

### **WHO ARE WE?**

Group Name: We have no official name--nor do we want one--however we provide the following: INTERDEPENDENT-INTERACTIVE, CHURCH OF GOD, SABBATH SERVICES, BIBLE STUDIES, AND OPEN FELLOWSHIP.

Address: 320 N. Griffin St. City: Bismarck State: ND Zip Code: 58501

Country: USA Phone: (701) 258-7172 FAX: (775) 239-2119

E-Mail: [Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Darwin-Laura@Juno.com)

Website: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com>

Leadership Body: Christ the Head of God's Church, Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 5:23, and I Corinthians 11:3. Local contact persons are Darwin or Laura Lee.

Purpose: To provide Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services and Bible Studies to all of God's People, including those who are not welcome to visit or attend other groups due to having been suspended or disfellowshipped, as well as those who want a place to attend weekly, those who are just visiting our area, and anyone else who is interested in God's way of living. We also have open fellowship here, meaning that you are welcome to come visit with us during our open fellowship times even if you are not interested in attending our Sabbath Services or Bible Studies.

History: We held our first Bible Study here on June 30, 2000 and our first Sabbath Service was held on December 16, 2000.

Affiliation/Membership: Our Affiliation is with God our Father and His Son Jesus the Christ. Our membership includes *all* of God's people, no matter where they are.

Distinctive Doctrines: John 13:34-35

Use Sacred Names?: Since salvation is between God and each individual (Philippians 2:12), so the use of sacred names would be between each individual person and God.

Observe Holy Days?: We believe that God commands us to keep the Weekly Sabbath as well as Passover/Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, however, we also believe there is much controversy out there in understanding if certain ones should or shouldn't be kept, how to keep them and when to keep them. So with this in mind, we will try to the best of our ability to accommodate these differences, believing and having faith that someday through God's Holy Spirit, we will all be brought into the same understanding on this subject. Until then let's follow John 13:34-35.

Evangelistic Efforts: We provide a service to God's People no matter where they are to the best of our ability. This service includes Interdependent-Interactive, Church of God, Sabbath Services, Bible Studies and Open Fellowship. We also welcome live speakers for interactive, and special music, on a volunteer only basis.

Periodicals: We have a newsletter, which we publish every 2 months.

Literature: We distribute tapes and literature for others and ourselves to the best of our ability.

Parent Group: The greater Church of God--The Ekklesia. Language: English

Other Language: None Country: USA

Name: Contact Persons are Darwin & Laura Lee Address: 320 N. Griffin St.

City: Bismarck State: North Dakota Zip Code: 58501

Phone: (701) 258-7172 E-Mail: [Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Darwin-Laura@Juno.com)

Directions To Meeting: 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota, located at the corner of Rosser Avenue and Griffin Street, with plenty of side street parking.

Time of Meeting: Usually 1:00 PM, but may vary.

**SABBATH SERVICES**--Every Saturday unless stated other wise on page 3. We generally do a phone hookup, video tape, or cassette tape, service with various speakers. If you have a video or audio tape you think we should hear, please send it.

We also welcome live speakers, and special music, by others on a volunteer basis. Please ask us about hosting.

Sabbath Schedule is as follows:

12:00 Noon---Open Fellowship  
(Door Open, Come In)  
1:00 PM---Sabbath Services  
3:00 PM---Open Fellowship

**BIBLE STUDIES**--We have Bible Studies approximately every 6 weeks. We have a Pot Luck Meal before we start our Bible Studies, so please bring food if you would like to participate in the fellowship, which goes with a meal.

Bible Study Schedule is as follows:

6:30 PM---Open Fellowship  
(Door Open, Come In)  
7:00 PM---Pot Luck Meal  
(Bring Food)  
8:00 PM---Bible Study  
9:00 PM---Open Fellowship

Bible Study Dates are as follows:

Friday, October 31, 2003  
Friday, December 12, 2003  
Friday, January 23, 2004

**GUEST ROOM**--If you are from out of town and are here to attend Sabbath Services or one of our Bible Studies, we do have a guest room. Please call ahead so we know when you will be arriving. (701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a message.)

**LOCATION**--Sabbath Services and Bible Studies are held at the home of Darwin & Laura Lee, located at 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota. Please use the upper back door by the garage. Phone Number (701) 258-7172 (Please Leave a message.)

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**--The deadline for submitting articles and letters for possible inclusion in our January/February 2004 Newsletter is December 15, 2003. Thank You. Laura Lee (Editor)

**FINANCIAL DISCLOSER:**

We do not charge for the services that we provide to the brethren. We also do not take any wages from the gift donations we are sent. The services we provide do however cost us money. In 2001 expenses for services provided were **-\$4537.29**. We received **+\$1368.00** in gift donations for 2001, leaving us with a balance of **-\$3169.29**. In 2002 expenses for services provided were **-4066.37**. We received **+\$1737.00** in gift donations for 2002, leaving us with a balance of **-\$2329.37**.

Donations for 2003 total **+\$3300.05**. Expenses for 2003 are as follows: Postage **-\$1247.93**, Telephone **-\$95.41**, Internet Services **-\$218.85**, Printing Charges **-\$863.33**, Local Services **-\$97.28** and Research Materials **-\$141.46**. Total balance for 2003 is: **+\$635.79**.

If you need a year end receipt, please request one. We truly appreciate the help we receive in helping others. Thank you Darwin & Laura Lee.

**E-MAIL & SNAIL MAIL:**

**Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@juno.com** Send your prayer requests here. They will go out via email.

**Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@juno.com** The deadline for Issue #19--January/February 2004 is December 15, 2003.

**Answer-Me-Darwin-Laura@juno.com** If you want us to answer your email, send it here.

**Darwin-Laura@juno.com** If you want us to read it, and delete it, send it here.

**FAX**--Our Fax number is: (775) 239-2119.

**SNAIL MAIL**--Our snail mail address is Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502.

**WEB SITE ADDRESS**--<http://darwinlauralee.150m.com>

**AD SECTION**--If you have an ad that you would like to have us print, please write it up and send it to: **Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com** We may not print all ads, but we will read them for consideration of inclusion in this newsletter and then we will let you know one way or the other. Some ads will also be posted on our Web Site.

**Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com** (List ID is: prayer-requests-darwin-laura)

**HOW DO I GET ON THE NEW "PRAYER REQUESTS & UPDATE" LIST? (Instructions:)**

We cannot go in and put you on the new list. You have to put yourself on the new list, and there are 2 ways you can do that. They are as follows:

#1--Use the invitation we sent you from Coollist. That Web Site link takes you right to the place where you can sign up/join the new list. The link on the invitation can be found under: "If you would like to participate in this mailing list, please visit the following web page on the web:" Then it gives you the link. This is the easiest way for you to sign up, so if you no longer have any of the invitations that we sent to you, let me know and I will send you another one, or if you never got an invitation but would like one, please e-mail us at **Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com** and we will send you an invitation. The subject line on the invitation reads "Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura Registration". This E-mail Prayer line is open to the general public.

#2--You can go to our Web Site at: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com> and go into the Prayer Requests & Updates section. There is a box there where you can subscribe to our new list. You put your e-mail address in the box and click on the subscribe button, which takes you into the Coollist web site, where you would click on the "Join" button and follow the instructions. This is a little harder way of doing it.

If you still have problems getting on the new list, let me know, and I will work with you. Thank You and I am looking forward to seeing you on the new list. Editor Laura Lee

**SABBATH SERVICES IN CALIFORNIA**

My name is Jeff Henderson, pastor of Believers in Christ Church of God. We meet each Sabbath at 11 am in Redwood City, CA at the Veterans Senior Center located at 1455 Madison Ave. We have a web site with directions. Our site is: [www.biccog.org](http://www.biccog.org) Our phone number is: 800/384-0998. Our group is small (about 25 adults and children), but warm and loving.

**SABBATH VIDEOS--NOVEMBER 1, 2003**

"The Seventh Day--Revelations from the Lost Pages of History" Part One with Hal Holbrook  
"The Seventh Day--Revelations from the Lost Pages of History" Part Two with Hal Holbrook

Come join us at 1:00 PM at 320 N. Griffin St. in Bismarck, North Dakota (Fellowship starts at 12:00 PM)

**SABBATH VIDEOS--NOVEMBER 8, 2003**

"The Seventh Day--Revelations from the Lost Pages of History" Part Three with Hal Holbrook  
"The Exodus Revealed--Search for the Red Sea Crossing

Come join us at 1:00 PM at 320 N. Griffin St. in Bismarck, North Dakota (Fellowship starts at 12:00 PM)

**SABBATH VIDEO--DECEMBER 13, 2003**

"Discovered Noah's Ark" Wyatt Archaeological Research

Come join us at 1:00 PM at 320 N. Griffin St. in Bismarck, North Dakota (Fellowship starts at 12:00 PM)

**SABBATH SCHEDULE--BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA**

October 18, 2003----No Services--Have a Great Feast

October 25, 2003----Open for Hosting--Please sign up

November 1, 2003----Video--"The Seventh Day--Revelations from the Lost Pages of History" Part One with Hal Holbrook and  
Video--"The Seventh Day--Revelations from the Lost Pages of History" Part Two with Hal Holbrook

November 8, 2003----Video--"The Seventh Day--Revelations from the Lost Pages of History" Part Three with Hal Holbrook and  
Video--The Exodus Revealed--Search for the Red Sea Crossing

November 15, 2003----Open for Hosting--Please sign up

November 22, 2003----Teaching the Law--Lesson #1--"The Law of God: Its Nature, Purpose, and Link to Eternity" and  
Teaching the Law--Lesson #2--"Genesis Chapter 1"

November 29, 2003----Open for Hosting--Please sign up

December 6, 2003----Teaching the Law--Lesson #3--"Genesis 1:2, The Spirit of God-Who and What is the Spirit of God?" and  
Teaching the Law--Lesson #4--"Genesis 2:1, Finishing Heaven & Earth-Four Fulfillments."

December 13, 2003----Video--"Discovered Noah's Ark" Wyatt Archaeological Research

December 20, 2003----Teaching the Law--Lesson #5--"The Story of the Sabbath: Its Link to the Kingdom, Its Purpose and How to  
Keep It. (Part 1)" and

Teaching the Law--Lesson #6--"The Story of the Sabbath: Its Link to the Kingdom, Its Purpose and How to  
Keep It. (Part 2)"

December 27, 2003----Open for Hosting--Please sign up

January 3, 2004----Teaching the Law--Lesson #7--"The Story of the Sabbath: Its Link to the Kingdom, Its Purpose and How to Keep  
It. (Part 3)" and

Teaching the Law--Lesson #8--"The Story of the Sabbath: Its Link to the Kingdom, Its Purpose and How to Keep  
It. (Part 4)"

January 10, 2004----Open for Hosting--Please sign up

January 17, 2004----Teaching the Law--Lesson #9--"Genesis 2:1-16" and  
Teaching the Law--Lesson #10--"Genesis 2:16-3:5"

January 24, 2004----Open for Hosting--Please sign up

January 31, 2004----Teaching the Law--Lesson #11--"Genesis 3:5-6" and  
Teaching the Law--Lesson #12--"Genesis 3:5-6 (continued)"

If you want to host Sabbath Services and need 2 Sabbaths in a row for your presentation and/or would like to have your presentation listed on our Sabbath Schedule in our newsletter which is sent out to the public, the next deadline for that would be: December 15, 2003. On those Sabbaths of Open Hosting where no one signs up, we will just play a cassette tape by any of various speakers. All Sabbath Services are Hosted by Darwin & Laura Lee unless otherwise stated.

