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## Faith to Face the Future

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**Billion-dollar bank failures!** Government rescues with trillions in bailouts, but somehow, nobody is at fault!

**Global crop failures!** Caused by global warming, or by genetic engineering and mass agri-business practices? Solved by the carbon tax—governments charging us to use the atmosphere?

**Who are our enemies and who are our friends?** Europe, Russia, Arabs, China, Korea? We do business with them all, but we don't trust each other. We waged expensive war, based on lies, and have not reduced terrorism.

We claim to bring freedom to other nations, but our own government wants to imprison and torture people without trial, to completely control healthcare, schooling, and just about everything else.

**We need not fear any of this!** The Bible shows us how we may have faith to face the future without fear—whether the "great tribulation" (Matt 24:21; Rev 2:22; 7:14) occurs in our day or many generations later. This faith is not dependent upon correctly understanding Bible prophecy! This is not to say that Bible prophecy is false or that nobody can understand it. **It is saying that faith goes above and beyond Bible prophecy!**

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**Faith not Fear**

The following short verses tell us the story:

But He [Christ] said to them [disciples], “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?”... (Matt 8:26).

Are we fearful? Do we have Faith?

There is no fear in love; but **perfect love casts out fear** because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love (1Jo 4:18).

With the love of God in our hearts, we know he is working things for our Good (Rom 8:28) and we do not need to fear what happens to us.

*Let your conduct be **without covetousness**; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So, we may boldly say: “The LORD *is* my helper; **I will not fear**. What can man do to me?”* (Heb 13:5).

It is easy to fall into the trap of covetousness. Big government and big business still live lavishly, and more media continue to trumpet money as the means whereby security and pleasure come to us. We hope to build a solid financial foundation for the future. But trust in those things is what produces **fear** in us. Indeed, the financial crisis and wars ahead might claim our homes, our cars, our savings and almost everything we have. But they will not claim what is eternal and important (1Pet 1:3).

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have **not** received the spirit of bondage again **to fear**; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Rom 8:14-15).

For you are all **sons of God through faith** in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26).

Good human fathers will let their children earn their own living and take care of themselves as they are able. But if they fall into disaster, especially not of their own making, they will take care of them. God will take care of us!

“I [Paul—and all believers] have **been crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I **live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Our purpose on the earth is to grow to be sons and daughters of God, to live forever with Him. We are here to learn to live by faith in God and reflect Him. We can continue to serve him with the resources we have now, knowing that we can trust Him to take care of us wherever we have to go, and whatever kind of good or evil leaders we may find ourselves under.

**The Results of Fear**

People who fear the future often spend a lot of time and money on prophetic books, videos, CDs, etc. While it is good to read Bible prophecy (Rev 1:3), one can waste a huge amount of time trying to prove or disprove the thousands of prophetic interpretations of the Bible. These things often make their authors wealthy or powerful, but rarely can one find anything that accurately predicts events before they happen without error.

Prophetic interpreters usually have elaborate charts showing how Bible prophecies predicted the dates of past events and how yet unfulfilled prophecies predict the dates of future events. What is virtually always missing is the past “track record” of the prophetic interpreter, showing that his predictions of ten years ago all came to pass as stated. Rather, one usually finds that the prophetic interpreter has revised his prophecies over the past 10 years because they **did not** come to pass as stated. Sure, they will claim that God gave them new revelation or changed His plan to give mankind more time. But how do we know that God will not do that again with their current prophetic interpretation?

So, do we need to know the dates of anything in advance?

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Indeed, it is **the people who do not have enough faith in God that desperately want to know when the major trials will come upon the world.** They will take time “to figure out prophecy” or spend money for someone else to do so to protect their lives and possessions. They want to pull their money out of the banks or stock market before they collapse. They want to flee to another city, state, or country if trouble is coming to theirs. They want to store food and supplies for themselves before a famine strikes. None of those things are wrong by themselves. But trusting in our ability to physically take care of ourselves produces fear—because we might not be able to do it. But trusting in God does not.

“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. Therefore, I say to you, **do not worry** about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matt 6:24-26).

While the Bible teaches the wise use of our physical resources, no scripture says that we will be judged by how much wealth we acquired during our life. The decisions we make in how we treat others, in developing the love, mercy and justice of God in our lives are far more important. God may choose to show us personally when a disaster is coming so that we may save our resources to share them with many people. If he chooses not to show us, and we lose everything we have to military action or a natural disaster, he does not hold us responsible.

