

Hating Evil, Fearing God

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PAGE 3 **Article**

"...You shall be judged"

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PAGE 7 **Article**

Day of – ATONEMENT – Gospel in Advance: Yom Kippur

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PAGE 9 **Article**

Kenya Update November 3, 2023

(Copyright 2023) by William P. Goff
(Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

PAGE 10 **Article**

Divine Assignments

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PAGE 13 **Article**

Johnny Bravo

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PAGE 15 **Short Article**

Will God Use Foreign-Born Immigrants to Save America?

(Copyright 2022) by Eddie Hyatt
(Grapevine, Texas)

PAGE 16 **Short Article**

Too Big to Fall?

(Copyright 2023) by Gary C. Miller
(Pocahontas, Arkansas)

PAGE 17 **Short Article**

A Country Divided!

(Copyright 2023) by Richard Markland
(London, Ohio)

PAGE 18 **Short Article**

Ads

18 --- Ad Space from BibleStudy.org

Parthia's Predicament (Part 5)

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PAGE 19 **Special Edition Article**

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PAGE 23 **Special Edition Article**

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

Hating Evil, Fearing God

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"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil . . ." —Proverbs 8:13

At a Feast of Tabernacles in Columbia, Missouri, my wife and I saw something that illustrates the double-mindedness of this world. Returning to the hotel after lunch one day, we pulled up to a stoplight. The car ahead sported a fake, bloody arm hanging out of the closed trunk. Gory handprints, footprints, and the outline of a bloody cleaver marked the back of the car. Across the rear window, scrawled in blood-red paint, were the words "The Necropolis," Latin for "city of the dead." The Necropolis bills itself as "The Most Extreme Haunted House in Missouri" where "Terror never felt so good."

This rolling advertisement for evil jarred our senses, but it was unsurprising. We were, after all, in an active college town, and it was October, the silly season for Halloween. However, we were surprised when the driver, a young woman, merged into the left-turn lane and turned into the College Park *Christian Academy*. While we cannot be sure that the driver actually attended the school, this scene at least gave the *appearance* that righteousness was fellowshipping with lawlessness and that Christ was in harmony with Belial.

If the driver of this depraved advertisement were, in fact, a student at the Christian Academy, she should have taken Paul's words to heart: "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22, KJV). Regardless of whether she considered herself a Christian, her public promotion of evil indicated that something critical was missing from her life. She did not have a proper fear of God, as we find in Proverbs 8:13: "The fear of the LORD is to *hate evil*..."

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

Defining "Evil"

Proverbs 8:13 is one of the definition verses of the Bible, along with "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, KJV) and "the love of God [is] that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:3), among others. Here, the *fear of the LORD* is defined as "hating evil."

The Bible uses "evil" in a wide variety of ways, but as we might expect, its basic meaning is simply "bad" or "negative." It appears in both the passive and active senses. When used passively, it describes distress, misery, misfortune, calamity, or repulsiveness. Proverbs 8:13, however, does not express the passive form of evil but the active form, which Scripture uses in two ways: The first can be defined as "what is wrong with regard to God's original and ongoing intent," while the second is narrower in scope, "what is detrimental in its effects on mankind."

People are most familiar with the second definition. We typically imagine something purposefully injurious or intentionally unkind when we think of evil. It is not merely *bad* in the sense that a hurricane may be bad; it is more than just unpleasant but terrible *by someone's design*. In this definition of evil, there is *intent* to harm or at least ambivalence toward harm done to another. Evil does not care if harm is done.

In his book, *People of the Lie*—subtitled "The Hope for Healing Human Evil"—Dr. M. Scott Peck provides a simple yet profound definition of *evil*: "that which does harm to life or liveliness." The book is about malignant narcissism: self-centeredness so extreme and pervasive that those possessing it continually injure others around them, not with physical wounds, but with subtle assaults on their emotional or spiritual well-being. This evil cannot be observed directly—the malignant narcissist is a master of deception—but can be seen only in its *effects* on others, in subtle violence perpetrated against others' human spirit. Even as these people harm life and liveliness, they put on a pretense of righteousness and piety, terrified at the thought that others might see them as they truly are or that they might actually have to face themselves.

This second way that "evil" is used in the Bible—"what is detrimental in terms of its effects on mankind," or "that which does harm to life or liveliness"—can be quite subjective. Thus, the Bible also defines evil as "what is wrong *according to God's intent*." A standard description in the Old Testament is that a particular person or group "did evil *in the sight of the LORD*." This description is critical because the people did not consider their deeds evil. In their view, they were harmless acts. Nobody was getting hurt, and nothing detrimental occurred (that they could see), so they did not consider their behavior to be evil. But what they did *was* evil—in God's sight.

Israel and Judah justified blatant idolatry and even child sacrifice by saying that they were not doing any harm or that the harm it *might* do to the child was insignificant compared to the "greater good" that they believed would come from the sacrifice. The same justification is used for the practice of abortion today.

Israel did not consider temple prostitution harmful either, but in the eyes of God—the only eyes that see objectively—what they did was evil. It was wicked not just in terms of going against God's intent; it went against God's intent *because* it was injurious to those involved, even though they could not see it. In their myopic pride, they could not see that what they were involved in would ultimately bear horrible fruit. So, God had to define right and wrong, good and evil, because man is so shortsighted that he often cannot see what will cause harm to himself or a neighbor.

The "haunted house" mentioned above is an excellent example of this. Halloween is nothing short of the glorification of evil. Its roots extend back to the Celtic—meaning Israelitish—festival of Samhain, the "lord of the dead." It was a boiling mixture of drunkenness, revelry, licentiousness, vandalism, treachery, superstition, anarchy, and rank demonism.

Today, this festival is dressed up in a creative costume and dubbed "fun for the kids," but its essence is the same. The world calls it "harmless fun," but it is evident from Scripture that it is "evil in the sight of the LORD." The seed from which Halloween grew was paganism—really just a softer term for "demonism"—and if the seed is evil, the fruit will also be evil, even if presented in a "fun" way. Yet, modern Israelites enjoy this annual dose of witches, vampires, and werewolves. They have no problem indulging in the occult, if only in their imaginations.

However, Proverbs 8:13 says that those who fear God instinctively and earnestly loathe those things that harm life and liveliness, even if the harm is not immediately apparent. The elements of Halloween, no matter what guise they take, are contrary to eternal life with God. If we fear God—if we respect Him and what He stands for—we also oppose all He is

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

against, which certainly includes anything associated with "the evil one" or his subservient "evil spirits."

What Godly Fear Produces

But what does "the fear of the LORD" at the beginning of the verse entail? Another proverb, Proverbs 9:10, helps us to understand: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." While Proverbs 8:13 defines what the fear of the Lord *is*, Proverbs 9:10 shows what it *produces*. Understanding the effect of the fear of the Lord will help us to understand the cause.

This verse uses a Hebraism in which the two clauses are written in parallel. The "fear of the LORD" in the first clause is linked to "knowledge of the Holy One" in the second, and likewise, the "beginning of wisdom" corresponds to "understanding." Most translations hide the fact that the Hebrew word rendered as "Holy One" is actually plural. It refers to both holy, divine Beings—the Father and the Son. We can more fully grasp this in conjunction with John 17:3, where Jesus says that knowing the Father and the Son—having personal, intimate knowledge of the Holy Ones—is eternal life.

