

Are Birthday Celebrations Christian?

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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

Contributors: BibleStudy.org, Curtis Dahlgren, Pat Higgins, HOIM Staff, Eddie Hyatt, Sue Hyatt, John Jewell, Laura Lee, James Steinle, Rich Traver, Craig White

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

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Birthday cakes. Lighted candles. Singing "Happy Birthday." Receiving gifts. In almost every culture and nation on earth, virtually nothing is as universally celebrated as birthdays. But is birthday-keeping biblical? Does YEHOVAH God agree with this practice?

As sure as death and taxes, all human beings are born on a particular day. Everyone has a birth date. Since God wants people to celebrate life abundantly (John 10:10), could this include celebrating birthdays? Is birthday-keeping innocent fun -- or does God hate it? Does it even matter? If you bought a new computer, you would expect it to come with an instruction manual. Without a manual, you would have to learn how to use it through trial and error -- and possibly delete necessary files and software in the process. The instruction manual saves users many headaches.

Believe it or not, you also came with an instruction manual -- the Bible! YEHOVAH God's expressed will and purpose is written throughout its pages. Every word of Scripture is YEHOVAH's message to you -- who you are, what you are, why He created you and how He expects you to conduct your life. Everything you need to know about the true purpose of life is written in YEHOVAH's Word (John 17:17; Matthew 4:4; II Timothy 3:16-17).

When you read the Bible, YEHOVAH God is talking to you! He shows you how to live a happy, fulfilling, abundant life. Pick up your "instruction manual" and examine what YEHOVAH says about birthdays.

Birthdays in the Bible

Birthday celebrations are mentioned in the Bible on three separate occasions and, in each case, something terrible occurred. These three accounts bear brief examination.

The first account is in Genesis. Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, celebrated his birthday by executing his chief baker (Genesis 40:1-23). YEHOVAH gave Joseph special understanding of a dream by Pharaoh's butler and baker, that the baker would lose his life three days after Joseph interpreted the dream. Joseph understood that Pharaoh would use this occasion -- his own birthday party -- to put his baker to death. As the dream had foretold, the baker was hung at the party.

In the second account, the New Testament figure Herod the tetrarch reluctantly ordered the beheading of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:3-11). Notice verse six: "But when Herod's birthday was kept..." During the dancing and merry making at his birthday party, Herod got carried away and eventually made a promise that he did not want to keep. As a result, a great servant of YEHOVAH God lost his life.

The final account is found in the book of Job. The Bible says that Job's seven sons "went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them" (Job 1:4). These parties were obviously not centered around any kind of celebration related to YEHOVAH God, or Job would not have worried that his children may have sinned during these celebration feasts. He was not exactly sure what was going on in their minds, but the very celebration of their birthdays triggered great concern in him (1:5). Apparently, during the birthday party of Job's oldest son, YEHOVAH allowed Satan to kill all ten of Job's children through what appears to be a tornado (vs. 6-13, 18-19).

Further proof that these birthday celebrations displeased YEHOVAH God is found in Job 3. Take time to read the entire chapter carefully. Job spends much time cursing every aspect of the day of his birth. The loss of all of his children, due to a birthday celebration, stunned and sobered him. His words make plain that there is nothing good about the day of a man's birth. He openly cursed the day he was born. This will be shown to have greater meaning later in this article.

Some who are familiar with these accounts attempt to explain them away by saying that there is no statement contained within them that directly prohibits birthday celebrations. They also ignore Job's comments described in the previous paragraph. It is true that the above scriptures do not contain a *direct* condemnation of birthdays starting with the phrase

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“Thou shalt not...” or something similar. But consider for a moment the central lesson of each of these accounts. They represent the only three birthday parties described in the entire Bible. *Absolute disaster occurred on each occasion!* If YEHOVAH God felt birthday celebrations were something positive and good, why wouldn't He have recorded one other account where something either good or positive happened? Yet, there is no such account.

What About the Birthdays of Well-known Bible Figures?

Surely the Bible records the birth dates of its most important figures. Does YEHOVAH not want those who serve Him to recognize these most important birthdays? Let's search for the birth dates of some of YEHOVAH's greatest servants.

Abraham is referred to three times in the Bible as YEHOVAH God's "friend" (II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James. 2:23). He is also called "the father of us all" (Romans 4:16). Many verses demonstrate that he will play a very important role when the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God is established on earth at the Messiah's second appearance. However, the Bible does *not* record the birth date of this truly great servant of YEHOVAH God.

Moses was referred to as the meekest man on the face of the earth (Num. 12:3). Many verses describe this Bible figure and virtually everyone is familiar with him. The Bible does not tell us when he was born either.

The famous King David is called "a man after My [YEHOVAH's] own heart" (Acts 13:21-22). Much of the Bible describes the life of this man. YEHOVAH used him to record a great many of the Psalms. When the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God is established on earth, prophecy records that he will rule the tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 34:23-31), called there the house of Israel. Surely the Bible records the date that this towering figure was born. It does not!

There is not one verse of Scripture describing anyone celebrating the births of these righteous men. In fact, the Bible is silent on the exact dates of the births of *all* YEHOVAH's faithful servants -- Jacob, Sarah, Noah, Abel, Samuel, Job, Esther, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Peter, Paul, James (the Messiah's brother), and the rest of the apostles. Even the birth date of Yeshua the Messiah goes unrecorded in the Bible!

The Christmas “Birthday Party”?

But what about Christmas? It is in the Bible, isn't it? Doesn't it celebrate the Messiah's birth? Didn't the wise men bring presents to baby Yeshua because it was his birthday?

Study any reputable encyclopedia or visit a well-stocked public library and you will discover that Christmas was celebrated by immoral, pagan idol worshippers -- people who many times sacrificed their children to pagan gods -- 2,000 years before the Messiah was born! December 25th originally marked the time of the winter solstice.

These idol worshippers held pagan festivals to celebrate the "rebirth" of the sun when the days began to lengthen. Let's briefly examine the subject of the "wise men" who gave gifts to the Messiah. The scripture that describes this is in Matthew 2:1, 11:

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born *King of the Jews*?...And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: *and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*"

It is commonly supposed that these were birthday presents for "baby Jesus." But is this what the Bible actually says? Absolutely not! Also, they arrived well after his "birthday." Notice that it refers to the Messiah as a "young child" rather than a baby. This is one more reason that the gifts brought to him could not have been "birthday presents."