Let us consider an example in concrete terms. Suppose a Christian has a million dollars that he wants to save for difficult times in the future—for his family, friends, and neighbors. The best thing he can figure out to do with it is spread it out among several accounts so that all the money is insured. But suppose the banking system collapses with no bailout and he loses all his investment. Is God going to hold him accountable for not interpreting prophecy or finding out about the secret backroom deals that bankers and governments make? Probably not. While this writer has seen and read about this kind of case occurring, there is another kind that is far more common.

Many Christians, unfortunately, intend to hoard their resources for their own benefit during the troubled times to come. Even worse, some have wealth that they have dedicated to God, but which they are still using largely for their own benefit. Sure, these people probably do not think of it that way—they think they are taking care of their own **needs**, not **desires**. But if they would tell their story to an impartial group of brethren—or to Christ in the Judgment, the conclusion would probably be that they are serving themselves.

And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 “And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 “So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.” 20 “But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then who’s will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:15-21).

This writer has seen the above happen—Christians who amassed wealth and died young. He has also seen cases where selfish Christians amassed wealth and lost it—their life being spared. Maybe God preserved their life so they could learn from the experience and go on to grow and be in the first resurrection.

The circumstances of each case vary considerably. Some people simply had much-above-average savings and investments, knew that they could help others from their abundance, but chose not to do so and lost it due to unexpected illness or financial reverses. Others had property or investments that they believed God wanted them to use for a specific purpose, but instead of selling them right away for a moderate price, they hung on to them hoping to get more—only to later see their value dwindle too little or nothing. These unfortunate situations were almost never foreseeable from a human perspective and in most cases the technical financial advisor might have said the people were doing the right thing. But they were not putting God first.

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**The Results of Faith**

If disastrous days are nearing, we need to have the **faith** to be ready for them. If we believe that God has told us to sell our house for a third of its current value and move elsewhere, would we have the faith to go through with it? What kind of revelation would it require for us to do something like that? A personal revelation to us? One to our local congregation or our church headquarters? What if our church leaders or members were divided on the validity of the revelation? (This writer has seen this happen.) Sure, we might receive \$100,000 more by waiting for the right buyer. But if we stay, our city may be destroyed by a cataclysmic event, one for which insurance companies will not pay. If we wait for evidence so obvious that everyone knows a disaster is coming, nobody will be buying houses.

We need to learn to live by faith each day. We need to be led by the Spirit of God in what we do:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom 8:14).

We can oppose the evil of our day, without fearing it—even though it comes to pass. When we see corrupt laws passed or injustice done in our nation, we can speak, write, and sometimes vote against it, just as John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles condemned evil in their day and as the “good and just” Joseph of Arimathea voted against it (Luke 23:50-51, NWT). If we are successful in resisting evil and implementing righteousness, praise the Eternal. However, we cannot make the mistake of thinking that either our salvation or the salvation of mankind depends upon our successes in dealing with corrupt human governments. If our efforts to implement righteous rule do not succeed in implementing it, they do succeed as a public witness that there are Godly people with righteous options, who were rejected by the masses.

**But even when the evil that we strongly opposed comes upon our nation, we need not fear it.** Most of mankind, and specifically those who believed in God, have suffered under corrupt governments ever since the Tower of Babel. Hebrews chapter 11 chronicles righteous people who suffered, and who are going to reign with Christ in the first resurrection. Some people mentioned there lived a long time, others died young. During the first couple of hundred years after Christ, the church was persecuted greatly, but it grew!

While we realize many people will suffer in difficult times, we also realize that many people come to God in those times. The goal of the Christian is to bring people to God, not to live the middle-class American dream. Peace and protection come from God, not from getting ourselves (or our children and grandchildren) into nice houses, good schools, and good jobs. It is not wrong to have good things, but all of these things should be used to advance the Kingdom.

As we see the time of the end approaching, we should not be hiding ourselves and our provisions away where we think we will be safe. Rather we should be:

1. “...Consider[ing] one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:24-25). See also Malachi 3:16-18.
2. “...Sigh[ing] and cry[ing] over all the abominations that are done within it [our nation]” (Ezk 9:4). “And [God] delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed [or distressed—NIV] by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds) — then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment (2Pet 2:7-9).
3. Resolving to refuse to cooperate with evil religious and economic systems, even at great risk to ourselves. We may not know exactly what the “Mark of the Beast” is, but we know that people both worship the Beast and receive economic benefit from his mark, and that we should do neither (Rev 13:16-17; 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).
4. **Making preparations to reach people with the gospel during troubled times as many people will come to repentance because of it** (2Cor 7:10; Rev 7:9-14). This seems like such an obvious idea, but this writer has heard few ministries that are stockpiling Bibles or booklets to bring people to God in difficult times. Many plan to escape the tribulation, but they should consider Matthew 16:25; 24:45-47; and Luke 12:42-44.

