



God's Character Online

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Editorial

“In history and prophecy the Word of God portrays the long continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress.

Those things which have been, will be **repeated. Old controversies will be revived**, and new theories will be continually arising” (2 *Selected Messages*, p.109).

Why I Believe In the Trinity/ Godhead

When Adventism began, many, if not most, Adventists believed in “antitrinitarianism,” the view that there is one God and He is the Father. Jesus, “begotten” out of Him, they say, gets life from the Father and thus is subordinate to the Father. The Holy Spirit is not God but simply God-breathed power. James White, Joseph Bates, Uriah Smith, to name a few, led the new movement and were antitrinitarians.

Ellen White did not agree. She consistently wrote of equality among the Original Three. Throughout her writings she expressed that there were three equally divine persons making up the Deity. Although she never made it an issue, she did not enter into the antitrinity camp in any way.

Quietly, aided perhaps by Ellen White’s views, antitrinitarianism yielded to belief in the Godhead or “Trinity”¹ and soon became established doctrine in the denomination. We still teach the Godhead or Trinity today prominently in SDA churches.

Within recent years a number of Adventists have turned their backs upon this view and are returning to antitrinitarianism, desiring to spread it among church members and bring us back to our roots. For these and other reasons I felt I should take this opportunity to discuss why I believe in the Trinity or Godhead doctrine.

Why I Do NOT Believe In Antitrinitarianism

The antitrinitarians say Catholicism originated the word “Trinity” in its Council of Nicea in 325 A. D.; this word is not in the Bible, and for those reasons, we should not use it. That, plus the fact that our pioneers believed it, I hereby declare irrelevant. The reason? It doesn’t prove anything. Adventists get their doctrine out of the word of God alone. What Catholics did or did not do, what early Adventists did or did not do is no particular model for us.

The evidences *for* antitrinitarianism boil down to two: In many places Scripture says Jesus was the “first” or “only begotten” of the Father. If

Jesus is “begotten” of the Father, it shows (to antitrinitarians) that *He had a beginning*, making Him inferior to the Father. The other evidence, Deuteronomy 6:4, says, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is *one* Lord.” If God is one, it doesn’t allow for two or three Beings in the Godhead (say antitrinitarians).

Only Begotten

What does it mean, that Jesus is “begotten”? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). “Jesus Christ, who is . . . the first begotten of the dead” (Revelation 1:5). What does it mean on a human level?

While Scriptural words and phrases are often used in their traditional sense, the meaning of some has altered since they were first penned, and that seems to be the case with “begotten” and “firstborn.” But we can find their intended meaning by a careful review of Scripture.

The psalmist says of David, “I will also *appoint* him my firstborn.” David was no one’s first child, but he got the lion’s share of his father’s goods. He got the best part, the promise that through him would come the Savior of the world. Judah was appointed firstborn among the children of Jacob, when his brothers—Reuben, Simeon, and Levi—proved unworthy. In Hebrews 11:17 Isaac is said to

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be the “only begotten” son of Abraham. Excuse me? what about Ishmael? To be the firstborn or only begotten son is not a statement of birth order but of who will have the pre-eminence. Thus it was with the Godhead. God, who anticipated having many earthly sons and daughters simply gave the pre-eminence to Christ, whose life and death made heaven possible for them, when before, they were dead in sin.

If we define “begotten” as we usually understand it, we encounter all kinds of problems. For example, using our standard understanding for a template, we need a celestial mother to incubate the Son. “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him” (Proverbs 8:30) is often quoted to support that Christ was “brought up.” But “with him”? Was the Father brought up too? We can see in these few examples the great dilemma we get into by failing to consult Scripture to define our terms.

One Lord

Deuteronomy 6:4 says, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” In Hebrew there are two words for “one.” *Yachid*, meaning a singular one—one which cannot be divided. And *echad*, one made up of parts—a compound or plural one. This text utilizes *echad*, which is translated “one.” Similarly, Exodus 24:3 uses *echad* to say, “The people spoke with one (*echad*) voice,” obviously many voices sounding like one. Therefore, one of the most prominent texts used to support antitrinitarianism, conversely, is one of the most prominent evidences against it. In this point we have solid, objective evidence against antitrinitarianism.

Why I believe in the God-head

“In the beginning Gods [*Elobim*] created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Notice the plural form here: *Gods*. In order to understand this quotation in its deeper meaning, we put it with John 1:1, “In the beginning [same

time frame] was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God (emphasis supplied).” Verse 14 informs us in order that there can be no mistake that the Word was Jesus Christ, the One who tabernacled among us. These texts present more than one Being at work in creation, all called “God.” Gods, plural, suggests a minimum of two, the Father and the Son. When placed with Genesis 1:2, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” we have a total of three Beings at work in creation. This agrees with the multiple Gods brought out in Genesis 1:26, “Let *us* make man in *our* image.” Therefore, we have three Gods active in the work of creation and discussing among themselves the creation of man.

But Jesus was there, and He was God.

Does it bother me to picture three Beings moving about, commanding things into existence, doing what Gods do, when we are told there is one God? No. In reality, there are three united Beings in one God family.

Jesus Was God of the Old Testament

I am so thoroughly convinced of this that I apply this simple rule to my reading of the Old Testament: Unless by context the Being presented is clearly the Father (as in Daniel 7:9), think “Jesus” when reading about the Old Testament God. I shall present some Scripture to back it up.

What did Jesus say about this? “Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:28, emphasis supplied). That this included more than prophecy is shown by:



Jesus is the Rock

“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a *God* of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he” (Deut. 32:4)

“There is no other Rock; I know not one” (Isaiah 44:8).

“And did all drink the same; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

Jesus Created the Worlds

“The Lord made the heavens” (Psalm 96:5).

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts [literally, “Lord Almighty,” NIV], the *God* of Israel . . . I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm” (Jeremiah 27:4, 5).

“The Lord of hosts [literally, “Lord Almighty,” NIV] . . . made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding” (Jeremiah 51:14, 15).

“. . . his Son . . . by [literally, “through,” NIV] whom . . . he made the worlds. . .” (Hebrews 1:2).

“For by him [Jesus] were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:8).

“He was in the world, and *the world was made by him*, and the world knew him not” (John 1:10, emphasis supplied).

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Jesus is the Judge

“He [“the Lord,” verse 10] will judge the people righteously . . . He cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and his people with his truth” (Psalm 96:10, 13).

“For the Father judgeth no man but has committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22).

Jesus is the Messiah

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway *for our God*” (Isaiah 40:3, emphasis supplied)

John the Baptist said, “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias [Isaiah]” (John 1:23).

Jesus—the First and the Last

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first and I am the last: and beside me there is no *God*” (Isaiah 44:6, “LORD” all in caps signifies Jehovah in the

“Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore”) (Revelation 1:17, 18).

These comparisons are numerous in Scripture. Jesus, Lord Almighty of the Old Testament, served as the “Action Man” in creation, while God the Father stood by approving. Their roles may be different, but both [all three?] are clearly God.

Now notice: “Are not You *from everlasting*, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed [the Chaldean] to execute [Your] judgment, and You, O *Rock*, have established him for chastisement and correction” (Habakkuk 1:12, Amplified, emphasis supplied). Who is the prophet addressing? The Lord my God, the Holy One, the Rock. Who is that? From the quotations we just covered above, it seems clear that it is Jesus. And He is from *everlasting*.

The Father’s Attitude

What is the Father’s attitude toward Jesus, being considered God along with Him? Is He jealous and protective of His rights and privileges, as we might be? opposed to anyone

filling the role of His equal? No. In Hebrews 1:6 the Father commands all the angels of heaven to worship Him [Jesus]. In verse 8 the Father says to the Son, “Thy throne, *O God*, is forever and ever.” I don’t see jealousy here. Jesus even sits on the Father’s throne (verse 13), a position extended only to equals. (See also *Desire of Ages*, p. 25; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36)

Clearly, God the Father promotes and encourages us to honor and magnify the Son, for “He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him” (John 5:23). Think of that! We can’t honor the Father unless we honor the Son. He not only doesn’t object to elevating Jesus’ status in our own minds, the Father says unless we do this, we don’t even honor Him [the Father].

This is the Father’s attitude toward Jesus. He is not jealous of Him. On the contrary, He elevates Him and asks us to elevate Him, too. This takes nothing from the Father. It adds to the honor we give Him.

Jesus’ Attitude

But what does Jesus say about all this? How does He identify Himself?