A long-standing, ancient custom of the East was to present gifts when one came into the presence of a king. These men understood that they were in the presence of the "King of the Jews." The Bible has many examples of people sending gifts to kings or presenting them upon arrival into the king's presence. This custom is common today when ambassadors or others come into the presence of a world leader.

Finally, notice what the **Adam Clarke Commentary**, Vol. 5, page 46, states about what really happened on this occasion:

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“Verse 11. They presented unto him gifts. The people of the east never approach the presence of kings and great personages, without a present in their hands. This custom is often noticed in the Old Testament, and still prevails in the east, and in some of the newly discovered South Seas Islands.”

Gifts were customarily presented to kings. The real intent behind this example should now be clear.

YEHOVAH God does not even *record* the exact day the Messiah was born. And nowhere in the Bible can you find examples of the Messiah’s disciples or the New Testament Church celebrating his birthday. However, YEHOVAH does tell us the exact month and day when the Messiah died (Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:4-5; Numbers 9:1-5; Matthew 26:1-2; John 18:28; I Corinthians 5:7). He expects all true Christians to observe *that* day annually, in the same month, on the same date (I Corinthians 5:7-8).

Think for a moment! Every year, millions of professing Christians celebrate the supposed birthday of Yeshua the Messiah. Yet they do not properly observe the day that the Messiah *died*, which YEHOVAH clearly identifies and records in great detail in His Word. He *commands* His followers to observe this memorial annually. Yeshua warned about such misguided professing Christians, saying, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men” (Mark 7:6-8). Each year, during the Christmas and Easter seasons, Yeshua’s warning is proven right!

How YEHOVAH God Views Your Birthday

We have now established that the Bible records negative examples of birthday celebrations, while it is silent on celebrating, or even identifying, the birthdays of all of YEHOVAH’s faithful servants -- including the Messiah.

But what does the Bible specifically say about *your* day of birth?

Most people think that the day of one’s birth is special. Celebrating it certainly does *seem* and *feel* like the right thing to do. Yet, Solomon was inspired to write, “A good name is better than precious ointment; *and the day of death than the day of one’s birth*” (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

Like Job, Jeremiah also cursed the day of his own birth: “*Cursed be the day wherein I was born*: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed...Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?” (Jeremiah 20:14, 18).

If the day of our death is better than the day of our birth, and some of YEHOVAH God’s greatest servants said that their birth date was far from being a special day, then how special can this day be? According to Scripture, it is not a time to express joy, sing and expect gifts, simply because one is born into the world on a specific date.

The Day of a Man’s Death

We have just read that the Bible explains the day of a man’s death is better than the day of his birth. This is a stunning statement. Most people do not think of death as particularly wonderful. When it happens to a family member or close friend, it is usually a day of terrible sadness and emotion. No matter how or when death comes, no one celebrates the event. The Bible describes death as an *enemy* and a *defeat*. Consider some of the following verses describing death. Keep in mind that the Bible still says this day is better than the day of birth.

Solomon also wrote, “As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. *And this also is a sore evil*, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit has he that has labored for the wind?” (Ecclesiastes 5:15-16). Does this sound like a day to look forward to? The Bible still states that the day this verse describes is better than the day of one’s birth.

The apostle Paul was inspired to write, “For the wages of sin [that you earn by breaking YEHOVAH’s laws] is *death*” (Romans 6:23). Death is the *penalty* for sin. It is not pictured in the Bible as a day of triumph or, as so many like to picture, “as a *friend* one meets at the end of life’s highway.” Paul also wrote, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and “...it is appointed unto men once to die” (Hebrews 9:27). Sin leads to death. John was inspired

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to write the definition of sin: “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4). The penalty -- the wages -- of sin is death. This is not an event to look forward to.

But there is hope!

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to this earth to rule -- to put all things, including his enemies, under his feet. This includes the enemy called death. Notice:

“Then comes the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He has put all *enemies* under His feet. The *last enemy* that shall be destroyed is death...So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. *O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 15:24-26, 54-56).

So, this life is a physical, temporary existence. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. Considering this, what is so “happy” about a “birthday” into an ungodly, carnal-minded world, only to die and never see life again? Why celebrate being born into a world that is cut off from YEHOVAH’s divine guidance -- a world of misery, confusion, poverty, ignorance, famine and disease -- that could erupt into violence at any time?

YEHOVAH God can and will give you eternal life. He wants you to have it. He wants you to live life to the fullest and experience the way of life that produces real peace, joy, abundance and security. But life has to be lived *His way*, according to *His rules*.

Paul wrote,

“For since by man [Adam] came death, by Man [Yeshua the Messiah] came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive...The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening [living] spirit...The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45, 47-49).

When compared to the awesome future YEHOVAH God has in store for us -- becoming spirit beings who will never taste death and will not be limited to the physical laws of this material universe (read all of I Corinthians 15) -- celebrating one’s physical birthday seems foolish.

Origin of Birthdays

Then where *did* birthday celebrations come from? The astonishing answer is from the pagan practice of *astrology*! Thousands of years ago, when men looked up into the night sky and charted the stars, they invented calendars and calculated the birth dates, to the very hour, of kings, rulers and their successors. These ancient pagan astrologers meticulously examined horoscopes and birthday omens because they believed that the fate of the rich and powerful might affect an entire society. Even to this day, men have been putting their trust in horoscopes instead of YEHOVAH God.

In ancient Egypt, the pharaohs ordered businesses to close on their birthdays and gave enormous feasts for hundreds of servants. In ancient Greece, wealthy males joined birthday clubs composed exclusively of men who shared their birth date. Once a month, the club celebrated with a feast. When a member died, he left money to help pay for future parties. In Persia, noblemen observed their birthdays by barbecuing an ox, a camel and a donkey and serving hundreds of small cakes to the celebrants.

In ancient Rome, the emperor gave huge parties in honor of his own birthday, which included parades, circuses, and gladiatorial combat. The celebration of days was so important to the average Roman citizen that the Roman calendar designated a majority of days for some form of celebration -- including many birthdays of gods and famous men.

