies and propaganda throughout history," by Bill Fawcett (Harper, 2007), and he says:

"The lie was the keynote deception for one of the darkest past of European history. I am not sure what so many Germans' believing it says about them or the world over half a century ago. What do we believe that is just as wrong today?"

Burke said: **"Among a people generally corrupt, liberty cannot long exist . . . Tyrants seldom [lack] pretexts . . . Falsehood has a perennial spring."**

"The lie that flatters I abhor the most . . . Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made, to turn a penny." – William Cowper (1731-1800)

"An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad." – Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639)

That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,

But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

– Tennyson (1809-1892)

CONCLUSION: **"Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie won't be in God's Kingdom."** – Revelation

Unlike George Washington, we've all told them, but I never *loved* one. In the mouth of two or three witnesses ("bear not false witness"). A few words more from the Scriptures:

"They have set up kings, but not by Me."

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice."

"Woe unto that nation whose king is a boy . . . Women and babes shall rule over them."

"For so is the will of God that you may put to silence the foolishness of ignorant men, not using your liberty as a cloak for malice, but as bond-servants of God."

"Where the spirit of the Lord is, *there* is Liberty."

Burke said, "Religious persecution may shield itself under the guise of a mistaken and over-zealous piety," but to rephrase the imperative above, written by Peter to the scattered Tribes in Asia Minor:

"Use your Freedoms to put to silence the ignorance of foolish people."

P.S. "A few honest men are better than numbers." – Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

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God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm . .
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

– Wm. Cowper

PPS: Like never before, it's high time to pray!

See Curtis Dahlgrens other articles at:
[Dahlgren, Curtis – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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Scattered But Not Divided

(Copyright 2023) by Fellow Servants (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Eph. 4:13-16, “til we all come to the **unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together **by what every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which **every part does its share**, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” **How can this possibly happen when the Church is so scattered and divided on doctrines, casting out and hating one another??**

Jer. 32:17, “Ah, Lord God! ...there is nothing too hard for You.” Also, “...with God all things are possible.” Mat. 19:26.

Believers of the TRUE Gospel will have fellowship with the Father and our Savior Jesus Christ & one another. Apostle John writes of this unity in I John. Holding fast to God’s Word of Life, our Savior & Lord, is believing, obeying, and loving the True Gospel.

Believing in the Name of Jesus Christ is believing the TRUE Gospel. John 16:27-28; Rom 10:9-10. The world’s religions ‘say’ they believe in Jesus Christ’s Name as they sit before their idols. Mat. 24:4-5. They follow men and eat their spiritual food, thereby, commit spiritual sexual immorality. Rev. 2:14-17. Overcoming the world, our Savior promises to give hidden manna and share in His inheritance of His throne I John 5:4-5; Rev.3:21. I John 2:12-14, apostle John writes to all the brethren in whatever spiritual state they are in. Please read all of I John. Also Prov. 4 & 8.

When going out to meet the bridegroom, the oil for trimming lamps can only be received from God. Rev. 3:18; Is. 55:1. You will become prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev. 21:2.

John 14:15-24 keep Christ’s commandments and also the words of Life. What is the commandments? I John 3:23, “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.” Name means all authority.

Walk in the Light. Love your brother and sister. Put on the whole armor of God. (Eph. 6:10-20). Do not love the world or anything in the world. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. Bear with one another in love. Strive to attain unity of faith.

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Speaking to you the truth in love,

See Fellow Servants other articles at:

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The Manhattan Declaration
(2009) Compiled by Jeffrey Caldwell (Arkansas)

I suggest you go to: <http://www.manhattandeclaration.org/> and consider signing. I and my wife have signed. It is a declaration of Christian conscience, standing for some of the most basic principles of truth.

The Manhattan Declaration
A Call of Christian Conscience

Christians, when they have lived up to the highest ideals of their faith, have defended the weak and vulnerable and worked tirelessly to protect and strengthen vital institutions of civil society, beginning with the family.

We are Orthodox, Catholic, and evangelical Christians who have united at this hour to reaffirm fundamental truths about justice and the common good, and to call upon our fellow citizens, believers and non-believers alike, to join us in defending them. These truths are:

1. the sanctity of human life
2. the dignity of marriage as the conjugal union of husband and wife
3. the rights of conscience and religious liberty.

