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Publisher: Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens iron.

Contributors: Brenda Branson, B. L. Cocherell, Curtis Dahlgren, Bill Glover, Laura Lee & Avram Yehoshua

Website: Church of God, Bismarck <https://www.church-of-god-bismarck.org>

Articles

Christmas, Easter, Halloween & Other Non-Biblical Holidays

by B. L. Cocherell (Nevada) (Continued from Issue #8)

THE ORIGIN OF HALLOWEEN

Few have taken the time to ask about the origin of Halloween and whether or not Christians should participate in this holiday. The truth is that Halloween is not Christian and should not be celebrated by true Christians:

"The principal fire-festivals of the Celts . . . May Day and the other one All hallows Eve or Hallowe'en, as it is now commonly called, that is, on the thirty-first of October, the day preceding All Saints' or Allhallows Day . . . the feast of all souls. At the beginning of November, which under a thin Christian cloak conceals an ancient pagan festival of the dead . . . in the manner of their celebration and in the superstitions associated with them, and alike, by the antique character impressed upon both, betray a remote and purely pagan origin" (The Golden Bough, p.733-34).

"Do not pursue after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise. You shall not do likewise to the Lord your God: for every abomination that the Lord hates, they have done to their gods. They have even burned their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be sure to do it: you shall not add to it or take away from it" (Deut.12:30-32 Para.).

God of the Dead

The following sources show that Halloween was originally a holiday celebrated in honor of the god of the dead: "The earliest Hallowe'en celebrations [in the British Isles] were held by the Druids in honor of Samhain, Lord of the dead, whose festival fell on November 1" (Halloween Through Twenty Centuries).

"It was a Druidical belief that on the eve of this festival [Hallowe'en], Saman, Lord of the Dead, called together the wicked spirits . . . (Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, "Halloween").

In the ancient pagan world, it was believed that the souls of good people would rise to heaven and the souls of evil people would be turned over to the lord of the dead. And once a year, the spirits of these dead people would be let out.

"Hallows' is an old word for a saint and Allhallows' Eve (31 October) is the vigil of All Saints (1 November), the Christian festival corresponding to an ancient feast of the dead. In many European countries it is traditionally a time when the spirits of the departed visit their former homes; a fire, food and drink are put ready for them.'

"In Sicily the ghostly visitors bring gifts for the children – toys, sweets and clothes stolen from the shops. The Welch believe that a ghost came and sat on every stile when the clock struck twelve. In some parts of Wales, the wandering shades [ghosts] appeared as a white lady, while in north Wales and Scotland people feared the spectral Black Sow" (Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Magic, Venetia Newal, p.16).

"In Wales until the eighteenth century it was customary to burn a candle in church to see what the future held. A bright flame meant a prosperous, happy year. An irregular flame foretold trouble, and if it went out this signified one's own death. Hallowe'en divination probably derives from Samhain . . ." (Ibid, p.16).

Halloween is a purely pagan, occult holiday. The symbols of Halloween tell the true meaning of the day. The Jack-O-lantern is an idol to the Lord of the Dead (Satan). The lighted candle within is a remnant of Halloween Fires to light the way for the returning spirits of the dead. The witch represents the high priestess of Satan worship. The full moon is the Sabat night on which witches perform their ritual worship of the spirits and Satan. The black cat is associated with witchcraft and symbolizes a witches' spirit guide (demon).

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The skeleton depicts Ankou, Lord of the Dead who allegedly traveled in the dead of night to claim his victims. Superstitious beliefs portray Ankou as living in an underground palace filled with thousands of candles. Each candle is supposed to represent a human life. He claims his victims by blowing out the candles.

Satan Worship

The truth is that when people observe and commemorate pagan observances, they actually worship Satan who wants to be worshiped as God: "Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the church [not the Church of God] in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make . . ." (The Golden Bough, Frazer, p. 419).

The Bible shows what God has commanded his people to do and not do. He commands his children not to learn the way of the Heathen (Jer.10:2). Moreover, God allows no way to sanctify a pagan festival as Christian: *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons"* (1 Cor.10:20-21 KJV Para.).

Incredible as it may seem, the Catholic church, which professes to worship Christ, admittedly has accepted pagan practices into their worship system.