The Roman calendar, with its emphasis on continual celebration, has had great influence on modern society. Consider the following quote about the origin of the Roman calendar:

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“Our [Roman] calendar is not Christian in origin. It descends directly from the Egyptians, who originated the 12 month year, 365 day system. A pagan Egyptian scientist, Sosigenes, suggested this plan to the pagan Emperor Julius Caesar, who directed that it go into effect throughout the Roman Empire in 45 B.C. As adopted it indicated its pagan origin by the names of the months -- called after Janus, Maia, Juno, etc. The days were not named but numbered on a complicated system involving Ides, Nones, and Calends. It was not until 321 A.D. that the seven-day week feature was added, when the Emperor Constantine (supposedly) adopted Christianity. Oddly enough for his weekdays he chose pagan names which are still used.” (*Journal of Calendar Reform*, Sept. 1953, p. 128.)

Modern birthday parties and celebrations by children take their form mainly from Germany, where the birthday child received gifts, chose a menu and received a candle-ringed butter or jam cake. The lighted candles for the cake may have originated from the birthday of the Greek moon goddess Artemis. Pagan worshippers honored her every month with moon-shaped honey cakes. Because the moon glows with light, the cakes were decorated with lighted candles.

Saying “happy birthday” to friends and loved ones was society’s superstitious way of protecting them from evil spirits. Birthday thumps, bumps, pinches, etc., were said to bring luck and send away evil spirits. Party snappers, horns and other noisemakers were also intended to scare off bad-luck spirits.

It should now be clear that birthdays are not only unbiblical, *they are pagan!*

YEHOVAH’s Sacred Calendar

It is important to note that YEHOVAH God has His own calendar. Much could be said about this subject. This brief explanation is vital. Typically, the number of days in YEHOVAH’s year is not the same from year to year. They are based upon the moon -- *not* man-made calculations that include leap years.

YEHOVAH’s calendar includes seven extra 30-day months in each 19-year cycle. This calendar rule, alone, ensures that birth dates would vary widely from year to year throughout one’s lifetime. It is as though the sacred calendar was designed by YEHOVAH God to make birthday celebrations impossible to observe, while the Roman calendar was specifically designed to make birthday celebrating more convenient.

The date of February 29, which only occurs once every four years, creates a special problem for all those with this birth date. However, only one person in every 1461 is affected by this “leap year” problem. The irregularities of YEHOVAH’s sacred calendar, with its extra 30-day month, occurring seven times in a 19-year time cycle, would affect one person in every *eight!*

Why It Matters to YEHOVAH God

Why does YEHOVAH God care whether or not you celebrate birthdays? After all, it is a chance for you to give presents to someone and make him or her feel good. What could be wrong with this?

Here’s what YEHOVAH commands: “Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed by them. For the customs of the people are vain” (Jer. 10:2, 3).

After YEHOVAH God freed Israel from slavery, He clearly instructed them, “After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, *shall you not do*: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, *shall you not do*: neither shall you walk in their ordinances” (Leviticus 18:3). YEHOVAH commanded that they not defile themselves with the practices and customs of the surrounding nations (vs. 24-29). “Therefore shall you keep My ordinance, that you commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that you defile not yourselves therein: *I am the Lord your God*” (vs. 30).

This is an emphatic command from YEHOVAH God. He does not want His servants dabbling in the customs of this world.

But what about those who reach age eighty, ninety or one hundred years old -- should we ignore altogether the many years of life experiences they have gained? No. In our current society, where senior citizens are routinely ignored and considered to be a burden, it is certainly permissible to *acknowledge* someone who has reached a considerable number of years. Someone who has lived through two world wars, the Great Depression, the Atomic Age, the creation of the

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modern nation of Israel, the Cold War, men walking on the moon, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedy assassination, civil rights marches, race riots, the rise and collapse of the Berlin wall and the worldwide growth of the Internet, has reached an age where special honor should be naturally conferred upon them.

Proverbs 16:31 says, "The hoary [white or gray] head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." People who have lived to great age, sometimes reflected by pure white hair, often have great wisdom and experience to share with younger generations. Simple *acknowledgment* that they have reached age 70, 80, 90 or 100 shows them honor and appreciation. It is not wrong to *acknowledge* that one has reached a milestone in a long life.

What we have described above is far different than *celebrating* birthdays with all of the usual pagan traditions! Celebrating the day of one's birth, as though it were a special occasion, is *wrong*. It violates YEHOVAH God's command. It keeps people selfishly focused on their *temporary*, physical lives, when YEHOVAH's purpose is to give His people Israel *eternal* life in His Family. True Israelite-Christians should be focused on how their lives are preparing them for rulership on this earth at the return of YEHOVAH God and Yeshua the Messiah.

Realize that YEHOVAH God hates all pagan customs and traditions -- birthday celebrations are not an exception!

See HOIM Staff's other articles at:
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The Church of Evolution
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The weather in various parts of the world seems to be becoming more and more extreme. In the United States there have been fearsome ice storms through several states. A colleague living in Kentucky said that power lines and trees are down everywhere and there are said to be about 4 million homes in Kentucky without power and at least three other states close to Kentucky which are in the same boat. More storms are expected in the next few days. He said that he and his wife in the biting cold were without power for four days. Here in England the east side of the country, including the southeast where we live, have had heavy snow falls. It is said that these are the worst for around 18 years. All the southeast airports were closed. Basically, the east side of England has been in chaos. At the same time Australia has been suffering the most dreadful heat waves, these have killed a number of elderly people with 22 reported sudden deaths in Adelaide. In Melbourne half a million homes were hit by a power cut. Temperatures more than 40 C or 104 F have "baked Victoria and South Australia for three days." Australia has experienced severe drought now for several years. It looks as though there is going to be no relief from it. The weather is something that constantly affects us. We are always interested in knowing what the forecast is. There can be few people around this world who never listen to a weather forecast on TV or radio.

You are probably familiar with the old country saying about the weather! It goes something like this: "Red sky at night, shepherd's delight; red sky in the morning, shepherds warning." Many people may recall that that in fact is a quote from the bible. Originally it was said by Jesus Christ to the religious leaders at that time. They were questioning him and wanted him to show them a sign from heaven. A sign which would prove conclusively that he was who he said he was. But he said to them "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' "and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' He then called them hypocrites and continued "You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times." He concluded "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." On another occasion he said this: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." We aren't much different are

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we! Then there was the time mentioned by Luke in his gospel. He quoted Christ who said that people just would not be persuaded, they would not believe, even though they witnessed someone rising from the dead. His disciples certainly did believe. Their faith was so strong that they were put to death except for John, he died at an advanced age on the Isle of Patmos.

