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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

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Articles

Holy Day Calendar and The Visible Crescent?

Part Two

by Jamie McNab (England)

In Part One we looked at some of the alternative calendars being "marketed" to God's people today. We saw what the Bible does, and does NOT say, about how to determine the new moons and new year's. We looked briefly at church history.

We continue in Part 2 to look at how impractical it would have been for God's people — especially over the past 2,000 years—to have kept a VISIBLE CRESCENT (which is probably the most popular alternative to the traditional Hebrew calendar).

Part 2 was originally in the form of a letter written to a member of God's church who wished for additional clarification of the calendar topic. I have retained the letter format in this article.

You've asked in your e-mail if I can let you have proof of God's Holy Day calendar. That's what I call a challenging question!!

There are all sorts of people out there who claim to have "proof" of "their version" of God's calendar. I think the last time I counted; I came to over a A DOZEN DIFFERENT CALENDARS — all claiming to be the original Biblical Holy Day calendar. Some people, like Herbert Solinsky, have spent DECADES studying the calendar — only to have fundamental disagreements with other very sincere "calendar scholars" who have reached an entirely different opinion. It all reminds me somewhat of 2 Tim 3:7, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth!"

I am enclosing a copy of an article I wrote for one of the recent Church of God Newsletters (*this now appears as Part One of this series*). It sets out, as clearly as I can, why we accept the calendar maintained by the Jews.

Despite what some may say, I am firmly of the view that the Bible itself does NOT give adequate information from which to develop a working calendar — and that is a FACT.

Compare the incredible amount of detail given in the Bible about LEPROSY (over 110 verses in Lev 13-14 alone!!), with the almost non-existent and vague references to "new moons" or the "beginning of months." God could have made it crystal clear in the Scriptures if He had wanted to. He chose not to. Yet I do believe He did leave us a standard — an authority over the calendar — as I hope my earlier paper makes plain.

Probably the *main alternative* to the calculated new moon of the Jewish calendar is the *visible crescent new moon*. This point is explained at some length in Part One, where hopefully I show that there is NO SCRIPTURE that demands we base the months on a visible crescent.

It seems to me, however, that even common sense shows that a visible crescent is simply NOT POSSIBLE, or practical, as a means to identify the beginning of a new month. A visible crescent, by definition, has to be VISIBLE — it has to be SEEN. Historians will try to explain how "witnesses" had to appear before the Sanhedrin in ancient times to confirm that they had *physically seen the new crescent* — at which point, if the witnesses seemed credible, the Jewish leaders would allegedly make the new month "official."

Well, that might be very convenient for those Jews living in Palestine — but makes life rather tricky for those Jews or other believers living in Egypt, Ethiopia, Russia, Spain, Australia and so on!

Without the benefit of telephones, faxes, and e-mail — how are they supposed to know when a new month has begun? Bonfires, and fast horseback riders, have been suggested, but come on — if you are over 2,000 miles away from Jerusalem, you probably wouldn't find out for a week or longer that a crescent moon was seen, and that the new month has already begun! It is totally impractical! It couldn't work.

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In some parts of the Diaspora, the Jews tried keeping TWO Holy Days at a time, so that at least ONE of them might be right! In fact, the custom still exists among the Jews to this day.

Consider also the true believers in Britain back in the first and second centuries. They were surely keeping the Holy Days. How could they know for certain when the crescent moon had appeared over Jerusalem 4,000 miles away?

What about the Church down through the centuries? What about the early Church of God in the USA back in the 1700's? How could they determine when the visible crescent had appeared over Jerusalem? Don't forget, the Jews had long since been driven out of Palestine, so there was in fact nobody there to look for the crescent, anyway! And certainly, no way to communicate with people thousands of miles away.

But some will no doubt say that nowadays COMPUTERS allow us to work out the times of *the visible crescent*. So, let's just ignore the “inconvenient” problem of HOW the Church figured God's Holy Days over the past 1,900 years when it didn't have effective access to Jerusalem, and didn't have software on smartphones and lap-tops to work from. Let's revert to the visible crescent, they say, even though IT COULD NOT HAVE WORKED for most of God's people since the time of Christ.

Well — what about the computer calculations of a visible crescent? Are they foolproof? Guaranteed? Can those who want to “observe” a “visible crescent” actually rely on a computer instead? As far as I can tell, the answer is a big NO!