In tying these things together, we see that the wisdom and understanding in Proverbs 9:10 are not abstract concepts but are related to eternal life. They are foundational to being able to live eternally. The reverential awe and respect—fear—of God is what produces wisdom in making sound choices, having good judgment, and understanding cause and effect. The fear of God makes for a good life—not just for the self but for everyone for all time.

James describes such "wisdom from above" as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). These elements produce a good life, a life of spiritual wisdom. All of these terms are opposites of evil, of causing harm. Godly fear causes a man to evaluate correctly and arrive at the proper conclusion about what he should or should not do. Ultimately, the fear of the Lord teaches us to live eternally—to live with the skill that the Father and the Son have in living.

Returning to Proverbs 8:13, we can see how hating evil fits into this conclusion. When we are vehemently opposed to all that does harm to life and liveliness, and our lives reflect this, we are beginning to live as God does. However, we have to put wisdom in the context of eternity. What may seem "harmless" in the short term may bear evil fruit in the long term. Unless we are able—and willing—to look as far forward as possible to see the outcome, we may not be able to perceive the harm.

Because of man's fickle and shortsighted nature, God has explicitly defined what is good and evil in His law, and the evil He defines is sin. It may not be immediately apparent to humans that burning incense to the Queen of Heaven causes harm because people are shortsighted enough not to realize they are paying homage to a worthless substitute of the true Creator, the One who gives life. Thus, God explicitly commands us to worship no other gods (Exodus 20:3).

Mankind may not see the harm in a "little white lie" (Exodus 20:16), but the One "who inhabits eternity" knows that truth and life are inextricably linked. When falsehood enters in, so do defilement and ultimately death.

Humanity may not be aware of the harm caused by coveting (Exodus 20:17), but the One "who knows the end from the beginning" and who created human intellect and the human heart knows that sin begins in the heart. The best way to stop sin at its source is to help mankind guard his heart before any sin can be produced.

Hate What God Hates

The last half of Proverbs 8:13 goes even further: "Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." To see who is saying this, we must back up a verse: "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion." Wisdom, personified here, vehemently opposes pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth.

An active understanding of what will produce abundant good for eternity—that is, wisdom—causes a person to hate its opposite: to despise evil and what causes it. All of the evil in the world is traced back to sin, and sin entered the world through Adam (Romans 5:12). Adam chose to sin, even though Satan perpetrated evil by encouraging Adam in a way that ended up doing tremendous harm to life and liveliness, not only for himself but also for every person that has come from him.

The four examples of evil in Proverbs 8:13, which *always* end up doing harm, were manifested in Satan, and all of his

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

children continue to exhibit them (see John 8:38, 41, 44). A progression is shown: Pride and arrogance are conditions of the heart, which is where it all starts. Where pride is in the heart, it will come out in "the evil way," in *action*.

Evil also emerges in words, though it may not always be obvious. Jesus cautions in Matthew 12:34, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." When evil resides in the heart, it will be exposed in *perverse* speech, language contrary to the truth of God and love. James 3:8 declares that "no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." He also says, "If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man" (James 3:2). We can only reach that perfection with God's intervention and help, which, thankfully, we have.

The apostle Paul essentially says that the foundation of good works—particularly within the church of God—is humility or lowliness:

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

However, if works are done with pride or arrogance or for the sake of appearance rather than truth and righteousness, they will cause harm. They may also produce some good, but the account of the Two Trees in the Garden of Eden teaches that, in the context of eternity, a mixture of good and evil is in reality only evil.

In II Corinthians, Paul stresses the need for believers to separate themselves from what defiles—evil. His concluding instruction is that the fear of God is how we accomplish this perfecting of holiness:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the LORD Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1)

We who believe in Christ's name, who have received Him, have been given the right—the authority—to become children of God (John 1:12). If we, as Paul instructs, separate ourselves from what is unclean, we will be His sons and daughters. Children resemble their parents, and one way we learn to resemble God is by loving the things He loves and hating the things He hates. God hates those things that harm the life and liveliness of His current and future children. As we grow in His image, we should also hate what is evil. That is one way we fear and respect Him.

The more we fear and revere the holiness of God, the more we grasp our own flaws and defilement. This, in turn, causes us to hate the evil we find within ourselves (Matthew 5:3-4, 6) and despise the elements of our nature that would make us miserable or cause misery in others if they were allowed to continue forever.

Yet, identifying those things is impossible without allowing the light of truth to shine into our lives. That light comes through knowing God and Jesus Christ. Knowing them helps us to develop the proper fear of God, and at the same time, it helps us to begin to see, by contrast, what things in us cause harm to life and liveliness.

See David C. Grabbe's other articles at:

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We must each personally realize that we will be judged for what we do—we cannot use the greater errors of others as an excuse for our own sin.

When a person first began to learn the basic truth of the Bible, there is often a great personal struggle trying to obey. He or she may need to discontinue Sabbath jobs or activities, clean up his or her diet or vocabulary. Each person certainly must learn to view his or herself in a completely different perspective—as a person that needs the Eternal for forgiveness, salvation, and new life.

But as the years go by, the "first love" for the truth of many tends to fade. As long as we show up for services, continue contributing and do not "rock the boat" the other brethren seem to be happy with us. If, in addition to this, we are spending a reasonable amount of time in prayer and Bible study, we can easily become very content with ourselves. But is that what our Father expects of us? Are we being judged for what we do now?

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10). Not only are deeds important, but also our words: "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt 12:36-37).

While it is the sacrifice of our savior that will ultimately make us clean in the day of judgment (1Jn 4:17, Rev 1:5), we are still accountable for what we do now. We will be rewarded based on what we do in this life.

Wonderful Lessons in Luke 12

The entire chapter of Luke 12 contains an excellent message for how we should live if we hope to be judged favorably for what we do now. The Messiah was addressing his disciples as well as a huge group of people. The whole chapter is excellent reading, but we will quote parts most relevant to the topic of personal judgment.

"...Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops" (Luke 12:1-3) We should think of these verses whenever we say something like "what they don't know won't hurt them." We are responsible even when no one else knows that a problem is our fault.

"And He said to His disciples, 'Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; not about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.... And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you' (Luke 12:22-23, 29-31).

There is nothing wrong with material things—they are promised here as a reward to the faithful. But do these things consume our lives? Are we constantly talking about our quality of food, clothing, housing or entertainment? Is our religion limited to a certain amount of prayer, study, and financial contributions? Are we growing personally and being a light to others?

"Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat and will come and serve them.... Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12:35-37,40). We are to be a light to others, they should be able to see our works. We are to be serving, doing the work until the end. Our Messiah and the apostles endured life-threatening events to preach

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

the Gospel. Will they be satisfied if we tell them “the Church corporation that had the most money went astray, so we couldn’t preach the Gospel?”