Having, over the past few months, watched several TV presentations featuring Professor Dawkins who has been constantly and vociferously pushing the false doctrines of the religion of evolution, I have now been forced into an awareness of another of the high priests of evolution. I have known of David Attenborough and his wildlife programmes for many years. They are well made and attractive to watch, although I have generally said they are best viewed with the sound commentary switched off. In recent years I have preferred to not watch them. But a new offering to the false god was hard to avoid. The publicity in the newspapers was virtually in one's face. One extreme statement heading one report was 'Bible to blame for devastation of the planet, says Attenborough' If you didn't see this obscenity then you missed nothing but the foolishness of an otherwise intelligent man. David Attenborough constantly misquoted and misused the bible. I can only assume he did it deliberately. He said how the book of Genesis peddled lies about how animals and plants appeared on earth. That it was at the root of why there was now serious environmental degradation due to the "greedy exploitation of the earth's natural resources." How did he come to this explanation. He had to have deliberately misquoted the first chapter of Genesis where God tells Man to subdue the earth and to have dominion over every living creature. He said that this gave the green light to Man to exploit the environment.

David Attenborough ignores the passage which says that man was "...put into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." By "dominion" as David Attenborough well knows, is to be in charge of the earth and to look after it. To be responsible for its health and maintenance. By using the word "exploit" he is accusing God and the word of God of lying. By using that word, he is accusing God of being responsible for, as he says, "...the devastation of vast areas of the land's surface." His presentation of evolution was predictable in that many statements are made but without proof of any kind. But, I suppose, there couldn't be any proof offered as none exists. He tried to show that the eye, both human and animal, with all its incredible complexity evolved. This ludicrous effort revealed the very fragile feet of clay that David Attenborough's and Professor Dawkins' false god has. There are very real and unanswerable questions both of them deliberately and knowingly avoid. Many are the examples in the Creation of an "irreducible complexity" - in other words, something that exists and couldn't possibly exist unless something else had happened at exactly the same time. The design and construction of the ordinary wooden mousetrap is a classic example. It has been said that there is no example of a rotary mechanism in the Creation - in fact there most certainly is. It is that of the flagellum which is a rotary drive mechanism.

There are so many embarrassing questions to be asked of such people, questions such as could be asked of Russian scientist Oparin who died a number of years ago. His premise was that life came into being as a result of lightning striking a pool of water which was laced with a number of chemicals. At no point did Mr. Oparin explain where the lightning came from. What made it strike the water. And where did the water come from and how did it happen to have all those chemicals in it. And where did they come from anyway. Mr. Attenborough and Professor Dawkins talk endlessly and eloquently about the "truth" of evolution and the "lies" of Creation, but always avoid the many questions that cannot be answered by their god. The big question of where did the universe come from is a question you may ask, but will never be answered, by these two people. Or any other priest of the church of evolution. Challenge these people as you may, and a number have, the security system given to this 'church,' will swing into action. To this false religion which is what it is, a protective system will activate. Letters you might write, eMails you might send, all will be carefully ignored, or be answered with an anodyne note. You will not be invited to take part in a TV rebuttal of the evolutionary creed.

Catherine Pepinster, the editor of The Tablet, which is a publication of the Catholic Church, achieved exactly 4 column inches for her to give her response to Mr. Attenborough. He had 21 column inches and a large, full colour photograph. In addition, he with others, gets the full benefit of television and its support systems to propagate their false religion. For religion is what it is. For their beliefs, there is no proof that can be called "proof" - for their beliefs there is a multitude of questions that cannot be answered. Indeed, will not have the benefit of even an attempt of an answer. What there is, is a deep hatred of God, of Jesus Christ and of the word of God, the bible. It is not only interesting, but it is also most important that we realise and see what is happening. There have always been atheists, and there have always been those who think Darwin is a brilliant scientist. He did, what so many do, including our two TV personalities, and that is to start with a belief which is founded in a hatred of God and of the existence of an intelligence far greater than theirs. They, and others like them, seem to have a deep, unreasoning hatred of God and of his word, the bible. There is a deep determination to destroy all knowledge of God. So, they start with what they want as their conclusion and try to make

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everything fit thereafter. In this, they are aided and abetted by the television channels, supported by their resources and finances. What is the motive? For the channels it is a desire to produce attractive, controversial television. Whether it is the truth or not is quite irrelevant. Audience numbers are all important. The larger the audience then the higher is the fee that can be charged those who wish to advertise on television. For the non-commercial channels it is the desire for public recognition, acclaim and a higher salary which affords the motive power.

The bible itself reminds us very plainly of some realities. In the first chapter of Romans this is what the apostle Paul wrote: "For the invisible things of him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (that's us! you and me) even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they (us) are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, (and they do, don't they) they became fools, (I didn't say that the Bible did!) And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." There's quite a bit more, but this is sufficient to condemn the church and theology of the church of Evolution and its false god.

This is, after all, what Satan's world is all about. Anger and hostility against God and all those who believe in the Father and look to Him and His son, Jesus Christ. As we rapidly approach the return of Christ and the ending of Satan's power over this planet, we can expect more and more frantic efforts by such as the priests of the church of evolution. His days, and those of the demons with him are numbered. There might just be another day for his priests if they wake up and repent of what they are doing and have done. In the meantime, the rest of us need to examine ourselves and see where we stand with the Father. The apostle Paul reminds us that although we have to see and recognise where evil lies and resist it, and warn others of it, in the end we all are to stand before God one day in the not too distant future.

See John Jewell's other articles at:

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

Azazel: Observations and Questions

(Copyright 2023) by Pat Higgins (Charlotte, North Carolina)

The recent understanding that the second goat of the Atonement offering—the one sent “into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man” (Leviticus 16:21)—represents not Satan the Devil but our Savior Jesus Christ generates some observations and questions.

