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Articles

...Does the Devil Hate Christmas?

by John Jewell (London, England)

On the surface, it 'seems' logical! What is the devils' attitude toward Jesus? It 'seems' logical that since he tried to kill Jesus on several occasions, and since he was able to influence the Jews and the Romans to finally KILL him, that the devil's attitude toward Jesus would be one of HATE! And, if that is true, it logically follows that the devil would also HATE *anything that is intended to be WORSHIP toward Jesus!*

Today, Millions of sincere Christians participate in 'holidays' that are *supposed to be WORSHIP toward Jesus.* What does the devil think of those 'holidays'? Does he like them, or HATE them? Is it true? ...Does the Devil Hate Christmas?

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I found an article on the web that stated, "the devil hates christmas!" here is what it said...

"the devil hates christmas. the birth of Christ was the greatest event in human history... the world that rejects the truth about the son of God hates the manger scene and the songs that tell the story to the world."

A priest had this to say, *"it's also good for us to remember though, that the devil hates christmas almost as much as he hates easter...."*

In another on-line article, one preacher went on and on about Christ's sacrifice, his death on the cross, and then declared, *"no wonder the devil hates christmas so much!"*

Now, since christmas is supposed to be about the birth of Christ, I'm not sure where that fella was coming from, but it's plain that he believes that the devil hates christmas!

So, *does the devil hate christmas*, or is this world jumping to a 'conclusion'?

Today, many, modern christian preachers have come to the conclusion that Jesus died to free christians from the law! Those preachers exit the seminaries, believing and preaching, that Jesus died to establish what they call "christian Freedom"! Freedom from any sort of rules or regulations... *freedom to love and worship God any way they please!* they preach it, and their congregations believe it! christmas and all its many facets is one of the major times that this worship is offered up to Jesus, the Son of God. Every year, millions of sincere christians approach this "season", with great determination to worship the true God! Not an idol, but the real, true God and his holy precious Son!

It's that time of year again, friends... sleigh bells ringing, children singing... soon, the tv and radio will be inundated with the sights and sounds of the christmas spirit... folks are getting ready to worship Jesus and celebrate his birth!

Those who are going to celebrate, are sincerely convinced that what they are about to do, is alright with God because their pastors have taught them *that they can decide* what 'worship' is.

The plot goes like this: the devil hates Christ... and because he hates Christ, he also hates Christ's birth! and, because he hates Christ's birth, he would automatically hate christmas, which is supposed to celebrate Christ's Birth!

And since, the devil hates christmas, the opposite must be true: that God loves christmas! --that is how the reasoning goes, but what if that 'reasoning' is flawed??

What if, God is the one who hates 'christmas'?

That may be 'un-thinkable' to you, but can you stop and think? Will you? Can you believe your bible? Will you? Here is what it says!

The devil has deceived the whole world! (rev. 12:9)

Some people take negative comments about Christmas, as offensive... Some get personally offended and unwilling to listen to anything that might increase their knowledge about this 'holiday'. *But can we listen?* Can we stop and think? Can we try with all our might to understand that it is the customs, and practices... the traditions, that we are talking about? Not the people!

Fact: the 'season' long anti-dates Christ! the customs and practices... the traditions date back almost to the beginning... *they are the customs and symbols of the worship ways of the heathen!*

That is where they come from... from heathenism! They are "the way? of the heathen!

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So, can we lay aside our offended natures, and look at the holiday, *and the original purpose...* the original "reason for the season"!

Originally, the reason for the season, was *for the worship of false Gods!* Every one of the customs and symbols were utilized *for that purpose*, and truly, unbeknownst to the masses, the so-called 'gods' they worshiped, were not *the actual recipient of the worship they were offering up!!!* Those false gods were not real! The 'worship' was offered, *but they did not receive it!!!* The actual recipient of that worship was the one who had inspired it... satan, the devil!!

Every minute particle of every move these people made, every sacrifice, every offering, the use and re-use of every ceremony and tradition... every word and thought associated with those things, was actually worship that went to, *and was received by*, the devil, himself!