The sighting of the first thin visible crescent is not just a matter of calculating how much of the moon will be visible, and whether the sky will be dark enough to make it out and so on. The visibility is also affected by such things as temperature and humidity, which vary by the day and hour and cannot be predicted. If you go by the visible crescent, then, to be absolutely sure, you *must physically observe it* with the human eye (or would God allow binoculars? Once again, the Bible is silent!).

Following are two quotes, one from the Royal Greenwich Observatory in England, and one from the US Naval Observatory, which explain the difficulty of any computer providing a perfect calculation of a visible crescent (emphasis added):

ROYAL GREENWICH OBSERVATORY

"It is NOT POSSIBLE to predict accurately the dates on which the new crescent Moon will first be seen each month since there is no collection of reliable, fully documented, observations that can be used to establish the conditions that must normally be satisfied at the time of first visibility.

“The simplest basis for prediction is that the Moon should be more than a certain age (measured from the time of astronomical new moon) at the time of sunset at the place concerned.

“It is, however, better to use the true elongation (the angular separation) of the Moon from the sun at this time, rather than the age. The new crescent is not normally visible until the Sun is below the horizon and so it is desirable to take into account the altitude of the Moon during twilight. The chances of seeing the new crescent depend slightly on the distance of the Moon from the earth, being greatest when the Moon is closest (i.e., at perigee). The local conditions, especially the height of the observer above sea level and the character of the surrounding surface, are important, and even when the sky is free from cloud there can be considerable variations in clarity of the atmosphere from day to day.

“The visual acuity of the observer is also significant. It must be realized too that there are considerable variations in the astronomical conditions with both longitude and latitude on the earth so that even if the weather conditions were good everywhere, the dates of the first sightings would differ from place to place. Predictions can, therefore, only be valid, for restricted areas. Under ordinary conditions, the first sighting will not occur until the age of the Moon exceeds about 30 hours, but a few reliable reports are known of sightings, under very good conditions, when the age has been only 20 hours or even less. It is unlikely that the new crescent will be visible unless the elongation exceeds 10 degrees, and the Moon exceeds 5 degrees when the Sun is 3 degrees. It is interesting to note that the new moon can always be seen 30 days after the previous one and in half the cases it can be seen 29 days after, because the length of the synodic month is 29.53 days...

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“Since it is clear that ANY PREDICTION of the date of first visibility MUST BE UNCERTAIN, it is necessary to decide whether to prefer an early prediction that could not be substantiated by direct observation if conditions prove to be good, or a late prediction that could be validated by an observer on the previous day. The simple rule that this Office recommends is that the age of the Moon should be 30 hours at the time of sunset at the place concerned, but this rule is not so reliable in middle and high latitudes.”

US NAVAL OBSERVATORY

“Under optimal conditions the crescent moon can be sighted somewhat less than 15 hours after astronomical New Moon. Usually, however, it is not seen until it is more than 24 hours old. Often it is not seen for more than 48 hours... But despite these advances WE STILL CANNOT PREDICT THE EXACT TIME or geographical location at which the young crescent will first be spotted.”

And so, we see that even scientists and astronomers, with the benefit of modern computer technology, are unable to GUARANTEE a predicted visible crescent in any particular location! So HOW would the church members in fifth century Britain, or 18th century America, possibly calculate the exact time of the visible crescent over Jerusalem, MANY THOUSANDS OF MILES away (and of course with no computers anyway)??

They couldn't CALCULATE a visible crescent. They certainly couldn't SEE it themselves. And in 1850 for instance, they couldn't wait for a telephone call from a friend in Judea, to let them know the crescent had been sighted!

So HOW DID THEY KNOW when to keep Passover and the other Holy Days? Simple —go find the nearest Jew and ASK HIM what the date is!

God has not left His people at the mercy of numerous disagreeing calendar experts. God's True Church has always relied on GOD'S FAITHFULNESS. God did not leave us without an accurate calendar for nearly 2,000 years. We've always found it with the Jews.

Let's be sure to HOLD FAST to what we have been given!

Who was Arsaces, First King of the Parthians?

by Cam Rea (Kendallville, Indiana)

The year is 248 BCE. The event: the Aparni tribe from the north along the Oxus River invaded the region of northern Parthia under the leadership of a man by the name of Arsaces. The result of the invasion was the establishment of the Arsacid Dynasty which would be known in our history books as the Parthian Empire.ⁱ This was the first time Arsaces was mentioned. But who was this man named Arasces and where did he come from?