We can see the governing principle for this subject in a quote from the article, “Seven Keys to Understanding the Bible,” written by Herbert W. Armstrong, that appeared in the December 1984 *The Good News* magazine:

For generations men have been putting human interpretations upon God's symbols. An important KEY, therefore, is that these symbols are interpreted in plain language in the Bible itself, if not in the context, then elsewhere, and we must search for God's own interpretation, never apply our own. (Emphasis in the original.)

One observation is that the new understanding of the *azazel* goat's symbolic identity highlights God's ability to delay His revelation of certain truths, even for long periods. Note the verses that point to who bears our sins, even as the *azazel* goat bore the sins of Israel:

- » [S]o Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many . . . (Hebrews 9:28)
- » [W]ho Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree . . . (1 Peter 2:24)
- » And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)
- » For He shall bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11)
- » And He bore the sin of many . . . (Isaiah 53:12)

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In terms of the former view, how many verses show that Satan bears human sins? *None*.

To illustrate how common, it is for people—even professing Christians—to miss obvious truth lying in plain sight, two more examples appear in well-known verses:

- » . . . He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality . . . (I Timothy 6:15-16)
- » For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Church members reading this article see the evident truths God reveals in these verses: Respectively, Jesus Christ alone among humans has been raised to immortality, and human beings do not have an immortal soul but must be given eternal life as a gift from God. Yet, having read these verses numerous times, most in nominal Christianity still believe they have an immortal soul and what they earn for sin is not death but eternal life in a place called hell. They have believed faulty men and religious tradition rather than God’s plain, unambiguous statements of truth.



Truth in Plain Sight

What accounts for the human ability to miss obvious truth in plain sight? Notice this explanation in I Corinthians 2:10-11, 14:

But God has shown us these things through the Spirit. The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God. Who knows the thoughts that another person has? Only a person’s spirit that lives within him knows his thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God... A person who does not have the Spirit does not accept the truths that come from the Spirit of God. That person thinks they are foolish and cannot understand them, because they can only be judged to be true by the Spirit. (*New Century Version* [NCV])

According to Scripture, the understanding of spiritual truth comes from revelation through God’s Spirit, not human intellect. One can have an Einstein-like brain, but it will prove useless in understanding spiritual knowledge. God reveals truth through His Spirit, and *He* reveals those truths at a time of *His* choosing (Daniel 12:9; Acts 1:7). Until God intervenes, people are left trying to understand the Bible through inadequate human intellect. Jesus Christ is the Word, the words of God personified (John 1:1, 14). One cannot know the Word by human effort, only by revelation (Matthew 16:15-17).

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But the truth is not revealed in one fell swoop, as noted by Herbert Armstrong on page 28 of his “Personal from Herbert W. Armstrong” in *The Good News* of December 1976:

I did not say ten years ago—twenty years ago—forty years ago—that God had revealed THE ENTIRETY of His TRUTH to me instantaneously, even before he conferred on me His GREAT COMMISSION. Always I have said, “God has revealed His TRUTH, little by little, a single bit of truth at a time.” Always I have said, “I am HUMAN—subject to MISTAKES.” Every man God ever chose and used was the same. David was a man after God’s own heart BECAUSE he confessed errors, mistakes and sins—REPENTED, and turned from the wrong to what God showed him was right. (Emphasis in the original.)

God is working with very fallible men. Human beings can be quite thick-headed in overcoming habits, traditions, and biases developed over many years and need heavy persuasion to change their minds, especially over serious matters like doctrine. But God works with astounding patience in revealing His truth—even truths that should be obvious—to the church, spurring understanding by His Spirit when the time is right.

Human Inadequacy

The recent revelation of the *azazel* goat’s identity raises another observation: Not all we believe is entirely accurate, no matter how long we have held our beliefs. Every human being, including an apostle or other church leaders with God’s Spirit, as Mr. Armstrong noted above, can be mistaken in both belief and practice until *God* chooses to reveal the truth.

Herbert Armstrong warned us of human inadequacy when he stated: “*Don’t believe me—BELIEVE YOUR BIBLE—BELIEVE GOD!*”

Consider his experience. After adamantly preaching a Monday observance of Pentecost for nearly forty years, he changed—basically turning on a dime—to keep it on a Sunday as soon as *God* lifted the veil. He saw he had misunderstood the Hebrew meaning of a single word. That minor tweak was all it took to make *God*’s intention clear. Mr. Armstrong followed his own advice—an example all should note—and believed the Bible rather than himself. For him, *the Bible—the Word of God—overruled his teachings, thoughts, and traditions, no matter how long or firmly held.*

Because we are flawed human beings, I Thessalonians 5:21 instructs us, “Test all things; hold fast what is good.” Paul wants his instruction to warn us that our knowledge is not perfect. Otherwise, we would not need to test. This verse encourages us to be sure that what we believe has a solid foundation. That foundation is the one Herbert Armstrong pointed to: God and the Bible. As we have learned from the decades-long misunderstanding of the *azazel* goat, starting anywhere else leads to error.

If we allow the Bible’s plain language to interpret itself, it is obvious who the second goat represents. Here is a truth that vain man overlooks: God’s truth comes from revelation, not human wisdom or intellect. Because God had not yet chosen to unlock the truth about the *azazel* goat, all we had to rely on in our struggle to find an answer was human reasoning discovered in ancient Jewish texts, apocryphal literature, fictional Jewish works, and even Arabic/Islamic tradition. These works of imperfect men and traditions tainted by opposition to God proved to be poisoned wells, sources full of the knowledge of good and evil.

Why Now?

Why is God unveiling this knowledge of the *azazel* goat’s identity now and not sooner? Why has God left it obscure, perhaps since the time of the early church? God *must* have a purpose for the timing. Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NCV) states, “He does everything just right and on time, but people can never completely understand what he is doing.”

A possible reason for the timing is that He may be using it to test where our loyalties stand as we near the end. Are they with God and His Word, no matter what, or are they with tradition and human reasoning? Or, like ancient Israel, are we stubbornly doing what is right in our eyes (Judges 17:6)?

Another possibility is that God wishes to humble us. He may desire to remind us that truth comes not by our human intellect, might, or power, but only by revelation through God’s Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). It comes as a blow to a person’s intellectual pride to realize he has deeply believed a lie for decades, thinking and even declaring he knew “the truth.” Only profound humility allows an individual to repent of such vanity.