## NEW SECTION--COMING SOON

Starting with Issue #19, we will have a "QUESTIONS SECTION". Please send your Biblical Questions to us anonymously. We do not need to know your name for this section, no name's will be printed in this section, only the question and the answer. Questions submitted should be 50 words or less. Please send your questions to us snail mail at: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502 (Make sure you identify your correspondence by writing "Questions Section" on your letter someplace where we will see it.) or email your questions to: [Questions-Section-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Questions-Section-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com)

**INFORMATION SECTION**--This section is meant for various items which should be of interest to the general public. If you have an item to be considered for inclusion in this section, please send it to: [Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com) We are not always in total agreement with all things we print.

### WARNING

by Unknown  
Sent by Sue Caughfield  
Cookville, Texas

I live in Alexandria, Va., but I work in Lafayette, Louisiana, sometimes, staying with friends when I'm there.

As you know from America's Most Wanted TV program, as well as the news media, there is a serial killer in the Lafayette area.

I just want to let you know about an "incident" that happened to me a few weeks ago, and could have been deadly. At first I didn't go to the police or anyone with it because I didn't realize how serious this encounter was. But since I work in a jail and I told a few people about it, it wasn't long before I was paraded into Internal Affairs to tell them my story.

It was approximately 5:15 a.m. in Opelousas, La. I had stayed with a friend there and was on my way to work. I stopped at the Exxon/Blimpie station to get gas. I got \$10 gas and a Diet Coke... I took into the store two \$5 bills and one \$1 bill, (just enough to get my stuff).

As I pulled away from the store, a man approached my truck from the back side of the store (an unlit area). He was an "approachable-looking" man (clean cut, clean shaven, dressed well, etc.). He walked up to my window and knocked.

Since I'm very paranoid and "always looking for the rapist or killer", I didn't open the window. I just asked what he wanted.

He raised a \$5 bill to my window and said "You dropped this." Since I knew I had gone into the store with a certain amount of money, I knew I didn't drop it.

When I told him it wasn't mine, he

began hitting the window and door, screaming at me to open my door, and insisting that I had dropped the money! At that point, I drove away as fast as I could.

After talking to the Internal Affairs department and describing the man I saw and the way he escalated from calm and polite to angry and volatile... it was determined that I could have possibly encountered the serial killer myself.

At this point, it is unclear as to how he gains access to his victims, since there has been no evidence of forced entry into victim's homes, cars, etc. And the fact that he has been attacking in the daytime, when women are less likely to have their guard up, means he is pretty BOLD, (and think about it... what gesture is nicer than returning money to someone that dropped it?????)

How many times would you have opened your window (or door) to get your money and say thank you... because if the person is kind enough to return something to you, then he can't really be a threat... can he?????

Please be cautious! This might not have been the serial killer... it probably wasn't... but anyone that gets that angry over someone not accepting money from them, can't have honorable intentions.

The most important thing to note is that his reaction was NOT WHAT I EXPECTED! A total surprise! But what might have happened if I had opened my door? I shudder to think! Forward this to everyone you know... maybe they can be as fortunate as I was! Kim

PS:

From the Sender: Ladies, really DO forward this to EVERYONE you know.

Even if this man wasn't a serial killer, he looked nice, he seemed polite, he wasn't...

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### WIRELESS PHONES

by Unknown  
Sent by Sue Caughfield  
Cookville, Texas

#### #77 On Your Wireless Phone

Lauren was 19 yr. old and in college. This story takes place over the Christmas/New Year's holiday break. It was the Saturday before New Year's and it was about 1 PM in the afternoon, and Lauren was driving to visit a friend. An UNMARKED police car pulled up behind her and put his lights on.

Lauren's parents have 4 children (high school and college age) and have always told them never to pull over for an unmarked car on the side of the road, but rather wait until they get to a gas station, etc., so Lauren had actually listened to her parents advice, and promptly called #77 on her cell phone to tell the police dispatcher that she would not pull over right away. She proceeded to tell the dispatcher that there was an unmarked police car with a flashing red light on his rooftop behind her.

The dispatcher checked to see if there were police cars where she was and there weren't, so he told her to keep driving, remain calm and that he had back up already on the way.

Ten minutes later 4 cop cars surrounded her and the unmarked car behind her. One policeman went to her side and the others surrounded the car behind.

They pulled the guy from the car and tackled him to the ground... the man was a convicted rapist and wanted for other crimes.

I never knew about the #77 Cell  
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Phone Feature, but especially for a woman alone in a car, you should not pull over for an unmarked car.

Apparently police have to respect your right to keep going to a "safe" place. You obviously need to make some signals that you acknowledge them (i.e. put on your hazard lights) or call #77 like Lauren did.

Too bad the cell phone companies don't give you this little bit of wonderful information. So now it's your turn to let your friends know about #77.

Send this to every woman you know, it may save their life.

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Before relying on the use of #77 on your cell phone for the above mentioned purpose, first check with your own cell phone company to be sure they have this feature. Laura Lee

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#### **CALENDAR PROGRAM**

**by Alan Ruth  
Farmington Hills, Michigan**

#### **PRESS RELEASE**

**SUBJECT: FREE Holy Day Calendar Program now on the Web!**

A FREE tool has finally been created to make it easy to view/print a detailed Holy Day calendar, with dates, for any year you want! This specially written program runs in a Microsoft/Netscape Web browser and can be accessed from one of two Internet locations:

<http://BibleStudy.org/hdcal/hdcal.html>

OR

<http://www.cbcbg.org/Calendar/index.html>

This unique programming project was initiated by the Christian Biblical Church of God and was supervised by Carl Franklin. The Holy Day calendar program was written in the high-level Java programming language and took 10 months to develop and test. Alan Ruth of the [BibleStudy.org](http://BibleStudy.org) Web site designed and coded the program.

This calendar tool was built to be useful both to the general public and to those doing in-depth Biblical research. With this program you can:

1. Display/print calendar showing God's Holy Days for ANY year from 3761

BC (the Hebrew year of creation) well into the future!

2. Access definitions to basic calendar concepts and read explanations of the four postponement rules used to determine Tishri 1 (the first day of the Hebrew new year).
3. By inputting either a Julian/Gregorian (e.g. 2000 BC, 30 AD, etc.) or Hebrew based-year you can find out for that year:
  - a. The exact date and time of the Molad (average conjunction of moon with earth and sun) of Tishri.
  - b. Which postponement rules (if any) were used to determine Tishri 1.
  - c. The number of days in the Hebrew year.
4. Plus, this tool can output a detailed one-month calendar pop-up showing the Hebrew/Roman date pairs for ANY inputted Roman or Hebrew month!

I encourage you to check this tool out, regardless of the type of calendar used to observe the Holy Days, to see a tiny fraction of the kind of information that can be made available worldwide through the Internet.

All questions related to the calendar, and to this Holy Day calendar project in particular, should be sent to [FredCoulter@mindspring.com](mailto:FredCoulter@mindspring.com)

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Although we believe there is much valuable information in Carl Franklin's study paper "The Calendar of Christ and the Apostles", which is distributed by Fred Coulter's Christian Biblical Church of God, we do not agree with their actual Holy Day Dates.

We also believe that the Calendar Program put together and offered for use to the general public by Alan Ruth and Carl Franklin is a useful tool for all of us, however, again we do not agree with their actual Holy Day Dates.

Alan Ruth, Carl Franklin and Fred Coulter's Christian Biblical Church of God all seem to promote the same Holy Days which were promoted by Herbert W. Armstrong before he died.

Herbert W. Armstrong believed that the Jewish people had the date for Passover wrong. We believe that Herbert W. Armstrong had the date of Passover wrong and not the Jewish people. Herbert W. Armstrong also kept a Sunday Pentecost, which in some years follows the count of the Sadducees and other years follows a method they just made up.

Christ had no dispute with the Holy Day dates the Pharisees were keeping and Paul taught the same dates as the Pharisees did. Philippians 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

Paul is making it quite clear that he was circumcised as the law states on the eighth day, that he is an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, he is a Hebrew, he is in accordance with the law and he is a Pharisee.

Because of the way Paul states what he does in Philippians 3:5, we can conclude that Israelites, Benjamites, Hebrews and Pharisees all recognized the same law.

Acts 16:19-21 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, **And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.**

Paul was a Roman also, but the law of the Romans was not the same as the law of the Israelites, Benjamites, Hebrews or Pharisees, so he did not mention his Roman citizenship in Philippians 3:5. Acts 22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge **a man that is a Roman**, and uncondemned?

Christ clearly says in Matthew 23: 2-3 ...The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

There is no command anywhere in the Bible to follow the Sadducees in anything, but yet many people in the Church of God culture follow the Sadducees in their count to Pentecost and follow Herbert W. Armstrong in his quest to make a new Passover tradition.

The Pharisees kept Sivan 6 for Pentecost and a late 14/15 Passover.

Christ our Passover lamb was crucified and died for us on the afternoon of the 14th. Most in the Church of God culture understand what time of the day Christ died, yet they continue to make a doctrine which says the Jews were wrong and the Passover lambs were killed on

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the early part of the 14th between sunset and dusk. Are you telling God that He doesn't even know when the Passover lambs were to be killed and that Christ was crucified and died at the wrong time of the day, because the Jews had the timing of the sacrifice wrong. Common sense, should tell us that human beings make mistakes, but God does not. God knows what time of day the Passover lambs were to be killed and Christ kept that Passover of his crucifixion and death at exactly the right time.

In Corinthians 11:26 it says "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

If we are keeping the Passover as a commemoration of Christ's death, it would only make sense that we commemorate His death at a point in time which follows His actual death. An early 14 Passover is clearly not a commemoration of Christ's death since it is symbolically being done at a point in time before His death, since most of us understand that Christ died on the afternoon of the 14th.

God would not give us Holy Days to keep and state which days he wants them to be kept on without also leaving us a calendar. I also see no scripture or scriptures anywhere in the Bible where God has given any of us authority of any kind to make up our own calendars. Now we are going to the Feasts where it is quite common to see and hear of people keeping many different dates for Holy Days. Does this calendar confusion make any sense at all and does God want us to continue to divide and separate because of it?

Let me testify that God did not give to us the Sabbath and then give us the authority to keep the Sabbath on whatever day of the week we might choose for ourselves. Why then do we think that God has given any of us, including Herbert W. Armstrong or anyone else the authority to go about making up so many different calendars? How does this make God's people at one with God?

The Hebrew calendar which the Jewish people still keep today as they did in yesteryear is the most accurate calendar there ever was in all of the history of man. There is a tremendous amount of evidence throughout the Bible which points to this being the calendar God left for us to use. The Postponements and measurement in parts are the very elements which make

this calendar so accurate. The book, "The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar" by Arthur Spier, nowhere says that Hillel II changed the Hebrew calendar in any way, only that he made the calculations public. As yet no one has sent me any actual proof that Hillel II changed the Hebrew calendar in any way.

My point here is not to separate and divide people further, but only to help everyone in doing it God's way to look at some things logically.

We here use the Hebrew calendar complete with the dates used by the Jewish people. We do not follow Jewish customs or traditions which are not found any place in the Bible. Laura Lee

Does your fellowship or group want a Web site but doesn't know where to start? Want to attract more NEW and repeat visitors to your existing site?

Looking for NEW ideas to EXPAND/ENHANCE your group's outreach efforts?

Unsure what kind of PC or Computer Hardware/Software to buy that suits your needs and budget?

The Webmaster at [BibleStudy.org](http://BibleStudy.org) is now providing computer and Internet consulting at reasonable rates.

Contact me at: [webmaster@biblestudy.org](mailto:webmaster@biblestudy.org) or at the address at the bottom of this email with your Computer or Internet needs/problems. Possible solution(s) and option(s) will be sent back along with quotes. Alan Ruth, Barnabas Ministries, PO Box 3393, Farmington Hills, MI. 48333, USA Computer Consultant.

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### GUEST BOOK ENTRY

by Jeff Henderson

Enjoyed my visit to your web site. Very nice and like the different music on each page. May God bless you as you seek to serve Him.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Thank you Jeff for your nice comments in your entry to our guest book.