Inasmuch as these truths are foundational to human dignity and the well-being of society, they are inviolable and non-negotiable. Because they are increasingly under assault from powerful forces in our culture, we are compelled today to speak out forcefully in their defense, and to commit ourselves to honoring them fully no matter what pressures are brought upon us and our institutions to abandon or compromise them. We make this commitment not as partisans of any political group but as followers of Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

See Jeffrey Caldwell's other articles at:

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

If in the future if you do not receive this newsletter on Saturday Morning, go to our website at:

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

In most cases you will find the articles posted and the newsletter download link would be found to your left as you are looking at your computer.

Iron Sharpening Iron

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

In regard to: A Matter of Trust

Article by Joseph B. Baity
Comments by Denver Braugler (Muncie, Indiana)

The article "A Matter of Trust" was written several months prior to being published in issue #132.

The author has significant gaps in understanding the technologies involved.

A decentralized autonomous organization, for example, is a fair and efficient means to exchange value without trust by voluntary and informed consent.

There was no six-month moratorium on development of artificial intelligence which Elon Musk suggested publicly in March 2023.

Apart from the author's demagoguery about AI eliminating 80% of jobs (as computerization already did), deranged optimism, and a dystopic [sic] dream, the author blindly accepted the notion that human governments are preferable. Just as self-driving automobiles are generally safer than those operated by humans, so too will be administrative functions handled by AI.

If AI can lead to development of an honest governance over evildoers, it will be an improvement over human operators. A government that has no need to place trust in a human, that treats equally everyone who isn't harming anyone, that follows rules which are visible to all and auditable by all — such is an improvement over human governance.

The problem isn't who runs government so much as it is that government is powerful enough to ruin your life. Socialism is still wrong no matter whether your life is managed by a politburo, a computer program, or a hybrid of these. The government is supposed to interfere only with evildoers (and those with nefarious plans). Everyone else should be left alone with no reason to fear. However, evildoers are found at all levels of current governments.

The fault lies in the widespread acceptance of being governed by anyone but the Eternal King.

In regard to: Scattered But Not Divided

Article by Fellow Servants
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

According to the internet, the world population at this time is approximately 8,045,311,447 or about 8 billion people. Of those 8 billion people the world Christian population is approximately 2,604,381,000 or about 2.5 billion people. The difference between 8,045,311,447 and 2,604,381,000 is 5,440,930,447 or almost 5.5 billion people. These 5.5 billion people would include devil worshippers and people who do not believe in God.

Does the Bible tell us how many people will be in the first fruits resurrection? Yes, it does.

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

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Rev 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but **the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.** **Rev 14:4** These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. **These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.**

Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him **an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

The number of people in the first fruits resurrection is 144,000 people according to the bible. And those people come from the following Israelite tribes.

Rev 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.* **Rev 7:5** Of the tribe of Juda *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Reuben *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Gad *were sealed twelve thousand.* **Rev 7:6** Of the tribe of Aser *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Manasses *were sealed twelve thousand.* **Rev 7:7** Of the tribe of Simeon *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Levi *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Issachar *were sealed twelve thousand.* **Rev 7:8** Of the tribe of Zabulon *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Joseph *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Benjamin *were sealed twelve thousand.*

And when that first fruits resurrection takes place, the elect will be gathered from all over the world.

Mar 13:27 **And then shall he send his angels and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.**

How big is a church?

Mat 18:20 **For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

That means that what constitutes a church does not have to be that big. And there are churches all over the world.

If you take 144,000 people and divide them into 6000 years, you get 24 Saints per year. In proportion to the huge populations at various times, 24 Saints per year is not a lot of people.

As near as I can figure the population of the Radio Church of God/Worldwide Church of God was approximately 150,000 by 1970. So, if you figure that 24 Saints per year were produced and the church started in 1934, that means you have 36 years times 24 Saints per year equals 864 Saints.

So, one more, baptized members in 1995 were said to be 89,000. Now we have 61 years between 1934 and 1995. Then we take 61 years times 24 Saints, and it equals 1464.

Okay, so none of my calculations are exact as you would have to know population, converted people and unconverted people for every year from Adam and Eve until today and only God has those figures. My point here is that the number of God's elect is very low when compared with the world population, those who claim to be Christian and even those who were once a part of the Worldwide Church of God. I think people lost track of how many splinter groups came out of the Worldwide Church of God, so I won't even go there.