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Another reason could be as a sober warning that even the elect can believe a lie if we are not vigilant in testing the foundation for our beliefs and then hanging on to the sure foundation. Christ warns His disciples in Matthew 24:24 that, “if possible, even the elect” can be deceived. In I Corinthians 10:12, the apostle Paul also warns, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

It seems the end-time events predicted in the Bible have already started. To weather the coming storms, Christ provides us with the knowledge of how to withstand them:

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. (Matthew 7:24-25)

The storms of deceit have already descended on this world. We can endure them if our beliefs and conduct are founded on the Rock—Christ and His Word. If we once misunderstood who the *azazel* goat represents, it can warn us to redouble our efforts to check our foundation on all we believe and practice. Is it on the Rock?

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A Few Thoughts from My Heart for Friends (Copyright 2023) by Sue Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)

I am a true introvert. That is how God fashioned me. And lately, I've been asking Him and myself if an introvert can be a change-agent, and if so, how? So, I've been spending a lot of time just reading and thinking with God.

Not only am I an introvert. I am also an outlier. An outlier is one who does not fit within the norms of culture. I don't fit because, thanks to a great elementary and junior high school education, I was taught, not to mimic, but to think and to think critically. It's hard for a thinker to conform to a box, including a church box! In fact, I've learned that you cannot be a thinker and fit within the confines of church culture.

One passage that the Lord brought alive to me when I was 17 years old, was J. B. Philips' rendering of Romans 12:2: *Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.*

I know that God has called me to be a catalyst for change and that He has given me an important assignment. For at least 50 years I've given up all to follow Him and to carry out the purpose for which He created me. Yet, I don't yet see the change in culture—*church* culture—that I know a Message proclaimed in *kairos* time is meant to produce. That “change in culture,” I believe, is synonymous with a clause in the Lord's Prayer: *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10, Lk. 11:2).*

Truly, the Gospel changes culture from one that is governed by human rules to one that is permeated with God's ways.

And the general commission that I received from the Holy Spirit at the Urbana Missionary Convention in 1973 is found, in part, in Psalm 67:1-2: *God be merciful unto us and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.* (This includes the commission found in Matthew 28:18-20 and the empowerment found in Acts 1:8.)

As I literally gave up all—family, beloved job, horses (my life), pets, brand new car, job that I loved, and my country—and followed Jesus, walking out the specifics of His will for my life, I encountered a culture in the church world that not only

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surprised and stifled me but that also almost killed me physically. *But God!* Yes, despite all, God never abandoned me and He used that 8-year pastoral experience (and beyond) to open my eyes to the ungodly character of fallen culture that tends to rule the Christian community. In this culture, I was expected to function according to the roles designated by fallen culture, rather than by the unique gifts and personality that God had created in me to fulfil His plans.

So, with my eyes now open and with considerable life experience under my belt, I was sent back to school by God for additional, formal education, first in an undergraduate Christian college, and then on to a seminary followed by graduate school and doctoral studies. During those many years of study in Scripture, Church History, Theology, and Ministry, I received many awards and was encouraged by most of my professors. Yet, that element of discrimination remained in some teachers who expressed their bias in their efforts to discourage me. Yet I excelled and through my research, I discovered the Biblical truth that had, for centuries, been terribly distorted by humans who dared to act as mediators. How arrogant of them! Did they not understand that Jesus is the Only Mediator. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men [i.e., people], the man [i.e., human being] Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:5)?*

The culmination of my research is summed up in my book *In the Spirit We're Equal—The Spirit, The Bible, and Women, A Revival Perspective* (1998, and 2022). The thesis of the book and of my doctoral dissertation is that, according to Scripture accurately understood and evidenced by the work of the Holy Spirit throughout Church history, men and women are equal in substance and value, privilege and responsibility, function, and authority in all areas of life and leadership, ministry and marriage. This is what the Bible teaches. It is not what the Church teaches—not yet!

So, I ask, “When will *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10, Lk. 11:2)?*

So, this *introvert* and *outlier* is continuing to walk with the Lord and do His bidding. These days, I’m reading and studying more than ever and I’m continuing to think with Him.

And I am asking for your participation as never before. No one of us can do the job alone. Even as Paul had his Timothy, each of us must have those in our lives who will function together as a team and amplify the Voice of the Message of Jesus in its various components—including what the Church should be teaching about men and women.

Will you help me spread the Gospel “Good” News about men/women and Biblical equality? For surely, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me [us], because he hath anointed me [us] to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me [us] to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised....*

Will you help me spread the message for which God equipped me and has asked me to articulate in *In the Spirit We're Equal?* Would you give copies as seed to people with whom you rub shoulders? If you cannot afford a copy or copies, I'll believe with you and as God provides, I'll give as many as you can spread as seed.

Also, I welcome your suggestions as to how you believe God would have me advance.

See Sue Hyatt's other articles at:

Hyatt, Sue – Church of God, Bismarck (church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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Abraham Lincoln's Indictment of the Joe Biden White House (Copyright 2023) by Eddie Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)



"Too proud to pray to the God that made us" was the scathing indictment of Abraham Lincoln on the American people in the midst of a devastating Civil War. This statement was part of his proclamation for a day of prayer and humiliation for April 30, 1863. They were his final words in the following stinging rebuke.

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us (Hyatt, [1726: The Year that Defined America](#), 185)!

Lincoln's words are also an indictment on the Administration of Joe Biden and the Democrat Party, for even with hundreds dead and missing in the terrible fires of Maui there has been no call or even mention of prayer. And why not? Such a statement from the White House would not be unusual. It would, in fact, be the American thing to do.

Biden did issue a proclamation for a day of prayer for May 4, 2023. It should be noted, however, that he was required to do so by an Act of Congress in Public Law 100-307, which requires the sitting president to issue each year a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as a "National Day of Prayer." But no tragedy--neither the death of 12 Marines in the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, the descent of American cities into chaos and crime, or the hundreds killed in Maui--have moved this president to call for a day of prayer.

Lincoln's call for a day of prayer was very personal for he was known as a man of deep piety and prayer. It was also a part of American tradition going back to the Pilgrims, who often set aside special days for prayer and fasting in times of tragedy and need. During the seven-year Revolutionary War, no less than 15 calls for days of prayer, repentance, and fasting were issued by the Continental Congress.