“I and My Father are one.” “The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You but for blasphemy, and because you, being a Man, *make yourself God*’” (John 10:30, 33, emphasis supplied).

“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He . . . said that God was His Father, *making Himself equal with God*” (John 5:18). Notice His Divinity was “equal” to the Father’s.

“The high priest asked Him, saying to Him, ‘Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am. . . .’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy!’” (Mark 14:61-64). The high priest identified Jesus’ answer as “blasphemy,” showing he realized Christ was claiming full Divinity (See John 10:33).

“Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ Then they took up stones to throw at Him. . . .” (John 8:58, 59). Here Jesus claimed for Himself the title of Jehovah. (See Exodus 3:14-18). His hearers understood He was claiming for Himself the title of the eternal, self-existent One. They did not like it, and “took up stones to throw at him.” But what if He told the truth?



Jesus Created the Heavens and Earth

Jesus was the Creator. (John 1:1-3, 14) God[s] created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). Therefore,

Jesus & the Children

Jesus is God.

God created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9; see also 1 Cor. 8:6).

Jesus is Eternally Pre-existent

Jesus said, “I came down from heaven” (John 6:38).

He prayed, “Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5, KJV).

Micah in the Old Testament says Christ’s “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2, KJV)

Evidences for Equality

In Chapter 1 of the book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, “Why was Sin Permitted,” Jesus’ status in comparison to the Father’s is clarified. It says that Jesus shared the Father’s throne. Who sits on the throne of God, the Sovereign of the universe? Only one *equal* with the Father. All other beings stand; only God, the self-existent one, sits (page 36). Satan desires to “sit enthroned on the mount of assembly in the sides of the north” (Isaiah 14:13, NIV, emphasis supplied) Jesus’ sitting on God’s throne powerfully communicates His position as God’s equal.

Philippians 2:5, 6 tells us what Jesus thought, and He thought He was *equal* with

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God. Was He mistaken? Was He lying? No, He thought He was equal with God, *because He was equal with God.*

The inspired word consistently declares the *equality* of Jesus with God the Father.

Jesus, the Son?

Antitrinitarians believe they have uncovered a great insight in believing that Jesus is the *real* Son of God, that this is not a role that He has assumed; He really, truly is the Son of God. I believe this too. Why? I believe Jesus is the true Son of God because God's word says so, and I will wait for heaven to tell me how it came about.



“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall *testify* of Me” (John 15:26).

“Then the Spirit *said* to Philip, ‘Go forward and join yourself to this chariot’” (Acts 8:29).

“The Spirit *told me* to go with them without misgivings” (Acts 11:12).

“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were *forbidden* of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6).

(3) *An Emotional Nature.* Does the Holy Spirit have an emotional nature? Yes. Here are a few quotations to support it:

“But they rebelled, and *revexed* His Holy Spirit” (Isaiah 63:10)

“And *grieve* not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things” (Acts 15:28)

Therefore, it seems clear that the Holy Spirit is a person, though different from us in many significant ways. We cannot expect the things of eternity to be exactly like the things of earth. There will be many surprises when we get there.

E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones

Antitrinitarians quote E. J. Waggoner's *Christ and His Righteousness* as saying: “There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John

8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning,” forgetting that Waggoner also said that Christ was “filled with all the fullness of the Godhead. So *He has life in Himself.* He possesses *immortality in His own right and can confer immortality upon others*” (emphasis supplied).

Ellen White says, “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived” [*Desire of Ages*, p. 530]. “Derived” means in this instance “To obtain or receive from a source.” Then “*underived*” would mean *not* obtained or received from a source.² Therefore, Christ didn't get His life from anyone. The first copyright notice on the *Desire of Ages* is 1898, and as far back as that date Ellen White believed and taught that Christ didn't get His life from any source. He was self-existent; He had life in Himself and therefore could confer it on others.

And Jones and Waggoner agreed. In fact, they were among the first to teach the eternal Deity of Christ, that Christ was God—God manifested in the flesh. “So truly was Christ God, even when here among men, that when asked to exhibit the Father He could say, Behold Me.”

Therefore, Jones and Waggoner cannot be used to support antitrinitarianism. Read their works, if you doubt this.

A Syllogism

I have persistently requested from the antitrinity community a syllogism to support their view and to check their logic, but to date I have not received this. Here is my syllogism of their theory:

Premise One: There is only one God, and He is the Father.

Premise Two: Jesus received life as a gift from the Father.

Conclusion: Therefore, Jesus is not God.

This is the bottom line and the ultimate destination of antitrinitarianism. “[T]he real purpose of [Satan's] rebellion was to dethrone God” (*Desire of Ages*, 57), and he doesn't give up easily. This



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up easily. This theory dethrones and demotes Jesus, the God of Scripture. Lucifer still wants to tear Him off His Father's throne and reign in His stead. It is the oldest argument in the sacred book.

Which leads me to ask: Antitrinitarians, is this how you thank your Savior for your eternal life—by demoting Him?

In Summary

It takes three fully Divine Persons, each filling His own special role, to make the gospel work. Heavenly intelligences could only declare valid a sacrifice originating at the level of full Divinity. Only full Divinity has life—original, unborrowed and underived—to give to the lost. If our Savior is not God, if He does not have life to give, we are still in our sins.

No hierarchical jealousy troubles the



Original Three; they gladly defer to the One most suited to whatever task exists, magnifying each other in the process.

In redemption's plan Divinity did not cut corners; God did not give Himself an unethical advantage or an easy way. He did not spare Himself but gave His "only begotten," His unique, irreplaceable Son, in order that we might not perish but have everlasting life. He left no foothold for the enemy to accuse Him of spending an inferior sacrifice to pay the sin debt.

Yet there is mystery regarding the God family that will be studied but never fully understood throughout future eternity. We can no more fully comprehend these things than an ant can understand the things of humanity. We must take the weight of evidence. Suffice to say, that "There are three that bear

record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One" (1 John 5:7). And, yes, that last quotation is legitimate; therefore, don't aspire to expunge it. See also Matthew 3:16, where three original heavenly Beings appear together in a scene in Jesus' life. Let us not go outside Scripture to get information on a subject so vital to our eternal interests and so key in giving glory to God.

¹ I prefer not to use the word "trinity," but since most people are familiar with it I will use it for the sake of clarity.

² The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright ©2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Updated in 2009. Published by [Houghton Mifflin Company](#).

Answer to

"The Cross of Christ"

By Ron Parsons

We both agree that Jesus was in a different position from Gethsemane onwards. You rightly observe that it was not the physical pain that was the main feature of the cross, but that it centred on the emotional conflict. So what caused the difference? What was different from the previous thirty years of His life?

In Gethsemane the man Christ Jesus was suffering under the burden of sin. But how did He get that burden? It is God who deals with sin, and it was God who put that weight on Him in the garden. We teach that it was this burden that killed Him! Therefore God killed Him!

But our understanding that God does not punish, hurt, or destroy conflicts with this thought and we shy back from it. But it WAS God who killed Him. It certainly wasn't Satan although he thought he was doing so! You wrote, "He was a murderer from the begin-

ning . . . (John 8:44), and he proved it by killing the matchless Son of God". That should really read, "He TRIED to kill . . ."

It wasn't the Romans, nor the Jews, and ultimately not the physicality of the cross that caused His death. Nor can we die of an emotional broken heart, although we can of a physical one. But let's think about this under the influence of the Spirit.

It is written, "Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

This commandment [permission/agreement] have I received of My Father". There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, 'He has a devil, and is mad; why hear you Him?' Others said, 'These are not the words of him that has a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the

blind?'" John 10:17-21. So there has been controversy over this fact from the beginning.

Jesus is God and He killed Himself, so it was God who killed Him!

How is this possible? Because our Saviour had *two natures* at that time and one of them, the Son of God caused the death of the other, the Son of man. It was the Son of God who deliberately opened the gates of sin and allowed them to flood onto the Son of man for it was the Son of man who died on the cross. Deity did not die, for that is impossible.

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That's what He told Nicodemus. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son OF MAN be lifted up" . . . John 3:14. If, like the people in the wilderness, we "look", we shall "live" even if it is a "brass serpent" that we are looking at. Numbers 21:8. *If we accept Him on the cross, without knowing any better, that will work, but new light requires new acceptance.*

After all, it is the Person who makes the change in us, not the symbol.