What we know about Arsaces is limited and obscure, and we have as little to work with in terms of gaining a panoramic view of the man. However, we are not at a complete loss, for some key historians do provide us with some detail as to who Arsaces was and where he came from. It is said Arsaces was a Scythian chief of the Aparni tribe, who were kin to the Dahae tribe.ⁱⁱ Arsaces father and ancestry is unknown, or at least to say, uncertain by most historians. However, many historians do agree Arsaces was a Scythian which is not disputed. But unfortunately, many historians have failed to recognize the meaning and linguistics of his name, and if they had they would soon discover that Parthia's founding father was an Israelite.

The name Arsaces is Greek and was a rendering of his Old Persian name Arshak,ⁱⁱⁱ which can also be rendered as Arsak, Asaac,^{iv} or Asaak.^v The name Arsaces/Arshak suggests that he was of Saka/Scythian origin. This is due to the “Sac” or “Shak” found in his name.^{vi} The name Sac or Shak is a rendering and form of the Hebrew name Isaac due to the constants **S-K** or **S-C** that are present in his name.^{vii} In addition, the Ar in Arshak is considered to be Scythian and means Aryan,^{viii} and in the Pahlavi dialect the language of the Parthian's the word “Aryan” is rendered “Eran”. The “Er” in Pahlavi is said to mean “noble” or “warrior”, and the suffix “an” attached to “Er” represents the relation. Thus, the name Eran can mean “The noble race” or “the warrior race” along those lines.^{ix} What becomes fascinating is that name Eran (Aryan) is also found in the Bible. The name Eran is also Hebrew and is pronounced as “Ay-rawn”. Eran was the head of the Eranite clan and was also the grandson of Ephraim (Numbers 26:35-36). In addition, the name Eran in Hebrew

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means, "watcher" or "watchful".^x This is a totally different meaning when compared to the Pahlavi meaning of the name Eran. However, the Pahlavi meaning of the name Eran does represent the tribe of Ephraim. Take for instance that the name Eran in Pahlavi as mentioned before means "noble" or "warrior". Both these descriptions are similar to the Biblical representation of the tribe of Ephraim. For the tribe of Ephraim supported the monarchy of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In addition, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel which was called Samaria was in the lands of Ephraim, and Ephraim was also the leading tribe of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.^{xi} Also, before we lest forget, the alternative meaning of Eran in Pahlavi is "warrior", and this meaning also describes the tribe of Ephraim as well. For if we turn to the book of Micah ch.5, the whole chapter shows us that the tribe of Ephraim was a great warrior tribe, but we should not forget that this is backed up by the fact that Ephraim was the leading tribe in Israel. Thus, the word Eran in Pahlavi is a great description of Ephraim's characteristics of being a "noble warrior".^{xii} Nevertheless, there is another possibility that the "Ar" in Arshak is the Hebrew name Er pronounced as "Ayr", and Er according to the Bible was the oldest son of Judah and grandson of Jacob (Geneses 38:3). Er, like the name Eran, are connected and roughly have the same meaning.^{xiii} Thus, it becomes possible, that the man named Arsaces/Arshak was indeed an Israelite and quite possibly from the tribe of Ephraim through the clan of Eran, and we can roughly say that his name when translated could be rendered along the lines as "Eran/Er of the house of Isaac." (End Notes are at the end of this Newsletter on Page 12.)

A Blast from the Past

A Church Without Women

(Copyright) by Dianne D. McDonnell (Arlington, Texas)

For decades we have all been taught that women should not offer prayers, lead the song service, give Bible Studies, sermonettes, or sermons. We have a church without women. How did we get this doctrine? Did Jesus teach this doctrine? Jesus commands: "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, **even to the end of the age.**" Matthew 28:19-20.

Jesus **commanded us all** to make disciples and **to teach** and He never placed limits on women. All of our present doctrine is based on **only two passages** spoken not by Jesus, but by Paul. Paul cannot negate the commands of Jesus. Since these two places contradict Jesus, they must be either **misunderstood or mistranslated.**

We have many scriptures written by Paul that praise women active in a teaching role and explain that there is no difference between males and females in the church. Paul teaches, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, **male nor female**, for we are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal 3:28. He is saying in the Church **it makes no difference whether you are a female or a male!** If there is no difference between male and female, then why don't we allow converted women to participate in our church services?