"On this day, the Church honors the Angels and Saints in heaven. It is a holyday of obligation. This day is a great family feast. It has its origin in the year 610, when [Pope] Boniface IV dedicated the [pagan] Pantheon of Rome to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. It is in special commemoration of the millions of Saints in heaven who have not been officially canonized by the Church, and thus have no special commemoration during the year.'

"This day commemorates all the souls in Purgatory. It is a day for pious remembrance of the dead, and for offering Masses and prayers for them. On this day as on Christmas, priests are allowed to say three Masses, for the souls of the departed, that they may be free from Purgatory.'

"From noon of All Saints' Day till midnight of the next day (All Soul's Day), all those who have confessed and received Holy Communion on either of the two days may gain the 'toties quoties' indulgence: a plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in Purgatory every time they visit a church or public chapel, and pray six 'Our Fathers', six 'Hail Marys', and 'six glorias' for the intention of the Holy Father [the Pope]" (My Catholic Faith, 1963, p.417).

Along with being part of the Catholic system of worship, Halloween is also the high Sabat for witches around the world. And the practices of witchcraft are condemned in the Bible (Deut.18:9-14).

True Christians should have absolutely nothing to do with such evil and abominable satanic practices, customs, and days. Additionally, the children of Christians should not be involved nor participate in these holidays and events.

To Be Continued in Issue #10

Feast of Reconciliation

by Bill Glover (Eugene, Oregon)

How great was your Feast of Tabernacles? What great spiritual lessons did you take from the feast that enabled you toward **spiritual maturity**? (Hebrews 6:1)? Or, did you skip the feast altogether, as many have done in recent years? We had a tremendous feast in Pine Mountain, Georgia. Before I relate our feast experiences, let us first review some very important factors about the Feast of Tabernacles as well as the other festivals of God. The title of this article shows the subject matter is that of **reconciliation**.

THE FESTIVALS OF GOD

Do you not realize that all the festivals of God - - including the weekly Sabbath - - deal specifically with **RECONCILIATION**? There is ONLY ONE-WAY humans can be saved - - RECONCILED TO GOD- - and that is through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). And do you also know that the entire human race from Adam until now is anxiously waiting in

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great expectation for the *reconciliation* of humans to God? (Romans 8:19 – 23)

Let us briefly review the annual holy days and their true significance so as to see what they should mean to each of us.

THE PASSOVER: The Passover, and its true significance, is the very first step in God *reconciling* humans to Himself. The Passover represents the death of Jesus the Christ. He allowed His blood to be spilled to pay the penalty of our sins (Ephesians 1:7, Romans 5:6 – 11 and 1 Peter 1:18). We were redeemed from our former way of life BY THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST - - the Lamb of God. The Passover made this REDEMPTION possible. We, who are called today, are among the first to hope (the first fruits or the first *reconciled* - -see Ephesians 1:12). Do we not realize that we have been called to become *reconciled* so as to be the literal SONS OF GOD, HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH JESUS CHRIST (Romans 8:17)? If we respond to God, we will SHARE CHRIST’S GLORY! Study also James 1:18.

Thus, the Passover must be the most important point in our lives since it is the beginning step of our *reconciliation*. Do we each examine ourselves during the Passover as God commands (1 Corinthians 11:27 – 32)?

UNLEAVENED BREAD: The seven days of unleavened bread picture the struggle those of us whom God has *reconciled* through the blood of Christ face as we practice putting sin out of our lives as we put leavening out of our homes for seven days.

PENTECOST: Pentecost is the festival that depicts those whom God is *reconciling* through a special anointing of the Holy Spirit which empowers them to put sin out of their lives so as to please God. Please study Acts 1:5 and 8, 2 Corinthians 1:21 – 22, Ephesians 1:13 – 14, 2 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 John 2:20 and 27. There are many more scriptures that confirm these truths.

TRUMPETS: Trumpets depicts the time when Christ returns and glorifies those *reconciled* to God and redeemed through the blood of Christ. They become the literal spirit composed sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ and become kings and priests in the world to come (1 Corinthians 15:49 – 54, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 18 and Revelation 20:5 – 6).