Every year, unsuspecting, sincere, and loving people, bring out the lights and the tinsel... the decorations and traditions, with all the music and sights and sounds... they begin several weeks before the big day, getting ready to worship... Jesus! They spend time preparing, building, setting up the various items and articles that they will use to celebrate... they drink in, through their eyes and ears, the 'spirit' of christmas, assuming that 'spirit' is from God!! They begin to fill their heads with thoughts about Christ, and to dwell on Him and how much they love Him... they drink it in, mentally, and physically, until it begins to affect their 'generosity' to the point that they want to *give* to those who are less 'fortunate'... they get so caught up in the 'spirit of christmas', that they begin to actually 'love their neighbors'...at least, a lot more than they do ordinarily... and as the big day approaches, they get more and more excited and eager to worship!

Some Don't Celebrate

Some, *like me*, do not celebrate... but, see... 'that' is ok... no one says that everyone *has to celebrate...* for the most part, that does not bother anyone. What bothers some, is anyone who dares to say aught against the 'season'!! When anyone speaks against Christmas, many assume that *they* are the target and the one being 'judged'! They get offended... after all, here they are, struggling, striving to get ready to worship the Son of God... spending their money and their time to do so, *marinating their minds in 'the spirit of christmas'...* and how dare anyone speak against it?

We hope you are not offended.

So, the people celebrate!! Their 'intent' is to worship Christ and celebrate His birthday!! They celebrate with earnest sincerity! They give it their all!! In the name of Christ, they strive to make the most of the season to tell others about Jesus and to do all the good deeds they can possibly do.

They do great things! They feed the hungry and clothe the poor and give gifts to little children, "*who otherwise wouldn't have a christmas*". and they do it all in Christ's name!!!

But, for just a moment, let us remember what those symbols and customs and traditions are, *and where they came from!!* You will not find them in the bible! God never commanded anyone to 'worship' Him that way! Those symbols, and customs and traditions were designed and put into practice by deceived human beings to worship false 'gods'... and that 'worship' ultimately found its way to the true father of that false worship... the 'god of this world'!! It ultimately was received by the devil, himself! Their symbols, and customs and traditions were ultimately worship to satan!

Again, it is said that "The devil hates Christmas."

But why?? Why would he? It is the very same thing he used to receive from the minds and the hands of the heathen!! The very same 'worship' that the heathen aimed at their false gods, and which ultimately went to the one who desired it in the first place!!!!

Today, the modern "christian" has been led to take the same symbols, customs, and traditions, *and aim them at the true God, as worship!!*

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But the true God, does not want it, and will not receive it!! And if he will not accept it, or receive it, then it is worship... in vain!

In their love and sincerity, the people want to worship the true God... they believe and have been taught, that it is ok with God, if they pick and choose how and when and with what customs, they will worship the true God!!

That is what they have been taught... *but not from the Bible!!*

The Plain Truth is, the True God never gave up his prerogative to define True Worship!

The Plain Truth is, the True God, long ago, explained to his people, Israel, *that He did not want those same symbols and customs and traditions applied to Him as worship!!!* This truth is plainly written there in the Book of Jeremiah!

There are a few, who see and understand that... They try to share it every year... the truth that God does not desire or crave worship that was once offered to heathen 'Gods' (and which actually went to his adversary, the devil!)

Jeremiah 10:1 hear ye the word which the lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Jeremiah 10:2 thus saith the lord, *learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. Jeremiah 10:3 for the customs of the people are vain...*

Here we have a direct "thus sayeth the lord"!! That used to mean something, but apparently, not anymore! Not in the case of christmas!

"learn not the way of the heathen"!

Why would God say that?? Why would he tell His people, not to do that?? Would He say *it if he didn't mean it??*

Does anyone care, or is everyone too offended to listen?

Can anyone lay aside *their hurt feelings* long enough to think about *God's feelings??* Can anyone stop and ask, "*what does God want?*"

John 4:23 but the hour cometh, and now is, when the *true worshippers* shall worship the father in spirit and in truth: for the father seeketh such to worship him.

That verse mentions "true worshippers". Are you a 'true worshiper'? or, have you been led to worship him in vain?

Yes, God desires to be worshiped!! But not with *the way* of the heathen! What else did he say? "*the customs of the people are vain.*"

These 'customs' are the product of the vanity of the people, inspired by the mind of the serpent!! They are vain worship, because the '*worship*' never gets to the one that was supposed to be worshiped!!!

As such, it is vain worship... it is useless, wasted effort!!

"in vain do they worship me..."

Can we stop being offended long enough to allow the truth of God to sink in?