Most of our doctrines are based on many scriptures, here a little and there a little, throughout the entire Bible. Present doctrine on women is based on **only two passages** in the writings of Paul. The first is found in I Cor. 14. Notice the member participation in services and disorder in the Corinthian church centering around prophesying:

1 Cor. 14:26-40 (New King James)

- 26 How is it then, ***brethren***? Whenever you come together, ****each of you** has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ("adelfoi" 80, a fellow believer, Thayer's Greek Definitions, **Paul indicates that each member, male or female, could participate.)
- 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.
- 28 But if there is no interpreter, **let him keep silent in church**, (Paul tells **men to "keep silent"** under certain conditions using the same verb "**sigatoo**" that he uses in vs. 34 addressing wives!) and let him speak to himself and to God.
- 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.
- 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.
- 31 For you can **all** (again Paul indicates both male and female participation) prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be encouraged.
- 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. (Paul is clearly dealing with disruptive outbursts. He explains that prophets can control their spirits and insinuates they should control themselves.)
- 33 For **God is not the author of confusion** but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
- 34 Let your women (or wives "gunaikes" 1135) keep silent ("sigatoosan"4601, same basic verb "sigatoo" used in

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correcting the men in vs. 28) in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. (This refers to Gen. 3:16 "...he will rule over you." Indicating a wife's submission to her husband within her marriage, not submission to all men. There is no other principle Paul could be quoting.)

- 35 And if they want to learn something, (These wives do not understand, and may not want to learn) let them **ask their own husbands at home**; (their believing husbands should teach them at home) for it is shameful for women (or wives "gunaiki" 1135) to speak in church. (These were unconverted wives and were not allowed to participate in services as converted women members were doing! These disruptive women were probably prophesying as pagan prophetesses did, because Paul asks sarcastically if God's original words came from them!)
- 36 Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?
- 37 If anyone (male or female) thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, (these wives considered themselves prophets) let him (male or female) acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. (Paul sets a policy that the unconverted wives are not permitted to have a part in services!)
- 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. (Ignorant of Paul's decision on this.)
- 39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.
- 40 Let all things be done decently and in order. (Again, avoid disruption!)

When Paul writes in verse 31, "For you can **all** prophesy in turn..." He was saying, "You'll each get your turn." Both men and women **members** were participating, but some uproar had occurred, possibly pitting some of the Christian prophets against unconverted wives who considered themselves prophets sent by pagan gods to straighten out these Christians! Paul corrects first the men, and then the unbelieving women in I Cor. 14:35, "**If they want to learn something, (showing they do not yet understand, and may not really want to learn) let them ask their own husbands (indicating believing husbands) at home; for it is a shame for women (wives) to speak in church.**"

Remember, some upset had occurred, and Paul was setting guidelines to prevent further **disorder**. These unconverted wives were disrupting services, probably prophesying as pagan prophetesses did! Corinth was just across the bay from Delphi where female priests presented a famous "oracle". Verse 37 reveals, "If any **think themselves** to be a prophet, or spiritual, (*these wives believed themselves to be spiritual*) let them acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." **These wives were unconverted, untaught, and thus were not permitted to take part in services.** The earlier part of the passage tells us "...you may **all** prophesy one by one" and Paul is not changing that. The "**everyone**" used earlier in vs. 26 shows **converted women** would continue to participate in an orderly manner. These unconverted wives were to be in submission to their husbands, even if they did consider themselves to be prophets! Untaught, they are not permitted to speak. Paul concludes in verse 40, "Let all things be done decently and in **order**." Looking at one half of the correspondence is like hearing only half of a telephone conversation. We have greatly misunderstood what Paul was saying and cannot continue to use this passage as "proof" in denying **converted** women participation in our services.

Paul praises "...**women who work hard in the Lord**" (Romans 16:12). How does one work hard *in the Lord* without teaching about Jesus? Paul records Pricilla going on an evangelizing trip and **teaching** the minister Apollos. He praises **Pricilla** (listed first) and Aquila as "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" to whom he owes his life and greets the church that meets at their house, Acts 18:18-26, Romans 16:3-5.

He praises a man and **woman**, Andronicus and **Junias**, saying, "They are outstanding among the **apostles**, and they were in Christ before I was." Romans 16:7 NIV. How can a woman be "outstanding" as an **apostle** and yet never teach a man? Would God put such a restriction on her? Is it against God's will for a woman to teach a man to better understand God's truth? If so, why did Paul praise both Junias and Pricilla? It is vital to understand that Junia was imminent "among" the apostles and not just admired or noted by the apostles. Like Paul, they had been imprisoned for their active leadership roles.