You also rightly observe that the death of the Son of man could have taken place "anywhere", but then make the assumption that it could have been "on the altar of burnt offering" as one of those places, but He is only described in the Bible as the Passover Lamb so that's where He should have been. It is a human idea that the brass altar was where He died, but *that altar is for burning, not for killing. [True. The sacrifice was dead before it was placed on the brazen altar.]* The killing place was separate to that [*the Garden of Gethsemane?*] – on the north side where the carcass was flayed and drained of its blood as in the plan of Ezekiel's temple.

And he [an angel guide] brought me to the north gate, and measured it according to these measures . . . And the chambers and the entries thereof were by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering. And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, to slay thereon the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering". (Ezekiel 40:35-39).

It is because we, as a people, do not understand the sanctuary services that we make this mistake. The professed Christian world (aka the daughters of Babylon) have long accepted that the atonement was made on the cross by the Son of God, that "merit" [a word that is not in my Bible] was obtained there, but this is wrong even though many Adventists want to believe it. It is a "sugar-coated pill" made so by Babylonian sentiments. The atonement that separates us from our sins forever is to be made on the Day of Atonement IN THE FUTURE and will be made for ALL Israel at the same time, not 4,000 years late for the Old Testament believers, and 2,000 years early before you and I were born!! (See note at the end for more on this.)

That Old Testament believers looked forward in faith and Christians look back to Calvary for salvation is a fabrication

which sounds good but which is nonsense. It is NOW (at the moment of conversion) that we need Him and His "death". It is at that moment that we need the "death" of our "old man" and an infilling with a "new man". It is then that we need *a real exchange of lives.*

As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew that He would have to suffer, yet He became man's substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety [reality] for the human race, with just as much power to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty [the second death] as when He died upon the cross of Calvary (1BC 1084.8; *Review & Herald*, March 12, 1901).

Think about that.

And this:

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat [the scapegoat], and confess over him ALL the iniquities of the children of Israel [the Son of God does this spiritually as well as literally on the day], and ALL their transgressions in ALL their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man *into the wilderness*: and the goat shall bear upon him ALL their iniquities to a land not inhabited: and he shall let go [free] the goat in the wilderness". (Leviticus 16:21-22. 4).



But the atonement that separates us from our sinful nature is made outside of the tabernacle in the homes of the people "on the fourteenth day of the first month", that is, "from the foundation of the world", or the beginning of the new life. Revelation 13:8.

If you will forgive me for saying so, what you have written is totally Pagan in that it posits a penalty and a payment to satisfy an angry god. Sure, it sounds good wrapped in Babylonian "sugar" but it is none the less baptized Paganism.

In actual fact, to obtain forgiveness for an action of sin subsequent to conversion, the believing penitent in the Old Testament brought a GOAT, a FEMALE goat, to the sanctuary courtyard and confessed his or her sin over the head of that animal. The "old life" does not receive forgiveness; it "dies" and is replaced. That is, we are "born again" the second time to a new start.

Thus it is written, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our "old man" is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For

In the sin offerings presented during the year, a substitute had been accepted in the sinner's stead; *but the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin.* It had only provided a means by which the sin was transferred to the sanctuary.

By the offering of blood, the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed the guilt of his transgression, and expressed his faith in Him who was to take away the sin of the world; but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law.

On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the [sinless] blood [of a goat] and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied.

Then in his character of mediator the priest took the sins upon himself, and, leaving the

he that is “dead” is freed from [inward] sin”. (Romans 6:5-7).

And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he [she] does somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his [her] sin, which he [she] has sinned, come to his [her] knowledge: then he [she] shall bring his [her] offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his [her] sin which he [she] has sinned. And he [she] shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering [confessing THAT sin, Leviticus 5:5], and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering [in the courtyard]”. (Leviticus 4:27-29).

If he did not have a goat then the offerer could bring a lamb, a FEMALE lamb, in its place. Verse 32. The priest then sprinkled some of the blood (the evidence of the penitent’s “death”, not Christ’s) on the horns of the altar, threw the rest down the drain, and burnt the fat on the altar. After that the priest ceremonially ate a portion of the animal’s flesh thus taking the sin into himself.

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed.

But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty (FLB 128.3).

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy [dangerous]. The priest that offers it for sin shall eat it: in the [a] holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation”. Leviticus 6:24-26. There were rooms in the temple for this purpose, but they are not mentioned in the sanctuary picture, so I presume they just set aside a certain area for this ceremony on the north side.

A “ruler” or leader in Israel was to bring “a [male] kid of the goats” for forgiveness of an action of sin, but no provision was made for it to be a lamb. Leviticus 4:23. Occasionally it was a ram as in the trespass offering (Leviticus 5:17-18), but we should note that none of the sin offering blood for the common person or ruler ever entered into the sanctuary building, but that’s the subject of another study.

One day, when we as a people actually read the law on the sacrifices, we will have a much different and greater understanding of the sacrifice of the Son of God.

If you remember:

We need also much more knowledge; we need to be enlightened in regard to the plan of salvation. There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare. When light begins to shine forth to make clear the plan of redemption to the people, the enemy works with all diligence [in the church] that the light may be shut away from the hearts of men. If we come to the Word of God with a teachable, humble spirit, the rubbish of error

will be swept away, and gems of truth, long hidden from our eyes, will be discovered.

There is great need that Christ should be preached as the only hope and salvation. When the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH was presented at the Rome [in the USA?] meeting, it came to many as water comes to the thirsty traveler. The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, seemed a precious thought (*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 3, 1889; *Selected Messages*, p. 359.2-360).

The twenty-four hour “burnt” offering of the daily service on the brass altar did not have any sin confessed over it at any time because it was not a sin offering but a “burnt” offering of dedication and typifies, not the death of God’s lamb for our salvation, but the dedication of His/our life to our/His service. This is the first offering mentioned in the book of the law (Leviticus 7 1:1-4), and is entirely voluntary, while the various sin offerings are not mentioned until Leviticus chapter four onwards!

It is not a matter of “merit” paying the penalty. In true Christianity there is no imposed penalty – only a solution

Let’s consider this point for a moment: If there is a “penalty” for sin then who set that up? It is often stated in misunderstanding that “the broken law demands a death” but the “law” is not a person and cannot “demand” anything, or be “satisfied” by such a payment. If the law is God’s law, then it must be God who is demanding the penalty, and we know how silly that is!

However, it is not the MAN-NER of the death of the Son of man, but the EFFECT of it we should consider. Jesus, the Son of man, did not die the death of sinners at Calvary because He was resurrected on the third day, showing that He died the death of Christians. He was “asleep” from 3pm Friday until early Sunday

morning and therefore He did not suffer any of the effects of the Lake of Fire.

To die the second death, the death of sinners, requires a permanent separation from life – a permanent separation from the God of life – and that’s what the Son of God did. He and His Father had made an agreement that if necessary, they would separate from each other in a way we cannot comprehend, but can have only a faint conception of, and that this would be eternal. He left His Father and “married” us! But that’s another study too!

It was not six hours on the cross, not eighteen hours of emotional turmoil, not three days in the heart of the earth, and not even thirty years of human living which brings us salvation. That is achieved by an eternal sacrifice.

In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word.

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.” God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the “Son of man” who shares the throne of the universe. It is the “Son of man” whose name shall be called, “Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother.

Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. (*Desire of Ages*, p. 25.3).

So the Son of man died as an example for Christians who sin, while the Son of God “died” for us to become Christians. And that latter “death” was not at

the cross or Gethsemane, but commenced in the Garden of Eden and is continuing today as sinners are converted. It was not the payment of a penalty, but is the gift of a loving Creator, and it was, and is, the “second” death.

You mention that the apostle Paul uses “. . .the cross’ as a brief form” (i.e. an abbreviation) and that’s what we need to consider as we read our Bibles, just as we do regarding the character of God.

There are grand truths, long hidden under the rubbish of error, that are to be revealed to the people. The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel’s message. The Holiness people [in the church] have gone to great extremes on this point.

With great zeal they have taught, “Only believe in Christ, and be saved; but away with the law [of ceremonies] of God.” This is not the teaching of the Word of God. There is no foundation for such a faith. This is not the precious gem of truth that God has given to His people for this time. This doctrine misleads honest souls. The light from the Word of God reveals the fact that [the lessons from the ceremonies of] the law must be proclaimed. Christ must be lifted up, because He is a Saviour who forgiveth transgression, iniquity, and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty and unrepentant soul.—(*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 13, 1889; 1 *Selected Messages*, p. 360.3).

Why are we so confused? Maybe the following will help.