My biggest point with all of these calculations is to show you that in the 144,000 first fruits are included all of the elect that met God's criteria from the time of Adam and Eve to now. The first two figures for population and Christians only count those that are living now. The populations for Worldwide only includes that church, and there were other churches now and throughout time. So, anyone's chances of being called by God are very low in comparison to the figures. So, if you have been called, try not to blow it. Then looking again at the figures, anyone's chances of being chosen by God to be among that 144,000 is even lower.

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Now if you are absolutely 100% sure you are one of the chosen elect of God, then you are more than likely an arrogant/cocky person or both who believes they know everything there is to know about scripture. Or you could be a person who believes that because you were in a certain group for example "Worldwide Church of God" and that automatically makes you one of the chosen elect of God, you are just lying to yourself. Neither of these options will automatically make you one of the 144,000 elect of God.

Believing in God/Christ will not make you one of God's chosen. Doing good deeds or helping people will also not make you one of God's chosen. Just being an over all nice person will also not make you one of God's chosen people. Yes, you do need to believe, do good deeds and be a nice person, but these are only part of the criteria for being one of God's chosen elect.

One of the things you should be doing every day is to search the scripture to see whether the things you are told or the things you hear are true. I do not mean read one scripture and, okay, now you get it. No, I mean study scripture. You need to be able to read scripture and be able to have the wisdom and knowledge of all scripture to put it together, so you understand it. The best way to do this is to start at the beginning of the bible and read a chapter a day and when you are done with the first reading do it all over again for the rest of your life. This will give you a solid foundation for study.

As you read the bible you will see that stuff is scattered all over the place and you have to try to piece it together like a huge puzzle. Do not be afraid to seek help from other people and other sources. You need all of that information in order to come to a conclusion of what ever matter you are studying.

What is it that you have to have in order to be chosen by God to be one of His 144,000?

You need to keep God's Law. I know many are saying that God's Law is done away, that it is a curse, and it is nailed to the cross, none of which are true. God's Law makes everything orderly. A lack of law leads to chaos and there has never been a better time than now to see that principle in action.

For example, if you have no traffic laws, people would be speeding, running red lights, hitting pedestrians, hitting other cars etc. and they could do all of these things without law, which is order. With no law your streets would be in chaos, and no one would ever be held accountable.

Right now, certain areas of our country portraying themselves as WOKE (Enlightened) feel people who commit crimes should not be punished. So, the criminals for the most part spend no or little time in jail and get off with no or few penalties. When there is no accountability for crime and no penalty for crime, the criminals just go out and commit more and worse crimes. Innocent people are the ones hurt by these WOKE societies.

Back in the Garden of Eden, Adam, and Eve both sinned by eating of the tree which God told them not to eat from. Anything that God tells you not to do in scripture is breaking the law if you do it. If God tells you what to do in scripture and you don't do it, you are also breaking the law. When you break God's law it is sin. The curse of the law of God is death. Death is what was nailed to the cross, not the law.

1Jn 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ conquered death for all of us by dying on the cross, that is a gift of God. When Christ died for us on the cross, He did not then say, keep on sinning and you will still receive the gift of eternal life. Absolutely not, if you want to keep on sinning which is breaking God's law, you will not receive the gift of eternal life. **God's chosen elect will be keeping God's laws which are mostly found in the first five books of the Old Testament.**

I know, many believe they have to hold on to the original doctrines they have been taught until the end when Christ returns, but is that true? You did not do that when you switched from keeping Sunday to keeping a Saturday Sabbath so why would that be true now? Because you are afraid to be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine?

Okay, so if someone tells you a new doctrine do you even look at it or do you just dismiss it? Being tossed to and fro with

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every wind of doctrine is the same as not looking at the new doctrine but in reverse. In the one case because you are afraid or worried about being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine you then refuse to look at any new doctrine. In the other case, because you were told and believe that you need to hold fast to what you have already learned, you dismiss any new doctrines without even looking at them. Both of these are unwise actions.

When you hear a new doctrine, the right thing is to read it, look at it, think about it, study it against scripture. If it does not match what scripture actually says, then dismiss the doctrine as false. **God’s chosen elect will compare the new doctrine to scripture and if they find that the new doctrine is correct and the old doctrine was wrong, they will change to the correct doctrine without hesitation.** I once heard a minister say he now understands “between the two evenings” but then said “but we are not going to change it.” If that is also your attitude, then you are probably not one of God’s chosen elect unless you are willing to change and now do the right thing.