Can we stop craving 'our way' over and above His way, long enough to put these points of truth together, so we can actually see what using these 'ways of the heathen' does? It turns our sincere, intended worship, into *zero worship!!*

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Friends, this subject is very important to God!

Deuteronomy 12:30 take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their Gods, saying, how did these nations serve their Gods? even so will I do likewise.

God did not want His people enquiring after these false Gods, trying to find out how the heathen served and worshiped those false Gods!! *He did not want His people trying to worship Him with those evil worship ways!!*

Deuteronomy 12:31 thou shalt not do so unto the lord thy God:

Read This! Malachi 3:6 for I am the Lord, I change not...

How plain and direct does it have to be??? God did not want to be worshiped with those customs, and symbols *back then*, and if Malachi 3:6 is true, *why would he want to be worshiped with those customs and symbols now!!!*

Why?

Again, in Deuteronomy 12:31 He tells us, "...for every abomination to the lord, *which he hateth*, have they done unto their gods;"

Plain statement! Those 'worship ways', are an abomination to him!!! He hates those customs, symbols, and traditions!!!!

"...for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."

I know, you would never do that... that *would* be an abomination! But that verse is not just speaking of human sacrifice, *it is referring to everything the heathen did, to worship their false gods!! Everything!*

Learning those other worship ways, *and aiming them at the true God, as worship*, is an abomination! So says your Bible!

Wait!!! You would not do that!! That is not your intention!!! Right?

Those who do so, thinking that God is pleased, *are deceived!* They are, in fact, disobeying God and '*offending him!*'

The true God does not want that kind of worship!! He will not accept those customs, practices, and traditions as worship! The end result is no worship at all!! (except to the one professing Christians do not really want to worship!! the adversary... the enemy of God!)

Deuteronomy 12:32 what thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

That is the Plain Truth about what God wants and expects from His people!!

I keep mentioning "His people"... are you one of His people? Really?

Are you willing to lay aside *your customs and symbols and traditions*, and begin to want what he wants... to crave what he craves??

Does God want to celebrate the birth of his Son? No mention of that in the bible! Does Jesus want to be worshiped on His birthday? No mention of that in the bible either!

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But the bible *does tell us* what God wants!! Deuteronomy 12:32: The preachers and teachers declare that God is ok with anything that the people want to offer up as worship!! God, in his holy word *denies that*, and demands to be worshiped as he specifies!!

Today, the modern 'christian', has been led to think that anything they want to offer up to God is 'good enough'... they think that they can decide!! They firmly believe that whatever they decide is 'worship', will do!

Is that really how God looks at it??

Read that verse in Deuteronomy again!!

Deuteronomy 12:32 what thing soever I command you, observe to do it:

Truly, today, that is a hard pill to swallow!! Who, if any, actually believes that God feels about it that way???

And here is the hardest part to take!! "...thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. "

Hardly anyone approaches this 'season' with that thought on their minds... they want to worship Christ!! They want to do it, *the way* their parents and grandparents did it... *the way* that was handed down from way back!

They do it 'automatically'... without thinking... without asking themselves this very important question: "am I 'adding to', or 'taking anything away' from *the way* that God wants and expects to be worshiped?"

No, they don't naturally think about that, and so they continue, year after year, offering up the same old stuff... not realizing that all their customs and traditions and symbols, mean nothing to God!!

The end result is total failure! Because misdirected, unaccepted worship, is no worship at all!!

No, the devil does not hate christmas! It is *the same worship* that he has received all along from the heathen... the very same customs, practices, and traditions that the heathen offered up to their false gods, as worship!

Why would the devil *hate* the worship that ultimately comes directly to him??

Before you buy that next present or sing that next christmas carol?... Think about it!

If you truly love God, may He bless you greatly as you seek to serve Him!

May God grant that someone will understand!

The TRUTH About the Origin of Modern Languages

by Nathaniel Burson (Big Sandy, Texas)

One of the most confounding questions to modern scholars is the reason for the sudden explosion of diverse languages upon the earth in the misty dawn of history. Where did language come from? HOW could it have evolved? It's a known fact that instead of EVOLVING, all languages DEVOLVE, or become simpler, never more complex! This is a great problem for evolutionists and worldly scientists. And yet the answer is before their very eyes? In fact, the answer is in their own lips!

There is CONCLUSIVE, demonstrable, SCIENTIFIC evidence that ALL languages today have a COMMON ORIGIN! That all men, at one time, spoke ONE LANGUAGE!