Special Testimony to the Oakland and Battle Creek Churches:

The doctrine of justification by faith and the righteousness by faith was opposed [in 1888], and masterly [dominating] efforts made through opposition and denunciation by a formal church [through its leaders], whose attitude was of a character to discourage integrity and faithfulness and good works [and support entertainment in the form of religious activity].

And the result is just as it was in Christ’s day.

Those who were blinded by the enemy would, from their standpoint, pronounce judgment against the living principles of truth as heresy, and if they dared would make the press [their publications] voice their sentiments with warnings and anathemas because their own preconceived opinions were not considered supreme and without a flaw. (Pamphlet 1897; PH157 18.1).

Notes

Included With Response to “The Cross of Christ”

I don’t normally refer to the “fathers” (aka tradition) for any verification of the truth, but Crozier’s article of 1846 met this idea head on (among other things), so I have attached a small portion of it taken from our publication of the *Daystar* with our added paraphrases. It is a great pity that his thoughts have been largely ignored by the church in the light of what Ellen White wrote:

The Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c; and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star, Extra*, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that *Extra*, to every saint. (*Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12.8).

Daystar Extra, pages 55-57
by O.R.L. Crozier
(All emphasis is in the original.)

But again, they say the atonement was made and finished on Calvary, when the Lamb of God expired. So men have taught us, and so the churches and world believe; but it is none the more true or sacred on that account, if unsupported by Divine authority. Perhaps few or none who hold that opinion have ever tested the foundation on which it rests.

1. If the atonement was made on Calvary, by whom was it made? The making of the atonement is the work of a Priest, but who officiated on Calvary? - Roman soldiers and wicked Jews.

2. The **slaying** of the victim was not making the atonement: the sinner slew the victim, Leviticus 4:1-4, 13-15. etc., after that the Priest took the blood and made the atonement. Leviticus 4:5-12, 16-21.

3. Christ was the appointed High priest to make the atonement, and he certainly could not have acted in that capacity till after his resurrection, and we have no record of his doing any thing on earth after his resurrection, which could be called the atonement.

4. The atonement was made in the Sanctuary, but Calvary was not such a place.

5. He could not, according to Hebrews 8:4, make the atonement while on earth. “If he were on earth, he should not be a Priest.” The Levitical was the earthly priesthood, the Divine, the heavenly.

6. Therefore, he did not begin the work of making the atonement, whatever the nature of that work may be, till after his ascension, when by his own blood he entered his heavenly Sanctuary for us.

[Paraphrase] It is said that the atonement was made and finished at Calvary. This has no support in the Mosaic law.

Who makes the atonement? The high priest. Who was in charge at Calvary? Romans and wicked Jews.
 The death was not the atonement. It was after the death that the high priest took the blood and made the atonement.

Christ is the High Priest and He could not have made the atonement until after His resurrection.

The atonement is made in the sanctuary in Jerusalem, but Calvary was not that place (being outside the gate).

Christ could not make the atonement while on earth for He was not a priest while on earth.

Therefore He could not make the atonement until after His ascension.

Let us now examine a few texts that appear to speak of the atonement as passed. Romans 5:11; “By whom we have now received the atonement,” (*margin*, reconciliation). This passage clearly shows a present possession of the atonement at that time the apostle wrote; but it by no means proves that the entire atonement was then in the past.

When the Saviour was about to be taken up from his apostles, he “commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,” which came on the day of Pentecost when they were all “baptized with the Holy Ghost.” Christ had entered his Father’s house, the Sanctuary, as High Priest, and began his intercession for his people by “praying the Father” for “another Comforter,” John 14:15, “and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,” Acts 2:33, he shed it down upon his waiting apostles.

Then, in compliance with their commission, Peter, at the third hour of the day began to preach, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,” Acts 2:38. This word remission, signifies forgiveness, pardon or more literally sending away of sins.

Now put by the side of this text another on this point from his discourse at the ninth hour of the same day, Acts 3:19, “Repent ye therefore; and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Here he exhorts to repentance and conversion (turning away from sins); for what purpose? “**That your sins may be** (future) **blotted out.**” Every one can see that the blotting out of sins does not take place at repentance and conversion; but follows, and must of necessity be preceded by them. Repentance, conversion, and baptism had then become imperative duties in the present tense; and when performed, those doing them “*washed away*” (Acts 22:16) remitted or sent away from them their sins. (Acts 2:28); and of course are forgiven and have “*received the atonement;*” but they had not received it entire at that time, because their sins were not yet blotted out.

How far then had they advanced in the reconciling process?

Just so far as the individual under the law had when he had confessed his sin, brought his victim to the door of the tabernacle, laid his hand upon it and slain it, and the priest had with its blood entered the Holy and sprinkled it before the veil and upon the altar and thus made an atonement for him, and he was forgiven. [See Appendix A, page 89.] Only that was the type, and this the reality.

You may note that the misunderstanding regarding the placing of the blood of the sin offering is in this article. It was then, and has been since, accepted without question by nearly all those who claim to teach about the sanctuary, yet it is not true. The only blood to enter the holy place in the daily services was the blood of a bullock for a priest, or for the whole congregation.

Ron Parson's Links

<http://ancient-sda.com/crozier/most.html>

<http://ancient-sda.com/portal/index.html>

NonConformist-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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Editor's Comment: This article, in response to mine on the cross of Christ, illuminates many aspects of the plan of redemption. Sin always exists, first in the repentant sinner, as he confesses his sin, then in the High Priest, then in the scapegoat when the sins are confessed over it. Then the scapegoat goes into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man and there he is left to die a natural death. Sin always exists and does not go into nonexistence, as far as the righteous are concerned, until the times of refreshing (Acts 3:19), which represents the falling of the Latter Rain. Even then, the sins of the righteous do not go into nonexistence but are placed on the scapegoat.

At the falling of the Latter Rain the righteous are sealed for eternity. Not until then are they safe from a recurrence of their choice to sin.

This is correct, so far as I know, but I am certainly not beyond the point of learning, especially when the subject is the great plan of redemption. But as illuminating and helpful as this response is in that it gives the broad range of

details of what happens to the sin, it actually goes far beyond the point I was making in my article.

My article dealt with the question: What paid the sin price (for want of a better word) for us? Only that—and I'm sorry I did not make that more clear. I'm sure you would not say that Christ's death is meaningless to us. We could just as well do without it? Pretend for a moment that Christ's death did not happen on earth or anywhere else. Would we be better off? Just as well off? No change? So Christ's death means *something* to us, and I was just trying to understand what part of that sacrifice was effectual toward our salvation.

Ron Parsons also objects to my use of the word “merit.” I apologize for using that word and am open to a suggestion of the proper word to use in this instance, where the meaning would be something that worked, that was effectual—something that did the job of saving us (although, as Parsons points out, there is a lot more to understand about salvation than just this.)

Beyond that, our Adventist understanding of sin varies widely from the understanding of other Christians. We believe that it doesn't vanish when one comes to the cross of Christ. It takes some time and the energy of the High Priest to eradicate. But—if you will excuse my mixed metaphors—something about the cross doled out our wages (Romans 6:23) when we were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). And in the article I dealt with that limited question.

But the point is well taken, that we need to understand the Sanctuary better. If God has provided us with a teaching aid such as the Sanctuary in the wilderness to assist us in our understanding the plan of redemption, we need to avail ourselves of it.

“Most startling messages will be borne by men of God's appointment, messages of a character to warn the people, to arouse them. And while some will be provoked by the warning and led to resist light and evidence, we are to see from this that we are giving the testing message for this time. Messages will be given out of the usual order” (9T 137).

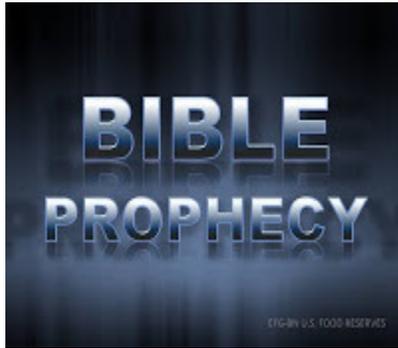
Editor and Contact Marilyn Campbell
email: yonargi@gmail.com



The Daniel 12 Timelines

By Duane Thiry

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: man shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4).



This sounds like the end of showing Daniel “that which is noted in the scripture of truth” (Dan 11:21). The rest of chapter 12 could be

either a repetition of some other part or it could be concluding remarks. Suppose it is a repetition of some other part. How does one determine which part? Is it because of the 1260 days? Or because of the word, “abomination”?

Daniel 7:25—And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his

hand until a *time* and times and the dividing of time.