There are a multitude of things covered by God’s law, of which most are common sense and easy to understand why God said not to do these certain things. So, because of the length I am not going to cover them here, but I do have a few points to bring up.

The Saturday Sabbath Command. Why is this important? Most people absolutely will not keep a Saturday Sabbath for any number of reasons. Yet God commands that we keep a Saturday Sabbath because it is a sign between Him and his people. In other words what God is saying is that if you are unwilling to keep this small command you probably won’t keep any of the others either.

Exo 31:13 Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign **between me and you throughout your generations**; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you.

Exo 31:17 It *is* a sign **between me and the children of Israel for ever**: for *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

Many people dismiss Sabbath Keeping because they do not feel they are an Israelite but that may not be true. The Jewish people is not the only Israelite tribe there is, although they are the visible tribe. If one looks at the tribe of Judah, they will see that it is scattered all over the world and is in most countries. Generally, the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and some of Levi were known as the tribe of Judah. If you read your Bible from cover to cover a little at a time daily, you will soon understand there were ten other tribes which to the public and themselves lost their identity and were scattered throughout the world as well. These are known as the lost ten tribes. (Mathew 10:6) Because they lost their identity and were scattered throughout the nations so no one knows who they are or where they are. Large portions of them have been located in countries like Australia, New Zealand, England etc. However, do not dismiss the Saturday Sabbath because you feel you are a gentile. You may not be a gentile; you may be an Israelite and do not know it. Even if you are a gentile, you may still be grafted into the Israelite tribes.

The bottom line here is that just like all of God’s Laws are for all people including the Gentiles the Saturday Sabbath Command which is a part of God’s Law is a command for all people. Some gentiles are in the lineage of Christ, Ruth and Rahab to name two. God wants all people to be saved but some will in the end because of free will, choose not to be. **God’s chosen elect will be found keeping a Saturday Sabbath.**

Most people that keep a Sunday Sabbath, feel God will honor that, but that is not what scripture says. There is no place in scripture that tells anyone to keep a Sunday Sabbath. The only Sabbath mentioned in the bible anywhere is the Saturday Sabbath and the high holy days which are also Sabbaths. There is also nothing in scripture telling anyone to ever keep Christmas, Easter, Good Friday, Halloween etc.

Now I am going to tread in territory that I have been in before. Before I start on this, I want everyone to understand that I also want all of us to make it. This is not my pet doctrine as I have none. I am just trying to point people to Christ and that means we have to discuss the good the bad and the ugly and if people get mad and leave for greener pastures, so be it.

Those who keep Sunday, I sincerely hope you will study the Saturday Sabbath in scripture before you dismiss it as a false doctrine. For those of us who already keep a Saturday Sabbath ask yourself if it would be okay with God if you kept

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a different day for a Sabbath, for example Sunday or maybe Friday. I think most people already keeping a Saturday Sabbath would see a problem with doing that. Wouldn't it go something like this: God commands us to keep a Saturday Sabbath and we cannot substitute that with another day because it would be a sin. For example, if we kept our Sabbath on Thursday, we would not actually be keeping God's Sabbath, we would be keeping our own Sabbath and God will not honor a Thursday Sabbath because He has commanded us to keep a Saturday Sabbath and anything other than a Saturday Sabbath would be a sin in the eyes of God.

So why are the high holy days any different than a weekly sabbath on Saturday? If it would be a sin to keep the Sabbath on some other day than the seventh day, then why is it okay to keep your high Sabbaths on whatever day you want to keep them?

I have through the years heard people say that God will honor our high Sabbaths as long as we keep them even if we do not keep them on the right day? Would you actually even be keeping God's high Sabbaths if you kept them on a different day than God appointed them to be kept on? No, you actually would not. Do you honestly believe that God would tell you to keep Holy Days and then not leave you a calendar to show you when to keep them?