ATONEMENT: Atonement goes hand in hand with the feast of trumpets in that both festivals depict the time when those *reconciled* to God and redeemed will be glorified with Christ and be ready to rule the earth with Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES: This festival depicts the one-thousand-year period during which God will use those who have been *reconciled* throughout history (the dead saints and those still alive when Christ returns) to bring *reconciliation* to all humans living on earth during that time period. The weekly Sabbath is another holy day that God gave to depict the *reconciling* of humans to God through Jesus Christ.

LAST GREAT DAY: This is the period of time God has allocated for all humans who have lived and died since Adam be given the opportunity to be *reconciled* to God through Jesus Christ. Please note that *reconciliation* is the prime theme through all of God’s holy days. The feast of tabernacles is truly important in light of *reconciliation* in that it is the period of time that God is preparing the earth for the billions of people who will come out of their graves in what the Bible calls “the second resurrection.”

With this brief review of the Holy Days of God, do you now see more clearly why God has commissioned His true servants with the MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION and the MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION? Carefully study 2 Corinthians 5:17 – 21 and drink in of its meaning.

I have an important question to ask all of you. Did you hear this “MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION” preached during your feast? And did you study this “GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION” during the feast? After your feast, do you now have a greater knowledge and appreciation of God’s festivals and the fact that all of God’s holy days point to and explain RECONCILIATION and the “GOSPEL” that teaches us about this *reconciliation*?

There are about two thousand groups that have come out of the Worldwide Church of God. This publication is specifically directed toward and about the different “*Churches of God!*” The Bible is very clear in that there is *only one* TRUE

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CHURCH OF GOD. Yet many groups make the claim to be that “**one and only** true church!” What about the other 1999 “Churches of God?”

THE PROBLEM

The problem is that all these groups view “the church” as an organization of people with a specific geographic location and with a specific leadership made up of men. But is this **the Bible definition** of “THE TRUE CHURCH?” The problem that exists in the different “Churches of God” today reminds me of what Paul encountered in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:11-17). Please study this scripture carefully and you will see this controversy repeated today.

I state with the Apostle Paul. “For there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? For when one says ‘I follow Paul,’ and another says, ‘I follow Apollos.’ Are you not mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3 – 4). Verse 5 then shows that the minister is only a **servant**. Then verses 6 – 9 states clearly: “I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, BUT GOD MADE IT GROW. So, neither he who plants nor he who waters IS ANYTHING, BUT ONLY GOD, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have (or are supposed to have) ONE PURPOSE.” And that purpose is RECONCILIATION TO GOD and TOWARD EACH OTHER. Is God not inspiring Paul to embarrass the Corinthians for following men rather than God? What about Galatians 5:15? Does this not describe the different “Churches of God” today? Isn’t anyone concerned with what God thinks about the present situation among those who “claim” to represent Him? Where does 1 Corinthians 13 fit into the current situation with the church? Do the words of God mean anything to the different groups? How will we answer Christ when He calls us to an accounting - - and we will be held accountable!

OUR FEAST OF RECONCILIATION

We held a very unusual feast at Pine Mountain, Georgia. We believe in reconciliation. We realize that most of the 2000 “Churches of God” actually believe in and teach most, if not all, the basic truths of the Bible. The main controversies involve the **human leadership** - - not doctrinal differences. We have striven to bridge these **personality differences**. In planning our specific feast this year, we reached out to others asking that they join us. Represented at our feast site were five different ministries. We experienced eight days of complete harmony. There were no disagreements since our theme was twofold. The first emphasis was to glorify our Savior Jesus the Christ letting God’s Spirit rule and the second theme was to emphasize that the feast is to emphasize RECONCILIATION - - reconciliation to God and toward each other.

Part of our fellowship at our feast this year were representatives from a messianic group. These members choose to use the Hebrew names for God. The rest of us found no controversy in this. In fact, those of us speaking often substituted Hebrew words for God during our sermons. It certainly is NOT a sin to use Hebrew wording when calling on God or praying to Him.

OUR KENYA FEAST SITE

We also had different feast sites in both western and eastern Kenya. Again, the theme was that of reconciliation to God and with each other. We have also been experiencing members of the Church of God-Seventh Day and the Seventh-day Adventists coming to us for fellowship. Several attended the feast with us. I have been very thankful that ministers from those two groups have already been in Kenya preaching the word. These ministers from other “churches” planted and we are now watering the seed planted. How can true Christians criticize and condemn other sons of God who are striving to follow God’s instructions - - not the instructions of church administrators?