“Then Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?’ And the Lord said, ‘Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has’” (Luke 12:41-44). Peter wondered who the Messiah was talking to here, just the disciples, or to everyone? The answer was He was talking to whoever it would be that was doing the work—there is no emphasis on apostleship or some other rank, but on being a faithful servant.

“But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the menservants and maidservants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers” (Luke 22:45-46). Some of us expected the Messiah to return many years ago, but He did not. Some “leaders” of the brethren are spending their energies attacking their fellow servants.

“And that servant who knew his master’s will and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:47-48). Whether these are physical or spiritual stripes is a topic for another article. **Anyone that has ever been beaten knows that it hurts—it is something to be avoided.** It was our merciful saviour that felt so strongly about this issue that he used this graphic terminology. What category of person are you and I? Do we know our master’s will or do we not? Do we have an understanding of the Truth? Are we a living example of it? Do we know that it was through the preaching of other men that we heard the Gospel? Can we prove that there are no more to be called and chosen? What are we doing about it?

“Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” (Luke 12:51-53). The context of these verses is still the same as above: doing the Master’s will when he returns. We can expect divisions among His servants, even among families. The Master is judging His servants, he wants to know who is seeking him and who is going along for the ride (1Cor 11:19).

Judge Ourselves Now

“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world” (1Cor 11:31-32).

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and Godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?” (2Pet 3:10-12.)

See Norman S. Edwards other articles at:

Edwards, Norman S. – Church of God, Bismarck (church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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The high priest entered the most holy place once a year on the Day of Atonement. **Hebrews 9:1-8**, Verse 8 "The Holy Spirit was showing by this that - the way - into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed." **John 14:5-6** "Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know "the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Leviticus 23:26-27 "The Lord said to Moses - The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves." V28 "Do not work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement." The Day of Atonement is an invitation and command, calling believers to identify with the death and sufferings of Christ by fasting on this day. It is also a prophecy that Christ would suffer.

*The - Holy Place in God's Temple - was symbolic of the Father's Presence. Christians who believe God are God's temple: Romans 8:10-11 "If Christ is in you your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of believing God. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." Eternal life or Salvation is: **John 17:3** "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

Leviticus 23:29 "Anyone who does not - deny himself - on that day must be cut off from his people." **When speaking of his death and suffering, Jesus Christ said:** Luke 9:23 "If anyone would come after me, he must - "deny himself" - and take up his cross daily - accept life's trials without complaining - and follow me." We identify, with Christ, in his suffering and death by - denying ourselves - on the Day of Atonement. The concept of Christians willingly "denying" yourself extends to repentance. Jesus Christ commands all to "deny" themselves warning of Judgment Day: by saying "unless you repent you too will all perish Luke 13:3-5." That is the same as saying: Leviticus 23:29 "Anyone who does not - deny himself - on that day must be cut off from his people."

The gospel in advance: All those who are called to believe in the God of Israel, are commanded to fast on the Day of Atonement so that we may identify with the suffering of Messiah Crucified. Understanding the Son of God paid our debt of sin. What other reason would there be for God to say, "anyone who does not deny himself or "repent" must be cut off from his people?" God teaches believers to accept, persecution, hardships, and trials in our lives as discipline from God; Hebrews 12:7 "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons."

Christians seeking acceptance of the world is a snare. If the world accepts you - you do not belong to Christ. Children of God: Should expect to be rejected and persecuted by the world, as Jesus Christ was, and wear that persecution like a crown.

The apostles felt privileged to suffer persecution for Christ. Acts 5:41" rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering" for Jesus Christ. **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives. **Philippians 1:29** "It has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him." **Philippians 3:10-11**, I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow to attain to the resurrection of the dead.

*The fulfillment of the Day of Atonement: Is when God gives the nation of Israel his Holy Spirit and reveals the sacrifice of his Son Christ Jesus to them. Jeremiah 31:31-33 and Ezekiel 36:24-36 is speaking of God's Holy Spirit being poured on the Jews and the nation of Israel. Ezekiel 36:25 "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a **new heart and put a new Spirit in you**; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. This will be - reversing what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 11:25 NIV "Israel has experienced a hardening in part." Ezekiel 36:24 "I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back to your own land." V27, "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

National Repentance: V31, “Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loath yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.” This attitude of repentance will spread to all the “survivors from all the nations” Zechariah 14:16 after Christ’s return. Zechariah 12:10 - I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a Spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced.” They will “grieve bitterly for him.” “On that day, the weeping in Jerusalem will be great.”

Christians and Jews, observe the Day of Atonement, by fasting and remember, we are identifying, with the great suffering and death of the Son of God. **On the Day of Atonement read:** Isaiah 53:3-12, John 19:33-34 and Matthew 27:27-31 - that describes the great suffering of our Savior. Our Father in Heaven paid our debt of sin:

Christ Jesus Crucified is Light that shines beyond the Grave! Praise God.

See Richard Frate’s other articles at:

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Hope you are well and have a wonderful upcoming Sabbath!

Your Kenyan brethren want to thank you again for all the help you have given them. They were so happy and appreciative for being able to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. It was also wonderful that (thanks to you donors) we were also able to send them home with little extra funds, which they used to purchase ingredients to make some solid food like chapatti bread, and beans.

You donors are a wonderful help to our impoverished brethren. Even this past week a few donations came in and we forwarded to the remote orphans and widows funds to buy soap for washing clothes and washing themselves. (They had not bathed with any soap in over a week.) They also bought some much needed clothes for those 30 remote orphans living in the bush. So, thank you very much for helping them.



Daniel and his children in front of their house.

Two of the children are Daniel’s (he had four children, but two died from starvation along with his wife last year.)

The other two are orphans of Agnes (the young church widow from the Itongo congregation who also died from starvation

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

just over a year ago.) Daniel was quick to take them in after their mother died. Thanks to your support, none of our brethren have died of starvation in over seven Months now, although they have been surviving mostly on porridge.

You donors have been helping so many of our widows, orphans, and impoverished brethren. Pictured below is Francis, who lives with his widowed Grandmother. This past week your donations purchased him a mattress and a plastic container to catch some rainwater off of his roof. Catching some rainwater is a big blessing because the only other source of water is what he fetches from the river, a ½ hour walk (each way) from their house. He carries the river water home in a 20-liter plastic container.



We also thank you for your prayers. Last Friday after returning home from school, Francis was busy collecting some firewood, and water from the river in preparation for Sabbath. Then he hurried to the village shop to purchase some small kerosene for their lamp just before sunset (They have no electricity.) On his way home he was robbed, hit in the neck with a wooden club. They stole his kerosene, but thankfully he is healing up okay.

These 3rd world countries are very dangerous, so please continue to pray for our brethren, for their safety and protection. Your prayers are so important, and so much appreciated. I know they pray for you all the time, taking nothing for granted. They know what it's like to go hungry and naked. They are the poor of this world, and thankfully “Rich in Faith”! (James 2:5)

We also thank the “Church of God Sabbath Day” located in North Carolina for funding the building of a toilet for the Getionko congregation. The digging started earlier this week, and the construction will be completed very soon. That group of about 25 members will be so happy to have a toilet. We here in the USA take soooo much for granted.