The noted historian, the late Michael Novak, said, "In all moments of imminent danger, as in the first Act of the First Continental Congress, the founding generation turned to prayer" (Hyatt, [1726: The Year that Defined America](#), 109).

Could it be that this White House is too smug and proud to pray? Could it be that President Lincoln's assessment of America at the time of the Civil War describes this White House? Is Joe Biden too proud to pray?

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Interestingly, the nation responded *en masse* to Lincoln’s call for prayer with people gathering in churches, homes, and public buildings to ask God to intervene on behalf of America. Almost immediately there was a change in the direction of the War and it soon came to an end.

The prayerlessness of this Administration is indicative of how far removed it is from Lincoln and the founding generation. But even if this Administration will not pray, there is a praying remnant that can alter the course of America.

Both the Bible and America’s founding documents make it clear that the future of America is not tied to who is in the White House. For example, II Chronicles 7:14, which promises a national healing, begins with the words, *If My people*. It was not dependent on the king or the priesthood. God made it clear that the nation’s future could be secured by His people rising up and taking responsibility.

In a similar way, the U.S. Constitution begins with the words, *We the people*. In other words, America’s Founders saw themselves, not as God-appointed rulers of the people, but as representatives and servants of the people. It is from this form of government that we get the designation of government officials as “public servants.” For America’s founders it was not about a president or a Supreme Court. It was about “we the people.”

So, despite what is happening in Washington, D.C., there is a way forward for America. If a remnant of God’s people will take seriously both our history and God’s promises, there is no question in my mind that American freedom can be secured for another generation. If we will humble ourselves and pray, we can see another “Jesus Revolution” roll across the land like a giant tsunami wave.

See Eddie Hyatt’s other articles at:

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

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What Are Firstfruits in the Bible?

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The English word “firstfruit” appears only once in the King James translation’s Old Testament. It comes from the Hebrew word *reshiyth* (Strong’s Concordance #H7225) used to designate the first fruits of the harvest.

The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him (Deuteronomy 18:4).

The plural of this word, however, is found twenty-five times in the Old Testament. It is derived from the Hebrew *reshiyth* (mentioned above) or from the word *bikkur* (Strong’s #H1061).

The underlying principle of firstfruits was that, individually, Israelites were to offer God the first of what they harvested in gratitude of his abundant blessings. These offerings made first at the wilderness tabernacle and then at the temple, were then distributed to the Levitical priests.

The tribe of Levi was given the firstfruits of the harvest (as well as tithes, other offerings, etc.) in support of their dedicated service to God and as an inheritance from Him. They, unlike the other Israelite tribes, were not allocated area in the Promised Land they could individually own and cultivate (Numbers 18:24, Joshua 14:3 - 4, 18:7, etc.).

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The phrase "first of the firstfruits" appears only in Exodus 23:19, 34:26 and Ezekiel 44:30. Its use underscores the principle that offerings to God during the three annual Feast Day periods (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles) were to be the first and choicest of the harvest.

New Testament meaning

In the KJV New Testament, the Greek word *aparche* (Strong's G536) is translated both as "firstfruit" and its plural in Romans 8:23, 11:16, 16:5, 1Corinthians 15:20, 23, 16:15, James 1:18 and Revelation 14:4.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:18).

The term "firstfruits" was used to refer to those who first became Christians in a particular geographic area (Romans 16:5, 1Corinthians 16:15). The Apostle Paul also used the term to denote that Jesus was the first of many other faithful servants God will bring back to life from the dead (1Corinthians 15:20, 23).

Paul labels the select few or remnant of Israel, called to be Christians, as the firstfruits of countless other brethren who will also, someday, be called and converted (Romans 11:16). This, of course, implies that many others will be converted at a time chosen by God.

Lastly, the conversion of 144,000 Israelites (excluding the tribe of Dan), during the early stages of the Day of the Lord, is called the firstfruits of God and the Lamb (Revelation 14:4).

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The real Tom Jefferson
(Copyright 2023) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

Much of the "modern" Jefferson image was formed over 200 years ago by his political enemies. For example, the offspring-by-Sally Hemings rumor was started for the 1800 election campaign. Guides at Monticello still spread that old gossip. DNA never actually nailed an individual – only someone from the Jefferson family, such as his brother or a nephew who had access to the slave quarters.

Regarding sex-with-slaves, TJ was adamantly opposed to the mixing of the races and said so.

He spent part of his career working toward regulations on the treatment of slaves and for finding a feasible plan for the ending of slavery.

In the first place, he didn't import any slaves; he inherited land, and the slaves came with the circumstances. He "married into" more slaves. It was against the law in Virginia to "FREE" slaves!

His teachers at William and Mary were anti-slavery. He tested the waters of anti-slavery in the House of Burgesses.

In the Continental Congress he seconded a bill that would have banned slavery in future states in all of the western Territories – both north and south – and it failed by just one vote in 1784 (Washington banned the spread of slavery to the Northwest Territories)!

See Curtis Dahlgren’s other articles at:

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

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The Marxist Plan to Abolish the Family Unit (Copyright 2023) by Craig White (Australia)

The natural and biological family unit is gradually being abolished. This was proposed by Marx, Lenin and Western Marxists but not Stalin or the eastern Marxists. Lenin experimented with this in Russia and BLF promoted the idea on their website.

The idea was for the triumph of the individual so that parental leadership, nation, race would be abandoned. In its place would be a world state composed of individuals without family or nations. This is gradually happening.

Lenin also legalised homosexuality, abortion, radical feminism, euthanasia and liberalised divorce. Stalin reversed the homosexuality and divorce policies and I think euthanasia wasn’t much practiced.

Mao abolished divorce and I think banned euthanasia. Both Stalin and Mao as well as other Communist regimes brought back nationalism, which is anathema to real Communism which was truly globalist (i.e., one world government, regional government, national governments, no more monarchies, open borders and eventually no more nations). All would be in common and a unified world blob. Their solution to wars and human issues!

<https://www.huckmag.com/perspectives/its-time-to-abolish-the-family/>

See Craig White’s other articles at:

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

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<http://www.friendsofsabbath.org/>

Blackrock 10 Trillion Criminal Enterprise Sent by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)

Thanks for this. Our people are clueless, I expect. The STRUCTURE of World Government is forming. Who will head it remains to be seen, and we need to know where to look. This will impact us all - financially and in what we can’t say.