OUR PRACTICE

We never attempt to draw members from other groups. If others seek to fellowship with us, we do not turn them away. We teach them that their primary fellowship is to be with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We follow God’s instructions as found in Romans 14. We find verse 4 very informative. We are not to judge another’s servant. In this case the one we tend to judge is ACTUALLY God’s begotten child (see also verse 13).

What about the seven churches addressed in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3? All seven had problems but GOD DID NOT CONDEMN THEM - - He admonished them to repent and overcome these defects. In recent months, a minister I have known since he was a youth spoke to a group other than his affiliation. His church rebuked him publicly for doing this. Clearly this church organization would have condemned all seven of the churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3. That group, and many others, would have condemned the apostle Paul for he spoke to any and all who would listen to him. A true minister of God speaks where God inspires him to speak and he speaks the word of God from the Bible and is NOT

controlled by a church board. A true minister is A MINISTER OF GOD - - and not a minister of an organized church body. Should we not all begin to follow the admonition from God found in 2 Corinthians 5:17 – 20?

Other Items

The Ayatollahs of atheism versus the next generation of evangelists? (Copyright) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

"At some point, there's going to be enough pressure that it is just going to be too embarrassing to believe in God." – Samuel Harris ("Letter to a Christian Nation")

JOHN STUART MILL wrote about the *tyranny of prevailing opinion*. Conventional 'wisdom.' "Consensus" versus last century's "outdated" values and mores. Like, when the Lord comes, "will He find Faith on the earth?"

"The Puritan heritage distilled through the 18th century patriots without, however, loss of its original religious strength explains many features in Lincoln's thought." – William Wolf, "The Religion of Abraham Lincoln" (1963)

Further excerpts:

"The prophetic note of a God of mercy Who punishes the sins of men in the *judgments of history with a view to reformation* would become a dominant theme in [Lincoln's] later religious utterances, especially in his presidential proclamations [such as his Thanksgiving proclamations].

"Here Lincoln saw much more clearly than most of the parsons of his day that there is an unbiblical preaching of pardon of sin that, by extricating the individual man from his historical and social setting, gives him illusions about punishment in this world and the next.

"Lincoln understood the gospel to mean the salvation of men in both a this-worldly and a next-worldly framework. Many ministers had reduced Christianity to a message of *escape for individuals in the NEXT world.*"

TO PUT THIS IN MODERN CONTEXT:

"Lincoln's religion cannot be hermetically sealed off from his social, economic, and political attitudes. His political action, as revealed by his own words, was ultimately the social expression of an understanding of God and of man that demanded responsible activity. This is contrary to a *widespread modern opinion that religion should be a separate interest OR EVEN A HOBBY IN LIFE and should not be ALLOWED to influence fields like politics.*

"No person as deeply immersed as Lincoln in the biblical faith could possibly take such a view. His criticism of the churches of his day was that they neglected this fundamental love of God and of neighbor by too much introverted attention upon *correctness in theological opinion . . .*"

IN ADDITION TO LINCOLN'S WRITTEN WORDS, Wolf mentions an anecdotal conversation that Lincoln had with a personal friend or two:

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"Isaac Cogdal, who had known Lincoln from the time of the New Salem period, recalled a discussion on religion in Lincoln's office in 1859; Herndon was in the office at the time. Lincoln expressed himself in about these words:

"He did not nor could not believe in the endless punishment of any one of the human race. He understood punishment was parental in its object, aim, and design, and intended for the good of the offender; hence it must cease when justice is satisfied.

"He added this remark, that punishment being '*a provision of the gospel system,*' he was not sure, but the world would be better off if a little more punishment was preached by our ministers and NOT SO MUCH PARDON OF SIN. This last comment has all the earmarks of an authentic Lincoln utterance." [my caps]

In 1860, 20 of 23 ministers in Springfield voted against Lincoln for President, probably because he never joined one of their churches. But as someone said, some people are "buttresses" of the Church; they support it from the outside.

In 1962 *DECISION* magazine published an article by Richard Nixon in which he said he had heard some of the 20th century's great theologians speak, but he sort of wished they would do more preaching *from* the Bible rather than just *about* the Bible. That is what it's going to take for the 21st century's Witnesses to stand up to the coming withering attacks from the Christian-hating and Israel-hating Left!