As you probably know, we try our best to send all the struggling groups some little funds each week to prepare a Sabbath meal for them to partake of together. For most, it is the best meal they eat all week. So please don't get weary in well

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

doing. (Galatians 6:9-10)

I don't thank you donors enough, but the funds you send continue to make a big impact in our brethren's lives. Life is tough there. Many in the surrounding villages are still dying from starvation, and still there are young boys (often times teenage boys) committing suicide by strangulation because they can't cope with the suffering. "*Thy Kingdom Come*" needs to be at the Top of the Prayer list.



The digging is a two-man operation.



One man at the top pulling up the dirt. The other man at the bottom, digging and filling up the bucket.

Nehemiah also plans to resume “Nehemiah’s Daily Bread” as he continues to visit the remote orphan children, bringing them a hot meal, and a study from the Scriptures. This ministry of his has been wonderful; the children get so excited when he arrives.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

Manley is also doing very well at university. He was rewarded by the school with a table and chair for studying, due to his good performance, and high grades. He also sends his heartfelt thanks to those supporting him.



Manley at his table & chair for studying. Thomas busy teaching his siblings how to sew.

Your support for these orphans and widows continues to accomplish much. Pictured below is Matara, Kemunto and Brian (Wako) sitting in front of their Grain Borer, which is used to store maize when they get a harvest. It is so wonderful to see Matara smiling. That man has been arrested and mistreated so many times, and all for only doing good things, caring for orphans.

(Isaiah 5:20) “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Matara and two of his orphans. (His other two girls are not feeling well.)

So, Brethren, we thank you from the bottom of our heart for continuing to support our widows, orphans, and impoverished brethren. The funds you send help them so much. Even now we are hoping to send food for this week’s Sabbath meal to those of our brethren who have been suffering and are hungry.

May our Almighty Father bless each and every one of you!

See William P. Goff’s other articles at:

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

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Divine Assignments

(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)

Do you ever desire to better understand God's calling in your life? Do trials and hardships cause you to wonder if God is working in your life or if He is displeased with your obedience to His Will?

Have you ever watched the movie, "**Independence Day**," with Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, Mary McDonnell, Bill Pullman, and Judd Hirsch? If so, then you know that all efforts to counter the invasion of the space aliens had failed. It seemed that humanity was doomed to extinction. All hope was lost. The scientist played by Jeff Goldblum got drunk and berated himself for his failure. His father, played by Judd Hirsch, said something to him that has always stuck with me and may provide a pivotal point in our lives.

He said, "Everyone loses their faith at some time in their life."

Did Abraham ever lose faith?

Abraham had successfully rescued his nephew, Lot, from an alliance of four kings recorded in Genesis 14. He then paid a tithe or tenth to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God and received a blessing. However, in Genesis 15, Abraham (Abram at the time) is filled with doubts—lack of faith. Notice:

"After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: 'Do not be **afraid**, Abram. I am your shield, your very great **reward**.' But Abram replied, 'O Lord GOD, what can You give me, since I remain childless, ... Behold, You have given me no offspring, so a servant in my household will be my heir'" (See Genesis 15:1-3).

Things looked pretty grim at that moment to Abraham. His faith had faltered. But then God replied, "This one will not be your heir, but one who comes from your own body will be your heir." And the Eternal took him outside and said, 'Now look to the heavens and **count the stars**, if you are able.' Then He told him, '**So shall your offspring be.**' Abram **believed** the Eternal, and it was counted to him as righteousness" (verses 4-6).

Abraham would not die childless and without an heir. His purpose in God's plan was not yet fulfilled. God has a plan

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

and a purpose for each one of us. But we must be willing to follow the Spirit as it leads us even when it may mean much sacrifice or hardship on our part. God is faithful. We must also consider wise counsel and fervent prayer before embarking on any endeavor that may appear foolish.

Lance Wallnau has released a video on "Divine Assignments" which is a good follow-up to his previous video on "Rewards" that I recently sent out. I think that you will find it very inspiring. Before watching it, I have also put a link to a clip from the movie, "Independence Day," released in 1996.

Movie link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t1IK_9apWs

Link to Lance Wallnau, "Divine Assignments":
<https://rumble.com/v3cqmo-how-to-hack-your-own-destiny-code.html>

See Dwight Fleming's other articles at:
[Fleming, Dwight – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](https://www.church-of-god-bismarck.org)

Johnny Bravo
(Copyright 2023) by Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)

Simon Sinek, author of "Why Leaders Eat Last?", tells the story of Johnny Bravo. Johnny is a pilot who put his life at risk to protect his men on the ground who had come under heavy fire in Afghanistan. Simon Sinek then asks the question: "Where do people like Johnny Bravo come from?"

Simon then launches into a detailed explanation of the chemicals produced in our bodies which affect our feelings. It is important to understand what actions produce these chemicals. Here they are: Endorphins, Dopamine, Serotonin, and Oxytocin. Simon explains how Serotonin is the leadership chemical and what actions stimulate it within us.

Though Simon uses some evolutionary explanations of how we developed these chemicals, it is obvious to Christians that God put these chemicals within us to help us to develop a closer relationship with God and with each other.

God made us to be social creatures. We have a strong need to be in a relationship with our Creator and with those whom we consider to be important in our social network of friends and family. These chemicals allow us to have the same feelings that God feels.

As we come into the Autumn season of God's Holy Days, the fellowship, and emotions that we share with others will invoke many good feelings and lasting memories. Psalm 133:1:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

I encourage you to take the time to listen to Simon's inspiring and sometimes funny discourse on what makes us tick as humans formed in the image and likeness of God. Knowing how our actions and beliefs affect our emotions will help us to better serve others to the glory of God. The insight found in this video will help us to better understand ourselves and the truth of God's Word. Simon also explains how email is not always the best means for communicating with others. It is a matter of context. (Sorry for my annoying emails.)

Here is the link to Simon's talk on leadership and service:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GE1w8OORirA>

See Dwight Fleming's other articles at:
[Fleming, Dwight – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

Will God Use Foreign-Born Immigrants to Save America? (Copyright 2022) by Eddie Hyatt (Grapevine, Texas)



By defeating her Democrat opponent and winning the vacant Congressional seat in south Texas, Mayra Flores became the first Mexican-born member of Congress. She won in this traditional Democrat district, which is 84% Hispanic, by running on a platform that emphasized faith in God, strong traditional families, and common-sense solutions to today's problems.

Mayra came to America at the age of 6 with her migrant parents who were farmworkers. She acquired her citizenship at the age of 14 and graduated from South Texas College in 2019. She became active in the Republican party when she realized that the Democrat Party did not support the values of faith and family on which she had been raised.

Mayra is a ray of hope for America because she shares the same ubiquitous and eternal values as America's founders. The Judeo-Christian principles of freedom on which this nation was founded transcend ethnicity and skin color. They will work in any nation and environment because they are rooted in eternal, transcendent truth.

While many American-born citizens, including politicians, have rejected America's Judeo-Christian founding, Mayra is pointing the nation back to those founding principles that brought about the end of slavery and Jim Crow, defeated Nazi Germany, and brought down the evil Soviet Empire (Hyatt, *1726: The Year that Defined America*, 89-104).