Paul lists spiritual gifts including, "the message of wisdom", and clearly explains these gifts are for **all** Christians, "Now **to each one** ("hekastos" 1538) the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." I Cor. 12:7 NIV. Also, "It was he (Christ) who gave **some** to be apostles, **some** to be prophets, **some** to be evangelists, and **some** to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." Eph. 4:11-12 Here "**some**" the Greek "tous" 3588, **is used and not the word for "man"**. Christ gives these spiritual gifts to **both men and women!**

The female apostle Junias is further proof that **both men and women were serving in each of these offices** using their spiritual gifts! Early historians such as **Origen** (2nd century), **John Chrysostom** (4th century) and many modern scholars affirm that Junia was both female and an apostle. See **U.S. News and World Report, August 10, 1998, page 52, "A woman named Junia is called an 'apostle.'"** Thayer's also confirms Junias was female, "A Christian woman at Rome..." All spiritual gifts come from God as He sees fit to build and strengthen His Church. The gift given does not

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depend upon a person's sex.

God is not opposed to women in leadership positions for God put **Deborah** in charge of Israel as a prophetess, judge and leader of his nation, Judges 4:1-8. God spoke directly to Deborah, told her who was to be the military commander under her, and went on to give a great victory. **God does not change**; He is the same in our era as He was then. "**For there is no partiality with God**," Romans 2:11. God can call women leaders today.

The **second of the two passages** used against women is I Tim. 2:11-12 NKJ, "11. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission 12. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Paul was writing to Timothy in Ephesus where there was a problem with false teachers as you can see by the first few verses of 1 Timothy. Ephesus was dominated by the **cult of Diana**, also known as **Artemis**, and the city was believed to be founded by **Amazon women**. The **Amazons** believed in female superiority, and in studying chapters 1 and 2 there are indications that unconverted wives were teaching false concepts of female superiority. Did Paul's rebuke to the wives of Ephesus leave all women unable to follow Christ's command to teach? Let's study the Greek words and see what we can learn.

THE ORIGINAL ORDER OF THE GREEK WORDS
of I Tim. 2:11-12

Greek	γυνη	εν	ησυχια	μανθανετω
	<i>Gunee</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>heesuchia</i>	<i>manthanetoo</i>
English	☉ 1 Wife/Woman	in	peacefulness	☉ 2 I let learn
Strong's*	1135	1722	2271	3129
εν	παση	υποταγη	διδασκειν	δε
<i>en</i>	<i>pasee</i>	<i>hypotagee</i>	<i>didaskain</i>	<i>de</i>
with/in	all	obedience	☉ 3 to teach	☉ 4 But
1722	3956	5292	1321	1161
γυναικι	ουκ	επιτρεπω	ουδε	αυθεντειν
<i>gunaiki</i>	<i>ouk</i>	<i>epitrepo</i>	<i>oude</i>	<i>authentein</i>
☉ 5 wife/woman	not	I am allowing	☉ 6 not even	☉ 7 to dominate
1135	3756	2010	3761	831
ανδρο	αλλ	ειναι	εν	ησυχια
<i>andros</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>einai</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>heesuchia</i>
☉ 8 husband/man	but	to be	in	peacefulness
465	235	1511	1722	2271

*Strong's Hebrew/Greek Dictionary (Strong)

- "Gunee" can be translated either wife or woman, Strong's 1135, "a woman...a wife."
- (I) let learn The w ending indicates "I" as in "I am allowing" two lines below. **Basic Greek in 30 Minutes a Day by Jim Found**, Page 84. Most translations omit this.
- didasko **Jesus** uses a form of the same verb, "didasko" 1321: "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching** ("didaskontes" 1321) **them** to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20.
- de In Greek usage the particle "de" modifies the word that comes directly before it and becomes "but to teach" in this case.
- "Gunaiki" translated "**wife**" in I Cor. 7:3 and 27. Can be a wife or a woman. see 1)
- "Oude" translated "not even" in I Cor. 11:14, "Doth **not even** nature teach...."
- to dominate - **Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament** I Tim. 2:12, "The King James Version 'usurp

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authority' is a mistake." Strong's: to act of oneself, **dominate**.

8. "Andros" can mean **husband** or man, Thayer's Greek Definitions, 435. The same word is used in Luke 2:36, "Anna...lived with her husband seven years...."

"A wife, in peacefulness, I let learn in all obedience (not causing angry disputes), but to teach (a) wife I am not allowing (present indicative tense—he is not presently allowing a wife to teach), not even to dominate a husband, but to be in peacefulness."