In regard to our web site at: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com> We are experiencing some problems over there at this point (mostly in the newsletter section). We are not sure at this point if

our scanner is not compatible with our web software or if we just don't know what we are doing.

We have just received new web software and will be updating our web site as we can. You probably won't notice too many changes to the welcome section, ad section, or prayer requests and updates section at first, as we will probably put most of our energy into the newsletter section at first.

It is our ultimate goal to be able to get all issues of our newsletter on our web site for all to view. We would also like to install a few interactive tools for everyone's use. If our new "Questions Section" has a good public response, we will also create a section for that on our web site at some point. As anyone who has worked on a web site knows, a web site can be both fun and frustrating at the same time. So sometimes the work goes well and sometimes it does not go so well.

For those who have not yet visited our site, we do have room in our "Ad's & Links" section to post times of Sabbath Services, Special Events, and Link ads.

We are also very much in need of people to sign up on our "Prayer Requests & Updates" list. When we just sent you the prayer requests and updates, hundreds of people participated in this effort. When we were no longer able to send them as we had in the past and it now required people participation to do their part in signing up, it looked as if very few cared any more, about this effort.

It is not a major undertaking to sign up on this new list. (See PAGE #2 for details on how to sign up.) Darwin and I have no access to seeing any of the information you provide to "Coolists" our list provider. The only thing we ever see in regard to who you are is your email address. We do not even get a name to go with the email address. So please if you care about other people and want to help in some way, what better way is there than to pray for those in need? Please remember there may be a time when we all will be in need of prayers of others. So please show your support now for intercessory prayer. We sure can use your help in this area. Thank you. Laura Lee

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**LETTERS SECTION**--This section can contain letters to the editor, to the brethren, or from the editor. Please keep in mind while reading these letters, that just because we print them does not mean that we agree with everything people say in these letters. Letters many times are filled with opinion and emotion and sometimes factual and un-factual information. This section is interactive. If you agree or disagree with a letter or an article in this newsletter and want others to know, this is the section for you. Please, if you want your letter to be printed, clearly say so and send it to: [Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com) We do not print all letters that we receive. If you state you want your letter printed, then we do consider it for inclusion. If we receive a letter that we feel would be of interest to others, generally we ask the writer for permission to print it.

**Letter Written: July 22, 2003  
Subject: SPEAK NOT AGAINST  
EVIL?**

**by Darwin & Laura Lee  
Bismarck, North Dakota**

**The following letter is the original version of a letter we sent to Dixon Cartwright of "The Journal". Dixon printed an edited version of this letter on page 2 of the July 31, 2003 issue of "The Journal".**

Matthew 15: 12-14 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be **blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**

We are writing in response to a letter in the June 30, 2003 issue of The Journal, which can be found on page 4 and is written by Charlotte Ann Farley of Dunlap, Tenn.

We give you the above scriptures to consider. We probably do not agree with everything that Pam Dewey says on her

web site at: [www.isitso.org](http://www.isitso.org), however it would be a rare occasion when one would agree with every single word that proceeds from anyone's mouth. We did not find her web site to be printed in an attitude of hatred, but in an attitude of love for the brethren, not wanting them to become entangled in the practice of idolatry by worshiping those who would lead the brethren away from God rather than to God.

You make statements in your letter which make it sound like we as Christians have no right to speak against evil and that if we do so we hate and are slanderous. Yet God caused certain things to be recorded throughout the Bible in regard to some of the awful sins of His servants. For instance David's affair with Bath-sheba and how he had her husband murdered so he could have her. Doesn't that offend you? What about when Jacob went along with his mother to set out to deceive his father into giving him the blessings? Doesn't that offend you? What about Paul (Saul before conversion), who murdered Christians. Doesn't that offend you? Did God slander these people because he made sure these things were recorded for us to read throughout the centuries. Does God hate these people? Or did God have these things recorded in the Bible so that we would read of them and see with our minds and hearts what we should not do, thus learning from the mistakes of others without having to experience the heartbreak of going through it ourselves?

One does not have to look very far to find information in regard to those leaders and people who are trying to hurt people for the gain of either money or power or fame. The way that you talk Charlotte is that when we see the abuse of our brethren we should look the other way and say nothing. When you knowingly and intentionally blind yourself from looking at the evil that happens through the ignorance of people, you are sending a message that it is okay for leaders and people to continue to do these things to your brothers and sisters, yet you won't say a thing because you are a good little Christian, for you have love and respect and forgiveness for all. Our opinion is that your stand in this matter is not love for others at all.

If we love our brothers and sisters we will warn them of the evil they have a tendency to become involved with. We will not keep our mouths shut and hide our heads in the sand and pretend to be

blind and ignorant. Christ himself said "if the blind lead the blind they both fall into the ditch." Personally I wouldn't want to be led by a blind leader, for it is a very good way for one to lose their crown. Are we reality based or are we given to fables and lies? Please open your eyes and see.

We publish a newsletter out of Bismarck, North Dakota and a couple of months ago a person sent us some information in regard to a Mr. Stair out of South Carolina. They gave us a web site address and we went in and read what was there. It was disturbing, and we came away sick. This man Mr. Stair has displayed evil actions and he has hurt many people. If people involved in this situation would not have said anything, but just walked away, this man Mr. Stair would still be practicing the same and continue to hurt many. Mr. Stair was caught by the authorities with the help of those people who were hurt by him. Pam Dewey has this information in regard to Mr. Stair posted on her web site at: [www.isitso.org](http://www.isitso.org)

Because people have been brave enough to speak out in regard to the actions of Mr. Stair and his actions have been brought to the attention of the public, Mr. Stair will in the future hurt far fewer people with his actions. These people who spoke out against the actions of Mr. Stair are very deeply in love with God and their brethren. Think about it.

We recommend Pam Dewey's web site, but take a box of Kleenexes along. We guarantee you that if you love the brethren and feel for those who have been hurt by such abusers, you will need them.

The only way to stop abuse of people is to warn people about the evil actions of others, in hopes that these abusers will soon repent. When we say nothing we are telling the abuser that it is perfectly okay for you to continue to hurt other people and we go along with you in what you are doing. We forgive the person, but we do not tolerate or keep secret the evil actions of those who abuse.

Yes, leaders or non leaders will be held accountable for their actions and non actions. If people sit back in their arm chairs and just wait for the Kingdom of God to come and do or say nothing against evil when it is in the power of their hand to do so, it must be that they are quite content with the way things are.

Speaking out against the evil or wrong some one is doing when  
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appropriate does not mean that, that person is angry without a cause. "Be angry and sin not".

Why do people continue to protect the abusers and ignore the victims (past, present and future)?

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The following poem was not sent to Dixon Cartwright of "The Journal", but is put in this section as it fits in with the above letter.

## WAITING FOR THE KINGDOM

by Darwin Lee

I'm a good little Christian waiting for the Kingdom,  
So when I see evil,  
I don't say anything.  
For I speak of no evil,  
For I'm waiting for the Kingdom.

For good little Christians don't speak about evil doings,  
They just wait for the Kingdom,  
Hoping all the evil will just go away.  
So I don't speak out against evil or wrong doing,  
I just let my brethren go astray.

For I'm waiting for the Kingdom.

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**ARTICLES SECTION**--We are always looking for good articles written by ordinary people, to consider for inclusion in this newsletter. Darwin and I do not always agree with every single thing that we print. Darwin and I also do not know everything. Like most people reading this newsletter, we are still learning. We do strive to bring to you Biblically Based Articles--The problem is that opinion and interpretation of scripture varies from person to person. So with that in mind let's let "iron sharpen iron" Proverbs 27:17--Let's learn from each other. Send articles to:  
[Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Newsletter-Only-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com)

## THE FACE OF JESUS

by Bill Bratt  
Portsmouth, Ohio

King David desired to build a temple for God, but God would not allow David to do so. The job passed on to David's son Solomon (2 Chronicles 6:7-9). After Solomon completed and dedicated the Temple, God appeared to Solomon: "Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. {13} "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, {14} "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chr 7:12-14 NKJV).

Notice that in Solomon's day, God's people were to humble themselves, and pray and seek God's face, and turn from their wicked ways. To seek God's face denotes His presence. God is always fully aware of what is going on. He knows our thoughts and our actions. It is interesting to note that God told Moses "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Exo 33:20 NKJV). Obviously if we as humans, in reality, saw God face to face, we would be burnt to a crisp because: "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29 NKJV).

It is also interesting to note as to what is recorded about Jacob in Genesis 32:22-32. Jacob wrestled all night long with God and desired that God would bless him: "And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" (Gen 32:26 NKJV).

Because Jacob prevailed, God changed his name: "And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed"" (Gen 32:28 NKJV).

Continuing in verse 30: "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Talking to our best friend "face to face" is much more intimate than talking to them on the telephone.

Seeking God's face is to desire an intimate relationship with our Creator, to

be in His grace and favor desiring His blessings. "The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it" (Prov 10:22 NIV).

## After the Resurrection of Jesus

The disciples of Jesus had spent three and one half years with Jesus. They had seen Jesus, face to face, and had a very intimate and close relationship with Him. Let's focus in on some accounts after the resurrection of Jesus when His disciples had first seen Him.

Let's begin with Mary Magdalene: "But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. {12} And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. {13} Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." {14} Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and *did not know that it was Jesus*" (John 20:11-14 NKJV).

Notice that she did not know that it was Jesus. Let's continue in verse 15: "Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, *supposing Him to be the gardener*, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." {16} Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). {17} ..... {18} Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her" (John 20:15-18 NKJV).

Why didn't Mary Magdalene know that it was Jesus?

## On the Road to Emmaus

Let's look at the occurrence where Jesus appears to two of His disciples on a journey to Emmaus: "Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. {14} And they talked together of all these things which had happened. {15} So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. {16} *But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.* {17} And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" {18} Then the one

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whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" {19} And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, {20} "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. {21} "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. {22} "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us" {23} ""When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. {24} "And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." {25} Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! {26} "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" {27} And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:13-27 NKJV).

In this occurrence the disciples eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Jesus.

Let's continue in verse 28: "Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. {29} But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. {30} Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. {31} *Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.* {32} And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" {33} So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, {34} saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" {35} And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:28-35 NKJV).

### **Jesus appeared to the Disciples behind Closed Doors**

The next occurrence that we will look at happened at sunset, as the first day of the week is ending and Jesus appeared to the disciples behind closed doors.

"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." {20} When He had said this, *He showed them His hands and His side.* Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. {21} So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." {22} And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. {23} "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." {24} Now *Thomas*, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. {25} The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." *So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe"* (John 20:19-25 NKJV).

Notice in this passage that Jesus showed the disciples His pierced hands that had been nailed to the cross and His side that had been pierced by a spear of a Roman soldier (John 19:34).

Also notice Thomas' comments in verse 25 that he would not believe unless he could see the wounds of Jesus for himself.

Jesus as He appeared to His disciples in His resurrected "human form" still had the wounds from the nails in His hands and His pierced side.

### **The Face of Jesus**

Could it be that the reason that Jesus' disciples didn't recognize Him was that the face of Jesus was not the face that they remembered! Jesus had been beaten (Mark 14:65), scourged (Mat. 27:26), had a crown of thorns plunged on His head (Mat. 27:29) and He was crucified (Mat. 27:35).

The prophet Isaiah prophesied that Jesus the Messiah, the Sin-Bearing Servant's visage or appearance would be so marred, injured, destroyed more than any other man: "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. {14} Just as many were astonished at you, So *His*

*visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men"* (Isa 52:13-14 NKJV).

Isaiah again speaks about the "face" of the Messiah: "I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide *My face* from shame and spitting" (Isa 50:6 NKJV).

Let's notice why Jesus was beaten: "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. {3} He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. {4} Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. {5} *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;* The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, *And by His stripes we are healed.* {6} All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:2-6 NKJV).