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5. Making sensible preparations—even secret preparations—to sustain lives of people in danger, even at a risk to our own lives (1Kngs 18:3-4). This would include basic things like food, water and shelter, and maybe more sophisticated things like alternate energy, agriculture, and construction facilities. The question to always ask: Is it for you or is it for the kingdom?
6. “Let[ing] no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being” (1Co 10:24). “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil 2:4).
7. Realizing “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (John 12:25).

### **Knowledge and Power**

There is a tendency among Sabbath-observing believers to value the spiritual gifts of knowledge, wisdom and teaching very highly. These gifts are indeed valuable. Sabbatarians have managed to come out of much error that entered Christianity through paganism and unbiblical church tradition. However, knowledge must still be kept in perspective. God does not always work through knowledge. As difficulty increases toward the end of the age, even correct knowledge of prophecy, governments, business, farming, food preservation, alternate energy and other survival skills will probably not be the only means by which God takes care of his people.

Several different Scriptures contrast the **knowledge** and the **power** of God.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine **power** has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the **knowledge** of Him who called us by glory and virtue (2Pet 1:2-3).

The Greek word for “power” here is *dunamis*, from which we get words like dynamic, dynamo, etc. It refers to “**miracle working power**” as in “And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for **power** [*dunamis*] went out from Him and healed them all” (Luke 6:19). This word *dunamis* should always be understood as miracle working power, as there are other Greek words used for being strong, full of energy or political/military power. The Bible shows that the corrupt Sadducees did not understand either the Scriptures or the Power of God, but that God wants us to understand both:

Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not **knowing the Scriptures** nor the **power** of God” (Matt 22:29).

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the **power** [*dunamis*] of the Holy Spirit. Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all **knowledge**, able also to admonish one another. (Rom 15:13-14).

The Apostle Paul teaches that certain people tend to seek after different things, in this case the Greeks sought wisdom, an off-shoot of knowledge, but the Jews sought a sign.

For **Jews** request a **sign**, and **Greeks** seek after **wisdom** but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power** [*dunamis*] of God and the **wisdom** of God (1Cor 1:22-24).

Of course, Christ gave the Jews a miraculous sign, his resurrection from the dead (Luke 11:29-30), but most of the Jewish leaders started a conspiracy to defame it rather than accept it (Matt 28:11-15). The apostle Paul showed the Greeks at the Areopagus the wisdom of God, but most mocked him or put him off indefinitely, not accepting the wisdom of God (Acts 17:18-34).

When the Corinthians were being deceived by false teachers, Paul said he would not enter an argument with them, deciding the issue through knowledge, but would deal with them according to the miraculous **power** of God.

But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the **word** of those who are puffed up [**knowledge** puffs up—1Cor 8:1], but the **power**. For the kingdom of God is not in **word** but in **power**

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[*dunamis*] (1Cor 4:19).

### **Future Understood by Power of Holy Spirit**

When it comes to the trials at the end of the age, Peter made it very clear that the power of God would see us through, not someone else’s understanding of biblical prophecy. This author realizes that many people are very serious in their desire to understand Bible prophecy and work very hard at it—many hours per week for many years. But even so, much of that work may be out of their own fear of the future, or from a desire to be considered spiritual by others. Even so, unless one’s prophetic understanding is inspired by the Holy Spirit, the most intricate prophetic interpretation, even if it explains every prophetic verse, is still a “cunningly devised fable”.

For we did not follow **cunningly devised fables** when we made known to you the **power** [*dunamis*] and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory:

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain [the “Transfiguration” Matt 17:1-9]. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed [“more sure word of prophecy”—KJV], which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that **no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation**, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit (1Pet 1:16-21)

Prophecy cannot be understood simply by man trying to understand it! While some of the New Testament writers wrote as if Christ might return in their lifetime, there is not one place where they said that God had revealed that to them—because He hadn’t. Nor did they ever claim that they knew Christ was returning based upon the prophecies of Scripture. They just knew the times they were living in were extremely difficult—so much so that Paul’s human wisdom caused him to recommend that single people not marry, though he said it was not sin to do so (1Cor 7:25-28).

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of **wisdom** and **revelation** in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **that you may know what is the hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His **power** [*dunamis*] toward us who believe, according to the working of His **mighty power** (Eph 1:17-19)

Paul is speaking to all believers here. The “spirit of revelation” gives us understanding of the hope of our calling. This revelation is a part of his “miracle working power” (Greek *dunamis*). This theme of revelation by the Holy Spirit to all believers is found elsewhere in scripture.