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How can this be done you ask? How can you PROVE that ONE language existed, after thousands of years, with NO WRITTEN RECORDS of that language anywhere today? Read on to discover the shocking truth that science cannot accept!

Languages are categorized into groups. These groups are then placed in bigger and BIGGER groups. The process by which this is done is a simple, yet fascinating one.

Most people know that Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, and a few other languages are all derived from Latin. This is obvious from the table below:

<i>English</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Portuguese</i>	<i>Latin</i>
Peace	Paz	<u>Paiz</u>	Pace	Paz	<u>Pax</u>
Year	<u>Año</u>	An	<u>Anno</u>	<u>Ano</u>	<u>Annus</u>
Hundred	<u>Ciento</u>	Cent	<u>Cento</u>	<u>Cem</u>	<u>Centum</u>
Flower	Flor	Fleur	<u>Fiore</u>	Flor	Flora

Had you, or any small child, compared these words, you would have been able to say that they came from a SINGLE ancestor, and would even have been able to make a close guess at the parent word. This is HOW you can prove the existence of a Proto language, from modern languages.

Over time, as those who became the French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish speaking peoples migrated from the Roman Empire to their modern lands, they were cut off from one another, and each group altered their language in a different way - by local slang, trade with people of other languages, and conquest by (or of) other nations.

Latin is the Proto language of the Romance group, but Latin is unusual because written records of it have survived to our day. When working with other branches, such as the Germanic branch, we can only discover the Proto language by deduction.

<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Dutch</i>	<i>Danish</i>	<i>Norwegian</i>	<i>Proto-German</i>
Peace	<u>Frieden</u>	<u>Vrede</u>	Fred	Fred	<u>Friede</u>
Year	<u>Jahr</u>	<u>Jaar</u>	Ar	Ar	<u>Yar</u>
Hundred	<u>Hundert</u>	<u>Honderd</u>	<u>Hundrede</u>	<u>Hundre</u>	<u>Hunderd</u>
Flower	<u>Blume</u>	<u>Bloem</u>	<u>Blomst</u>	<u>Blomst</u>	<u>Blome</u>

But as you can see, it is very easy to establish the Proto language. But even among these Proto-languages - Latin, Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, and Greek, to name a few - there are similarities. These allow us to show that, for example, the Proto-Germanic branch sprang from the same predecessor as the eastern European Balto-Slavic (Today's Russian and similar languages) branch.

This ancestor of modern European and Middle Eastern languages is called the Proto-Indo-European branch. While scholars dispute this subject because THEY don't have any records of that period, most agree there are 4-6 branches of this Proto language.

Now comes the interesting part! YOU do have a record of that period! You not only know how many branches there were from that so-called Proto-Indo-European group, but YOU know the names of the heads of the families that spoke that language!

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Genesis 10:22, 31 The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.... These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their TONGUES, in their lands, after their nations.

There are five children of Shem, therefore, FIVE branches of the Proto-Indo-European group! YOU NOW KNOW how many Branches to the Language tree there are! Now read a detailed account of how it happened:

Genesis 11:1-4 And the whole earth was of ONE LANGUAGE, and of ONE SPEECH.... And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Mankind was not yet scattered on the earth, and he spoke the TRUE Proto-World Language whose very existence is debated by modern, educated, linguist's!

Genesis 11:5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all **one language**... let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech... Therefore, is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Did you SEE? Man was in ONE place, with ONE language, when that language was divided by God, man spread apart over the earth! Compare with this historical linguist's biblically independent opinion:

“The invention of modern human language fifty thousand years ago led to the explosive expansion of modern humans around the globe. And even today traces of this sudden expansion persist in languages around the world.” (Merritt Ruhlen - Where Do Languages Come From?)

This man is DESCRIBING, WITHOUT KNOWING IT, the destruction at the tower of Babel, the confusing of the languages, and the following dispersion of mankind!

This well-intentioned scholar, like the vast majority of those in the world today, is simply looking in the wrong PLACE for his answer! If he would only look to the Bible, he would find the DETAILS of HOW the languages changed at the SAME TIME that mankind “exploded” over the whole earth!

The reason scholars today believe that this took place around 50,000 years ago, is that they measure the rate of language mutation based on the last two thousand years, since there has been a written record. But languages in the recent millennium or two have changed vastly slower BECAUSE of this written record!