Jesus was beaten severely and it is "by His stripes we are healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

David wrote Psalms 22 which was a prophecy of our suffering Messiah on the cross. Let's look at verses 16-17 (NKJV): "They pierced My hands and My feet; {17} I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me." Read all of Psalms 22 to get the total impact of what Jesus Christ was going through on the cross.

The Apostle Paul mentions the face of Jesus in 2 Cor 4:6 (NKJV): "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ.*"

*In conclusion:* Jesus is compassionate and can sympathize and have pity on us in our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29) who was slain (Rev. 5:6) and He died for us (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

If we could look into the marred and beaten face of Jesus, we would realize the amount of love, compassion and mercy that Jesus had for us to endure the beatings, scourging, the crucifixion and death so that we could attain salvation



less free to ignore, modify, or change the oral law.

On the other hand, the vast majority of professing Christians believe that neither the written law nor the oral law apply to them, so they are free to worship God as they please and live their lives without any biblical constraints or fear of punishment.

A quandary of gigantic proportions faces everyone who truly seeks to understand the Bible in this age, because there seems to be no totally trustworthy human authority from which to gain accurate biblical knowledge. Given the fact that there is much confusion and divergent opinion about the biblical text among the various biblically based religions, the logical conclusion is that we are living in the times of Amos' prophecy--there is a famine of hearing (i.e., understanding) God's word. If this were not true, it would be an easy task to find a trustworthy source of biblical understanding wherein there is no contradiction or divergent opinion as to the meaning of biblical text.

### **Three Reasons Understanding Is Withheld**

The following are three major reasons why few people understand God's words during this age.

#### ***Wicked or Wise***

The prophet Daniel records one of the reasons that the understanding of God's word is withheld from most people today:

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Dan.12:8-10 KJV).

Much of what is recorded in the Bible is there for the benefit of those who have a need to know certain things, because these things pertain to them and no one else. Therefore, this knowledge is withheld from other people because it will not benefit them. See Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 15:11.

#### ***National Israel***

"Make this announcement to Judah and to Israel: "Listen, O foolish, senseless people--you with the eyes that

do not see and the ears that do not listen--have you no respect at all for me?" the Lord God asks. 'How can it be that you don't even tremble in my presence? I set the shorelines of the world by perpetual decrees, so that the oceans, though they toss and roar, can never pass those bounds. Isn't such a God to be feared and worshiped?' "But my people have rebellious hearts; they have turned against me and gone off into idolatry. Though I am the one who gives them rain each year in spring and fall and sends the harvest-times, yet they have no respect or fear for me. And so I have taken away these wondrous blessings from them. This sin has robbed them of all of these good things" (Jer 5:20-25 TLB).

Most of the Patriarch Israel's descendants (including the Jews) worship false gods and have departed from their covenant relationship with God. Therefore, many of the blessings that they were promised for obedience (including an understanding of God's word) has been withheld from them until they repent of their sins.

#### ***Jesus and His Parables***

Many believe the reason that Jesus spoke in parables was to make his meaning clear; however, this was not what he said. He said that he spoke in parables to conceal information that could lead people to conversion:

"And when he was alone, those around him, with the Twelve, asked him as to the parable. And he said to them, To you has been given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God. But to these outside, all things are being given in parables: that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; least they should be converted, and sins be forgiven them" (Mk. 4:10-12 Para.). See also Isa. 6:8-10; Matt. 13:10-15; Lk. 8:10; Jn. 12:37-40; Acts 28:25-27.

The word "mystery" in verse 11 is translated from the Greek word "mysterion", which means "mystery" or "secret". Jesus clearly said that those outside of his group were not permitted to understand the secret plan of God that would lead them to salvation.

The apostle Paul spoke to the Colossians about this same mystery and he told them that it was only revealed to the saints:

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and I fill up in my flesh the things lacking of the afflictions of Christ,

on behalf of his body, which is the church; of which I became a minister, according to the administration of God given to me for you to fulfill the word of God, the mystery having been hidden from the ages, and from the generations, but is now revealed to his saints [the elect of God]; to whom God desired to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:24-27 Para.). See Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 3:9.

#### **Why the Secrecy?**

But why would this information that leads a person to salvation be kept secret and why is it only revealed to God's elect?

The mystery of salvation has been preached since the time of Adam, but only a very few have been allowed to understand it. God the Father and Jesus Christ love their human creation much more than most people can begin to comprehend. It is this love and concern for each individual that prevents God the Father from offering salvation to all of humanity before the establishment of his kingdom on earth.

God the Father and Jesus Christ want everyone to become a part of the God family; they want everyone to obtain salvation:

"Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of truth" (1 Tim. 2:4 KJV).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9 KJV). See also Psa. 136:1-16.

This love and concern is the reason that God the Father and Jesus Christ have formulated a plan that will afford each individual the optimum opportunity for success. The Father knows the potential and character of each individual and in which phase of his plan to offer them the opportunity for salvation. In order for each person to have the best possible conditions for success in obtaining salvation, they must be allowed to live in a time and environment in which they can succeed if they want to. Therefore, a true understanding of God's word is withheld until this time arrives for each individual.

#### **An End to the Prophecy of Amos**

Only the restoration of God's laws,  
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precepts, and principles to their original physical and spiritual meaning and intent will bring an end to the prophecy of Amos concerning the famine of the understanding of God's word. The promise to bring an end to Amos' prophecy concerning the lack of understanding of God's word and circumstances surrounding the ending of this prophecy are mentioned many times in both the Old and the New Testaments. The following two prophecies concerning the third Elijah show when Amos' prophecy will begin to end and when God's laws, precepts, and principles will begin to be understood in their entirety:

"Behold I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction" (Mal. 4:5-6 Para.).

"And Jesus replied, Elijah truly will come first and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11 Para.).

Within these two prophecies are the keys to understanding the ministry of Elijah during the end of the age and exactly what will be restored. Notice that he will prepare the way before Christ's return, and that he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the sons to the fathers.

Why do the hearts of the fathers need to be turned to the sons and the sons to the fathers and what is it that needs to be restored? Restoration is only necessary when something has not been maintained in its original form. God's written law has not changed since it was given to Moses and recorded in the books of the law--God's law does not need to be restored because it is eternal. What has degraded and is in need of restoration is the understanding, teaching, and application of God's laws, precepts, and principles that have either been lost or perverted through the centuries.

The biblical record is replete with God's admonitions for Israel to return to his law and way of life. During the time of Jesus, the understanding, teaching, and application of many of God's original laws, precepts, and principles had been so perverted that they were almost unrecognizable (See Matt. 23:1-4). Understanding that the perversion of God's laws, precepts, and principles would continue until his return, Jesus asks in Luke 18:8 if he will find the faith on the earth when he returns?

After the death of the apostle John and the disappearance of the early church as an organized entity with a central governing authority, the teachings of Jesus and the apostles concerning God's laws, precepts and principles were perverted to the point that very little is truly understood today about the written law and its physical and spiritual intent and meaning. Therefore, in order for the confusion about what the Sovereign Father and Jesus Christ expect of each individual to be resolved, a true understanding of God's law and his worship system must be restored.

The prophetic reference by Jesus of the restoration of all things surely includes a restoration of God's worship system that has been perverted since it was given at Mount Sinai many centuries ago. The restoration of God's worship system also includes a restoration of God's law, precepts, and principles that are necessary for a person to live a totally righteous lifestyle. Only the restoration of God's laws, precepts, and principles to their original physical and spiritual meaning and intent will bring an end to Amos' prophecy concerning people's serious lack of understanding God's word.

The message of the third Elijah is centered around the restoration of the truth of God. Therefore, we should expect the third Elijah to restore an understanding of how the worship system that God instituted at Mount Sinai and the worship system that Jesus Christ instituted at Jerusalem work together in the salvation of anyone who will believe and worship God the Father in truth.

When these two aspects of the Father's worship system are restored and understood in the light of his plan for the salvation of humanity and believed by those whom he calls to salvation, it can truly be said that the hearts of the fathers are turned to the sons and the sons to the fathers. Belief in and adherence to God's true worship system results in a return to a harmonious relationship between the fathers who taught righteousness (i.e., the Patriarchs, Moses, Aaron, the Apostles, and others) and the sons (i.e., those who are taught righteousness and believe).

There is much confusion and bewilderment within both the Jewish and Christian religions as to the exact meaning and intent of much of the Bible, and there are literally hundreds of opinions on any given topic found within the Bible. If you are attempting to truly understand God's laws, precepts, and

principles, where can you find a book, a teacher, or a group of people who truly understand God and his teachings? Are we living in the times spoken of by the Prophet Amos? Yes, we are living in the times of Amos' prophecy of a famine of God's word. However, for those whom the Sovereign Father is calling to salvation, there is no need to remain ignorant. Moreover, you who are being called can eat and drink of God's word if you will seize the moment and come to the table of the Lord.

"Seek you the Lord while he may be found, call you upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7 KJV).

The fulfillment of prophecy is a major proof that the Sovereign God exists and that he has the power and authority to control the destiny of humanity. Moreover, the fulfillment of Amos' prophecy concerning a famine of the understanding of God's word tells us that God's plan for humanity is right on schedule and we are very close to the return of the Messiah.

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### **WHO WERE THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES?**

**by Bryan T. Huie  
Dennard, Arkansas**

The Pharisees and the Sadducees are the two most well-known Jewish sects from the time of Yeshua the Messiah. Both, to some extent, opposed Christ during his ministry and received condemnation from him. In this paper, I am going to examine the origins, beliefs, and impact of these two rival groups.

Historically, all of our knowledge of the Pharisees and Sadducees has been derived from three main sources: the works of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus; the early rabbinical writings (200 A.D. and later); and the New Testament. Recently, however, references to these parties have also been found in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls unearthed at Qumran. Each of these sources has its limitations, but I will seek to achieve a historically accurate depiction of the Pharisees and Sadducees which is



supported by all the available information.

First, let's look at the derivation of each party's name. It is commonly believed that "Pharisee" is derived from the Hebrew *perusim*, which means "separated ones." However, recently it has been suggested that "Pharisee" may instead come from the Hebrew *parosim*, meaning "specifier," since they sought to specify the correct meaning of God's law to the people.

The Sadducees are widely assumed to have been named after Zadok, a priest in the time of King David and King Solomon, although a less accepted theory alleges that they took their name from a later Zadok who lived in the second century B.C. Alternately, some scholars have theorized that the name "Sadducee" comes from the Hebrew *saddiq*, meaning "the righteous."

The origin of these two sects cannot be definitively traced. The first specific mention we see of them is during the reign of John Hyrcanus (134-104 B.C.). The scant evidence available suggests that they coalesced as distinctive groups soon after the Maccabean revolt. To fully grasp the basis for the emergence of the Pharisees and Sadducees, it's helpful to understand the political climate in which they developed. I would encourage you to study the history of Judea in the two centuries before the ministry of Messiah.

Regarding the factors which led to the establishment of the Pharisees as a distinct party, British historian Paul Johnson writes:

In their battle against Greek education, pious Jews began, from the end of the second century BC, to develop a national system of education. To the old scribal schools were gradually added a network of local schools where, in theory at least, all Jewish boys were taught the Torah. This development was of great importance in the spread and consolidation of the synagogue, in the birth of Pharisaism as a movement rooted in popular education, and eventually in the rise of the rabbinate. (p. 106, *A History Of The Jews*)

Addressing this same topic in his history of the Hasmonean dynasty, Elias Bickerman states:

The Pharisees . . . wished to embrace the whole people, and in particular through education. It was their desire and intention that everyone in Israel achieve holiness through the study of the Torah . . . (p. 93, *The Maccabees*)

While the Pharisees primarily came from middle-class families and were zealous for the Mosaic law, the Sadducees were generally wealthy members of the Jewish aristocracy who had embraced hellenism. Because of their support for the program of economic and military expansion instituted by the Hasmonean rulers, the Sadducees came to exercise considerable influence in the court of John Hyrcanus. During this same period, the Pharisees became distinct from the *Hasidim* who had fought against the hellenizing forces in the Maccabean revolt. The Pharisees emerged as a significant force in Jewish affairs because of their influence with the common people.