Paul is expressing his solution to a local problem of wives becoming false teachers. The Strong's numbers can be used to easily look up definitions. "Gunee" and "gunaiki" can be woman or wife. "Gunaiki" is translated "wife" in I Cor. 7:3, "Let the husband render unto the **wife**", and translated also in verse 27, "bound unto a **wife**". Paul writes first, a woman/wife "**I let learn with all obedience**" which indicates that the wives he is addressing are still in the learning stages and not yet ready to be teachers. Paul goes on in I Tim. 2:13 to talk about Adam and Eve, husband, and wife. This is further indication that in I Tim. 2:12 he is instructing wives not to dominate their husbands.

Remember Mary was allowed to learn at the feet of Jesus, Luke 10:42. Why did Jesus teach her? Someday she was to teach others, both male and female, the things Jesus had taught her! She was learning, and someday she would be ready to teach.

Christ commands his disciples **to teach** new disciples through the end of the age.

In Titus 2:3 NIV, Paul instructs, "Likewise, **teach the older women** to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but **to teach** what is good." Here the original Greek translated "to teach" means "**a teacher of the right**" (Strong's 2567), the right way of life! Women are to learn to teach so they may become **teachers of the right way of life**. Scriptures that follow suggest they start by teaching the younger women but does not limit their teaching to women only.

We have always said that we must study **all** of what the Bible has to say on a particular doctrine, here a little and there a little. Yet, in this case our focus has been narrowed to **only two passages** of Paul's letters. Our church doctrine, based on these two misunderstood passages, **conflicts with all the rest of Paul's writings**, and **contradicts the words of Jesus!** We have **ignored all other scriptures** Paul and others wrote that show God is impartial and uses women as well as men to spread His gospel. Jesus never intended doctrinal restrictions be put on women who serve Him, restrictions preventing women from using all the spiritual gifts He has given them! Women in the early church served Him fully. **It didn't matter whether you were male or female!**

Paul wrote about two women who "**contended at my side in the cause of the gospel**" Phil. 4:2-3 NIV. These women were teaching both men and women, contending for the true gospel at Paul's side. Women hosted churches meeting in their homes, Col. 4:15 (NAS, NIV), Acts 16:14-40. The book of II John was written "to the chosen lady" (chosen by God) and loved by "all who know the truth," obviously a very well-known female church leader. Romans 16 praises a woman traveling on church business, and praises many others serving the Lord, including one woman Paul calls an outstanding apostle! **Many women leaders served the New Testament church.** Did Jesus intend for our church today to be **operating at only half capacity** as we face the end times? Did He plan a church with fully 50-60% of its membership forced to work only in the background? Is He pleased that over half of His children are unable to fully use **all** their spiritual gifts? **Did Jesus intend for His Church to become a church without women?**

This article has been updated and re-printed from "The Church of God Messenger" September/October 2001— Issue No. 5.)

Other Items

28th Amendment to the United States Constitution

Sent by Howard Naasz (Colorado)

An idea whose time has come.

For too long we have been too complacent about the workings of Congress. Many citizens had no idea that members of Congress could retire with the same pay after only one term, that they didn't pay into Social Security, that they specifically exempted themselves from many of the laws they have passed (such as being exempt from any fear of prosecution for sexual harassment) while ordinary citizens must live under those laws. The latest is to exempt themselves from the Healthcare Reform that is being considered...in all of its forms. Somehow, that doesn't seem logical. We do not have an elite that is above the law. I truly don't care if they are Democrat, Republican, Independent or whatever. The self-serving

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must stop. This is a good way to do that. It is an idea whose time has come.

Have each person contact a minimum of Twenty people on their Address list, in turn ask each of those to do likewise.

In three days, most people in The United States of America will have the message. This is one proposal that really should be passed around.

Proposed 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution:

"Congress shall make no law that applies to the citizens of the United States that does not apply equally to the Senators and/or Representatives; and Congress shall make no law that applies to the Senators and/or Representatives that does not apply equally to the citizens of the United States ".

Editor's Note: I had 10,000 emails sitting in my inbox from the last newsletter in 2009. I saved the emails and now I am going through them a little at a time. The interesting ones I will print, and I thought this one was interesting. Laura Lee

A Man Had a Dream

Sent by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

A man had a dream. His whole life passed before his eyes. He was on a beach and during the best times of his life, he saw two sets of footprints. The Lord said, "I was walking with you."

During the worst times of his life, the guy saw just one set of footprints. "Is that when you were carrying me?" the man asked.

"No," said the Lord. "That's when you were sinning, and I couldn't bear to watch." And the guy says:

"What about that long groove in the sand?" And the Lord says:

"That's when I was dragging you, kicking and screaming."

Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

First Love

by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

In reviewing Arlan Weight's article on "First Love", (I will skip the use of "this writer" sounds so "scholarly"). I would concur that he is primarily right on the focus of "what is the true gospel"? However, I do believe there is more than one gospel as was noted, means "good news". There is the gospel ("good news") of circumcision/uncircumcision.

- **Galatians 2:7 (KJV)** But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel (good news) of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter...
- **Galatians 2:14 (KJV)** But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Also Gal. 2:2 and verse 5 are in context with the above scriptures. You see, that to a gentile coming into the truth of the gospel, being told by Paul they do not need to be circumcised would indeed be good news to them saving all that pain attributed to being circumcised. As for the Jews the gospel of circumcision was good news to them, for they were God's chosen ones. When you learned you were/are one of God's chosen, was that not good news to you?

There is the gospel of salvation,

- **Ephesians 1:13 (KJV)** In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel (good news) of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...

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- **Ephesians 3:6 (KJV)** That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
- **2 Timothy 1:10 (KJV)** But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:
- **2 Timothy 2:8 (KJV)** Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:
- **Romans 16:25 (KJV)** Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Here the cross of Christ is the (a) gospel,

- **1 Corinthians 1:17 (KJV)** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

The context of this verse is “the cross of Christ”. Why wouldn’t the cross of Christ be a gospel of good news?

There is the gospel (good news) of, (dare I say it) grace.

- **Philippians 1:7 (KJV)** Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.
- **Acts 20:24 (KJV)** But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the **gospel of the grace of God**.

There is the gospel to be obeyed.

- **2 Thessalonians 1:8 (KJV)** “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” ...

How does one obey a gospel?

- **1 Peter 4:17 (KJV)** For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

To summarize, I believe if one were to be honest there is more than one gospel/good news. The announcement of Christ’s first coming was indeed good news, which was that He would be the savior of mankind through the cross. That to me is really, really exceptionally good news. Paying for our incurred death penalty in our stead by Christ giving up His eternal existence, dead, death which is final, but for the fact that Christ knew that His Father would resurrect him back to life again. But the fact is He was dead for real, for three days and three nights.

Can you grasp that? That God gave up his eternal self-existent life for you and all men and women. He created all flesh and humbled Himself to the death of the cross. Now I ask you once more, is that GOOD NEWS or what?

Mainstream Christianity for the most part preaches/teaches that.

- **John 3:16 (KJV)** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Is that scripture true or not? Let all admit that is good news that even I learned from these “false” churches, one of which I was privy to be schooled in. Yes, I do not say that “tongue and cheek”, I mean I could have been taught the way of an atheist who believes there is no God. At least I had some teaching of the truth of God. Not everything that the church I was schooled in was a lie/false.

Even the Catholic clergy teaches that abortion is murder. Do we, Church of God not even give them credit for that. God will help them someday to see the rest of the truth, just like you and me, bit by bit as they study God’s word all in due

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time. Let us have the proper attitude of them, for you were, in most cases part of them. We do not give in to the false teachings they have, neither should we look on them with disdain for God is not working with them at this time for the most part as a whole. That is/was the message of the good news of Christ's first coming.

- **Matthew 1:21 (KJV)** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Again, is not that good news also?

As before mentioned, yes, primarily most scriptures that mention “the gospel”, pertain to the gospel of His Kingship on earth and transformation of it from death and destruction to peace and plenty for all with the good news that they too, all in due time will hear the good news that Christ died for them too and paid for their death penalty in their stead.

Consider this, when Christ is King, sitting on His throne in Jerusalem, people will be living the “good news” under His rule. Is that all they will have for good news? Is that enough good news for them? They are living the promise of a better kingdom, what more is there? How about the preaching to them as well the good news that they too have forgiveness of sin, (grace) death penalty paid for by the now King in Jerusalem.

In conclusion, the gospel of Jesus's person and what he did for us at His first coming must not be dismissed because mainstream Christianity had a different gospel. When Paul said,

- Galatians 1:6 (KJV) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” ...,

that other gospel could not have been the gospel Arlan was talking about, that of the kingdom to come, for he himself says, “mainstream Christianity” never preached that gospel. So, what other gospel was Paul referring to? It certainly was not the gospel of the Kingdom of God to come. So just what was it?

An in-depth study will reveal what that gospel primarily was.

- **Galatians 1:6 (KJV)** I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:
- **2 Thessalonians 2:7 (KJV)** For **the mystery of iniquity doth already work**: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.
- **Romans 6:1 (KJV)** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- **Romans 6:15 (KJV)** “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid”.