A written record serves as an ANCHOR for language! It helps to prevent drastic dialect changes. But without this written record - which was not possessed by much of the world until relatively recently - people living great distances apart will name things differently, remove parts of words and create idioms and slang MUCH faster than is happening today!

So, returning to Genesis 10, the TRUE PICTURE of the language tree, you see that the earth, the nations, and the TONGUES were divided up FIRST among the Sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, who today inhabit Europe, Africa, and Asia, respectively - And a child can see that there are THREE MAIN GROUPS of languages, each of which are VASTLY DIFFERENT from each other - Those spoken in Europe, Africa, and the Orient!

And among the sons of SHEM, the father of the Proto-Indo-European group, God subdivided it among his FIVE sons - Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram!

Asshur became Assyria, who in turn became Modern-day Germany. Asshur was the father of the Proto-Germanic branch of the language tree!

The lesson of this amazing knowledge is that THE BIBLE holds the ANSWERS to science's “UNANSWERABLE PROBLEMS”!

A Blast from the Past

God's Government

by Arlan Weight (Bismarck, North Dakota)

What kind of government does God use in ruling the universe? Is it democratic? Do angels vote? Does God have a cabinet of advisors? Is God's government hierarchical, from the top down? Which is it, top-down or bottom-up ... two choices?

Maybe we need to ask a different kind of question. Since it is God's Government, it is God's Government. It is not man's government, and because it is God's Government, could it be that it is neither of the choices offered above, at least not the way we understand the options? Could it **be**, in order to be God's Government, it has to have Godly elements, verses man's government, which have none?

For example, many notable and great statesmen have said the only way for peace to happen is through one world government. And yet they all seem to be also saying, in the hands of man this would be a disaster. Why?

To those who desire a hierarchical style wouldn't this be the perfect way, control from the top-down with all the world supporting the leadership. Sounds simple and logical, but which nation would be willing to give up its sovereignty? Unless all nations recognize their only chance for survival is at stake, the chance of this happening is virtually nil. Even if the facts prove it to be necessary, all people would have to be convinced of it, which is unlikely. Therein we see the problem. One statesman indicated it would take "a strong hand from someplace".

To those who seek a democratic form, here is a perfect way to harness the support of all the world's citizens to support goals of peace and stability through elected officials, representing every district throughout the world. This option on the surface sounds simple, logical and would seem to have more of a chance than the 'hierarchical' style, because each nation might be able to maintain its sovereignty. The 'League of Nations' and now the 'United Nations' organizations have become man's best attempt to achieve peace. Have they worked? I think we can all see they have only been marginally successful at best.

Again, the two styles of government are workable, but are impossible in the hands of man. Why? Because they lack something. Even if it were possible for one nation to have the power to force all nations to submit, it would ultimately fail. The reason is that it would not have the Godly elements mentioned above.

So, what are these elements? First of all, the basic difference between God's government and man's is that God is in charge. God's way is ruling by serving, whereas man's way is ruling by being served. One way is the way of helping and giving, while the other is the way of taking and self-seeking. Let's look at a basic scripture.

"Jesus called them", the disciples, "unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mat. 20:25-28)

Think about it. Jesus is saying, if you want to be great, great in God's eyes, be a servant. Let's meditate on this for a moment. What is greatness anyway? Is it being exalted in the eyes of the people? Is it some great title? Is it something like this so we can strut around, and people will just bow down to us? No, absolutely not. However, this is the way of this world. This is how man likes to think of himself in a rulership position. In man's society and government, it usually follows a form of intimidation and fear.

But today, do you find any government that truly gets its satisfaction in serving? Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you; considering service to be the greatest honor one can aspire to? Not hardly. Not in this world. No, this is man's government.

But think about it. God seems to be saying, in His government there are those who will be great, and yet at the same time, they who are great get their greatness from serving. In Mark 10:44, Jesus said, "whosoever of you who will be chiefest, shall be servant of all." How can this be? It sounds like a contradiction in terms. This is something mankind fails miserably in understanding, because man simply cannot understand the principle of giving. And yet the Bible clearly indicates true happiness comes from giving, not receiving. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Imagine that! Again, this is a hard concept for man to understand. In fact, it's impossible. Although some actually do experience this satisfaction because they just seem to fall in the category of givers rather than the takers. But this is not the norm.