According to Josephus' classic history, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, John Hyrcanus was originally a disciple and supporter of the Pharisees. However, a Pharisee named Eleazer opposed Hyrcanus serving as high priest because of doubts about his genealogy. Eleazer alleged that his mother had been raped during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, calling Hyrcanus' lineage into question. When Hyrcanus proved that this story was a lie, a Pharisaic court recommended a lenient punishment of lashes for the slanderer. This angered Hyrcanus, who, with the encouragement of a Sadducean friend, quit the popular Pharisees and became a Sadducee. He even went so far as to abolish the Pharisaic practices that had been enacted into law and punish those who observed them. The hellenistic Sadducees consequently amassed considerable power during his reign.

Things got much worse for the Pharisees during the reign of Hyrcanus' son, Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.). One year during the Feast of Tabernacles, Alexander, performing as high priest, corrupted the libation ceremony by pouring the water over his feet instead of on the altar as the Pharisees decreed. For this, he was pelted by the religious Jews with lemons. Outraged at this affront, he had his soldiers slay 6,000 of the offenders. This brought on a civil war which lasted six years and cost 50,000 Jewish lives. When the war eventually ended, Josephus records that Alexander transported some of his Jewish prisoners of war, most of them probably Pharisees, "to Jerusalem, and did one of the most barbarous acts in the world to them; for as he was feasting with his concubines, in the sight of all the

city, he ordered about eight hundred of them to be crucified; and while they were living, he ordered the throats of their children and wives to be cut before their eyes " (bk. 13, ch. 14, sec. 2, *The Antiquities of the Jews*).

Alexander became increasingly unpopular among the Jews because of the civil war and his pro-Sadducee, hellenizing tendencies. The influence of the Sadducees was prevalent until his death in 76 B.C. On his deathbed, Alexander encouraged his wife, Salome Alexandra, to make peace with the Pharisees, since they had influence with the majority of the population. In a statement which calls to mind a major criticism Christ had of some of the Pharisees of his day, the Babylonian Talmud records Alexander telling Salome, "Fear not the Pharisees and the non-Pharisees, but the hypocrites who ape the Pharisees " (*Sotah* 22b). Once in power, Salome took her husband's advice and began favoring the Pharisees. This was not difficult for her, because her brother, Simon ben Shetech, was the leader of the Pharisees at this time.

During Salome's reign (76-67 B.C.), the Sadducees lost much of their authority. Although Salome was the recognized leader of the nation, it soon became obvious that the Pharisees had gained significant influence. They were brought into the Sanhedrin and became the major force in national politics. In reality, they became the actual power behind the throne. Now in a position to avenge earlier persecution from the pro-Sadducean faction, they had some of those who had advised Alexander put to death. After an outcry from the Sadducees, including her son Aristobulus II, Salome allowed them to leave Jerusalem for several surrounding fortresses.

Herod the Great's rule (37-4 B.C.) brought changing fortunes for both sects. One of Herod's initial political goals was to reduce the power of the Pharisees, who held enormous sway with the people. As the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* states, Herod's "first adversaries, the people and the Pharisees, objected both to his being Idumean, a half-Jew, as well as his friendship with the Romans. Those who opposed him were punished, and those who took his side were rewarded with favors and honors" (p. 319, "Herodian Dynasty").

Josephus records that two of those

rewarded were a Pharisee named Pollio and his disciple Sameas, who had encouraged the Jews to accept Herod because they felt the rule by a foreigner resulted from divine judgement and the people should willingly bear it. Perhaps because of this intervention, Herod was on fairly good terms with the Pharisees throughout most of his reign and generally avoided conflict with them until just before his death. By that time, it appears that the Pharisees as a party had essentially withdrawn from politics, although individual Pharisees may have remained politically active.

Herod also sought to diminish the position of the Sadducees, who had regained their power after the death of Salome and held the high priesthood and the majority of the seats on the Sanhedrin. One of the first things Herod did upon becoming king in 37 B.C. was to order the execution of forty-five Sadducean members of the Sanhedrin for their support of his rival for the kingship, Antigonus; in addition, he confiscated their property to pay Marc Antony, the Roman who had appointed him king. He also turned the Sanhedrin into a religious court only, taking away its power in secular matters.

Since he was only half Jewish, Herod knew the people would not tolerate him serving as high priest in addition to being king, as some of the Hasmoneans had. So he separated the two positions and began appointing high priests at his pleasure.

Eusebius, in his fourth century **Ecclesiastical History**, wrote:

When Herod was appointed king by the Romans, he no longer nominated the chief priests from the ancient lineage, but conferred the honour upon certain obscure individuals. . . . Herod was the first that locked up the sacred vesture of the high priest, and having secured it under his own private seal, no longer permitted the high priests to have it at their disposal. (p. 31, ch. VI, pop. ed.)

This broke the custom of the high priesthood being attached to a particular family. Herod also abolished the practice of the high priest holding the position for life. According to Josephus, in the 107 years from the beginning of Herod's reign to the fall of Jerusalem, there were 28 high priests. The Talmud records that by the time of Messiah, the high priest bought the office from the government and the position was changed every year. But even after he was out of office, the ex-

high priest kept his rights to the dignity of the office. These policies resulted in a group of wealthy Sadducean priestly families (primarily the Boethus, Anan, and Phiabi families) being appointed to the office on a regular basis.

Herod's decision to appoint the high priest had a major impact on the operation of the Temple. British historian Paul Johnson writes:

By downgrading the importance of the high-priest, a hated Sadducee, Herod automatically raised in importance his deputy, the *segran*, a Pharisee, who got control over all the regular Temple functions and ensured that even the Sadducee high-priests performed the liturgy in a Pharisaical manner. (pp. 117-118, **A History Of The Jews**)

While most of the priests in the service of the Temple belonged to the party of the Sadducees, there were some who were Pharisees. **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** states:

The difference between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was not a simple one of priests versus laymen (many Pharisees were also priests - mostly of the lower ranks, but probably some even in the upper levels) . . . (p. 279 vol. 4, "Sadducees")

There is some dispute among scholars about who actually controlled the Temple sacrifices and rituals before and during the time of Messiah. While many accept the witness of Josephus and the rabbinical writings, some scholars have taken the position that these Jewish historical sources cannot be trusted because they were written after 70 A.D. They have rejected the claims made in post-destruction rabbinic literature that the Pharisees were the dominant religious group in the affairs of the Temple as early as the Maccabean period. However, new evidence found among the Dead Sea Scrolls tends to discredit this skeptical view.

In reference to this dispute, Lawrence H. Schiffman, professor of Hebrew and Judaic studies at New York University, writes:

. . . Any light that might be cast on the history of the Pharisees and their teachings in the pre-destruction period would be critically important. With new evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls it is now possible to demonstrate that for much of the Hasmonean period Pharisaic views were indeed dominant in the Jerusalem Temple . . . (pp. 30-31, **Bible Review**, June 1992, "New

Light on the Pharisees: Insight from the Dead Sea Scrolls")

One of the Dead Sea Scrolls, known as MMT, sheds light on the prestige the Pharisees enjoyed prior to the ministry of Christ. According to Schiffman:

MMT is a foundation text of the Qumran sect. It was written in the early Hasmonean period when the Temple was managed and its rituals conducted in accord with Pharisaic views. The Hasmoneans made common cause with the Pharisees in order to cleanse the Temple of the excessive hellenization that they blamed to a great extent on the Sadducean priests who had become, in their view, too hellenized. Various elements in MMT and in the Temple Scroll [another Dead Sea document] represent the polemic of those who continued piously to hold fast to Sadducean views against the Hasmoneans and their Pharisaic allies.

. . . It can no longer be claimed that there is no evidence for the Pharisees earlier than the tannaitic materials and the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, who wrote after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. In fact, the scrolls provide extensive and wide-ranging testimony about the pre-destruction history of the Pharisees and their ideology. MMT and the Temple Scroll provide evidence of Pharisaic dominance over the Temple ritual in the early days of the Hasmonean period. (*Ibid.*, p. 54)

Regarding later Pharisaic control of the Temple, **The Erdmans Bible Dictionary** says:

By the time of Jesus they [the Sadducees] included the families who supplied the high priests, as well as other wealthy aristocrats of Jerusalem. Most members of the Sanhedrin, the central judicial authority of Jewish people, were Sadducees. Thus, the Sadducees were the party of those with political power, those allied with the Herodian and Roman rulers, but they were not a group with influence among the people themselves. The views of the Pharisees prevailed among the common people, so that even though the two groups differed with regard to items in the laws of purity and details of temple procedure during the feasts, the Sadducean priests were compelled to operate according to the Pharisees' views. (p. 902, "Sadducees")

Emil Schürer, in his extensive history **PAGE #14**

of the Jews during this period, wrote:

The Pharisees maintained their leadership in spiritual matters, especially in urban circles. It is true that the Sadducean high priests stood at the head of Sanhedrin. But in fact it was the Pharisees, and not the Sadducees, who made the greatest impact on the ordinary people . . . The Pharisees had the masses for their allies, the women being especially devoted to them. They held the greatest authority over the congregations, so that everything to do with worship, prayers, and sacrifice took place according to their instructions. Their popularity is said to have been so high that they were listened to even when they criticized the king or the high priest. They were in consequence able to restrain the king. For the same reason, also, the Sadducees in their official functions complied with the pharisaic requirements because otherwise the people would not have tolerated them (p. 402, vol. II, rev. ed., *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)*)

Addressing the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees regarding religious observances, Alfred Edersheim, a noted nineteenth century Jewish scholar, wrote:

Even greater importance attached to differences on *ritual* questions, although the controversy here was purely theoretical. For, the Sadducees, when in office, always conformed to the prevailing Pharisaic practices (p. 320, ch. II, bk. III, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*)

Because of their fear of the people, this Sadducean adaptation to Pharisaic views extended to all official duties the Sadducees performed. Josephus verifies this fact; of the Sadducees, he states:

They are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitudes would not otherwise bear them." (bk. 18, ch. 1, sec. 4, *The Antiquities of the Jews*)

*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* confirms this severe restriction on the power of the Sadducees during the time of Christ:

Although the spiritual power of the Pharisees had increased greatly, the

Sadducean aristocracy was able to keep at the helm in politics. The price at which the Sadducees had to secure themselves power at this later period was indeed a high one, for they were in their official actions to accommodate themselves to Pharisaic views. (p. 1112, "Sadducee")

Even though the high priest was a Sadducee, history shows that the Sadducees were compelled to follow Pharisaic customs in the Temple rituals because of their fear of the people. This gave the Pharisees effective control of Temple observances, which was probably most noticeable during the annual feasts.

Alfred Edersheim recorded the practical effects of the Pharisees' control of the Temple:

When a Sadducean high-priest, on the Feast of Tabernacles, poured out the water on the ground instead of into the silver funnel of the altar, Maccabean king though he was, he scarce escaped with his life, and ever afterwards the shout resounded from all parts of the Temple, "Hold up thy hand," as the priest yearly performed this part of the service. The Sadducees held, that on the Day of Atonement the high-priest should light the incense before he actually entered the Most Holy Place. As this was contrary to the views of the Pharisees, they took care to bind him by an oath to observe their ritual customs before allowing him to officiate at all. It was in vain that the Sadducees argued, that the daily sacrifices should not be defrayed from the public treasury, but from special contributions. They had to submit, and besides to join in the kind of half-holiday which the jubilant majority inscribed on their calendar to perpetuate the memory of the decision. The Pharisees held, that the time between Easter [Passover] and Pentecost should be counted from the second day of the feast; the Sadducees insisted that it should commence with the literal "Sabbath" after the festive day. But despite argument, the Sadducees had to join when the solemn procession went on the afternoon of the feast to cut down the "first sheaf," and to reckon Pentecost as did their opponents. (p. 220, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*)

Pharisaic control of the local synagogues was more direct. Synagogues first came into being after the Jews returned from the Babylonian

exile. They were not intended to replace the Temple, but were meant to be places of prayer and instruction in the Torah. At first, the teachers of the law in the synagogues were priests and Levites. But some in the priesthood became hellenized and lost the respect of the people because of their accommodation of Greek ideas at the expense of the law. The apocryphal book of *II Maccabees* shows that, by the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, even the priests at the Temple in Jerusalem had become enamored with the Greek way of life; so much so "that the priests had no courage to serve any more at the altar, but despising the Temple, and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the unlawful allowance in the place of exercise, after the game of Discus called them forth" (*II Macc.* 4:14).