Someone said that "the search for truth" is a delight to modern theologians, more important than the Truth itself, because the "search" allows them to avoid taking a firm stand on anything. Their "Faith" is more like religious Nihilism than that of the Lord they profess to be working for; "nihilism" being a belief in "nothing at all," or "NIL."

P.S. As I write, it is "Oscar" weekend (big whoop). In the USA TODAY the other day, there was a page one article in which 94 percent of women in the film business responding to a survey said that they had been harassed or assaulted sexually. Surprise, surprise! Didn't they know that the men who run that business are creeps? And if you take off your clothes and pretend to have sex with a man who isn't your husband in front of three or four cameras all day, do you expect to be treated like Mother Theresa the rest of the day?

"Hollywood's a place where they'll pay you a thousand dollars for a kiss, and fifty cents for your soul." – Marilyn Monroe

"If you ask me to play myself, I will not know what to do. I do not know who or what I am." – Peter Sellers

"They have great respect for the dead in Hollywood, but none for the living." – Errol Flynn

The Seed of Abraham
by Avram Yehoshua (Flagstaff, Arizona)

The Seed of Abraham's website (<https://www.seedofabraham.net/>) has Avram Yehoshua's teachings on it (about 180 articles), which form the theology for The Seed of Abraham. Avram calls that theology, The Hebraic Perspective. It is not to be confused with the Hebrew Roots movement nor Messianic Judaism; the former having many grievous heresies, such as Gentile circumcision, and the latter not taking Mosaic Law to heart. The major theme of the teachings center

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around the New Testament, after the resurrection, declaring to both Jew and Gentile Christian to walk out their faith in Jesus/Yeshua through all the laws and rules of Mosaic Law that apply to them, and to forsake the erroneous teachings of the Church regarding its anti-Mosaic Law theology, Sunday, Easter, Xmas, and the eating of unclean meats such as bacon, ham and shrimp.

The Lord began The Seed of Abraham in 1983 through Avram (1951–present), author, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, whom Yeshua blessed over the years, giving much insight and understanding into the Scriptures. Avram has taught more than 500 times, in churches of all persuasions, on the holiness of Jesus from an Old Testament perspective. He has also lived in Israel for 16 years, with his wife Ruti, witnessing to his Jewish people, and also to Arabs, on a daily basis. His heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they would be saved (Rom. 10:1).

Fear

by Brenda Branson (Hanson, Kentucky) Copyright © September 2000

I am a prisoner . . .
confined not by bars or locked doors
but by harsh words and raised fists.

I am just a few steps away from the open door of freedom
but fear holds me back.

Fear that his opinion of me may be true . . .
That I might really be stupid and unfit.
Fear that I will fail on my own
and face his sneers of contempt as he watches me struggle.

Fear that no one else will ever love me
or comfort me when I'm lonely and afraid.
Even though he often withheld love and comfort, at least he was there.

Fear of losing my most precious treasure—my children . . .
Maybe I will never see them again, as he has threatened
Perhaps they will even blame me for leaving.

Fear of dashing my children's hopes
destroying their security
denying their dreams
and diminishing their trust.

Fear of bringing disgrace on the name of my Lord
Fear of judgmental Christians . . .
Fear of the unknown.

So I remain here, a prisoner in my own home
Wearing a mask of contentment and happiness on the outside
While I am slowly dying on the inside.

Freedom beckons me . . .
Do I dare get up and run outside?
Or settle for the stifling sameness and strange comfort of bondage?

Fear . . .
The shackle which chains me to the known

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Or the motivation which gives me courage to confront the evil.

The choice is mine.

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18

A Blast from the Past

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

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

The two words that jump out at me in this scripture are "fornication and adultery". Most people think they know what those two words are talking about, however, do we? The Bible, God's word defines the words that are used. Let us take a look first at how the Bible defines "fornication".

FORNICATION

In the Old Testament, there are five scriptures in the King James Bible that use the word "fornication", they are 2 Chronicles 21:11, Isaiah 23:17, Ezekiel 16:15, 26, 29. If you read the entire chapters of 2 Chronicles 21, Isaiah 23, and Ezekiel 16, you will find that the Old Testament definition of fornication is in the context of idolatry. All 3 of these chapters are talking about idolatry and what it includes.