Daniel 12:7—And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a *time*, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Continued on page 11

For the Honor of Mohammed

By Floyd Phillips

I was watching the news today reporting on Muslims around the world protesting, many violently, over what they consider to be a blasphemous video about their prophet Mohammad. What they were saying to vindicate their violence in their protests caught my attention. They claimed they are compelled to do these things because they have to honor their prophet.

They simply have no other choice.

This got me to thinking about this issue of honor. As I have watched these events transpiring around the world over the past week or so I couldn't help but remember the story of Gideon and his father who seemed to have gotten caught up in a somewhat similar situation as reported in Judges chapter 6.

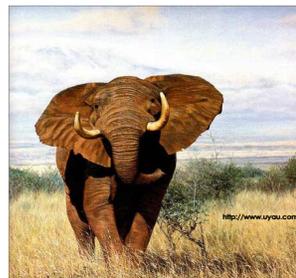
Continued on page 16

Editor's Comment: This article was obviously written when we were under the impression that the YouTube video caused this violence. We have since learned that was not the case, but the article contains much that is valuable and thought provoking anyway, so the decision was made to share it with you. We hope it blesses you as it did us

The Africa Report

Editor's Comment: I felt I had sufficient material (three files) for the Africa Report, so did not ask for additional material from the field for this issue of the newsletter. Then when I went to put it together, I found only letters from various contacts. I will not make the same mistake in the future but will ask for a full report. Still, I found the letters very uplifting and inspirational and invite you to now enjoy them with me.

I am happy to let you know that the books (*Light on the Dark side of God*) have found their way to Tanzania. I had the privilege of sharing the message of God's character to Tanzanians who came to the camp meetings where I was the main speaker. I gave them the books and they were very grateful. I am again today leaving for another camp meeting and hope God will work mightily in revealing His



wonderful character to those who will attend. I will give them books later after sharing. So please keep lifting us up in prayer.

Thanks and God bless.

James Ongiri

An African Elephant Charges

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Some see similar English words here and assume they must refer to the same thing. But in Daniel 7, the word translated as “time” is *iddan*, whereas in Daniel 12, the word translated as “time” is *mow’ed*.

Time: *iddan* – Strong’s 05732 - (Aramaic) from a root corresponding to that of 5708; a set time; technically, a year:--time.’

Time: *mow’ed* – Strong’s 04150 - from 3259; properly, an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand):--appointed (sign, time), (place of, solemn) assembly, congregation, (set, solemn) feast, (appointed, due) season, solemn(-ity), synagogue, (set) time (appointed).’

One may conclude both mean a year of time, but they are different words. Just because we can take something in the Bible calculate it out to be the same number (1260 days) does not imply it refers to the same period of history. The number 40 occurs many times in the Bible, but no one assumes each mention of it refers to the same time period.

Both Daniel 7 and Daniel 12 refer to an abomination. But from prophecy we expect the same which causes abomination in the past will cause it in the future. Just because Daniel refers to the same abomination is no justification that both references refer to the same past period and cannot refer separately to each prophesied period. In 1883, Ellen White wrote that the prophetic periods of Daniel especially relate to our own time.

In the Scriptures are presented truths that relate especially to our own time. To the period just prior to the appearing of the Son of man, the prophecies of Scripture point, and here their warnings and threatenings pre-eminently apply. The prophetic periods of Daniel, extending to the very eve of the great consummation, throw a flood of light upon events then to transpire. The book of Revelation is also replete with warning and instruction for the last generation. The beloved John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, portrays the fearful and thrilling scenes connected with the close of earth’s history, and presents the duties and dangers of God’s people. None need remain in ignorance, none need be unprepared for the coming of the day of God. (*Review & Herald*, September 25, 1883).

Daniel's Questions

And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? (Daniel 12:6).

After hearing of the history of the kings of the

north and south in chapter 11, Daniel asks, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” What wonders? While some may say it can only mean verses 31-35, would it be unreasonable to understand it to be all these wonders which were most recently relayed to Daniel? All of these wonders. Clear down to verse 45 of chapter 11 where the king of the north “shall come to his end and none shall help him”. Or it could even be to verse 3 of chapter 12 where the “wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament”. And what was the answer to how long to the end of these wonders?

[I]t shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. (Dan 12: 7).

Other versions translate it as completely shattered, breaking in pieces, or power of the crusher of the holy people.

Scatter: *Naphats* – Strong’s 05310 - a primitive root; to dash to pieces, or scatter:--be beaten in sunder, break (in pieces), broken, dash (in pieces), cause to be discharged, dispersed, be overspread, scatter.’

Accomplished: *kalab* – Strong’s 03615 - a primitive root; to end, whether intransitive (to cease, be finished, perish) or transitive (to complete, prepare, consume):--accomplish, cease, consume (away), determine, destroy (utterly), be (when ... were) done, (be an) end (of), expire, (cause to) fail, faint, finish, fulfil, X fully, X have, leave (off), long, bring to pass, wholly reap, make clean riddance, spend, quite take away, waste.’

Taking the words for “accomplished” and “scatter” together is in agreement with the translation of “completely shattered”. Perish, consumed, destroyed, broken in pieces does not indicate a first-rate condition for the holy people at the end of this three and a half times. But how does this compare to Daniel 7:25?

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7:25).

Until: *ad* – Strong’s 05705 - (Aramaic) corresponding to 5704; X and, at, for, (hither-) to, on till, (un-) to, until, within.’

They are given into his hand until the time period is finished. History shows that even before the time period was finished, the saints were experiencing more and more freedoms. The Bible was being printed, Bible societies were being formed, and it was the beast power that was being progressively more shattered, even to the point of its receiving a “deadly wound.” This first persecution lessened, while that in the future increases more and more until the power of the holy people is completely shattered.

The answer given did not exactly address Daniel’s question. He says he heard, but did not understand. He expected the holy people to be triumphant as in past visions. To think their power is scattered was not how he hoped the end of these wonders would come out. So he tries again by asking, “What shall be the end of these things?” The answer begins by telling Daniel it is for a time way past his time. Then he is told how long the power would last.

set And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. (Daniel 12:11).

It would last for 1290 days from when the daily is taken away and the abomination set up. The abomination would last 30 days more after the power of the holy people has been completely shattered. Then, further information is given.

(Daniel Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. 12:12).

Those who wait 1335 days would be blessed. How does that fit in? There’s not much to go on from chapter 12.

Fitting Together the Timelines

Revelation has a similar blessing phrase which is stated after the world is brought together for battle:

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walk Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he naked, and they see his shame. (Revelation 16:15).

Ellen White, in *The Great Controversy*, describes the persecuting power of the future. But there is good news. The people will be delivered.

ing Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathiz- tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril. But they must wait yet a little longer. The people of God must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism. (p. 630).

Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life. (p. 634).

Then in the next chapter (Chapter 40), she describes the death decree passed and how God will deliver his people.

The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people. Like peals of loudest thunder His words roll through the earth. The Israel of God stand listening, with their eyes fixed upward. Their countenances are lighted up with His glory, and shine as did the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai. The wicked cannot look upon them. And when *the blessing* is pronounced on those who have honored God by keeping His Sabbath holy, there is a mighty shout of victory. (p. 640; emphasis supplied).

Could this be the blessing on those who wait? Could this relate to those who are blessed who come to the end of the 1335 days in Daniel chapter 12?

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Revelation 13:15).

A death decree is passed, but in our nation, laws are passed and become effective at a future date, usually at midnight. Ellen White describes this.

Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. (p. 631).

This also compares to Esther where Haman conspired to set up a law to kill the Jews. It was specified for a specific future day.

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. (Esther 5:9,10).

As in Esther's day, the wicked people of the future are anticipating the appointed day. This is their time of exuberance, their time of exultation.

As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect. It will be determined to strike in one night a decisive blow, which shall utterly silence the voice of dissent and reproof. (p. 635).

But their plans are suddenly thwarted.

It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark, heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: "It is done." Revelation 16:17. (p. 636).

A marvelous change has come over those who have held fast their integrity in the very face of death. They have been suddenly delivered from the dark and terrible tyranny of men transformed to demons. Their faces, so lately pale, anxious, and haggard, are now aglow with wonder, faith, and love. Their voices rise in triumphant song: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.[]" (p. 639).

When the voice of God turns the

captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life. (p. 654).

The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having

led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. "We are lost!" they cry, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Every where there is strife and bloodshed. (p. 655).

There is a time when the power of the holy people is completely shattered and then there comes a time when they are delivered, blessed, and triumphant.