But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” **But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a

### **One Reason For Faith to Face the Future**

Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D. Ohio) has been warning the USA about the dangers of voting machines since the 2004 election. At that time, he was aghast that “**Diebold Election Systems**, which came under the harshest criticism from the California elections panel, is headed by CEO **Walden O’Dell**, who [in 2003] became active in the re-election effort of President Bush, even attending a strategy meeting with wealthy Bush benefactors at the President’s private ranch in Texas. Soon after, O’Dell wrote a fund-raising letter where he said he was ‘committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year.’”

Both Kucinich and other election watchdogs have pointed to demonstrations by computer experts of how possible it is for a skilled person to alter the results of electronic voting machines.

Now, on 9/9/09 blackboxvoting.org has news of the planned merger between Election Systems & Software with Diebold/Premier Election Systems, which will leave one vendor of voting machines. Blackboxvoting.org also explains the abandonment of all paper ballots in many precincts and the continued non-prosecution of election law violations—such as officials who take unsupervised possession of voting machines and records for hours at a time. It is very possible that we will not have a fair national election again.

Christians can oppose corruption and tyranny, while simultaneously being confident that even if evil leaders succeed, God has handled them before, will take care of His people, and will soon judge them!

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man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, **not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual** (1Cor 2:9-13).

Christ taught his followers that they would understand the future through the Holy Spirit:

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **He will tell you things to come** (John 16:13).

The same knowledge and power duo is here, too. The spirit guides us into truth—helps us to study the Bible and history so that we understand the plan and purpose of God. But it also shows us things to come, something that can only be done by miraculous power.

### **How Do We Experience the Power of God?**

We receive the miraculous power of God by asking, by asking a lot, by asking for it to do God’s will, not for our own benefit. We receive it by faith.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing (1Th 5:16-17).

...Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure (James 4:2-3, NLT).

Does not James understand the way many believers are? How often do we ask our Father for His miraculous power to serve others? How often do we ask for miraculous revelations of the future, so that we can know what to do now? Some people, who claim to believe in God, would think we are “nuts” for doing such a thing. This is not power so that we can become a religious leader and have a following after ourselves. This is power so we can serve others and do his work now!

Then He spoke a parable to them, that **men always ought to pray and not lose heart**, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. **And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him**, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, **will He really find faith on the earth?**”

Some Christian writers have gone as far as to say that God is no longer working by miracles, but only through the efforts of church organizations, collecting and spending money to do His work. Certainly, some of His work has been done that way and He will give His servants credit for it (1Cor 3:12-14) But it is also understandable why people who only understand this kind of work would fear the future. The financial structure of the world—and also these church organizations—is likely to fall apart.

Those who trust in the power of God realize man can do nothing to exceed God’s power. We do not need to fear the future, even the collapse of our economy or nuclear war. If we do not feel close enough to God that we are comfortable with His care, then we need to begin to get there, now.

**One way to strengthen ourselves is to get in the habit of continually speaking to others, confirming our trust in God to deliver us in difficult times.**

Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. “They shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare



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them As a man spares his own son who serves him” (Mal 3:16-17).

We should be able to talk about our trust in God for miraculous deliverance with the same practicality that we talk about our jobs, our school, going shopping, etc. We should not have a “practicality voice” which we use to discuss physical things, and a sanctimonious voice we use to discuss religious things. The same God that created the food we eat and the ground upon which we stand is the one that will deliver us by his miraculous power. Our Messiah and Savior commanded that we not be ashamed of Him and His words:

When He had called **the people** to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels**” (Mark 8:34-38)

Through our prayers and ongoing sharing of His words with those we meet, we can have faith to face the future, through the miraculous power of His Holy Spirit. Amen.

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## **Why is the Fat Reserved for God?** **(Copyright) by Nathaniel Burson (Big Sandy, Texas)**

We all know that God says that “the fat is mine” dozens of places in the Old Testament. Did you ever wonder why? And for that matter, why would God ask us to do something that is impossible? Why do I say impossible, you ask? Well, every piece of meat that you eat, regardless of where you get it on the animal, has at least SOME fat in it. So, while we can eat “lean” hamburger, 98% fat free, we’re still eating 2% of the fat that is “God’s”, aren’t we?

This last question in particular I see as critically important because if all we can do is “try” to avoid the fat, then it sets us in a habit of just “trying” to do what God wants, when we all know that avoiding all fat is quite impossible short of being a vegetarian. It sets us in a fatalistic attitude where we accept that we can’t succeed and assume God just wants us to do our best – which is terribly debilitating to righteousness, and results in people just “trying” to be righteous. Which, not surprisingly, never works.