Because of this, the scribes, who were lay teachers of the law, eventually supplanted the priests in the synagogues. The model for the scribes was Ezra, who was designated by the Hebrew title *sopher*. After the Jewish return from exile in Babylon, this term came to mean one who was learned in the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Torah. In the New Testament, these men are primarily called "scribes," but they are also referred to as "lawyers" and "teachers of the law."

Although not all Pharisees were scribes, the vast majority of the scribes were Pharisees, and they regulated the synagogues, teaching and interpreting the law. The Pharisees were solidly devoted to the daily application and observance of the Mosaic law and the "oral law," known as the Oral Torah.

Paul Johnson describes this "oral law" of the Pharisees as follows:

They followed ancient traditions inspired by an obscure text in Deuteronomy, "put it in their mouths", that God had given Moses, in addition to the written Law, an Oral Law, by which learned elders could interpret and supplement the sacred commands. The practice of the Oral Law made it possible for the Mosaic code to be adapted to changing conditions and administered in a realistic manner. (p. 106, *A History Of The Jews*)

Dr. Brad Young, a professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, writes of the oral law:

The Oral Torah clarified obscure points in the written Torah, thus enabling the

people to satisfy its requirements. If the Scriptures prohibit work on the Sabbath, one must interpret and define the meaning of work in order to fulfill the divine will. Why is there a need for an oral law? The answer is quite simple: Because we have a written one. The written record of the Bible should be interpreted properly by the Oral Torah in order to give it fresh life and meaning in daily practice. . . . Moreover, it should be remembered that the Oral Torah was not a rigid legalistic code dominated by one single interpretation. The oral tradition allowed a certain amount of latitude and flexibility. In fact, the open forum of the Oral Torah invited vigorous debate and even encouraged diversity of thought and imaginative creativity. Clearly, some legal authorities were more strict than others, but all recognized that the Sabbath had to be observed. (p. 105, ***Jesus the Jewish Theologian***)

The Sadducees however, rejected everything except the written Scriptures (primarily the Pentateuch) and their own ***Book of Decrees***, which specified a system of capital punishment: who was to be stoned, who strangled, who burned, and who beheaded. To the Law of Moses they adhered strictly to the letter, without making allowances for the spiritual intent.

This was one of the major points of contention between the Pharisees and Sadducees; however, it wasn't the only difference of belief. Both the New Testament and Josephus show that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection from the dead and the existence of spirit beings such as angels and demons. They believed humans had freedom to make their own choices, but that God could and did interpose His will in men's lives. Josephus also wrote that the Pharisees believed "souls have an immortal vigor in them," and that men would be punished or rewarded in the next age based on how they conducted themselves in this life. Josephus further states that "on account of which doctrines, they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people; and whatsoever they do about divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction" (bk. 18, ch. 1, sec. 4, ***The Antiquities of the Jews***).

Regarding the beliefs of the Pharisees, ***The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*** states:

The presentation of the Pharisees in

the Gospels is generally negative. Jesus is seen to be disputing with them continually, which suggests that his teaching was the antithesis of pharisaism. Closer investigation, however, does not support this suggestion. The NT evidence shows Jesus in agreement with beliefs and practices vitally important to the Pharisees. (p. 828, vol. 3, "Pharisees")

The Sadducees had very different beliefs from the Pharisees. They denied the resurrection of the dead, as well as the existence of spirit beings. The Sadducees believed, according to the teachings of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, that the soul dies with the body. Therefore, they taught that there were no rewards or punishments after death. The Sadducees had a deistic view of God; they saw Him as uninterested in human affairs and therefore unwilling to intervene. Regarding their views on the resurrection, Messiah issued a strong denunciation, telling them that they were wrong because they did not know the Scriptures or the power of God (Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24).

The average Jew rejected the teachings of the Sadducees, and they had very little support among the common people. While some scholars have interpreted these beliefs as a conservative effort by the Sadducees to resist religious innovations by the Pharisees, Messiah's teachings were clearly much closer to those of the Pharisees than the Sadducees. It's more likely that the doctrines of the Sadducees simply represented a corrupt elite's attempt to minimize the impact of religion on their secular lives.

***The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*** states the following about the motivation of the Sadducees:

As a result of their high social status the Sadducees were dominated by political interests, and in these areas they were rigidly conservative, it naturally being in their best interest to maintain the status quo. Maintaining the status quo necessarily entailed collaboration with the Roman occupiers, by whom their power was delegated, and for this self-serving policy the masses despised the Sadducees. (p. 279, vol. 4, "Sadducees")

During the time of Christ the two parties are thought to have been relatively small; the number of Pharisees is estimated to have been about 6,000,

while the Sadducees were only half as many. Both groups came into conflict with Christ during his ministry; however, it was the scribes and Pharisees who first opposed Yeshua.

Concerning the primary cause of this conflict, Dr. Brad Young writes:

Many scholars and Bible students fail to understand the essence of Jesus' controversial ministry. Jesus' conflict with his contemporaries was not so much over the doctrines of the Pharisees, with which he was for the most part in agreement, but primarily over the understanding of his mission. He did sharply criticize hypocrites . . . (p. 100, ***Jesus the Jewish Theologian***)

Yeshua strongly and frequently condemned the Pharisees for being self-righteous and hypocritical. Does this mean that **all** Pharisees at the time of Christ were self-righteous hypocrites? Regarding this question, Dr. Brad Young writes:

A Pharisee in the mind of the people of the period was far different from popular conceptions of a Pharisee in modern times . . . The image of the Pharisee in early Jewish thought was not primarily one of self-righteous hypocrisy . . . The Pharisee represents piety and holiness. . . . The very mention of a Pharisee evoked an image of righteousness . . . (***Ibid.***, pp. 184, 188)

Dr. Young continues:

While Jesus disdained the hypocrisy of some Pharisees, he never attacked the religious and spiritual teachings of Pharisaism. In fact, the sharpest criticisms of the Pharisees in Matthew are introduced by an unmistakable affirmation, "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice" (Matt. 23:2-3). The issue at hand is one of practice. The content of the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees was not a problem . . . The rabbis offered nearly identical criticisms against those who teach but do not practice . . . Unfortunately, the image of the Pharisee in modern usage is seldom if ever positive. Such a negative characterization of Pharisaism distorts our view of Judaism and the beginnings of Christianity . . . The theology of Jesus is Jewish and is built firmly upon the foundations of **PAGE #16**



Pharisaic thought . . . (*Ibid.*, pp. 184, 187, 188)

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's commentary on Matthew 23:2-3 concurs with Dr. Young's interpretation above. Of this passage they write:

**Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit.** The Jewish teachers stood to read, but sat to expound the Scriptures . . . **in Moses' seat** - that is, as interpreters of the law given by Moses. **3. All therefore** - that is, all which, as sitting in that seat, and teaching out of that law, they bid you observe, that observe and do. The word "therefore" is thus, it will be seen, of great importance, as limiting those injunctions which He would have them obey to what they fetched from the law itself . . . (p. 108, vol. III, **A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical**)

Addressing the character of the Pharisees, researcher John D. Keyser writes the following: "As a result of the harsh portrayal in the New Testament of these teachers of Jewish law, the very name Pharisee has become synonymous with hypocrisy and self-righteousness." He goes on to say that many modern scholars "have failed to realize that the Pharisaic religion was divided into TWO SEPARATE SCHOOLS - the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel. The group that Christ continually took to task in the New Testament was apparently the School of Shammai - a faction that was very rigid and unforgiving in their outlook" (p. 1, "Dead Sea Scrolls Prove Pharisees Controlled Temple Ritual!").

Although Pharisees were frequently the adversaries of Christ, it should also be noted that not all their interactions were hostile. Pharisees asked him to dine with them on occasion (Luke 7:36; 11:37; 14:1), and he was warned of danger by some Pharisees (Luke 13:31). Additionally, it appears that some of the Pharisees (including Nicodemus) believed in him, although they did so secretly because of the animosity of their leaders toward Christ.

The New Testament shows that Yeshua did not clash with the Sadducees until near the end of his ministry. This was because they were a political party, not the religious teachers of the people. The Sadducees were not primarily concerned with religion, but with the power they could acquire through the high priesthood and the political system. They used their position in society to increase

their wealth and affluence.

In his Bible dictionary, James Hastings describes why the Sadducees became antagonistic toward Christ:

It was only toward the close of His life that our Saviour came into open conflict with them. They had little influence with the people, especially in religious matters; His criticism was therefore mainly directed against the Pharisees and scribes, the supreme religious authorities, although, according to Matt. 16:6, 11, He also warned His disciples against the leaven of the Sadducees, meaning, probably, their utterly secular spirit. They, on their part, seem to have ignored Him, until, by driving the moneychangers out of the Temple (Matt. 21:12, Mark 11:15, Luke 19:45), He interfered with the prerogatives of the Sanhedrin. His acceptance of the Messianic title "son of David" also filled them with indignation against Him (Matt. 21:15). They accordingly joined the scribes and Pharisees in opposition to Him, and sought to destroy Him (Mark 11:18, Luke 19:47), first, however, attempting to discredit Him in the eyes of the people, and to bring down upon Him the vengeance of the Romans, by their questions as to His authority, as to the resurrection, and as to the lawfulness of paying tribute to Caesar (Matt. 21:23, 22:23, Mark 11:27, 12:18, Luke 20:1, 19, 27). In the Sanhedrin that tried Him they probably formed the majority, and the "chief priests," who presided, belonged to their party. (p. 351, vol. IV, **Hastings Dictionary of the Bible**, "Sadducees")

For a number of reasons, a group of leading Pharisees and Sadducees conspired to put Christ to death. But because of his popularity, they knew they had to do so secretly or risk the wrath of the people, because many of them considered him at the very least a prophet, and quite possibly the long-awaited Messiah. Due to the treachery of Judas Iscariot, the Pharisees and Sadducees managed to capture Yeshua by force in the dead of night. He was illegally tried and crucified before the Passover feast.

This isn't the last we hear of these two groups in the New Testament, however. The book of Acts shows that they both impacted the Church of God, each in a different way.

The Sadducees were the continual opponents of the early Church and the

apostles. No Sadducees are ever mentioned as having become part of the community of believers in the Bible. **The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary** says:

After the day of Pentecost the Sadducees were very active against the infant Church. Along with the priests and the captain of the temple they arrested Peter and John and put them in prison. A little later, they arrested all the apostles and took counsel to slay them (Acts 5:17, 33). Their hostile attitude persisted throughout the rest of the Acts of the Apostles. There is no record of a Sadducee being admitted into the Christian Church. According to Josephus (Antiq. xx, 9, 1), they were responsible for the death of James, the brother of the Lord. (p. 742, "Sadducees")

Conversely, the New Testament records that there were Pharisaic Christians in the early Church. Acts 15:5 shows some of the Pharisees who had accepted Christ as the Messiah voicing their opinion on the circumcision question. Some commentators believe that the zealous Jews mentioned in Acts 21:20 were actually Christian Pharisees. And Pharisaic scribes on the Sanhedrin council stood up for the apostle Paul when he was brought before them in 58 A.D. (Acts 23:9).