I am sure all reading this are all nice people, that you do good deeds etc. etc. but if you are being paid to hit the center of a target and you miss, you do not get paid. And so, it is with the high holy days. If God has called you and put before you the scriptures (bible) which told you what days to keep and you dismiss them and go off and listen to some guy telling you to go look for barley or new moons and you miss the target then you have lost your first fruit resurrection and your chance to rule with Christ. Not keeping the high holy days on the correct days as God has laid in front of you is a sin, plain and simple. Sins are not just when you do something bad like steal something or kill someone. Sin happens when God tells you to do something, and you don't do it and sin also happens when God tells you not to do something and you do it anyway. There is no excuse for anyone not to know which days the Holy Days are on. It is all in the Bible and it is pretty clear from scripture exactly which calendar they are using to keep the correct holy days on. It does not take a genius to understand this. What it does take is someone who wants to follow God. Someone who wants to do the right thing whether it is a new doctrine or an old doctrine they need to change. **God's chosen elect will all be found keeping the same calendar and the same high Holy Days.**

How can this possibly happen when the Church is so scattered and divided on doctrines, casting out and hating one another??

So, this is the question I have attempted to answer in this Iron Sharpening Iron, and here the answer is: God's people may be scattered and there may be a good reason for that in these end times. People are more hidden from the enemy (Satan and his minions, mostly his minions) in smaller groups.

The second part of the question is easy. God's people are not divided on doctrines. God's chosen elect will all be found keeping the entire law of God and according to scripture some will barely make it. So, it is not an easy thing to work out your own salvation. It requires a lot of hard work and study.

And if you are in a group that is still disfellowshipping people you have two choices, leave the group or stand up to ministry when you see that being done. Being Dismembered from a group is not the end of the world and many who are dismembered from the group learn what scripture actually says a lot faster than they will ever learn it in such a group. (The use of the word "dismembered" instead of "disfellowshipped" has been borrowed from my friend David Sielaff.)

Extra Notes:

Recently we heard a minister say that only the beheaded people will be the elect of God. In other words, only those who have been beheaded will be in the first fruits resurrection. He uses:

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and / *saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Here is the major problem with that teaching, King David was not beheaded, and we know he will be in the first fruits

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resurrection. Also, Paul and many others were not beheaded.

Also, in 1Co 15:51-52 which is talking about the first fruits resurrection it shows clearly that some will be raised from the dead and others will just be changed because they are yet alive at the time of Christ's return.

1Co 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **1Co 15:52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Now, another person using the same verse Rev. 20:4 combined with Rev. 7:9 got from it that two separate groups would be resurrected. In other words, there would be the group of the 144,000 and then another group besides that called a great multitude.

Rev 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

The problem with thinking the 144,000 and the great multitude are two separate groups is found in Rev. 14:1 and 14:3 which clearly shows in verse 3 that the 144,000 were redeemed from the earth and standing before the throne. The time frame would be the marriage supper of the lamb.

Now look in Rev. 14:1, again, we have the 144,000 who returned to the earth with Christ to fight the nations and start the Kingdom of God rule for 1000 years.

So, the great multitude and the 144,000 are the same group and they are those who were redeemed from the earth and will rule with Christ for a thousand years. This is the first fruits resurrection.

Rev 14:3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Rev 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

In Rev. 20:4, I believe it is talking again about one group which would be the 144,000 redeemed from the earth but in this verse, it is explaining the various traits of those who were redeemed and why: For example, part of the job of the first fruits will be to judge others which will happen during and after the thousand years is up.

So, this verse starts out talking about judging and ends with “reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Then what is in between those two descriptors is how they ended up getting these jobs of judging and reigning for a thousand years.

They got these jobs because they were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God. They did not worship the beast or his image. They did not receive the mark of the beast. And these are only a few of the things they did to be worthy of rulership with Christ. So, it isn't talking about only the beheaded will be in the first fruits resurrection and neither is it telling us there were two groups in the first fruit resurrection.

Then another problem arises in that some people the bible says will be in the first resurrection do not seem to be from any tribe and yet it numbers the 144,000 as being part of all the tribes except Dan. Read the Faith Chapter Hebrews 11. Many people listed in that chapter did not seem to be of any tribe. Also, what about the people from the time of Adam to the Flood that may be in the first fruit resurrection.

The only solution to this that I can see right now is were they at some point grafted in? Can the grafting in be both physical and spiritual? The grafting in is found in Romans 11.

Does anyone have any articles in regard to the grafting in and how it works that they can send to us for consideration for print?