God never asks you to do something that you cannot FULLY and completely obey! And avoiding the fat is no exception! See for yourself.

**Leviticus 3:14-16** *And he shall offer thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat is the LORD’S.*

That verse does “plainly” say that all the fat is the Lord’s. But look at how it prefaces it; it describes the fat that covers the inwards, which includes a deposit known as “perirenal fat” in modern biology, and “the fat above the kidneys” in classical biology. And the fatty mass surrounding the liver (the caul). In other words, the “visceral fat” (chest-cavity fat) as it is now

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called is all specifically mentioned; but not mentioned is the “subcutaneous” (under-skin) and intra-muscular fat. All of the fat you will find in ground chuck will be intra-muscular fat. So is the fatty layer that often accompanies shanks and certain steaks.

As you read through all of the Old Testament prohibitions against eating the fat, you will never find a mention of intramuscular fat or subcutaneous fat being prohibited or reserved for God. But rather every time that “ALL the fat is mine” or a similar statement is made, it has been prefaced with or followed by a definition of “ALL the fat”. For example:

**Leviticus 7:3-4** *And he shall offer of it **all the fat thereof**; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul that is above the liver, with the kidneys, **it shall he take away**:*

And in the next verse, “All his fat” goes undefined, but the verse after connects us back to the previous sacrifice:

**Leviticus 4:19** *And he shall take **all his fat from him and burn it upon the altar. And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this**:*

How was the fat handled on that sacrifice?

**Leviticus 4:9** *And the two kidneys [of the bullock for the sin offering], and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, **it shall he take away**,*

Again, only visceral fat is mentioned. And that is consistent throughout the Bible. But what does all of it MEAN? We know WHICH fat God reserved for Himself, but we still don't know WHY!

**Leviticus 7:22-25** *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, **Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it. For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people.***

That is one of the key verses on this subject; what exactly does that tell us? It tells us that God is very serious about us not eating the fat, that is clear. And the other verses make it clear that He is speaking of visceral fat.

It also tells us that unlike, say, pork, the fat is not unclean, because it “may be used in any other use”. Other uses for fat include soap, grease, candles, waterproofing, and quite a few other things.

And finally, it is interesting to note that God only mentions the fat of oxen, sheep, and goats; it does not mention chicken fat or fish fat. And on the issue of fat they are completely ignored elsewhere as well.

This world, and the things in it, are made after the pattern of heavenly things. **Hebrews 8:5** indicates this, although admittedly this is not really the context it was in. But we know that we are fashioned in the pattern of God; made in his image, to look just like him. But the world around us is all a part of a master pattern; from what the animals represent to how they are made, it is all part of a big picture. And particularly those things that God makes an issue of such as the fat and the blood being reserved for Himself have a deeper symbolic meaning.

Biologically, the fat is used by the body to store excess energy in good times for hard times; let us make an analogy; fat is the “money” your body needs to survive. When there is a temporary excess of money coming in, on payday or harvest season, you will first spend that money on this week's grocery bill, and then you will store the surplus in a bank. Then in the downtime between your next payday you will draw on that reserve. If you have a well-paying job or low expenses, then you will continue to have an excess every month and save that money back for your retirement, children, and grandchildren.

And that is, in a nutshell, what fat is designed to do. When you take in more carbohydrates (starches and sugars primarily) than your body will use between now and the next meal, the excess is primarily stored as fat; the fat is deposited in various parts of your body and when you fast (voluntarily or involuntarily) these fat cells are broken down and used for

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energy. And now we have enough groundwork laid, I can tell you what fat MEANS, and WHY God chose it for Himself.

**Genesis 45:18** *And take your father and your households and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.*

Fat is considered by many cultures, particularly those in the middle east, to be a delicacy. And as we saw, only the visceral fat is prohibited. Here God promises that they will eat the fat of the land. There is also a dual meaning because here the fat (the same Hebrew word is used as elsewhere in Leviticus) is pictured as a blessing of plenty of food and good land. Because the fat is one of the end products of metabolism in the body, God uses it to represent the end product of working a good productive land – in that sense, the fat would also represent the bottles of wine and oil, the barns full of hay and the bins full of grain for the next year.

**Numbers 18:12** *All the best <same word “fat”> of the oil, and all the best <fat> of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.*

Here God uses the same word translated as fat in a metaphoric sense to mean the “best” portion of something. Obviously, wine is entirely fat free, so it has no fat in the literal sense. And here God was giving the “best” - the “fat” of the land to the sons of Levi. And now comes the fascinating part:

**Numbers 18:20-21** *And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, **I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance**, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.*

Later on in the same chapter, after going through all the things God had given to the tribe of Levi, He sums it up in the word “tenth” - the tithe! It is the TITHE that the “fat” represents! There is another, even stronger proof of this, in...