She reminds us of the words of Pope John Paul II who was Polish but understood America's unique founding on principles of faith and freedom. Emphasizing the critical importance of maintaining those founding principles, he said,

The continuing success of American democracy depends on the degree to which each new generation, native-born and immigrant, is willing to make its own the moral truths on which the Founding Fathers staked the future of your Republic (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots, 2nd Edition*, 156).

It may be that America's best hope for the future lies with foreign-born immigrants like Mayra Flores who understand what it really means to be "American."

See Eddie Hyatt's other articles at:

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

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Too Big to Fall?

(Copyright 2023) by Gary C. Miller (Pocahontas, Arkansas)

America is going the way of ancient Rome.



ROMANIZED AMERICA: PLEASURE & VIOLENCE

By the Numbers:

America, like the ancient Roman Empire, is obsessed with pleasure, leisure, violent sports (football, boxing, wrestling). Roman mass entertainment became increasingly violent with gladiatorial combat in the Roman Colosseum Arena. State sponsored sporting events: **93 days** (A.D. 59; Emperor Claudius). Official yearly holidays: **159 days**. By A.D. 354: **200 official yearly holidays**. **175 days** were public games.

LOST WORK ETHIC:

The Roman *six-hour* workday, ending around 2 p.m., allowed time to indulge in gladiatorial sporting, chariot races at the hippodrome, and theater. The 50,000 seat Roman Colosseum finished and dedicated in A.D. 80, was celebrated with *100 days* of games.

AMERICA ON THE SAME PATH:

US average workday is about *7 hours* (counting holidays, vacation, sick leave). The US has **11** Federal holidays. Government offices close an additional **104** times each year (weekends). This does not include public schools' non-contracted closings **108** days each year (including weekends). *TOTAL US Federal and State: 115 days per year [Rome: 200]* State sponsored sporting events in 14,800 US public school districts (grades 10-12) is nearly **223 years** of **total hours per year** at state expense!

GOVERNMENTAL INTRUSION Rome, America:

Erosion of a moral base and work ethic brings society's demise through growing government control-intrusion into private life (strangling regulations, taxes; US tax: 35 cents per dollar, inflation's stealth tax (2100% since 1913!), fuel tax avg. 18 cents per gal). Roman governmental dependency (welfare), and *overextended military expenditures* (US 900 military bases worldwide: 900) were its demise. *Sound familiar?*

SHORTER TIME:

The Roman Empire's three periods of the Kings of Imperial Rome (753 BC to 476 AD) lasted for over 1000

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

years. America, 1776 A.D. to.... is on the precipice of a similar fate in a *much shorter time*.

**** ROMAN EMPIRE WITH ITS “eternal city [Rome]” WAS NOT “TOO BIG TO FALL,” ARE WE? ****

See Gary Miller’s other articles at:

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

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A Country Divided!

(Copyright 2023) by Richard Markland (London, Ohio)

Never Has the United States Been So Divided. Poor Leadership Has Never Been So Glaringly Obvious!

President Biden is rapidly declining in the polls. With less than a year until the '24 election, how will his Presidency be remembered? Supporters feel he isn't radical enough. To conservatives, he is viewed as someone who is changing the country in such a way that the very survival of the nation is being questioned. When asking Americans what President Biden has achieved, most people are at a loss for words. One of the greatest achievements, under his weak leadership, is turning Americans against one another. If major changes do not take place, a civil war in cities across the country will result. With former President Donald Trump climbing in the polls, the Democratic Party is in a state of panic. Both President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are a national and global embarrassment. Strong leadership is needed, but it is glaringly obvious that America is a nation that has completely lost its way.

Matthew 12:25 – “...Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed... (NLT).”

America is being invaded from the south due to its wide-open border. The WOKE agenda is a cancerous condition because America is morally bankrupt. Never has there been so much chaos in the streets of the nation due to a livid hatred for the nation of Israel. The United States is not only viewed as tragically weak but is a global superpower in name only to the nation's enemies and allies alike. The U.S. is facing a crisis unlike anything in its history. Problems are mounting rapidly, yet where are the changes needed in order to survive?

Mark 3:24 – “A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse (NLT).”

See Richard Markland’s other articles at:

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

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Parthia's Predicament (Part 5)

(Copyright) by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)

An Empire that succeeded a series of World Empires, remaining in power for nearly Five Centuries, found itself in an awkward situation in the middle of its Dominion. At about the time of Christ's Birth, the Empire was experiencing political crises. Who would be their King was of major concern among the Elites of the Realm.

In the Old Testament, we're introduced to a powerful Empire located well to the north of Israel. That Empire was Assyria, a nation God used to conquer and deport the peoples of the House of Israel on account of their rejection of their Covenant with God and the embrace of other gods.

That conquest resulted in the House of Israel being deported to the northern fringe of Assyrian territory, located between the Black and Caspian Seas just south of the Caucasian Mountain range.

Several decades after this, Assyria was overtaken by Babylon, formerly a province within the Assyrian Empire, themselves made famous in the Old Testament by their conquest of the remaining two tribes, those of the House of Judah, the southern tribes of the greater House of Israel.

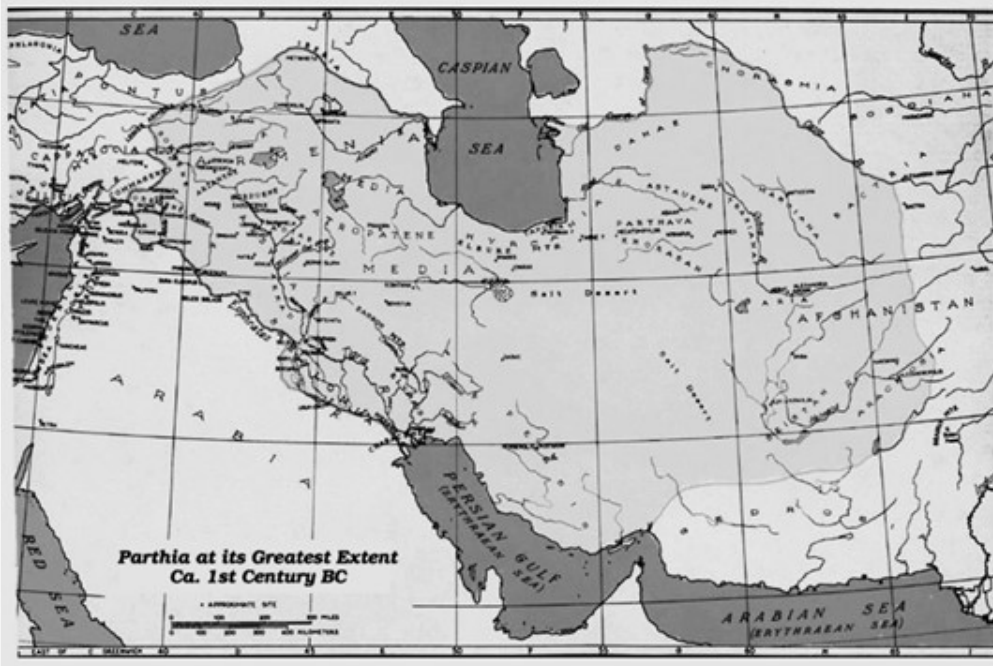
But Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian Empire, and they to the exploits of Alexander the Great, whose dominion was awarded to one of his generals after his death, thereafter, known as the Seleucids.