The former leader of the **Worldwide Church of God** came to see these principles of giving verses taking. He used to always say that this world and its societies are going the way of 'get' while God's way is the way of 'give'. On page 48

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of the book **'Mystery of the Ages'**, **Herbert Armstrong** wrote of the character of God. He wrote, "that character might be summed up in the one-word Love, defined as an out flowing loving concern. It is the way of giving, serving, helping, sharing, not the 'get' way."

He also advocated that God's government must operate from the top down. God is supreme in authority. Jesus always pointed to His Father as the one responsible for the works which he performed on the earth. He said His Father was greater than He. In John 10:29 Jesus said, "My Father is greater than all." In John 14:28 Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I."

Even though Jesus said the Father was greater, He also said, "I and my Father are one." Even though the Father sent Jesus to this earth to do a work, Jesus is saying He fully agreed with the plan. Jesus whole desire was to finish what the Father gave him to do. Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish His work." (John 4:34)

So, Jesus' coming to this earth was the Father's plan. It was His work. Jesus says so. But Jesus also wanted to do it. (Isa. 6:8 and Mat. 13:14) So here is government, God's government; God the Father, supreme in authority and Jesus, or the 'Word', lesser in greatness, but one with his Father in everything, totally agreeable.

How does this government function? Is it a master-slave relationship? Did the Father say to the 'Word', you will go to the earth and do thus and thus or else? No. Rather Jesus' whole purpose was to serve willingly, not grudgingly or of necessity. Willingly. Notice Jesus attitude about this in Isaiah 6:8, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then said I, 'Here am I; send me.'"

So even though the form of government appears hierarchical, it doesn't function the way man's government functions. In God's government the Godly elements of giving and serving, make it work. There is no lording over and intimidation or threats. There is hierarchy alright, but the greater the authority the greater the service. (Mat. 20:25-28 & Mark 10:44) It's a law. It has to be this way or else the whole system would fail. As the level of authority increases, the level of responsibility also increases, and it follows then that the need for greater serving also increases.

Think about it. Here is God, supreme in authority and yet the law of His government, the law He himself is bound by, is that He be the "servant of all" (Mark 10:44). Again Matthew 20:27 "whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant." The word 'chief' comes from the Greek word 'protos' meaning 'first or foremost.' The word servant is from the Greek word 'doulos', which means 'bond servant or slave'.

So again, here is God, ruler over all the universe, bound by his law of service, becoming a bond servant to all beneath that supreme authority. To be otherwise would break the law of love and outgoing concern and would ultimately fail. This is exactly what happened to Lucifer and why his perverted hierarchy doesn't work. His style of government is also hierarchical, but it is self-serving. It lords itself over others, it exalts itself.

You might also say it like this. In God's government the one who is the most humble and meek is the one with the greatest authority. In Satan's government the one who is the most pompous and arrogant is the one with the greatest authority.

But again, in God's government the functioning law is that of Love and outgoing concern. It has to be this way or else it would fail. The law is sure. It's as sure as the sun rising every morning or the seasons unfailling. God and his law of love and service are forever. "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:4).

When man took of the forbidden fruit, he chose for himself the ability to form his own style of government. Satan, being very clever, deceived mankind into thinking he was forming a government, like God's hierarchical form, but with one missing ingredient... God's Holy Spirit.

Man thinks he is functioning like God by administering authority from the top down, but without this missing ingredient he is unable to govern in a benevolent way. It is impossible to do so. Even with best intentions, it is impossible. The only way possible for hierarchical government to succeed and continue to grow is by God's Spirit.

Notice the words in Zechariah 4:6. "Not by might nor by power but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The word 'might' comes from the Hebrew word 'geburah' meaning 'force, mastery, might, mighty act, mighty power, power, or strength'. The word 'power' comes from the word 'koach', which means 'ability, force, fruits, might, power, strength, substance or wealth'.