**Ezekiel 34:3** *Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.*

This was a parable meant to condemn bad ministry who was concerned with fleecing the flock and not with shepherding it and keeping sin out of it. And as part of the condemnation, He accuses them of being clothed with the wool – not a sin, obviously – and of eating the fat (which as long as it wasn't the visceral fat wasn't a sin either!). But the fat is represented again as the TITHES and money which was fleeced from the “sheep” in God's “flock”.

So here is the conclusion: as God blesses a righteous person or nation, they accumulate excess; called in the Bible “increase”. As a healthy body grows on good food, it accumulates a healthy excess which it stores back called “fat”. As a righteous person saves back this “increase”, God requires that a tenth be saved back as tithe and given to Him. The rest of your increase you are free to enjoy the fruits of however you see fit.

**Numbers 18:17** *...burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.*

God required the Levitical priesthood to burn on the altar all visceral fat; this was God's portion, his “tithe” of the animal. The rest (in most cases) they were free to enjoy themselves. The fat that was removed was a lump portion of energy which the animal, thanks to God's blessing, had been able to save up and which God took as His tithe of that animal.

The fat pictures God's blessing of an animal and a people; most of that fat and that blessing is ours to keep, but the visceral fat is representative of God's portion, and eating that is stealing from God (**Malachi 3:8**), and whoever eats it will be cut off from Israel (**Leviticus 7:25**). Pretty simple really.

So don't think twice about that 2% fat in your hamburger; enjoy it as the blessing of God that it is. And the moral of the story? Don't ever accept that God will ask you to do something that can't be done perfectly.

**Psalms 63:5** *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow [same word: “fat”] and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:*

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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## Delighting in Design –and in its Originator<sup>1</sup> (Copyright 2022) by Philip Bell (Powder Springs, Georgia)

Living things certainly *look* designed—like the intricacies of a peacock’s tail.

You have likely heard it said, or said it yourself, “Everywhere we look we see design.” Obviously, one would fully expect believers in biblical creation, and advocates of Intelligent Design, to attest to design in the creation—hence the many books and countless articles in magazines like *Creation*, journals, newspapers, and on the web, plus the plethora of videos on DVD and online.

Living things certainly *look* designed. Some people are surprised to learn that even well-known, militant atheists and evolutionists will admit this fact, as the following three cases illustrate. Let’s hear first from British biologist [Richard Dawkins](#):

“Living things are not designed, but Darwinian natural selection licenses a version of the design stance for them. We get a short cut to understanding the heart *if we assume* that it is ‘designed’ to pump blood.”<sup>2</sup>

Director of *The Skeptics Society* (US) [Michael Shermer](#) agrees:

“The design inference comes naturally. The reason people think that a Designer created the world is because it *looks* designed.”<sup>3</sup>

So does American evolutionary biologist and Intelligent Design critic [Jerry Coyne](#):

“If anything is true about nature, it is that plants and animals seem intricately and almost perfectly designed for living their lives.”<sup>4</sup>

In the above instances, Dawkins, Shermer, and Coyne had living organisms in mind. But on a cosmic scale, too, top scientists affirm design. Charles Townes (1915–2015), who shared the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1964, unashamedly affirmed the universe was God-made:

“Intelligent design, as one sees it from the scientific point of view, seems to be quite real. This is a very special universe: it’s remarkable that it came out just this way. If the laws of physics weren’t just the way they are, we couldn’t be here at all. The sun couldn’t be there, the laws of gravity and nuclear laws and magnetic theory, quantum mechanics, and so on have to be just the way they are for us to be here.”<sup>5</sup>

So, to repeat, wherever we care to look we observe design. This being so, why is it that many people today seem unable (or unwilling) to accept the evidence of their eyes?

### Design denial

Recall that Richard Dawkins actually admits that “a short cut to understanding” living things is gained by *assuming* that they *are* designed—even though he emphatically rejects that any designing intelligence was involved; and certainly not the God of the Bible. He is very insistent upon this point, but also inconsistent! And those who disagree with him—who believe instead that the *Creator God* is behind all the design we see—he calls deluded. Of course, not all atheists and

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sceptics go as far as Dawkins in their rhetoric. Nevertheless, an increasing number of people in our secular society are buying into the lie that design denial is synonymous with (even necessary for) scientific integrity. They are persuaded that design denial is an entirely sensible position.