Each of these Empires dominated much or most of the region formerly (originally) the dominion of Assyria. But strangely, what had been Assyria – Babylon – Medo-Persia – Greco-Macedonia (the Seleucids) ¹ in time became dominated by

¹ This succession of empires is documented in Daniel chapter Two. We need to consider why Parthia is not included.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

those very peoples who had been deported into what had been northern Assyrian territory. The peoples of the northern House of Israel (could we say by design?) found themselves possessors of a vast Empire, without significant territorial challenge for some 470 years. ²



When compared to several well-known ancient world powers, the duration of the Parthian empire was extraordinarily long.

Internal Struggles

It was in the middle of the Parthian Empire's dominion, that being the years around the time of the birth of Christ, that the political scene in its land had become unsettled to the point of civil strife. The key question was WHO had the rightful title to the throne of the Empire?

What isn't commonly known is that Parthia did not hold to the usual practice of primogeniture with regard to the succession of their kings. In other words, the oldest son of the currently reigning king wouldn't automatically be considered the legitimate heir to the throne. That was not the case in Parthian affairs. ³ Their arrangement instead was by the determination made by a high-ranking ruling class who exercised a **checks-and-balances approach**, limiting the power of any reigning king.

Somewhat unique in the ancient world, supreme power did not reside in the reigning monarch either, but instead was overseen by a Two-House Counsel ⁴ consisting of one group, the 'kinsmen', and another, known as 'wise men'. (This may compare with the House of Commons and the House of Lords arrangement known in Britain, or the House and Senate in the United States Congress.)

With this realization, we can better understand the role and importance of these "kings of the east" who entered Judaea in the years BC to pay homage to Him who is born "King of the Jews".

² The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power in ancient Iran from 247 BC to 224 AD. Its latter name comes from its founder, Arsaces I, who led the Parni tribe in conquering the region of Parthia in Iran's northeast, then a satrapy under Andragoras, who was rebelling against the Seleucid Empire. [\[Wikipedia\]](#)

³ "PARTHIA, The forgotten Ancient Superpower and its Role in Biblical History", S. Collins, page 47

⁴ Strabo, a Greek Geographer and historian of the first century.

Purposeful Anointing

What isn't well-known is the situation then existing within the Parthian Empire as it regarded the ruling monarch of the time.

First, it was not the eldest son of the previous king who automatically inherited the throne. The above referenced political bodies had significant say as to who would be installed as the next reigning king. Secondly, the list of potential heirs in the decade BC was especially short, complicated, and seriously dysfunctional, even to the point of seizing power by inter-familial assassinations occurring between and among rivals.

It was this situation that gave rise to the interest of the Magi in making the arduous 600-mile trek to the capitol of Judaea, to say nothing of them having sighted a 'star' on a particular day of the year (a Biblical Holy Day?)⁵ to pique the interest of an astronomically astute elite body, one familiar also with Bible prophecy! We need to ask ourselves, what did this event in the Jerusalem area have to do with Parthia? Did they see it as an omen and a Divine Answer to their present predicament?

Further, they opted to do what they did without the usual diplomatic protocols of giving advance notice of their intentions. Being Parthian nobles, they had at least tacit diplomatic immunity. Herod would not have dared to molest them despite becoming outraged at their snub when they left secretly!

Nor should we dismiss the involvement of angels in this event: leading them to the specific house and warning them of Herod's true intentions. They certainly would have known of the phenomenon of murders for political advantage, which had become commonplace in their own homeland.

Heir to the Throne?

Where this all begins to come together is with the realization that any verifiable descendant of King David was acceptable as a potential heir to the Parthian Throne! Jesus' lineage was known and published (Matthew 1 & Luke 3). It isn't too remote a possibility that the Magi would have maintained contact with the Jewish Priesthood regarding such lineage and would know of the recent angelic prophecy we find in Luke 1:32, "*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:*" which alludes to and identifies that Son referred to in Isaiah 9:6-7. Parthians regarded their Arsacid Dynasty as having been occupied by descendants of King David and particularly through the line of Phares.

Elites of one nation would know their counterparts in another, especially between these two nations having a common religious and ethnic background. The above quote in Luke 1 was known from nine months prior to Jesus' birth, and several additional months prior to the time of their visit. It was known sufficiently for Luke (an elite in Jewish society) to relate it for us.

Dual Significance?

The Magi's response to seeing 'His star' ⁶ would've been accentuated by the situation with regard to the Parthian Throne at the time. Did they interpret this as an answer that warranted investigation?

As a lead-up to the situation, Phraates IV, ca. 38–2 BC, son of Orodes II, was chosen as successor by his father after the death of Pacorus I. Feeling his position to be uncertain, Phraates IV massacred some thirty other children of Orodes II. He also had killed his own father and brothers. He was himself assassinated by his wife and son in 2 BC.

Phraates V, circa 2BC – 4AD, became the next king. His mother, Musa, formerly a Roman slave girl, wife of Phraates IV and mother of Phraates V, ruled as the Parthian Empire's first and only ruling queen, together with her son Phraates

⁵ An article: "*We Have Seen His Star*" explains the unique event as they saw it.

⁶ An article: "*We Have Seen His Star*" #313 relates unrealized aspects of this unusual event.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

V. This Phraataces / Phraates V, Son of Phraates IV, ruled alongside his mother Musa. Can we begin to see what the Magi's concerns were? And how were they compromised to where they were coerced to let this happen?

Let's also consider, did their queen and king know of and authorize their excursion to Jerusalem? It did pose a real threat to the legitimacy of their own rule. The Magi certainly could have justified their doing so as just another pilgrimage to worship there as was common in those days. (See Acts 2).⁷ This also poses that the queen and king didn't have the authority over their Magi that might be expected.

The Arsacid Line

The longevity of one particular dynasty was, in this Empire, rather unique in history. The Arsacid's were known to be of the line of King David of Israel. It was typical for the Assyrians (as we see in the Babylonians) to employ ranking members of their captives to administer regional governance over their own peoples.

This too would have given the Arsacids recognition and credibility among the captives. In time, it was Arsaces I who originally rose to prominence, leading the people to secede from the Seleucid Empire.

In about 247 BC, Arsaces was crowned king in [Asaak](#), a city which he had founded, and which served as the Arsacid royal necropolis. His coronation at Asaak is generally presumed to mark the start of the Arsacid dynasty. (We can discern in these names the affiliation with Isaac, the legitimate heir of Abraham). Their ancestral heritage was well-known among themselves and is reflected in many names of prominent figures and associated sites!

Due to the assassinations and other intrigues among their ruling class, there often was a dearth of potential legitimate heirs to the Parthian Throne. Certain of their kings saw need to kill all potential rivals in order to preserve their own positions.