Now a question may be asked, how long of time between the holy people being completely shattered and the holy people being triumphant?

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. (Revelation 17:12).

There is also another "hour" when Babylon falls, when it is divided into three parts.

And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. (Revelation 16:19).

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. (Revelation 18:10).

For in one hour so great riches are come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off {Revelation 18:17}.

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour

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rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. (Revelation 18:19).

There is one hour of the kings of the earth reigning with the beast and, after the voice of God, there is one hour of Babylon falling. The 1290 days of the persecuting power of Daniel 12:11 includes its beginning, the increasing amount of persecution to when it completely shatters the power of the holy people, when the kings of the earth reign with it, and through its hour of falling.

Babylon is symbolic, committing fornication with kings and clothed in fine apparel. Since context of the hours is symbolic, they translate into 15 days. Using simple math determines the offset of the beginning of the 1335 days from the 1260 and 1290. Adding 15 days on the end of the 1260 days takes it to the voice of God. Subtracting the 1275 (1260+15) from 1335 days gives 60 days, which the 1335 days prior to the 1260 and 1290 days.

The United States is a leader in our world today. Many nations follow its lead.

The prophecy of Revelation 13 declares that the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns shall cause "the earth and them which dwell therein" to worship the papacy—there symbolized by the beast "like unto a leopard." The beast with two horns is also to say "to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast;" and, furthermore, it is to command all, "both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive the mark of the beast. Revelation 13:11-16. It has been shown that the United States is the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns, and that this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy. But in this homage to the papacy the United States will not be alone. The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a restoration of her power. "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Verse 3. The infliction of the deadly wound points to

The downfall of the papacy in 1798. After this, says the prophet, "his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." Paul states plainly that the "man of sin" will continue until the second advent. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8. To the very close of time he will carry forward the work of deception. And the revelator declares, also referring to the papacy: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life." Revelation 13:8. In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in the honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church. (p. 578)

The United States will begin the enforcement of the Sunday law, but soon the whole world will follow. The enforcement measures will increase to the point of making a death decree. But God's people will be delivered, at which time, the lost people will realize they have been deceived and will slaughter those who led them astray and each other. God doesn't slay them. It is after this, at some yet to be declared time from the voice of God, that Jesus comes.

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Editor's Comment: It seems to me that God is disseminating a knowledge of future events more detailed than we have had in the past. This model of prophecy parallels my thinking in many ways. That prophecy relates pre-eminently to our time; that the "wonders" means everything written in the book of Daniel; that the shattering of the holy people prefigures their complete subjugation at Deliverance, and you found in *Great Controversy* what I found in *Early Writings*, that a blessing is pronounced upon the people of God after the ordeal is over. You did a very thorough job. Way to go!

I particularly liked that you held closely to Spirit of Prophecy; so many consider her work optional today. You obviously don't. I like that.

However, you got your timelines by using the day-for-a-year measure. It's very reasonable, but how did you get around this statement by Ellen White:

However, you got your timelines by using the day-for-a-year measure. It's very reasonable, but how did you get around this statement by Ellen White:

I saw that they were correct in their reckoning of the prophetic periods. Prophetic time closed in 1844 (1 SG 148).

"Prophetic time" by definition is the day-for-a-year measure. We cannot use it today, because it ceased to be useful in 1844.

When one can develop a pattern of end time events from Sr. White's work, and then find that the Daniel 12 timelines duplicate that pattern, it is very persuasive. I didn't see that they were similar until after completing my study.

I agree that prophecy did not end in 1844. We still have many details to dig out of the inspired word before the end of time. But how do you justify using day-for-a-year after 1844.

What do you think, readers? SDAs are voracious students of prophecy. By sharing our findings I believe we will gradually discover what God has been trying to teach us all along.

The Africa Report

Thanks for the newsletter. I am very enthused especially by the reports of the world field and how God is embracing hearts to see Him as He is, and to move on in their spheres of influence letting that light shine. It must have been a very uplifting and life-giving gathering. This is just a small note of thankfulness to God for it.

Concerning the group which we visited and studied within a weekend . . . this group's leader has fallen in love with the CoG message especially and is talking it. He has invited us for a full week meeting with this group in a near future and we purpose to be available. They are on studying the "*Light On the Dark Side of God*" book. Another group which was our first to meet in this "book series" is also moving on with the book study as a lesson book for their Sabbath school.

I have been able to watch part of your videos online while I had an opportunity of being in a strong network up to session 3 and hope to get another opportunity online for completion from session 4 on the Angels. So far so good.

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I have been able to watch part of your videos online while I had an opportunity of being in a strong network up to session 3 and hope to get another opportunity online for completion from session 4 on the Angels. So far so good.

Blessings and God’s Love in Christ.

Nathan

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I have been in touch with Nathan and he gave me an update on their work, in the last little while. . . . The translation work he is referring to is Doc's [Dr. Douglin] CoG book. It has been translated into Kiswahili but they are proofing and editing it. James and Nathan are working together on it and James is also traveling to share the message. I thought you'd like to hear about it :) I'd love an opportunity to share about the projects and needs in Africa in your next newsletter so just give me a heads up if/when you'd like me to submit something.

Nicola Straub
Africa Coordinator
nicola.straub@yahoo.com

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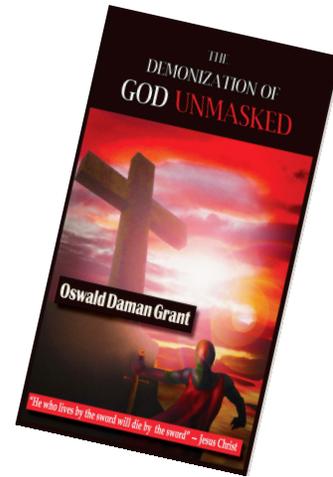
On translation work, we will not be able to meet together for the same with James until maybe 4th September onwards. He was away for a one-week camp in Kuria where he was called by the “Bill” group. So he came home on Sunday and has to help in setting things in order in his home and farming before he leaves for another meeting with the same group next week in a place by the name Mogonga a little bit nearby. One man, whom we visited over a whole weekend and studied with him and a group he is ministering to, has fallen in love with the CoG message and he was presenting it last week I am told in that camp meeting. James gave out some copies of Marilyn’s book. Kuria is a Kenyan community bordering and sharing “lives” with Tanzania.

Nathan

Final Visit To:

The Demonization of God Unmasked

By Oswald Daman Grant



My Reply to Oswald Damon Grant’s Response to My Com- mentary on *The Demonization of God Unmasked*

By Kevin Straub

A Correction

I want to correct my presentation of *The Demonization of God Unmasked: A Critique and Commentary (Abridged; 9/12 issue)*, in that I misunderstood the sentence from page 149 of *Demonization*, which reads:

“With this understanding of God’s character then, with this knowledge of God, everyone who practices righteousness, who is nonviolent towards friends or foe alike—even if they are liars, fornicators, etc..., is born of God”

In my commentary, I said that I found this statement confusing, given that it did not seem to concur with the teaching contained in *Demonization*. I should have studied the sentence more and I should have inquired from Oz as to just what was meant, here, when I was apparently not bright enough to figure it out. The liars and fornicators in this sentence is in reference to the “friends or foe alike” and not to “everyone who practices righteousness.” Of course. My apologies for this to Brother Grant. I have updated the paper to reflect this correction.

Response

Thanks for your reply Ozzie. I read all of it and must speak to it without a lot of words and keep straight to the point, with open frankness. I have already developed the case upon which I maintain my rest. Anyone not having read it, should read it.

Commenting briefly on this additional information, I must reiterate that it seems obvious in the reading that there is some untenable stretching of Scriptures involved in your thesis and it must therefore remain that the position you have taken is conjecture or private interpretation. I do not find anywhere in inspiration any hint of the primacy of a law of good and evil over self-exaltation. Satan’s argument was for lawLESSNESS and we see it today in occult philosophy, the purest form of Satanism. It is readily apparent in the popular media and songs with the mantra “Follow Your Heart” and “I Did It My Way.” It is embodied in the Satanist’s creed, “Do as thou wilt, this is the whole of the law.”

The leaders in the oligarchy of this world, the highest echelons of power, first circle of rule next to Satan, in their assumption of power and supremacy over others in contrast to the truth of the equality of all humanity before God, make laws that apply to others but to which they themselves are not subject. This is lawlessness, as far as they have to do with it and as far as the not-so-ignorant masses can determine by observation of the activities and lifestyles of their ruling classes.