In the New Testament, in Matthew 19:9 the word for fornication in the Greek is "porneia" and is found in that exact form 6 more times. In 1 Corinthians 5:1 it is used in context of sexual sin, incest. Next is 1 Corinthians 6:13, and if you read this entire chapter, it is in context of sin in general. In 2 Corinthians 12:21, the context is speaking of unrepented sins. Galatians 5:19, is again speaking of sin in general and if you read the entire chapter it is speaking of both the fruits of the spirit and the fruits of the flesh (or sin in general). Again, in Ephesians 5:3, the word is used in context of sin in general and is directed at saints in general. In Revelation 19:2 the word "fornication", "porneia" is being used in the context of idolatry.

In Galatians 5:19-21 it says: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication (porneia), uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Colossians 3:5 tells us what idolatry is: ...fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

2 Kings 21:21-22 says: And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers and walked not in the way of the LORD.

So, by these scriptures, we can know what the Bible definition of fornication is, it is sin, and sin is idolatry, and it is a lifestyle.

Matthew 15:18-20: But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 6:19 and you are bought for a price, 1 Corinthians 6:20, and your body is not your own. Both your body and your spirit are God's. If your lifestyle is to lust after other gods (idols), this comes from the heart and is spiritual as well as physical and is called fornication or the worship of idols. There are several lists of behaviors in the Bible which could be called sin lists or lists of idols, and fornication is idolatry. Colossians 3:5.

Strong's Concordance under fornication #4202 & #4203 even lists fornication to mean idolatry in the Greek. How did we miss this, and why have we held so many women and children in bondage through marriage, telling them they can only leave Egypt for sexual sin (how we looked at fornication)? We have a society and it's within the Church of God also, a mindset that if people know a woman is being beaten by her husband they call her stupid for staying in it, and when she tries to get out they not only won't help her, but they tell her she can only leave for sexual sin, so if there is no sexual sin, she can never marry again because she will be committing adultery and cause the other person also to commit adultery.

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WHAT DOES A FORNICATOR LOOK LIKE?

Study Esau: Hebrews 12:16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

ADULTERY

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

"Adultery", in Strong's Concordance in the Hebrew-Old Testament is #5003 and means to "Apostatize". #3431, #3429, and #3430 in the Greek-New Testament all refer to #3432 which means "Apostate". In Webster's Dictionary "Apostasy" means: an abandoning of what one believed in, as a faith, political party, principles, etc. "Apostate" means to revolt, standoff. "Apostatize" means: to be an apostate; abandon one's faith, political party, etc.

This can also mean emotional divorce from your mate. This Apostasy may even mean you are still in the marriage, physically, but you just plain old don't have a marriage relationship of any kind. Apostasy can include both physical and spiritual things.

What does God say about adultery?

Proverbs 6:32: But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

Jeremiah 5:7: How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me and sworn by them that are not gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses.

Jeremiah 7:9: Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Ba'al, and walk after other gods whom ye know not.

Ezekiel 23:37: That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery; and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them.

2 Peter 2:14-15: Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bo'sor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

Revelation 2:21-23: And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death: and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

There are many more scriptures throughout the Bible about adultery, that you can also look up, but it looks like the definition of adultery according to God is apostasy, or abandonment of His way (God's Way). It is a departing from God's way and going the way of Satan. Can people in the Church of God commit adultery or abandonment? You bet they can. If your lifestyle consists of any of the things which are listed on God's sin lists, you are committing adultery. So next time you thumb your nose at a divorced person who is doing the best they can to do things God's way, please look at yourself first, because if you are lying to your wife, stealing from friends, smoking, drinking to excess, treating your wife as garbage and as a lower life form than the family pet, you are committing fornication (idolatry) and because you are departing from God's way by doing these things, it is adultery (apostasy). (Read the entire Chapter of Jeremiah 3.) The twisting of these Bible scriptures has been to long used as a way for men and even women sometimes not to take responsibility for their own actions against others, especially their own brides whom they are to cherish.

God divorced Israel for adultery (abandonment of His ways). (Again, read the entire Chapter of Jeremiah 3.) Their adulteries were their sinful lifestyles which they did not want to give up. Their sin was fornication (idolatry), which according to the Bible, not only included their worship of molten images, but also those things they did not want to give up in their lifestyles, which could and did definitely include sexual sin, but it also included their lusting from the heart after things like lying, drinking, etc. etc. etc.