In regard to: Symbolism Of Oil

Article by Nathaniel Burson
Comments by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

Ten Virgins Controversy

Burson in his article "Symbolism of oil", states, "So no, oil does not represent the holy spirit, and never did." Then goes on in the third sentence of that paragraph with this statement, "The fruits of the true Christian". Meaning the oil represents that as he explains it in all that paragraph.

Next sentence. "And by fruits, I don't mean the pillow fluffing and helping old ladies across the road; but the changes they've made in their nature." Well, my, my, my, try that without God's Holy Spirit and see where that gets you! God's very nature cannot be produced in you without His Spirit in you. **Ro 8:9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Furthermore, **Zec 4:6** Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, **This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts**". (Emphasis mine throughout) Not by one's own might or by one's own power, but the power of and by God's Holy Spirit! That is the only way you are going to change your nature!

With out God's Holy Spirit, no oil can be produced. That to me then can be likened to God's Holy spirit and five of the virgins did not have any oil, "for their lamps had gone out". No Holy spirit, no oil, no fruits, no truth, no "change in their nature", as the author put it.

He then goes on to say this, "An abundance of oil, and a lamp brightly burning in the world, is the result of a sincere Christian **changing themselves into the likeness of God daily (2 Corinthians 3:18).**"

What, we are changing ourselves into the likeness of God? Bible course 101 and any one serious in understanding what God is doing one would see that is a bold face lie and be able to site. **Ge 1:26** ¶ "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" No, not at all, just the opposite, God is making us in His likeness. **Isa 64:8** But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter; and we all *are* the work of thy hand. **Isa. 45:9**..... Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?.....

Here are some of the fruits of the spirit, **Ga 5:22** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," Helping old ladies across the road (pillow-fluffing) would be gentleness-goodness and love. The New Testament throughout is filled with examples of so-called "pillow-fluffing!"

Loving your neighbor as oneself is changing one's nature with God's help. Again, you can't change your carnal nature on your own into the likeness of God.

Oh yes, we have our part in the matter but only if we let and desire God to fashion us in His likeness.

Let's stop playing word games. **2Ti 2:14** ¶ Of these things put *them* in remembrance, **charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit**, but to the subverting of the hearers.

As far as truth being closer to representing the oil, this is what God has to say about truth, **1Jo 5:6** ¶ This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. **And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.**

One needs (#1) God's Holy spirit foremost to produce (#2) truth, to produce (#3) fruit. So the oil consists of all of these and perhaps more.

Choose the one that best fits your pet narrative and stop arguing- disputing over words to make yourself feel more "holier than thou"!

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One sure falsehood (lie) in Burson’s article second to last paragraph he says this, “The light is produced by our works. **Our righteousness, not God’s righteousness.**” Oh, such nonsense. This is what God says about “our righteousness”, **Isa 64:6** But we are all as an unclean *thing*, **and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Jesus says, **Mt 6:33** “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”. Just what is His righteousness? **Ps 119:172** My tongue shall speak of thy word: **for all thy commandments are righteousness.** When we live by the righteous commands of God’s Holy law we are doing, living the ways of God, His righteousness in us, not ours. That can only be accomplished in us by God’s Holy Spirit! Yes, yes, yes, God’s righteousness, not ours!

Last, if not least, Burson says this, “So the question is... do you have enough oil? **I doubt it.**” Oh, what a judgement on others reading his “truth” about the ten virgins. Everyone reading his article including you if you read his article have been judged by him that you do not have enough of God’s Spirit or oil to be God’s child. What a flat out arrogant Hollier than thou perception he has of himself.

So again, everyone, even if God Himself has you as one of His, (only He knows) Burson has judged if you come upon his article, as not one of Gods! Now, how is that for self-righteous judgement of others? Arrogance reeks here. God says pride and arrogance is a man’s downfall. **Pr 8:13** The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: **pride, and arrogancy**, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. **Pr 16:18** Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. **Da 4:37** Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: **and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.**

So, brother Burson, Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Then God won’t have to do it for you! Because God does correct every son whom he loves. **Heb 12:6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Holy Days 2023

Passover – April 6, 2023 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 6-12, 2023

Pentecost – May 26, 2023

Trumpets - September 16, 2023

Atonement – September 25, 2023

Tabernacles –September 30, 2023 to October 6, 2023

Last Great Day – October 7, 2023

Notes