Pride and arrogance always presupposes lawlessness, we do not have in the history of the rebellion a proposed alternate law presupposing pride and arrogance.

Human law, under permissive will, is to keep a check on the ultimate course of Satan's "system" of governance, which is truly anything but systematic or orderly. Bear in mind that humans rule according to arbitrary law, call it "good and evil" if you like, but they do so with hearts of lawlessness.

The spirit of anarchy is permeating all nations, and the outbreaks that from time to time excite the horror of the world are but indications of the **pent-up fires of passion and lawlessness** that, having once escaped control, will fill the earth with woe and desolation. (ChS 53.3).

Protestants now urge that the resurrection of Christ on Sunday made it the Christian Sabbath. But Scripture evidence is lacking. No such honor was given to the day by Christ or his apostles. The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had its origin in that **"mystery of lawlessness"** [2 Thessalonians 2:7, Revised Version.] which, even in Paul's day, had begun its work. Where and when did the Lord adopt this child of the papacy? What valid reason can be given for a change which the Scriptures do not sanction? (GC88 54.1).

"The world is filled with transgression," she declared. **"A spirit of lawlessness** pervades every land, and is especially manifest in the great cities of the earth. The sin and crime to be seen in our cities is appalling. God cannot forbear much longer. Already His judgments are beginning to fall on some places, and soon His signal displeasure will be felt in other places." (LS 415.1).

And then shall be revealed **the lawless one**, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

I have no dispute that Satan is the god of this world. It is evident all around that there are various laws of governance in the world's institutions and kingdoms which all rule according to Satan's principles. Those principles, however, are primarily lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. That is, to exert oneself for the purposes of self-gratification and self-aggrandizement at the expense of all others.

I find the reasoning in defense of the position of *Demonization* circular and contrived, insisting that the alleged primary development of a law of good and evil to meet the

rise of evil in the universe proves its own veracity. If that sentence seems difficult, it is because what we are being asked to accept *is* difficult. Not only is it not found in inspiration, it runs contrary to it. What we have here is a "reverse engineering" of what is seen to determine the cause of the rebellion. But there is no need for it, because we are told what that cause was, that Satan became corrupted "by reason of his brightness." This, to me, is simple enough and to go beyond this and suppose that Lucifer had a cause other than being a legend in his own mind is skirting on the borders of finding a reason for sin, when we are told that there is none.

May God grant us all keen discernment that we might avoid bringing disrepute upon the message of the purity of His character of non-violence, a beautiful thing upon which we all agree. Glory to His Name!

Reply By Oswald Damon Grant

Are we to know, from the Scriptures, what was involved in Lucifer's rebellion in the transcendent sphere, when he rebelled against God's law of *agape* love? In different ways we have been given inspired guidance to know, to the extent we should know, what originated the schism in heaven. One of the ways we can understand what transpired in Lucifer's rebellion is by studying Genesis chapters 1-3, Isaiah 14, and Ezekiel 28. Another is through the study of the prophetic scenario which describes how the rebellion will be demonstrated and terminated here on earth, just before the Second Advent of Christ.

Psalms 94:20 indicates that when iniquity, evil, originated with Lucifer, it was hatched by law: "Shall the throne of iniquity [Lucifer's throne], which devises evil by law, have [any] fellowship with You [with God's throne of *agape* love]?" The law of iniquity was antithetical to God's law of *agape* love, and therefore could have no "fellowship" with God.

Accordingly, as we look forward into the near future, just before the Second Advent of Jesus Christ occurs, the issues that will grip the world will be in relation to two antithetical laws: one emanating from Satan and the other from God, two laws that cannot have fellowship with each other. These two will bring the curtain down on humanity's fate. The rebellion that commenced over two opposing laws in heaven will, likewise by two opposing laws on earth, bring to a

climax the war between God's law and Satan's law.

By Satan's law, "He [the man of lawlessness] shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law" (Daniel 7:25).

We know that "the man of lawlessness," the man of sin," who is also called "the beast," is directly empowered by Satan. Revelation 12:2 says that "The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority." The dragon, whom we know to be Satan, Lucifer, initiated the first "rebellion," the first "falling away" or "apostasy" in the transcendent sphere, and now he has also invested and enabled his ambassador, "the man of lawlessness," to do the same here on earth before the Second Coming. When Satan gives "the man of lawlessness" "his power" he intends or "thinks to change" through his Sunday law God's law of *agape* love, which we know can never be changed. Satan gives the man of sin "his throne," "which devises evil by law." Pride and self-exaltation arise from the "great authority" the man of sin has been given, and fuel his insane arrogance in claiming equality with God. He exalts himself by having his own law with which he thinks to replace God's law. The end-time war over the two laws is an exact re-enactment of Lucifer's initial rebellion in heaven.

Who is being worshipped through Satan's evil law? Revelation 13:4 says that it is the dragon: "So they worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'"

"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. The coming of the lawless one [with his Sunday law] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2: 3,4, 9, 10, emphasis added).

The temple of God is the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum where God's law is. In the earthly tabernacle the law was encased inside

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the ark, in the Most Holy Place. The lawless one “sits as God in the temple of God” where God’s law is, “showing himself that he is God.” The lawless one thinks to change the law of God and therefore he sits as God, as one who presumes to have the authority to change God’s law.

Our eschatology tells us that soon there will be two laws: the Sabbath law and the Sunday law, God’s law and Satan’s law. These two laws regarding the two days of worship have deep significance, and they reflect the principles of God and Satan. God’s Sabbath reflects that He is the Creator, the giver of life, the God in whom there is no darkness at all, the God whose law is *agape* love. Satan’s law reflects that he is the thief, the murderer from the beginning, the accuser and the destroyer. Which law is obeyed at this time will decide the fate of humanity. Everyone will receive, over these two laws, either the mark of the beast or the seal of God. At this time Satan’s law of arbitrary reward and punishment will be confirmed through the arbitrary reward of those who comply with the beast’s law (they will be able to buy and sell) and the arbitrary punishment of those who follow God’s law (they will not be able to buy and sell). Those who obey God’s law will not be able to “buy or sell” because Satan’s arbitrary law will be implemented as punishment.

Revelation 14:12 confirms that the end-time issue revolves around law, around the commandments of God: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” Those who wish to remain faithful to God will find themselves caught in the midst of retaliatory, punitive penalizations for obeying God’s Sabbath law. Those, on the other hand, who keep the commandments of Satan’s law of good and evil, which is reflected in his Sunday law, will do his iniquitous bidding. For such obedience they will be arbitrarily rewarded by being able to “buy or sell.” They will be able to rely on Satan’s worldly governments and laws for their livelihood and sustenance. Those who remain faithful to God and His law will rely completely on God for their survival, and we are told that their food and water will be provided.

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As with many of the stories in the book of Judges, this one seems to have some strange things about it too. But one thing I have always really liked about it was what Gideon's father said to the men of the city when they launched a violent protest over Gideon tearing down their Baal altar and the Asherah next to it and replacing it with an altar to the God of heaven. But this is what his father, coming to Gideon's defense (even though Gideon himself was so fearful he had done it all in the dark the night before), had to say to the crowd who came out with great passion to vindicate the honor of their god:

But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you contend for Baal, or will you deliver him? Whoever will plead for him shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar." (Judges 6:31)

I have wondered why the media has not brought up this idea to ask these people protesting so violently about their logic of maintaining the honor of their prophet. If Allah is so strong and so protective of the reputation of the prophet Muhammad, then why does He need so much help from humans? And what is this thing they call 'honor' anyway. How does committing acts of senseless violence against innocent victims bring honor to a prophet of Allah or God or anyone for that matter?

I understand quite well that a vast number of Muslims do not agree with the radical actions of those protesting in the streets around the world today. These protests make great news headlines and stirring pictures to arouse intense emotions in the minds of millions of viewers. But they hardly reflect the true ideals and beliefs of many Muslims who are greatly embarrassed by the actions of their fellow professed Muslims. But besides that point, how does creating mayhem around the world create more honor for anyone? Is it really necessary to regularly remind the world that they believe that Muhammad must be remembered as

the leader of extreme violence? Is the religion of Islam so weak that it has to rely on constant use of intimidation, force, coercion and even death to maintain its power on the earth?