The Magistanes (Magi) were tasked with maintaining awareness of Arsacid males born and/or living in foreign lands. It wasn't uncommon for them to summon potential heirs to repatriate for the purpose of serving as king. With this realization, the Magi's interest in paying homage to a potential 'newly born heir' becomes very understandable. Jesus was not only a direct descendant of King David, but also was of the Phares line! (Perez in the Gospels). We can see that in both genealogical accounts in Matthew 1 & Luke 3. That was the branch which the Arsacids were of!

Political Impropriety

So, while a serious crisis was developing in their homeland, and while observing an important Holy Occasion,⁸ an unusual and unexplainable sign appeared to the west that they recognized for what it was. How did they know? What did they know?

It's with this realization that we can better perceive the significance of the Magi's visit to 'worship' the "King of the Jews", as they referred to Him before Herod, though they had 'other' interests.

See Rich Traver's other articles at:

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

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⁷ It wasn't unusual for large pilgrimages originating in Parthia to travel to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel "under the protection of many ten thousands of men". Josephus: "*Antiquities of the Jews*", book 18, chapter 9, paragraph 1.

⁸ Possibly while observing the new moon beginning the civil new year, not long after sunset, this 'star' appeared. This date being what's known as the Feast of Trumpets. The occasion of the first visible crescent beginning the seventh month, would establish their lunar calendar for the coming year. The Feast of Trumpets was associated with the coming of the Messiah.

Expect the Unexpected (Part 2) (Copyright 2023) by Warren Zehrung (Little Rock, Arkansas)

Notice how Zephaniah [~ 630 BC] doubles down on **how soon** this prophecy will be fulfilled. God says:

Zephaniah 1:4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and **I will cut off the remnant of Baal** from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;

Zephaniah 1:14-18 "**The Great Day of the Lord is near, it is near**, and hastens greatly, [any moment now!] even the voice of the day of the Lord: the **mighty man shall cry** there bitterly. That day is **a day of wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A Day **of the trumpet** and **alarm** against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in **the day of the Lord's wrath.**"

But John the Baptist **did not see** these things shaping up in Christ's ministry. His expectations of who the Messiah was were **not being met** in the person of Jesus Christ. Time was growing short because John the Baptist was in prison waiting to be executed and he was greatly concerned that he had miscalculated. He wondered, "Was Jesus the Christ/Messiah?"

John the Baptist saw only the **soft and kindhearted** side of Jesus as Isaiah also spoke of him:

Isaiah 42:3 and Matthew 2:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

Certainly, John the Baptist saw the works of Jesus, that He was gentle and compassionate. Undoubtedly, Jesus would not break a tender and fragile person's spirit. John the Baptist saw that loving, healing side of Jesus, but he had much greater **expectations** of the Messiah.

What about that other nature of the Messiah—to wage war **against evil**? Where were the mighty and evil men **crying bitterly** at the Messiah's **severe** coming as we saw in Zephaniah 1:14?

Jesus was not raising an army – He wasn't destroying the Romans, as John the Baptist expected him to do.

John the Baptist – was not sure at all that Jesus was the Messiah because he did not know that there would be **two comings** of Jesus. Let's pick up the story in:

Matthew 11:2 Now when John the Baptist had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, Matthew 11:3 And said unto Him, Art thou He [the Messiah] that should come, or do we look for another? Matthew 11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: Matthew 11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. [Definite attributes of the Messiah] Matthew 11:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall **not be offended in me.**

Jesus told John the Baptist's two disciples to report back to him that everything was proceeding according to God's schedule—and **don't let your expectations offend you.**

Matthew 11:7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John [the Baptist], What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? Matthew 11:8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. Matthew 11:9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. Matthew 11:10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

thee. Matthew 11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath **not risen a greater than John the Baptist**: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

It is important that we trust in the words of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, knowing that:

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put **their trust in Him**.

What are the **expectations** of Christ's coming for True Christians? **Expect the Unexpected**, because it is going to be **tougher** and **rougher** than we can imagine.

Let's consider The Four Horsemen of Revelation 6. I've heard many times that the prophecies of the Four Horsemen have **already been fulfilled**. The Tribulation is next, they say. Brethren, **Expect the Unexpected**—because that is what is coming.

There have already been many cases of false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, hunger and famine, and pandemics—but we must ask ourselves if they have fulfilled the meaning of the first four seals of Revelation 6? Brethren, **expect the unexpected**.

The fulfillment of the Four Horsemen prophecies—the First Four Seals of Revelation 6—are going to be **unprecedented!** They are **the beginning of sorrows!** There will be **false prophets** like the world has never seen. There are going to be **wars and rumors of wars** that will be extraordinary. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:6 And ye shall hear of **wars and rumors of wars**: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but **the end is not yet**.

Jesus says that there are **more seals** to come. There will be more **starvation, hunger, and famine** than the world has ever seen before.

Soon, there is going to be so much **sickness, disease, endemics, and pandemics** that it will make the COVID-19 epidemic look like a case of the sniffles.

Matthew 24:7-8 There shall be famines, and pestilences, and natural disasters, in widespread places. **All these are the beginning of sorrows**.

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of **Jacob's trouble**; [none worse]

Then the Tribulation – unfortunately, many of those in the Church of God will sell out!

Matthew 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, **here is Christ**, or there; believe it not. Mat 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall **deceive the very elect**.

Brethren, there are many types of 'Jesus' that are being **declared** in our world. There are people who attend with us that can hardly wait to see some miracles—and these coming miracles are going to be awesome and stupendous!

We had better be ready to **expect the unexpected**—because these soon coming signs and wonders will **blow your mind!** Even True saints are going to be tested mightily by the false Christs of the beast system.

Only the **very elect** who are truly converted and close to God will recognize the **fallacy** of those **great signs**.

Many people **use** Jesus' name, but do they really adhere to the Will of the father? Do those who declare **the name Jesus** strive to live in accordance to the very Word He represents? The beast will **appeal** to those who have embraced a 'substitute Jesus' that in reality does not represent the Real Jesus in Spirit and Truth.

Truly knowing **Jesus**, is going to be absolutely vital to ensuring that one endures to the end.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

Basing one’s faith on **miracles**, or personalities, or on faulty doctrines that misrepresent our Savior will play a huge part in whether or not one will **worship the beast**.

2Thessalonians 2:9-11 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and **signs and lying wonders**, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, **that they should believe a lie**:

These false Christs, if it were possible, shall **deceive the very elect**. Things are rapidly deteriorating in the world – going down fast!

Look at the rise in artificial intelligence - A.I. You cannot **believe** anything you **hear or see** in the news, or TV advertisements anymore. Those days are gone! It is all A.I. fake. (Artificial intelligence only mimics factual intelligence through the manipulation of knowledge and understanding of the true realities.)

People are **addicted** to their smart phones which will only aid in the transfer of this **deception** Jesus tells us is coming.

Matthew 24:25 Behold, I have told you before. Matthew 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; **believe it not**.

Jesus has warned us to be very careful with our assumptions about His second coming. He foretold that **His return would be unexpected**, and no man would know the day or hour (Matthew 24:36-39, 42-44; 25:13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-46; Acts 1:7; I Thessalonians 5:2; Revelation 3:3). God gives us many clues.