‘Talk about design if you really must, but whatever you do, don’t bring God into the discussion.’ That, they claim, is bad science! I am reminded of the line from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, “The lady doth protest too much, methinks.”<sup>6</sup> You can substitute “lady” with any spokesperson for the secular scientific establishment who claims that it is unscientific to follow the trail from designed things to the Designer—a claim that is contrary to the Bible (e.g., Romans 1:20). No, we really *should* follow where the scientific evidence leads us. We have nothing to fear from facts, only fact-denying dogma. Beware of those who say otherwise, whatever their credentials.

Anything that has the hallmarks of intimidation and propaganda should be treated as such. The following words are very apt, a fictional description of the ruling Party of the totalitarian state of Oceania, in George Orwell’s dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: “The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command.”<sup>7</sup> Again, applying this to the evidence of design before our eyes, we say no. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck—it is most likely a duck. If something looks designed, and the assumption of design will actually help our understanding of it, it is special pleading to claim that the ‘science’ of Mother Nature, Lady Luck, and Father Time has made the Designer God redundant. In recent years, new scientific evidence has not been kind to the idea that unguided natural selection and genetic mutations over deep time produces sophisticated design (see [‘Evolution explains everything about life’](#)).<sup>8</sup>

### **The Maker’s marks**

The hallmarks of design are everywhere we care to look. In making the point that Jesus was far greater than Moses, one Bible writer wisely affirmed, “For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God” (Hebrews 3:4). This is not the place to delve further into that passage, but don’t miss the message: if the architect and construction workers are the ones who deserve the credit for an impressive house, the One who is “builder of all things” even more so.

When something “looks designed” (Shermer), even “perfectly designed” (Coyne), we do indeed get “a short cut to understanding” (Dawkins) if we acknowledge it to be so. Trying to avoid this leads to a sort of cognitive dissonance, a conflict between two contradictory ideas—as in, ‘it looks designed, let’s pretend it’s designed as it’ll help us understand it, but let’s be sure to keep telling ourselves it is *not* designed.’

In his most recent book, *Return of the God Hypothesis* (2021),<sup>9</sup> Stephen Meyer reminds his readers that:

“... many of the founders of modern science did not just assume that the universe had been designed by an intelligent agent. They also argued for this hypothesis based on discoveries in their fields of study. Johannes Kepler ... Robert Boyle ... Carl Linnaeus. Many other individual scientists made specific design arguments based upon empirical discoveries in their fields.”<sup>10</sup>

These [great scientists](#) of the past, rather than denying the design that stared them in the face (and suffering cognitive dissonance), delighted in it! This was a vital factor in their fruitfulness as outstanding scientists.

‘Delighting in design’ is certainly true of the editorial team of CMI’s [Creation magazine](#), as well as the many authors and graphic artists who contribute to each new issue. Consider subscribing if you don’t already receive it—read, learn, and share it with others.

Let us avoid the foolish mistake of ascribing greatness to the things that are made. Christians should also help friends, colleagues, and family members to avoid this pitfall. Instead, we must be sure to worship the Maker whose marks we have observed in His manufactured creatures—evidence for God’s Grand Design is all around us. Merely to delight in the created designs *themselves*, while robbing our Creator of the glory that is rightfully His, is sheer idolatry (see Romans 1:25).

### **References and notes**

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10. Meyer, ref. 5, p. 47. Return to text.

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## Talking 2017 or what? Déjà vu all over again

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**"The ruler was a strong leader who brought renewed wealth and power to the nation. He restored the border. He made new trade possible, and money flowed into the country from abroad."** – Beyond Today magazine, January 2017

BUT A HICK OUT IN THE STICKS had a different message from God: "The time is ripe for My people. I will spare them no longer." That was about 782 BC and the leader was Jeroboam.

The man was a sheep herder by the name of Amos. He said, "Sovereign Lord, forgive!" And God delayed His judgment. For a while! But will He delay it for America?

In 2017, an Amos might have said to the President, "If the Lord didn't spare Jeroboam's kingdom, will He spare ours when the people continue to sin time and again?"

A political awakening is all well and good, but what we really need is a spiritual and moral awakening. Are we living in pre-World War III days? I'm glad to be in my 80th year, so I won't have to see all of it.

I've also been thinking about the world as it was when my parents conceived me, in 1941 about a month before Pearl Harbor. The President was Franklin Roosevelt, who wasn't pro-immigration like his "altruistic" admirers who opened our border on the south. In May 1939, the SS St. Louis left Hamburg, Germany for Cuba with 925 Jews trying to flee from Germany. They had Cuban passports, but the ship was not allowed to disembark. It sailed to Miami, but FDR sent the Navy to prevent access to America's border and warned other countries in the hemisphere not to allow those [bleep] Jews to land.