In fact, the man responsible for writing more of the New Testament than anyone else was unquestionably a member of the sect of the Pharisees. Paul affirms his affiliation in several places. In Acts 22:3, Paul states that he was a Jew brought up in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel, a leading Pharisee who had intervened for Peter and the apostles soon after the beginning of the Church (Acts 5:33-39).

In Acts 23:6, Paul publicly declared, "**I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee**" (Acts 23:6). It is very telling that more than twenty years after his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul still claims to be a Pharisee. This alone should be proof that, on a basic level, Pharisaism and Christianity did not conflict.

Regarding Paul's speech before the Sanhedrin, Luke depicts "Christianity and Pharisaism as natural allies, hence the direct continuity between the Pharisaic branch of Judaism and Christianity. The link is expressed directly in Paul's own  
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testimony: he is (now) a Pharisee, with a Pharisaic heritage (23:6). His Pharisaic loyalty is a present commitment, not a recently jettisoned stage of his religious past (cf. Phil 3:5-9). His Christian proclamation of a risen Lord, and by implication, of a risen humanity (Acts 23:6), represents a particular, but defensible, form of Pharisaic theology" (p. 1111, *Harper's Bible Commentary*).

In Philippians 3:5, Paul states that he was "concerning the law, a Pharisee." In verse 6, he goes on to say that he was "concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

Regarding Paul's exultation in this Scripture, the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* says:

As a further cause for boasting in Philippians, Paul claims to be a Pharisee. Here the term was defined with precision. The expression 'as to the Law a Pharisee' refers to the oral Law. . . . Paul thereby understood himself as a member of the scholarly class who taught the twofold Law. By saying that the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat (Mt 23:2), Jesus was indicating they were authoritative teachers of the Law. . . . In summary, Paul was saying that he was a Hebrew-speaking interpreter and teacher of the oral and written Law (p. 504, "Jew, Paul the")

The formal end of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees came after the Romans quelled the Jewish revolt of 66-70 A.D. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Pharisaism gradually died out, but the basic Pharisaic tenets lived on in an altered form, that of rabbinic Judaism. However, with the Temple destroyed and the support of the Romans withdrawn, the Sadducees ceased to exist as a party.

Nearly 2,000 years after the life and death of Christ, we have a tendency to view biblical events through the filter of our own modern western culture. But Yeshua is intricately linked to the Jewish religion and society of his day. To truly grasp the message of Yeshua, it's vital that we have a historical understanding of the time in which he lived. This requires a basic knowledge of first-century Jewish culture and society. Hopefully this paper has been helpful in arriving at a better appreciation of Messiah through a more complete understanding of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

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**New Testament**  
Strong's Ref. # 4202

Romanized porneia  
Pronounced por-ni'-ah

from GSN4203; harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively, idolatry:

KJV--fornication.

Fornication by this Strong's definition is found as Fornication 24 times and as Fornications 2 times in the King James Bible.

#### MATTHEW

- Matthew 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
  - Matthew 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of **fornication**, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.
- In the above scriptures, we can see that fornication and adultery are two different things. Further proof of this is given just a few verses before:
- Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:
  - Matthew 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

If the only grounds for divorce were adultery as many claim, then many would be able to divorce their mates just for thinking about wanting to have a different person for themselves.

Based on the above scriptures, we can conclude that fornication is clearly something more than adultery. We can also clearly see that fornication is grounds for divorce.

- Matthew 15:17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?
- Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth

from the heart; and they defile the man.

- Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, **fornications**, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
  - Matthew 15:20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.
- Here we are told what things defile a man from the inside out. Notice this next verse which clearly shows it's the dirt in a persons thoughts which defiles a person from the inside out and not the dirt which can be washed off with soap and water.
- Matthew 15:11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

- Matthew 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for **fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Here Christ clearly tells us that the only reason for a man or woman to divorce their mate is fornication. That is why it is so important to understand what this word means.

Many have so narrowly defined fornication to mean only: sex before marriage and yet here in this very scripture, it shows that Christ was speaking of this as grounds for people to divorce who are already married.

Christ further goes on to explain that if you have divorced your mate for any other reason than fornication, that you cause your mate to commit adultery and also yourself, if either of you remarry. If however the grounds for divorce were clearly fornication, only the person who was put out for committing fornication would be committing adultery or causing another person to commit adultery by a remarriage.

#### MARK

- Mark 7:20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.
- Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, **fornications**, murders,
- Mark 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:
- Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

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Here again, we see that fornication is something which defiles the body from within, and not from outside dirt that can be washed with soap and water. Notice verse 15.

- Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

#### **JOHN**

- John 8:30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.
- John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**
- John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- John 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
- John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**
- John 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.
- John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
- John 8:37 **I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.**
- John 8:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: **and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.**
- John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, **If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.**
- John 8:40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.
- John 8:41 **Ye do the deeds of your father.** Then said they to him, We be not born of **fornication**; we have one Father, even God.
- John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me:** for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
- John 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.
- John 8:44 **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye**

**will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.**

Please read the entire chapter of John 8 in context. This is a very good definition of what fornication is, right from the Bible itself. If one is born of fornication, one is born of Satan.

In context what is being said here, is that if you are obeying God, you are born of God and you will be found to be doing those things which Abraham did. If you are born of fornication, you will be found to be doing those things which your father the devil does. We are talking about lifestyle here. Does your lifestyle resemble Abraham's lifestyle or does it resemble Satan's lifestyle? If your lifestyle resembles Satan's lifestyle, then you are clearly committing fornication.

#### **ACTS**

- Acts 15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions (**defilement--Strong's #234**) of idols, and from **fornication (idolatry--Strong's #4202)**, and from things strangled (**animals not bled out--Strong's #4156**), and from blood (**bloodshed by violence, i.e. murder--Strong's #129**).
- Acts 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.
- Acts 15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from **fornication**: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Verse 20 above is a short summary of some major things which are covered in the law of God. Verse 21 shows that since the law of God as taught by Moses was already being taught in the synagogues in every city, every sabbath day, people would have clearly understood what was said in verse 20 and would have recognized it as a major part of the law of God.

- Acts 21:25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep

themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from **fornication**.

Some were saying that Paul was teaching that the law of Moses (law of God) should not be kept, because Paul taught that circumcision was not required for salvation.

- Acts 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

In the last part of verse 24, Paul is clearly showing them that the law of God must be kept and that he himself keeps it.

- Acts 21:24 ...and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

#### **ROMANS**

- Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
- Romans 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, **fornication**, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
- Romans 1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
- Romans 1:31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
- Romans 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Again, we are seeing lifestyle here. Fornicators are people who do things against God and enjoy it and people who do the same. Fornicators are people who do not like to retain God in their knowledge. It is best to read the entire chapter of Romans 1, which clearly states that these law breakers are with out excuse.

- Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

## 1 CORINTHIANS

Please read 1 Corinthians 5-7.

➤ 1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is **fornication** among you, and such **fornication** as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

In this scripture we see that the fornication being reported is incest. One of the two people involved in this lifestyle of fornication is married to his father. It becomes clear that the entire congregation has allowed it to continue for some time.

➤ 1 Corinthians 6:13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for **fornication**, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

See also verse 15-17.

➤ 1 Corinthians 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

➤ 1 Corinthians 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

➤ 1 Corinthians 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

What is being said here is that you cannot be joined to both God and Satan at the same time. Your lifestyle is to follow one or the other.

➤ 1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee **fornication**. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

From the book of John we arrive at a definition of fornication which helps us to understand the above scripture. We all sin and make mistakes in this life, but many of our sins are committed out of ignorance or because we just didn't think. In other words many sins we commit are not intentional. Fornication on the other hand seems to be an intentional lifestyle which is totally against God.

Let's take an alcoholic for instance. How many times has an alcoholic been told that their particular lifestyle of drinking is not right and better yet how it affects those around them? If one is told and still continues in such a lifestyle, that lifestyle is clearly intentional. Take any of a number of lifestyles which are against God and no matter how many times it is brought to the fornicators attention that what he is doing is wrong, he continues in

his or her fornication.

King David gives us a good example. When David was confronted with his affair with Bath-sheba, he immediately repented. I do not see any other recorded affairs that David had with other women in scripture. David made a mistake and he repented of that mistake. David did not continue to do the same thing over and over again making a lifestyle of such behavior.

To sin outside of the body would be to do it in ignorance or without thought. To sin against ones own body is to sin intentionally, knowing full well that it is wrong, but yet doing it over and over again.

➤ 1 Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

➤ 1 Corinthians 7:2 Nevertheless, to avoid **fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Here verse 1 explains verse 2. It is better to be married than to touch (have relations with) a woman that you are not married to. In other words to avoid a lifestyle of having sexual intercourse with many woman, get married so you have your own wife or husband. This will help you avoid a lifestyle of fornication.

## 2 CORINTHIANS

➤ 2 Corinthians 12:21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and **fornication** and lasciviousness which they have committed.

This is part of a letter Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church where he feels that many will not have repented of fornication by the time he next visits them.

## GALATIANS

➤ Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, **fornication**, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

➤ Galatians 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

➤ Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Here is an excellent reason to make sure that one understands the real

definition of the word fornication, because if we are committing fornication, we will not make it into the Kingdom of God.

## EPHESIANS

➤ Ephesians 5:3 But **fornication**, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

In other words, as we are to be God's people, clean and holy--we should not be at the same time bringing shame on God and his way by leading lifestyles of alcoholism, adultery, idol worship, homosexuality, hatred towards others, etc. etc.

## COLOSSIANS

➤ Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; **fornication**, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **(also-Strong's #2532)** covetousness, which is **(are-Strong's #2076)** idolatry:

This is a list of things which are considered to be idolatry. Idolatry is not just the worship of statues or men. Idolatry can also include the things we do if we are continually lusting after certain things which are against God as in a lifestyle of sin.

## 1 THESSALONIANS

➤ 1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from **fornication**:

In verse 1 of chapter 4, it states we "ought to know how to walk to please God". So in context when we are told to abstain from fornication, what is being said, is we need to abstain from walking in the way of Satan.

## REVELATION

➤ Revelation 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her **fornication**; and she repented not.

In context, this is talking about how God gave Jezebel and those who followed her a chance to repent of fornication and they did not.

➤ Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet **repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:**

➤ Revelation 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries,



nor of their **fornication**, nor of their thefts.

More scriptures on unrepentant lifestyles.

➤ Revelation 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her **fornication**.

Babylon is fallen due to fornication, i.e. sin.

➤ Revelation 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed **fornication**, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Again we are seeing a lifestyle of fornication--sin. The Kings of the earth have committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth are drunk with sin, because they went willingly along with it.

➤ Revelation 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her **fornication**:

➤ Revelation 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

I believe that verse 5 explains verse 4. Fornication is abomination against God.

➤ Revelation 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her **fornication**, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Here we are again talking about the system of Satan. Read the following verse:

➤ Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

This is a plea for people to turn away from sin and turn to God.

➤ Revelation 19:2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her **fornication**, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

God will eliminate Satan's system and the Kingdom of God will remain forever, and ever.

## CONCLUSION

I am sure that everyone who has followed this article can see that this is a rather large subject and what I have covered is minimal. I encourage everyone to study this subject for themselves and if you find something more, we would like to hear from you.

The conclusion I see from all of this, is that God allows divorce for the reason of fornication. Several scriptures throughout the Bible show that if you follow God you are at one with God and if you follow Satan you are at one with Satan. You cannot do both at the same time. The things of Satan cannot be bound to the things of God.

In a marriage situation if one person is following God and the other person is following Satan, you are unequally yoked. Being married to a person who is just a non believer is far different than being married to a person who is clearly leading a lifestyle which is in total opposition to God, such as alcoholism, adultery, drug addiction, homosexuality, wife beating, serial murder, etc. etc. etc.

The decision to divorce or to remarry is a private matter between only the people involved and God. It is also good to get outside counsel from someone you trust if that is possible.