Daniel Interprets King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 2:28 There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the **latter days**.

Daniel 2:31 You, O king, saw, and beheld a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

For hundreds of years, and more, Nebuchadnezzar's dream of successive world kingdoms in Daniel 2:1, and Daniel's dream and visions of Daniel 7:1, were typically interpreted to illustrate the **same four** successive empires or kingdoms. (Daniel 7's dream and visions only has to do with the end-time.) Many old charts pre-dating Herbert Armstrong's day which present this error are still in existence! A simple exercise in counting the component elements of the image of Daniel 2 reveals something else. Again, notice the **five** distinct materials of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Daniel 2:32-33 This image's head was of fine gold (1), his breast and his arms of silver (2), his belly and his thighs of brass (3), His legs of iron (4), his feet part of **iron and part of clay** (5).

Can this disparate conglomeration of **Iron** and **Clay** radical Islam? **Iron** and **Clay** will not form a metal compound – they do not mix like **oil and water** will not mix. They are unified in their desire to push the Jews from the Jordan River into the Mediterranean Sea – leaving only a land of Palestine. Shia and Sunni Muslims hate each other, but they **hate the Jews more**. Their argument is over the line of succession of the Prophet Muhammad.

Daniel 2:33 His...his feet part of iron and part of clay.

This is a good caricature of the widely scattered Muslim nations of today. They have no one leader and they are not unified – except in their intense hatred of Judah.

Daniel 2:34 You saw till that **a stone was cut out without hands**, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

Five Elements

Just as in Daniel 2:32-33, we find five elements in Daniel 2:35.

Daniel 2:35 Then was the iron (1), the ceramic clay (2), the bronze (3), the silver (4), and the gold (5).

Brethren, every word of this prophecy is unequivocally True!

Daniel 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, [five elements] broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and **the stone that smote the image** became a **great mountain** and filled the whole earth.

That **stone that was cut out without hands** is **Jesus Christ** the Messiah! Brethren, that right there (verse 35), is the Kingdom of God being established over all the kingdoms that ever existed on earth!

The **Stone** of verse thirty-five represents **Jesus the Messiah**, who will establish His Father’s Kingdom over the earth and will subjugate all other authorities.

Kingdom of God Set Up

Daniel 2:44 In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom [the return of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God being set up], which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

A **second testimony** of the various materials can be found in Daniel 2:45, where Daniel is then interpreting the dream for Nebuchadnezzar.

And just as we found in Daniel 2:32-33, and in Daniel 2:35, we find the same **five elements** in Daniel 2:45. God repeats things for emphasis and clarity!

Daniel 2:45 Forasmuch as thou saw that the **stone** was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron (1), the bronze (2), the ceramic clay (3), the silver (4), and the gold (5); the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter [in the end-time]: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Three times God reiterates that there are five materials. Each time the materials that make up Nebuchadnezzar’s image are listed, there are **five**.

We would be wise to ask WHO are the parties that **will not cleave** one to another? What kind of kingdom does not have **cohesiveness**?

Daniel 2:43 And whereas thou saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but **they shall not cleave one to another**, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

Daniel spells out the **head** (First Kingdom), the **chest** and **arms** (Second Kingdom), the **belly** and **thighs** (Third Kingdom), the **legs** (Fourth Kingdom), and the **feet** (Fifth Kingdom). The image, then, consists of **five regions** of the body, and **five different materials**. Nowhere does the Bible number these parts of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as being *four* in number.

Jesus Christ inspired every word spoken and written by the prophets of old.

1Peter 1:10-11 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the **Spirit of Christ** which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

The Coming of the Messiah

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the Tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

Trumpets, the first day of the seventh month, is the date most associated with the Messiah's return (Leviticus 23:23-24).

Matthew 24:30, 31: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Seven Messengers of God

Revelation speaks about the meaning of this day. Let's review a few vignettes about this Day of Trumpets from the Book of Revelation.

Revelation 8:2 And I saw the **seven angels** which stood before God; and to them were given **seven trumpets**.

Jesus will take-over **all** worldly corrupt governments - that is all of them.

Revelation 11:15 And the **seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world** are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Jesus will have **all power and authority** to establish God's Kingdom... (Revelation 11:17).

Revelation 18 is a **severe warning** to God's people not to have anything to do with the house of cards that is about to crumble—which is Babylon—the world in which we live. **If you haven't already**, put your entire Faith and Trust in God – willing to leave all earthly possessions and associations behind you.

God Calls It the Fall of Babylon

Revelation 18:1-2 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, **is fallen**,

That means the total destruction of Rome and her daughters. The total collapse of Wall Street, Banks, Financial Institutions, Currencies, the Military Industrial Complex, Social Media, the Sports, Music (:22) and Entertainment power-houses ...right down to the very last Password and Website – like they never existed. Every Government will utterly fail. Why? Because...

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. 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.

Can all society, civilization, trade, and culture collapse in one day? You had better believe it can—as soon as God says, “Enough is enough.”

Revelation 18:5 For her sins have **reached unto heaven**, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

It is going to happen so fast it will take your breath away!

Revelation 18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in **ONE DAY**, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for **strong** is the Lord God who judges her.

Literally in **ONE DAY—gone!**

The “New” Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 16, 2023 --- Issue No. 150

Have you seen these giant container ships that ply the oceans these days? Can you imagine if you had a copy of the bill of lading, the cargo manifests, and shipping lists? Nowhere on them would you find itemized, One brigade of militarily trained, able bodied young men with their marching orders.

Already, the enemy has infiltrated the ranks of our industries, government, and military industrial complex. I believe we are living in a fool's paradise if we think our enemies aren't relishing our downfall. Customs and immigration agents close their eyes to the **human trafficking** that takes place in the dark.

Revelation 18:12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and every scented wood, and all manner of articles of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most expensive precious materials, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

And that is not all. Hidden amongst the grain, fuel cells, and produce in concealed living chambers are illegal immigrants; illegal combatants by the millions – being snuck into our country. Don't take my word for it – God says so.

Their jobs at ports of entry, Customs, and Immigration, allow them to **close their eyes** when a shipload of more infiltrators arrives with passports, money, social security cards and driver's licenses and a reservation with an Uber driver to whisk them away.

Revelation 18:13 And cinnamon, and spice, and perfume, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and **slaves, and souls of men.**

That is **human trafficking** of immense proportions – enough to collapse an economy and bring a nation down. Does God give us any indication **how long** it will take for this total ruin to come about?

Revelation 18:10 ... for in **one hour** is thy judgment come.

Revelation 18:17 For in **one hour** so great riches is come to naught.

Revelation 18:19 for in **one hour** is she made desolate.

Revelation 19:1 And after these things I heard a great voice of many people [not angels – could these be the resurrected saints] in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: Revelation 19:2 For **true and righteous** are His judgments: for He has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

We know this Day—picturing the Day of Trumpets—will be fulfilled exactly as God has planned.

So, brethren, let's get our priorities straight—and come out of this present evil world, and not be a part of any of her wicked systems.

Let's ask God to lead us by His Holy Spirit. Let's draw near to God!

See Warren Zehrung's other articles at:

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

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