Here is an example of fornication. My second husband was a drinker. He loved to drink. He was also Mr. Macho man; I never saw him cry except once. I was yet recovering from a back injury which was caused from a beating I had taken at his hand 2 years before this incident. He had stopped drinking for over a year but decided to take it up again one day. He came into our apartment, with a bottle of 30 proof rock gut wine, and offered me a glass and of course, it looked like he had already had at least one and was going for another. I saw that bottle in his hand and I knew, that when the bottle came back into our house, so do the beatings he used to inflict. I knew I would not survive another beating at his hand, I was not and am still not fully recovered from the last one he inflicted on me. I looked him straight in the eye, and I said, "You will have to choose between me or your drinking." That is the first time I ever saw the Mr. Macho man cry real tears. He was crying as he gathered his stuff and took his bottle and left. The next time I saw him was after he filed for divorce

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and came back to get some more of his things. That was fornication (idolatry), he loved his drinking (idol), more than his wife (relationship, marriage, joining). He committed adultery (apostasy, abandonment) when he left.

MATTHEW 19:9 & MATTHEW 5:32

The church has used these to hold people in bondage indefinitely, and it is my opinion that we stop doing this, as these scriptures when you dissect them, do not mean what people have been taught they mean. Please do not believe me, study it yourself.

In Matthew 19:9, for instance, in the Greek, the last part is not even there, and many Bibles don't put it in. In Matthew 19:9 as it is written in the King James Bible, you have a "him, him, her" thing and in Matthew 5:32, you have a "him, her, her" thing, which is important to understanding these verses. In Matthew 19:9 the word "commit" implies an intentional action, where in Matthew 5:32, the word "causeth" implies either an intentional or a non-intentional action. In Matthew 5:32, the Greek word which was translated as fornication is "logouporneias", and since it only appears in that form one time in the entire Bible, there is some dispute as to what this word really means. Also, in Matthew 5:32, the word adultery used in the King James Bible, is used twice here and is translated from two different Greek words, into the same English word.

Matthew 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication (idolatry), and (he who puts her away for something other than idolatry, and) shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away (for idolatry) doth commit adultery. (The last part of this scripture does not even appear in the Greek and some versions of the Bible, do not even put it in there.)

This would sort of blow the idea that if one spouse is free to remarry, so too is the other one no matter what they did. As I understand corporation church culture, once a group of ministers chooses to say God loosed one person from the marriage, then it means that both are free to remarry again. So, in other words, if one person is unbound from the marriage, because of fraud (lying, deception), or for adultery (sexual sin or abandonment) the other person is freed by the ministry also to go and do it all over again. It never did sound right to me. Once a person knows the definition of fornication and adultery, one can see that God does hold at least one person accountable for the divorce, and it may or may not be the person who actually physically filed for divorce and left the marriage. It is impossible to have a relationship with an unrepentant person--or any person who is unwilling to change their own destructive behaviors into good behaviors for the good of the relationship.

Matthew 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication (idolatry), (will) causeth her to commit adultery (apostatize, not being a family, not joined): and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (for idolatry), committeth adultery.

REPENTANCE

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance...

Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Acts 26:20 ...that they should repent and turn to God and do works meet for repentance.

These scriptures show that true repentance of our sinful behaviors require that of doing works and these works will produce fruit. In our relationships with each other, just saying you are sorry does not cut it. We can say we are sorry to someone forever if we want to, but if we do not change our behaviors towards that person, we will get nowhere in having a right relationship with that other person. Many men, and probably even some women, use scriptures to especially beat up on their mates. Matthew 19:9, and Matthew 5:32, have actually been used by many men, both in the church and out to keep women and children from leaving very destructive relationships. When I study these scriptures, it looks to me like men and women are each accountable for their own behaviors and if a man or a woman is hard hearted (unrepentant), stiff necked (unrepentant), and going down the path of destruction, God does not require that men or women stay in these situations and stay in bondage. Just for the record, I am not recommending divorce at the drop of a hat, because God does not like divorce, and neither do women. God wants very much for us to work on our marriages. However, if only one person is working on the relationship, and the other person is totally refusing to work on anything, there may come a point in time when it would be more destructive to stay than to leave. Sometimes whether to leave a marriage or not is a very hard thing. Myself being a woman and having gone through it, I can tell you I would not recommend divorce unless there is no other way.