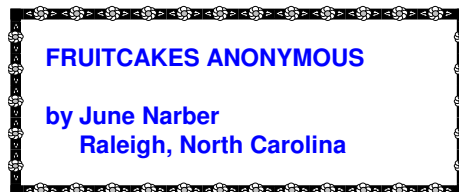
We here believe that God's original intent for marriage was one man, one woman from youth and stay married until death do you part. However sin entered the world and for the hardness (unrepentant) heart (mind), God allowed divorce for the reason of fornication (lifestyle of unrepentant sin).

How do I know if it is okay for me to divorce or to remarry?

➤ Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

➤ Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

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Among all of the multitude of Sabbath keepers across America, there are some excellent ministers and ministries. Unfortunately though, there are some that we need to be careful of. These ministers or in some cases, simple "spiritual leaders", teach things that are

basically, really off the wall (Hebrews 13:9). The problem begins when a man gets a wild idea and he begins to fantasize that he is a special called one of God. This is what I call *Prophet fever*, or even worse, is *Two witness syndrome*. Two Witness Syndrome is when an individual starts imagining that they are one of the two witnesses that God has promised would stand up in the last days and confront the end time "beast" system. The nicest word I could come up with that describes these individuals is fruitcake. Fruitcake is made up of all kinds of dried fruit and different nuts. My point exactly.

We are living in troubled times. Many brethren are used to strong prophecy as part of their church experience. We should be concerned about prophecy and world events. God tells us to watch world events and pray we are worthy to escape the coming tribulation (read Luke 21:31-36). The first group of men I will discuss are those with prophet fever: The prophet fever fruitcake.

These individuals take prophecy out of Biblical perspective and turn it into the gospel. Their whole focus is watching world events and trying to fit them into a time scale so as to predict the end of the world (age). They also are alarmists. Their whole objective is to keep brethren scared out of their minds so they keep sending them money. Satan uses these deceived souls to get Christians' minds off of the important issues: like obeying God, developing Godly character, loving and serving others, and living by every word of scripture. The most dangerous of this type of individual are those that attempt to gather Christians together to a central location or compound, claiming it is the promised place of safety. For those of you who are not familiar with this term, many Sabbath keeping churches believe, based on Revelation 2:14-17 and 7: 3-8, that God has promised his end time people a physical place of safety or protection before the tribulation and the end of the world (age) occurs. The dangerous thing about these men who are gathering or who will attempt to gather brethren together, be it in the United States, or those who radically try to fly to Jordan to the popularly believed place of safety, is that this is the type of occurrence that makes people outside of our religious background think that we are all part of a crazy and dangerous cult.

Never forget the Waco incident. I am

sure our government is very interested in such attempts and preaching of a "place of safety". From past experience, they probably believe that religious folk will gather and attempt to commit suicide.

God says that he who seeks to save his own life, the same shall lose it (Luke 17:3 and Mark 8:35). We know for sure that the end of the world (age) will come. It could be soon or many years from now. A Christian should live every day they have to the glory of God, and not worry about when it is going to happen, but know with confidence that when it does happen, God's will shall be done in their lives. I am not saying there is not a place of safety. Personally, I think there will be one, but not one of HUMAN creation. Could it be that if a self-proclaimed prophet tries to put out an alarm that it is time to flee and people flock to a location to save their mortal lives, that will be the first place God allows to be struck, and they might likely all die? Trying to take matters into one's own hands is most definitely a strong evidence of a lack of faith! Please note Luke 17:34-37. We could use this scripture to demonstrate that in the case there is a place of safety, the Biblical example is that God supernaturally gets his people there, rather by angelic messenger or other direct intervention. **The humans do not decide when and where to go.** Also, remember the example of Lot leaving Sodom and Gomorrah; and the Israelites leaving Egypt, both were by supernatural commandment.

Is it so horrible the thought of dying for what you believe? Martyrdom is also prophesied in Revelation for some of God's brethren. The problem is we can not know whom this will happen to for sure or when it will happen. (Matthew 25:13). Why worry about it? If we have to die for God, so be it! The next second in our conscious minds, we will be resurrected to all power and glory as a child of God: AND the best part, we will be in the Kingdom: no more Satan, demons or evil for a thousand years!!

Why am I writing an article about fruitcakes, the end time, and possible martyrdom to a multi-doctrinal Sabbath keeper's newsletter? Because, regardless of what you personally believe about WHAT will happen in the end time, scripture tells us that we should 1) watch world events (Luke 21:36); 2) not be deceived by false prophets (Matthew 7:15); 3) grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18); 4) obey

and live by God's commandments (Revelation 12:17); 5) have the peace and joy from the presence of God's Holy Spirit in us (I Thes. 5:13, II Corinthians 13:11, Philipians 4:7, and I Peter 5:14).

*How do men get these ideas?* First of all, it is the illusion of their own importance that deceives them. Satan is active in all of these situations too, and his demons seeking who they can influence. *Who can be deceived by them?* Anyone who has not developed the meat of the spiritual word and gone on to grow and overcome with the help of God's Holy Spirit. Many of these individuals have not allowed God to work in them to develop their spiritual and physical talents to use to His Glory. The humans involved are self absorbed in first, the fear of the prospect of dying for God and secondly, in the illusion that God can only be working with one little tiny church at any given time. One group even calls their members the "jewels of God", as they have been refined from the rest of us *luke warm* and sinful people.

One warning sign of such a fruitcake is a person that concentrates on one main topic most of the time and refuses to preach the other important aspects of Christianity. Prophecy is one of the most common concentrations. The Bible does not become fanatical about any one particular fact that we must obey above all others in order to be saved from eternal death. Other common subjects include pronouncing God's name a certain way; Holy Day postponement arguments; belonging to the ONLY true Church of God on Earth (their church, of course!); not tithing fully to THEIR church; not obeying the given minister or spiritual leader in all things, and so forth. To not believe, perform, or focus on the given doctrine means you are going to the Lake of Fire. I once heard a man teach that women were judged worthy of eternal life by how well they submit to the authority of men, if women received higher education, obtained professional careers, or had any authority over any man in the physical world, they were doomed and of course, under the control of Satan. Funny, I always thought the Bible taught that eternal life was a gift of God received upon repentance, faith in Christ and living the rest of their physical lives in obedience to God's Laws!

It is amazing at how many individuals these days believe that they are prophets. Some openly claiming that they are! Rest assured, that when God

Almighty raises up HIS prophets, there will be no doubt in any of our minds who they are, especially the Two witnesses. They will teach and preach the commandments and every word of Scripture. When they prophesize, they will state What is to happen to Who, and Where, and it will come to pass exactly as they said it would. A few of the latest predictions I have heard some of the self-proclaimed prophets make hit or miss by a few days, or happen SORT OF the way they said they would. I think their prophesizing is really more of an educated guess. I can do that too, so does that make me a prophetess? I think not! The Two Witnesses will also expose the Beast and the false religious system openly for the whole world to see. Great powers will be given to them as well: they will have the power to control the weather and impose punishment and judgment as they see fit, according to what God wills for them to do. They do not sit behind desks NOW ushering out judgments on the churches and people of God, and they most definitely would not be trying to scare the dickens out of elderly people about being murdered, tortured etc. if the person did not join their particular religious group. Others teach that the two witnesses are just metaphors in Revelation. If so, does that mean our eternal life and the Kingdom of God are just metaphors too? NO WAY!!

If the day comes and you are imprisoned or face impending torture or death for the truth of God, stand firm, rest in the power and will of God, and great glory will be given to you if you endure to the very end. I don't like the idea of having to die for my belief, but I will if this is what it takes for me to prove my faithfulness to God. However, I would rather believe that my daily life is testimony of this, but that is not my, nor your decision to make. We can only be aware of what the prospects are and be willing to do whatever it takes to endure unto the end (Revelation 12:11).

Fruitcakes sometimes look good from the outside, and sometimes they smell good. But they still are fruitcakes any way you cut them up: full of fruits and nuts. The bread of life is Jesus Christ. In him, we have confidence and power and faith. Allow no human to deceive you, nor to take your crown of life (Revelation 3:11).

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We cannot go in and put you on the new list. You have to put yourself on the new list, and there are 2 ways you can do that. They are as follows:

#1--Use the invitation we sent you from Coollist. That Web Site link takes you right to the place where you can sign up/join the new list. The link on the invitation can be found under: "If you would like to participate in this mailing list, please visit the following web page on the web:" Then it gives you the link. This is the easiest way for you to sign up, so if you no longer have any of the invitations that we sent to you, let me know and I will send you another one, or if you never got an invitation but would like one, please e-mail us at [Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com](mailto:Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@Juno.com) and we will send you an invitation. The subject line on the invitation reads "Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura Registration". This E-mail Prayer line is open to the general public.

#2--You can go to our Web Site at: <http://darwinlauralee.150m.com> and go into the Prayer Requests & Updates section. There is a box there where you can subscribe to our new list. You put your e-mail address in the box and click on the subscribe button, which takes you into the Coollist web site, where you would click on the "Join" button and follow the instructions. This is a little harder way of doing it.

If you still have problems getting on the new list, let me know, and I will work with you. Thank You and I am looking forward to seeing you on the new list. Editor Laura Lee

Please send your prayer request by snail mail to: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502  
By E-mail to: [Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@juno.com](mailto:Prayer-Requests-Darwin-Laura@juno.com) By Fax to: (775) 239-2119.

**I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE PRAYER REQUESTS AND UPDATES VIA SNAIL MAIL.**

Darwin & Laura Lee Name \_\_\_\_\_  
320 N. Griffin St. Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Bismarck, ND 58501 \_\_\_\_\_  
(701) 258-7172 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**THESE TAPES ARE FROM THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM IN MINNESOTA. FOR INFORMATION ON THE BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAM YOU MAY CONTACT DALE & DONA FEHR AT [DLFehr@compuserve.com](mailto:DLFehr@compuserve.com) TAPES MAY BE ORDERED THROUGH US.**

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| _____ 17. Ray Wooten 4-19-03                                                           | _____ 18. C. Wayne Cole 6-7&8-03 (2 Tapes)                  |

**CD'S**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Miracle of Hope and Nadia---2 Rich Text Files & 1 Media Player File

**LITERATURE** [Snail Mail Only]

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Why Were We Disfellowshipped By The United Church of God an International Association? by Darwin & Laura Lee 111 pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Wiley & Suzanne Black (Another Case of Abuse) by Bernard Kelly (The Bible Expositor--Last Issue) 16 pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Garnet Hill Story (Another Case of Abuse) 28 pages

**ARTICLE REPRINTS**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Is Disfellowshipping a Christian Practice?--by Arlan Weight--Issue #2
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Just Judgment Important for Local Congregations--by Darwin Lee & Norman Edwards--Issue #2
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Letter of Appeal--by Ned Dancuo--Issue #2
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Go To Your Brother--by Arlan Weight--Issue #2
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Passover--by Arlan Weight--Issue #3
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage--by Laura Lee--Issue #3
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Testimony of Abuse within the Church of God--by Tawanda Ray--Issue #4

**TRACTS (Article Reprints)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. UCG Attendance Policy Raises More Questions & About a Shepherd--From Servant's News--Issue #1
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ending the Cycle of Abuse in the Church of God--by Laura Lee--Issue #1
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What is Heart?--by Don & Petra Esposito & Laura Lee--Issue #3
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What is Division?--by Dave Baldauf & Laura Lee--Issue #3
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What is Individual Responsibility?--by Tawanda Ray & Laura Lee--Issue #3
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Titanic--Then and Now--by Myra McQueen--Issue #4

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BIBLICAL ERRORS  
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PLEASE EMAIL  
US WITH THE  
DETAILS.**

**OR SEND US THE  
DETAILS VIA  
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**ALL CONTACT  
INFORMATION IS  
ON PAGE #2.**

**Laura Lee (Editor)**