In June 1939, the ship where the people were allowed to disembark in England, Holland, Belgium, and France. The Nazis took over Holland, Belgium, and France the following year. About 200 of the passengers from the St. Louis were deported to concentration camps, and nearly half of them died in the Holocaust.

**"By late 1941, the doors into the U.S. had been all but closed."** [source: Friends of Zion magazine, January 2020].

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But late 1941 is exactly when I came into the "picture." Eighty years later, I'd like to remind you about a book entitled "As America Has Done to Israel." Maybe it's no mystery why God allowed Japan to bomb Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt had been told what was happening to the Jews by a Polish diplomat, Jan Karski, face to face. Though nearly two million Jews had already been murdered in Poland, Roosevelt didn't want to hear about it. His wife Eleanor said this at one point:

**"If something was unpleasant and he didn't want to know about it, he just ignored it. He always thought that if you ignored a thing long enough, it would settle itself.**

"AMERICA REFUSES TO BOMB THE RAILS": that's another article in the 1/20 FOZ issue. It tells the story of a Treasury Secretary, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. investigation into the State Department in 1943. State told him that their role in the destiny of Jews in Europe was none of his business (he was Jewish). Rabbi Stephen Wise had told him about the atrocities, and he confronted a career bureaucrat at State and then Secretary of State Cordell Hull, but finally took the issue to FDR himself. By the spring of 1943, we could have bombed the rail lines into Auschwitz; we were already ready to bomb an industrial complex near there.

Morgenthau's assistants produced a Report on the Acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of Jews." Finally, FDR must have seen the light, and he removed the Department of State from the issues involving Jews, refugees, and so on.

**"Deplorably, by the time of this action, some four million Jews had already been slaughtered."**

In retrospect, it's amazing that the Lord allowed us to win that war. It was the last one we won.

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**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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**<http://www.renewamerica.com/columns/dahlgren/220131>**

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## **Thought on 2 Timothy 1:13**

**(Copyright) by Albert Hudson (United Kingdom)**

*"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."  
(2 Tim. 1:13).*

Throughout the ages the progress and development of Christianity has been marred by doctrinal strife. Intolerance, discord, and persecution has stained many a fair page of the Church's history with its indelible markings. Men and women whose loyalty to the cause of Christ was beyond question have nevertheless so utterly failed to grasp the essence of Christian teaching that they have soured their lives and blemished their good works with the evil fruits of religious controversy. And realising, as one must do, that the seed of these things lies in individual conscientiousness and zeal for the Truth it is a matter for wonder that greater thought has not been and is not being given to the essential place of theological teaching in the Christian life. That it is an important—perhaps the most potent—of the external forces shaping and influencing our development cannot be denied. That it is of all aspects of our fellowship together the one most productive of misunderstanding, division, and the waxing cold of that love which constitutes the evidence that we have passed from death into life, is unhappily only too true. That we in this day have been blessed with an insight into the deep things of God far exceeding the portion of past generations is so tacitly accepted that the position is never questioned. Yet current thought still tends to gravitate to the extremes; we are told on the one hand that salvation comes by reason of an intellectual appreciation of true theology, and by means of which faith remains unshaken in the evil day; upon the other hand that doctrinal understanding is of such relatively little importance that nothing more than a mental

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acceptance of Jesus Christ, coupled with a life of good works, is asked of those who would follow in the steps of the Master.

Somewhere between these extremes the truth must lie, and it is with sober and reverent minds that we should enquire, first as individuals, and then in communal discussion, if we are to occupy our rightful place as ambassadors for Christ to this generation. The Apostle Paul, writing to his son in-the-faith Timothy, leaves us in no doubt as to his own outlook on the matter. *"If anyone...will not give his mind to wholesome precepts—I mean those of our Lord Jesus Christ—and to good religious teaching, I call him a pompous ignoramus. He is morbidly keen on mere verbal questions and quibbles, which give rise to jealousy, quarrelling, slander, base suspicions, and endless wrangles; all typical of men who have let their reasoning powers become atrophied and have lost grip of the truth."* (1 Tim.6:3-5 N.E.B.). That is all too often where the doctrinal enthusiast finishes—the doctrinal enthusiast, that is, who finds no place for the other side of the Christian way. That other side is defined by St. Paul in this same passage *"Pursue justice, piety, fidelity, love, fortitude and gentleness. Run the great race of faith and take hold of eternal life. For to this you were called...Turn a deaf ear to empty and worldly chatter, and the contradictions of so-called 'knowledge,' for many who lay claim to it have shot wide of the faith."* (1 Tim.6:11,12,20,21 NEB)

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## **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**