In general, Christian churches teach the law has been done away with, “nailed to the cross”. That is teaching lawlessness and is perverting the doctrine of the gospel of grace and not to worry so much if you sin, grace is what saves you. They fail in general, to teach and remind the Christian that Christ said,

- **Matthew 19:17 (KJV)** And he said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*
- **John 14:15 (KJV)** *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

They teach the commandments are done away with.

- **Matthew 5:17 (KJV)** *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

Jesus did not just preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, He taught that we needed to keep his laws here and now, “not manana”. The gospel that Paul said was another gospel than what he preached was perverted. License to sin. To the unconverted that indeed was/is “good news”. I witnessed many former members pan a sigh of relief when they were told, you are no longer under the law and that there would no longer be any need for them to keep certain laws like the Sabbath and Holy Days. Some said to me personally that driving all those miles to be at Sabbath gatherings was a burden. How reminiscent of our Old Testament forefathers in all their moaning's of God's harsh laws! To the Christian God calls, he/she considers God's laws, holy, just, and good even as Paul stated.

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Paul stressed the gospel of Christ crucified and Christ's saving grace the purpose of Christ's first coming. Christ stressed the gospel of the purpose of his coming again to usher in his Kingdom. The gospel of Christ's saving grace through the cross should not be diminished by preaching only the gospel of His second coming just because it was not preached by so called Christianity. Yes, Arlan did say, "We were not ignorant about what Jesus did in giving His life so that we may live. This was not something we were strange to." (Page 11, paragraph two, line 5 & 6, The "New" Church of God Messenger, May 22, 2021- Issue No. 16). The main reason it was not strange to most of those God called out of those "so called Christian churches", is that that is where we were taught about the gospel of Christ's saving grace by the cross, although it was perverted, but the basic truth of why the cross, was taught. That is Christ died on the cross, shed his blood to save us from paying our own death penalty.

- **1 Corinthians 1:23 (KJV)** But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
- **1 Corinthians 2:2 (KJV)** For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Response to: First Love by Arlan Weight (Issue #16 & 17)

Questions Answered About Masons

by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

As to speaking in Masonic Lodges. You are correct that when the Masons speak, they are speaking for the devil. At the same time, ought we to consider, if a believer speaks to "Mason's", that they would be witnessing to them of whom The Almighty and his son really are? Also, what about Christ when he went into the temple in Jerusalem and preached/taught the Jews. Including the Pharisees. And yet, does not he say that the Pharisees "are of your father the devil"? The Mason's: "of the devil". The Pharisees (and their followers): of the devil. Now, meeting in their halls with none of them present is another thing. Did not we meet in a Mason's lodge for a while? I forget.

Editor's Note: Darwin says that between Worldwide Church of God and later United Church of God an International Association the churches met first in a Jewish Temple/Synagogue, then in the Bismarck Masonic Lodge/Hall and after that in the Mandan Masonic Lodge/Hall. He figures you spent at least a decade meeting for Sabbath Services in a Masonic Lodge/Hall. Laura Lee

Response to: Questions Answered About Masons by Keith Slough (Issue #17)

ⁱ Lerner, The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau, p. 29

ⁱⁱ Strabo, Geography, 11.9.2

ⁱⁱⁱ Garthwaite, The Persians, p. 75

^{iv} Isidore, Wilfred Harvey Schoff, Parthian Stations, p. 31

^v Frye, The Heritage of Persia, p. 211

^{vi} Holt, Thundering Zeus, p. 183

^{vii} Collins, Israel's Lost Empires, p. 197

^{viii} Rjabchikov, Sergei V., 2001. The Interpretation of Scythian, Sarmatian and Meotian-Sarmatian Motifs and Records. "THE SLAVONIC ANTIQUITY" Home Page (<http://public.kubsu.ru/~usr02898/sl29.htm>).

^{ix} Dr. Suzan Kaviri. (Iranian Languages Chista). Political, Social, Scientific, Literary & Artistic (Monthly) Oct 2000, No. 171 Pages: 26 - 27 <http://imp.lss.wisc.edu/~aoliai/languagepage/iranianlanguages.htm>

^{ix} Strong, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, **Eran** (#6197), **Er** (#6147).

^x Strong, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, **Eran** (#6197), **Er** (#6147).

^{xi} Davidiy, Joseph, P. 104-105

^{xii} Davidiy, Ephraim, p. 24/King James Bible

^{xiii} Strong, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, **Eran** (#6197), **Er** (#6147).