Unfortunately violence, along with a great deal of deceit among all parties in religious conflicts, seems to be becoming the norm rather than the exception. And not only religions around the world but most governments also rely increasingly on raw force and fear to keep people in line and under their control. This is a mindset that is rapidly spreading as we see the whole idea of freedom and personal choice disappearing altogether as a relic of the past. America has almost lost all of its individual freedoms for which it has stood since its inception while most people are unaware that they are already gone. It is not just Islam that is addicted to violence but this addiction seems to be pervasive almost everywhere one looks today.

So, my question still remains – how does *honor* fit into all of this? There is a lot of talk here in America about honoring our troops. Yet the stories that I sometimes hear of what really happens in places where our troops are turned loose are too often anything but what I would consider honorable. It seems that today we have come to the place where appearances and information spin is everything while truth and reality on the ground is suppressed in the name of patriotism and national security. It has now even been declared that anyone that in any way supports or communicates with anyone associated with Wikileaks can be sentenced to death for high treason as Assange and his associates have now been declared official 'enemies of the state'.

More and more I find that what is done in the name of honoring our country seems to be almost the opposite of what used to be considered the honorable and right thing to do. Instead of standing up for truth, for right, for freedom and accountability, now the only thing important to those in government is preventing anyone from knowing what is really going on at all costs. The word *honor* has been hijacked to mean whatever the state wants it to mean rather than maintaining true integrity any longer.

So it appears that our country has little to back up any claims to a better definition of honor than rogue Muslims rioting on the streets around the world. In fact, what I am starting to observe is that all this has little to nothing to do with any video. I doubt that even a tiny percent of the people rioting and

committing these acts of violence have ever seen any part of that video they claim to find so dishonoring to their prophet. What I suspect is that a supernatural spirit of hatred compelling to selfish acts of violence is taking hold of the minds of millions of people all over the world. They now are simply waiting for any excuse to express their inner rage and lash out at others. And this spirit is present here in our country as well.

I suspect it may not be long before our own country may be racked with similar scenes of violence as we see every day on the news that is spreading across Europe, China and the Mideast. This is the spirit of force, of fear, of death that is the signature trademark of Satan's kingdoms. And as we are quickly closing in on the end of time allotted to this world's peoples to decide what spirit will control their lives, more and more are embracing the spirit of demons and are acting out the results of that choice under the compulsion of those spirits.

Violence has no part in heaven's plans for those who truly choose to believe and follow the ways of God. It is the counterfeit systems of this world, both religious and otherwise that utilize the methods of force and coercion in order to prop up their power. But force and fear are not the way of those who will be overcomers as described in the book of Revelation. Only those who seek the true honor of God by choosing the path of non-violence prescribed by Jesus who was the true revelation of God, will actually honor the reputation of God. All who choose in any way to condone or support or participate in violence do so because they believe in a God who will resort to violence when things go from push to shove. This mistaken belief about God has done more damage in this world than almost any other malicious lie we have embraced. Whether it be Islam, Christianity or Communism, violence in no way increases the honor of anyone. It only brings shame and suffering and ultimately death.

Project Update

This has been a busy two months for Seventh Era Ministries. We put out two hundred pamphlets in Boise neighborhoods, plus we mailed about one hundred pamphlets to a church directory. In addition, about two cases of books went out to US and Canadian addresses. We have a request for two more cases of books to go to Canada, so if anyone is driving from the western United States, going to Ontario, Canada (or vice versa and back again) in the next little while and would be willing to take a couple boxes of books, please get in touch with me.

We're getting busy on the Internet, too, trying to figure out what works and how to advertise online. You may be interested in seeing my partially completed ad at: <http://snack.to/bz1c57hx>. Another place where the ad may be seen is:

<http://www.transworld-ads.com>. I am currently learning to advertise on Amazon Kindle, but that will be for another time. If you or someone you know is familiar with Amazon Kindle technology and/or how to market with Kindle, please get in touch (or have them get in touch).

The next few weeks things slow down for the holidays here in the United States. In addition to that, we have a presidential election next week for which we should all be praying. This election may affect the world in ways we are only beginning to understand.

How the world needs the character of God message. How the church needs it too. We need soldiers who are bold enough to bring this message to the fore. If all who believed it were living by it and teaching it, what an army of the Lord it would make.

Let us know what you are doing in this regard. We will publish it for the benefit of all.

“Come, Let Us Reason”

Fireside Chats on the Character of God

with Kevin Straub



Permissive Paradigm--Part I

Q. We have heard several teachers of God's Character teaching wonderful things about the non-violent ways of Jesus and that He is the perfect image of the Father. They even show us how God is not one who tortures the finally impenitent in the process of the fires of second death but that there is a natural progression of cause and effect. Our problem is that we do not hear these teachers saying much about some significant issues in violence which we read about in the Bible. We are interested in knowing more about how to reconcile what we understand to be the non-violent character of God with:

- all of God's apparent involvement in all the Biblical killing and especially about the fact that the Bible speaks of God's setting up the violent kingdoms of this earth that we should obey them in their arbitrary laws
- or of the commands of God to His people with regard to the use of violence, as we see in:
 - a) the Mosaic civil code;
 - b) regarding how they should deal with internal dissensions and;
 - c) concerning going to war with their enemies.

Some teachers stay silent on many of these issues but when asked outright,

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They will tell us that God did in fact play a killing and destroying role by proactively using the “sleep death” to “time them out” and part of this would have been God killing by proxy, or “by word,” in His instructions to His people in the Old Testament theocracy. This seems unsatisfactory to us, still portraying God as one with a mixed character, having not only life, but also death, in Himself. What do we say to all of this?

A.

Yes, all of this tends to perpetuate the notion that somehow being directly under God’s direction as a people means that He will give them instructions in violence. Many of us have heard the question: “Why doesn’t God act this way now?” and the quick answer we often hear is “Because we are not under a theocracy.” (This is unfortunate, because that is not what is meant by a theocracy. God intends that His Church should be a theocracy; only with man out of the way can the third angel’s message go forward with great power and “finish the work.” The hierocracy that is the present day General Conference structure cannot accomplish the work that the Lord will do when He alone is Head over His Church. But that is another subject.) Our beloved teachers may give a more complex answer than this but it is generally found that they don’t have an answer that is much more satisfying and don’t seem all that anxious to teach in this arena of the Character of God (CoG) discussion.

I believe that it is problematic for a CoG teacher to present God as one who kills in any way, even though it is the “sleep death” (first death), because it is glaringly obvious that its proactive violence does not harmonize with the peace teachings and their active demonstration in the life and death of Jesus. Furthermore, we must consider the last generation theocratic movement of God, as the 144,000 enter the time of final crisis when the enemies of God array themselves against His people. Why would He not command them also in the use of violent means, as He did in the first theocracy, that they might advance into the antitypical promised land by military conquest? The church does not believe or teach this, of course. Does this not say that in Jesus, God has changed His methods? If we have a changeable God, then what are we saying about His

character, about the integrity of Jesus’ words, “I and my Father are One,” knowing that God declares His unchanging nature (Mal. 3:6) as does the writer of Hebrews, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (13:8). It must be that in all of this the message of a God that is One, Eternal, and Perfect, functioning according to immutable law which is a transcript of His character, would be undermined. (Let the reader pause to meditate upon the ramifications of what I just said.)

This is a big subject and I am glad it is raised. It is going to take several installments just to begin to discuss it. In the examination of God’s loving character questions concerning His consistency are raised when we look at His use of violence. God’s commands to kill are particular points of discussion that need to be raised and I believe that the subject needs to be covered very early in our explorations of the truths of God’s character and attributes. Those who start to learn these truths can get very excited at the new views of God opening up to their understanding but as soon as they start to share with their brethren the non-violence of God, they get stumped with the questions regarding the wars of Israel, the civil laws, God setting up kingdoms of men which rule by force, and such.

We who present the advancing light on God’s character to others will generally make our initial launch into the studies with the basic appeal to the life, teachings, and cross of Christ as our fundamental hermeneutic on the character and attributes of God, for obvious reasons, as Jesus said plainly:

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou [then], Show us the Father? (John 14:9).

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word (John 17:4, 6).

John went on to say that the basic message that Jesus came to teach those who walked with Him and which they were then to convey to all of us through their testimony, is that “God is light and in Him is no darkness. At all” (1 John 1:5). When we look at what he said earlier in John 1:4, we understand that the “light” of humanity is life – His life.

Therefore darkness is death and it is not in God. If it is not in God, then He does not give it. At all. Ever. It comes from somewhere else. Where He is, there is light, life. Any place where He is not, there is nothing, which is darkness, death. How can we be so absolute, so “black and white” in our thinking? Jesus.

Watch for the next issue, as we continue to break this down.

To be continued...