Think of it. Think on the meaning of all these words. Even though God and Christ have all the power of the universe (Mat. 28:18 & Isa. 40:12-31), His government is not going to operate that way. Man's only way, the only way he understands, is the use of force or intimidation. If you don't do what we say we will bomb or punish you until you recognize the power. And this is usually done for vain or self-serving reasons, not necessarily for the benefit of those being punished. But God's reasons are always noble. God can and does correct those he loves, but it's always done for the benefit of those being corrected, never in an uncontrollable state of anger or show of power. (Heb. 12:5-11) Man cannot and will not accept any other answer but force of power. God says His government will function "by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts". (Zech. 4:6)

Think of it. In this world it can't be otherwise. It's also part of the deception Satan has foisted off on mankind that

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peace can only come by use of force. But God says His government will operate by His Spirit. The fruits of God's Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Ponder this. All these characteristics appear opposite to the might and power aspect man thinks of when discussing government. The higher one ascends in the hierarchy of God's government the more love, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance one must have. Is this the way it is in man's hierarchical form of government? No. Absolutely not. The higher one ascends in man's hierarchy, the more power he wields. Instead of bearing long with individuals, he's often short, impatient, and threatening. Instead of controlled, he's sometimes uncontrollable, and sometimes prone to irrational behavior.

Can we begin to see the difference between man's government and God's government? On the surface they may look alike, but without God's Holy Spirit, Man is left with only second best, which is not best at all, but following after the deception he's received from Satan.

God's Chosen Leaders

God's Chosen leaders exhibit the fruits of God's Spirit. But did they have them from the beginning? Were they qualified to lead instantly the moment God tapped them on the shoulder? No. Not at all. Rather these elements were built into them over a lifetime of experience.

Abraham is called the father of the faithful. (Rom. 4:16 & Gal. 3:7) But was he filled with faith when he lied about his wife Sarah being his sister? It doesn't appear so. This was earlier in his life and it took years of training; first of all, on God's part exercising His own Spirit of gentleness, kindness, and long-suffering to develop the faithful spirit in Abraham. Secondly it was said 'Abraham believed God'. (Gen. 15:6 & Rom. 4:3) Did this automatically happen? No, not hardly. It took constant effort on the part of Abraham. It took constant effort on the part of Abraham to do as God told him and to experience the results that things would turn out as God promised. But also think about God. Think about His faithfulness to deliver as promised. One could say, well He's God and he could do as He pleases, but think about it... It would only take once for God to renege on a promise for Abraham to begin to question whether God would be true to His word. But no, He never failed and therefore this faith was built ...built over time. Until finally God could say "now I know..." (Genesis 22:12) Now God knew, after a lifetime of testing and proving Abraham to be sure he had developed the spiritual quality of faith.

In other places Abraham is called 'The Friend of God'. (2 Chron. 20:7 & James 2:23) Would you suppose he could remotely be called God's friend unless he had also developed all the other character traits of God's spirit? "Can two walk together, unless they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3) The answer is certainly not. So, Abraham is held up for all of us to see. To see the character traits, he developed over his lifetime and how that God most assuredly will use these to execute proper government "by His Spirit".

Isaac surely exhibited a great deal of faith in God and trust in his own father Abraham to be willing to be sacrificed if necessary. He becomes somewhat of a "type" of what Jesus would do in that he was willing. He certainly learned the lessons of faith well and at an early age, and yet ...he wasn't perfect in everything. Not a lot of faults are mentioned about him, but one can see some things he yet had to overcome. One problem he seemed to have was not being as truthful as maybe he should have been. It seems this was something even his father Abraham had to overcome. (Genesis 20:2-12 & Genesis 26:7-10) It was the matter of telling half truths about their wives being their sisters.

Isaac also learned of the bitter fruits of parenthood when favoritism for one child over the other happens. (Gen. 27) The story is there for all to read about now, and yet one can be assured he learned these lessons of life and will one day be among those who will be entrusted to rule "by His Spirit".

Jacob surely didn't start out with all the fruits of God's spirit when he and his mother conspired to gain the blessings of the birthright, that normally would have gone to the eldest son, Esau. Jacob, with support of his mother, lied about his identity to his father, Isaac to gain these blessings. This was a bitter lesson of how not to do things and has had far reaching effects.

Look at the legacy of his life and the training that God put him through to develop the fruits of God's spirit in him. Read of his dealings with his father-in-law, how, that even though he was mistreated by him many times, Jacob always tried to treat him fairly in return.

Joseph started out as somewhat of a hotshot. Being the favored son, he appears to be a bit proud. Maybe he was an obedient son, which won him this favor, but look at the troubles it caused him. He (Joseph) seems to be a bit caught up with himself in the beginning. His father (Jacob) also, in showing this favoritism, angered Joseph's other brothers to the point of wanting to kill him. Upon Reuben's insistence, however, they sold him into slavery in Egypt instead.