<https://harbingersdaily.com/in-depth-blackrock-sits-at-the-apex-of-the-deep-state-holding-unfathomable-power-to-reshape-the-global-economy/>

<https://t.me/LibertyZoneNewsBriefs>

See Rich Traver's other articles at:

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

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Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: Digital Identity

Article by James Steinle

Comments by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

In regard to Mr. Braugher's statement, "James Steinle repeated this preposterous quotation..." referring to the October 14, 2023 --- Issue No. 141 pg. 2, under "Digital Identity". Mr. Braugher indicated the information in that email was incorrect and stated, "Let's read the verifiable press releases from the actual authorities who issued them and stop publishing gossip."

After reading the response I was ready to admit that I might have been mistaken in what I had posted in the email that I received from another person. In checking for any inaccuracies I found an original source from the World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-06-2023-the-european-commission-and-who-launch-landmark-digital-health-initiative-to-strengthen-global-health-security>.

I believe Mr. Braugher may have misread part of the article, thinking it said something that it actually does not.

In regard to: Azazel: Observations and Questions

Article by Pat Higgins

Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

From the article:

Consider his experience. After adamantly preaching a Monday observance of Pentecost for nearly forty years, he changed—basically turning on a dime—to keep it on a Sunday as soon as *God* lifted the veil. He saw he had misunderstood the Hebrew meaning of a single word. That minor tweak was all it took to make God's intention clear. Mr. Armstrong followed his own advice—an example all should note—and believed the Bible rather than himself. For him, *the Bible*—the Word of God—overruled his teachings, thoughts, and traditions, no matter how long or firmly held.

So, the above is the first thing I will agree with and disagree with. Herbert Armstrong's advice is correct. Anytime we find from scripture that we have been wrong about something we should change and do the right thing. In this particular case though, Herbert Armstrong just went from a Monday Pentecost which was incorrect according to scripture to another incorrect Sunday Pentecost which also is not in scripture. The Pentecost taught in scripture is Sivan 6. In Herbert Armstrong's very early years he also kept a Sivan 6 Pentecost.

As far as the Azazel Goat goes why do you believe that it has to represent someone, for example Satan or Christ? The

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word scapegoat (Azazel) is only used three times in the bible, Lev. 16:8, Lev. 16:10 and Lev. 16:26 and in Strong's #H5799 it means “Goat of Departure”.

I see nothing in the below scriptures showing the live goat represented either Satan or Christ. In verse 8 it clearly tells you what both goats were for: One goat was for the Lord, symbolically for the people to atone with the Lord and the other goat was the goat of departure. The verse says nothing about the live goat representing anyone.

The goat for the sin offering was like any other sin offering. But the live goat was different. What they did with the live goat was to symbolically put all or the rest of the sins of the people on the live goat's head. Verse 30 and verse 34 tells you why they did this. They did this to symbolically show that all of the people's sins were atoned for and not just some of them. In other words what was symbolically being done here is that whatever the sin sacrifices did not cover, was now covered symbolically by putting all the rest of the sin on the live goats head and sending the goat out to an uninhabited wilderness. It symbolically took care of everyone's sin for at least one day of the year, that being atonement. The goat does not represent anyone. It is just symbolically a goat of departure to carry their sins away from them.

Atonement is symbolic of wiping the slate clean of all sin.

Lev 16:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;

Lev 16:2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail before the mercy seat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

Lev 16:3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place*: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

Lev 16:4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these *are* holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and *so* put them on.

Lev 16:5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel **two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.**

Lev 16:6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

Lev 16:7 And he shall take the **two goats, and present them before the LORD** at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Lev 16:8 **And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.**

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

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

Lev 16:11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself:

Lev 16:12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail:

Lev 16:13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not:

Lev 16:14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

Lev 16:15 **Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:**

Lev 16:16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy *place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

Lev 16:17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in

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the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

Lev 16:18 And he shall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, **and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about.**

Lev 16:19 And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

Lev 16:20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy *place*, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, **he shall bring the live goat:**

Lev 16:21 **And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:**

Lev 16:22 **And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.**

Lev 16:23 And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy *place*, and shall leave them there:

Lev 16:24 And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.

Lev 16:25 And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar.

Lev 16:26 **And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.**

Lev 16:27 And the bullock *for* the sin offering, **and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.**

Lev 16:28 **And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.**

Lev 16:29 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

Lev 16:30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* **ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.**

Lev 16:31 It *shall be* a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

Lev 16:32 And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments:

Lev 16:33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

Lev 16:34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel **for all their sins once a year.** And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Holy Days 2024

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

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 23-29, 2024

Pentecost – June 12, 2024

Trumpets - October 3, 2024

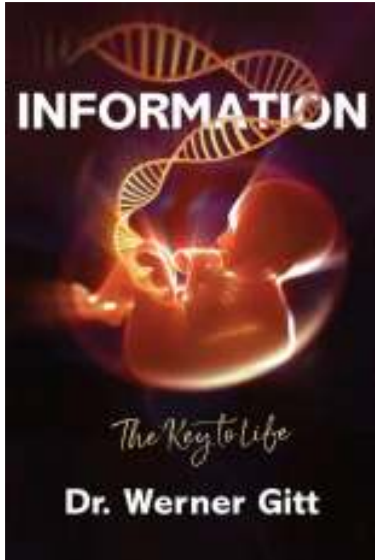
Atonement – October 12, 2024

Tabernacles –October 17, 2024, to October 23, 2024

Last Great Day – October 24, 2024

Ads

Ad from David Rives Ministries (October 19, 2023)



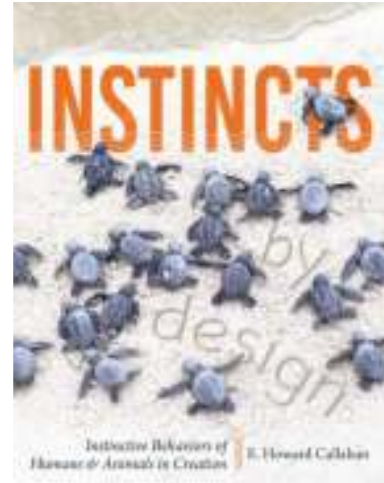
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Notes