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MARRIAGE

Up until now, I have been rather lenient on men, so now I'm going to start on you, and what your responsibilities are within the marriage relationship. Men are the head of the house, and men are over the wife as Christ is head of the church. What does this mean to you men? Does it mean you beat your family sheep and lambs into submission under you, and whatever you say goes? Men all around the world love this next scripture. Ephesians 5:22: Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands... For some reason men forget to read the entire scripture. We should start in Ephesians 5:21: Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: ... Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Men, Christ has set you in a leadership role. Christ has not set you up in a boss role to be telling your wife what to do every chance you get. Christ has not set you up in a dictatorship role over your wife, so that you can oppress her and keep her from reaching her full potential, because you are beating her once a week or more. Christ has given you a special calling, with a lot of responsibility. Christ holds you responsible for the wellbeing of your family. God holds men 100% responsible for the wellbeing of their families. I am actually glad I'm a girl, because that is a lot of responsibility when one sits down and thinks about it. Men you are responsible to provide for your families, spend time with your families, and guide them through life's ups and downs in a loving way, as Christ would do it. Submitting to each other is to be done by both husband and wife, and a better term would be, to work together for the good of the family.

Now, you men and women may or may not have noticed a couple of other things in the above scripture. Christ commands women to submit to their own husbands, and as I already stated, submitting is working together for the good of the family. Women are not required to take either abuse or orders from men outside their immediate families, or in their immediate families either. This is not to say that you cannot help other families or other men. It just means they do not have license to boss you around because you are a woman. This may not even be a problem many women have, but I have seen it, and it is not pretty.

The other part of this goes like this men. Christ has given you a job that requires you to lead (guide by your example) your wife, as Christ leads the church. That means you are to guide in a Christ like manner, and not as Satan leads. There is a very large difference in those two paths. If a husband is trying to lead in a Christ like manner and makes a few mistakes along the way, that is one thing, at least he has a repentant attitude, and is working on himself. However, if a man, lies or deceives his wife on a regular basis, if he is never home, if he puts others and his job above his marriage relationship, if he is out partying every night, if he gets drunk on a regular basis, etc. etc. etc. If this is your lifestyle to follow Baal, and you do not want to give it up, and if you don't think you need to, not only apologize to your wife, but also repent (change your behaviors), then I suggest that you get out your concordance and check to see what all the things are that God holds you responsible for, because you are in the leadership spot. If you lead your wife and family down the path of destruction, you are accountable to God for that. The other thing is, that God does not hold your wife and family burdened and bound to live their lives in your sewer.

Just as God divorced Israel, for an unrepentant lifestyle (hardness of heart), God does allow divorce among His people for the same reason, and by God's own word, people who leave a marriage for this reason are free to remarry. Read Matthew 19:3-8, Christ did not change the reason for divorce. All Christ said here, was that it was meant from the beginning for man to only have one mate, but because of the hardness of your hearts (unrepentant sin as a lifestyle), God allowed divorce. Unrepentant sin (hardness of heart), lifestyle, would include any reason listed on the sin lists (idol lists). God did not in his word confine divorce only to sexual sin, as so many want to do, in order to not take responsibility for their own deviant lifestyles. (Read 1 Corinthians 6:13-18)

Wives are very relational, they want to be loved and cared for and God does command husbands to love their wives, understand their wives, and husbands are also very much responsible for their wife's happiness. Now I know guys, these things may not seem fair to you, after getting sermon after sermon on how to control the wife and family, but face it guys, does that control thing really work? Because wives are relational, they are not quite as quick as men sometimes are to leave their homes and start all over again. Women have a tendency to work on the relationship with their husbands even long after they have perceived, it isn't going anywhere. So, guys if your wife leaves because she now feels freer to because of this article, do not blame me, because I was not the one who was in your house, you were. You as the leader, and head of your home are 100% responsible for the guiding and caring of your families, and if you do not want to clean up your life, God does give His permission for her to get out, and she is justified by scripture to do so. I purposely have not given you all the scriptures that pertain to men, because it is my opinion that you should look at what God says about your role under Christ yourself. So, study men!

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