But look at the hardship Joseph endured and the many long years of patiently being obedient to God and being willing to suffer wrongfully in order to develop the character traits of love and outgoing service, the character traits of God's spirit.

In reading the story of Joseph, one can see how that God not only developed the fruits of His spirit in Joseph, but his

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father, Jacob, as well as his brothers. Again, the story ends well but it took many years of patient training on the part of God to instill and ingrain these character traits in those he chose. They weren't born this way.

Moses is said to have been the meekest man in all the earth at that time. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3) But was he this way in the beginning? Was he this way when he was growing up in Pharaoh's court? It's unlikely, but at some point, he began to change. Maybe his own real mother had a lot to do with his early start of developing Godly character. **We** can only assume this. Anyway, when he killed the Egyptian it appears, he did it thinking he could get away with it. (Ex. 2:12) So it appears clear that he, at that time, still lacked that close relationship with the creator. Maybe one can say he did it in a fit of righteous indignation over what he saw was wrong, especially when he knew these were his brothers and sisters that were being mistreated.

Anyway, it doesn't excuse the fact that it was a killing and he had to flee for his life. He fled to the land of Midian where he spent the next 40 years of his life tending sheep. It's very likely these 40 years taught him the ability or character trait of meekness. Was this by accident? Or was it by design, God's design. Could God have used any other type of person? When we read the story of Israel's 40 years of wandering, it becomes plain it took someone of that character and nature to put up with all the griping and complaining. What if Moses wouldn't have had the ability to intercede for his people like he did on many occasions? Well, we can only speculate, but it's quite apparent God instilled the character traits of His spirit in Moses as well as possibly many others who witnessed what happened.

David is described as a man after God's own heart. How much of God's spirit did he display to begin with? Unlike Moses or Abraham, David seemed to have a great deal of faith in God at a very early age. This is evident in the way he took on vicious wild animals as well as Goliath. It's quite evident he was quite close to God to trust him in this intimate manner.

But maybe some other things were lacking and needed to be developed. Faith is one of the character traits of God's spirit but there are others. How about the aspect of humility, meekness, long-suffering, self-control etc. As we read of David's life, we can see it was not a bed of roses. He spent many long years battling his own human nature to grow spiritually to where God knew he could be trusted to always do what is right. This is the one God says is his chosen to govern Israel in the world tomorrow. (Jer. 30:9)

The Apostle Paul was a well-educated man but was struck down early in his life. Prior to that how much mercy did he display when he put people into prison and consented to their deaths? It's quite evident he lacked mercy, patience, as well as maybe most other character traits of God's spirit. One thing he appeared to have was zeal. He seemed to have a determination to carry out to completion that which he believed in, namely persecution of the early Christians.

After his conversion he went on to suffer much physical and mental abuse, finally giving his own life in martyrdom. In the final analysis he was able to understand and practice the way of true love when he wrote 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter.

The Disciples were a rough and tough group of men, who for the most part were of the common types. They mainly were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector. One can only imagine but that these men displayed a good deal of carnal nature before their conversion. James and John are sometimes referred to as the 'sons of thunder'. Peter denied Christ on the night of his betrayal, but all of them lacked a good deal of faith. In the end they began to turn the world upside down by the message they preached and their witness.

Even **Jesus** learned by the things which he suffered. (Heb. 5:8) What kind of things? It appears Jesus always allowed God's Spirit to have rule in his life. He always followed after the urgings of that spirit rather than that of his own human inclination. An example of this is when he forgave those who crucified him, rather than the normal human reaction of revenge.

Now if he had to be proven in the flesh by testing when He was given God's spirit without measure (John 3:34), what about us? He is our example (1 Pet. 2:21) and we are to walk as he walked. If there was ever any person who displayed the fruits of giving and serving it was Him.

Now Jesus is going to be the top one in the hierarchy of God's government and yet he was the humblest and meekest of all. (Matt. 11:29) It follows then that any who will be in that hierarchy must also have these same fruits well established in their character. Again, the ones who are able to serve and give most and do it with humility are the ones who will be the greatest in God's government (Mark 10:44), quite different from man's view of hierarchy. All of God's family members will have developed the fruits of God's spirit and will have been fitted for a job in that government structure.

To Be Continued in Issue #13