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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

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
August 7, 2021 --- Issue No. 27

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

Articles

About Critical Race Theory by Sue Hyatt (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

CRITICAL THEORY was first introduced in 1989 and has gained significant momentum since then. Here are 4 things to be aware of about this way of thinking.

- 1) It is a THEORY, not a FACT. A "theory" is an idea suggested by some person. By their very nature, theories come and go. The Bible presents facts that do not change.
- 2) It deals with GROUPS not INDIVIDUALS.
- 3) It DIVIDES us; it does not UNITE us.
- 4) It is a MARXIST strategy, not a BIBLICAL reality.

God deals with each of us as an INDIVIDUAL, not as a member of a GROUP. You and I are saved as INDIVIDUALS by the shed Blood of Jesus and God holds us accountable as individuals. But Critical Theory defines us as members of GROUPS, not as INDIVIDUALS. And those groups then designate us as Victim/Victimizer or Oppressed/Opressor.

For example, as a WOMAN, Critical Gender Theory tells me that I am a VICTIM of MEN, the VICTIMIZERS. It defines me as the OPPRESSED of Men, the OPPRESSORS.

And a WHITE person, Critical Race Theory defines me as the VICTIMIZER/OPPRESSOR of People of Color (African, Native American, First Nations, etc.)--the VICTIM/OPPRESSED.

If we were to read the Bible without our cause-driven points of view, we would see the truth and take a Biblical stand and fulfil the Great Commission.

May we Rise and Shine as individuals!

1"Arise [from spiritual depression to a new life], shine [be radiant with the glory and brilliance of the LORD]; for your light has come, And the glory and brilliance of the LORD has risen upon you.

2"For in fact, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness will cover the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you [Jerusalem] And His glory and brilliance will be seen on you (Isaiah 60:1-2, Amplified).

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<http://www.godstowomen.org/>

Was the Sop Leavened or Unleavened? (John 13:26-27) by John W. Ritenbaugh (Lancaster, South Carolina)

A rule of Bible study is never to base a doctrine on the meaning of a Greek or Hebrew word, and this controversy is a prime example. It is true that *artos*, used in all of the gospel accounts for the bread eaten during the Last Supper, is the Greek word for "bread." However, this word is a very general or generic term, much like the English word "bread" is. We use "bread" for everything from white to whole wheat to pumpernickel bread. We also use it for breads made of corn, barley, rye, spelt, rice, and other grains. We use it for sourdough as well as for sweet breads like banana and pumpkin. And, most importantly, we use it for **both** leavened and unleavened breads. We even use it as a generic term for food (as in "our daily bread")! The Greeks did the same with *artos*.

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Greek also has a word for "unleavened," *azumos* (also transliterated as *azymos*), which is literally "without yeast." Yet just because this word does not appear in the gospel accounts of the Last Supper does *not* mean that the bread Jesus and His disciples ate was leavened. Gerhard Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, a pre-eminent source on New Testament Greek, says this on the word *azumos*:

P. Fiebig [a Greek-language scholar] . . . shows that the term *artos* does not exclude *azumos*, but that in certain circumstances, e.g., in description of the Passover, it may mean this. Hence the occurrence of *artos* at the Last Supper is no proof that this was not really the Passover.

In addition, both early Jewish writers Josephus and Philo use *artos* in their description of the matzo of the Passover meal. Also, the loaves of the unleavened showbread in the Tabernacle and Temple, were regularly called *artoi* (plural of *artos*). It is understandable, then, that the gospel writers used the generic term *artos* because they knew that their readers would know what kind of bread they were talking about.

We also need to understand the "sop" itself. This is the Greek word *psomion*, and means "a morsel," "a crumb," "a bit," "a fragment," or as Strong's interprets, "a mouthful." Thus, it means a piece of food, and in the Last Supper, one used particularly for dipping. Therefore, the word does not necessarily suggest that the sop was used for soaking up liquid. It could also be used like a potato or tortilla chip for dipping in a sauce or for scooping up smaller bits of another food toward the mouth. We have a traditional picture in our minds of Jesus dipping a piece of bread in gravy or something akin to salsa, but John 13:26-27 does not tell us what Jesus dipped the piece of bread in. It could have been yogurt, gravy, oil, a sauce, or any number of other things. Thus, that the bread must have been leavened so as to be soft and absorbent is not contemplated in the term.

Lastly, it is nearly a certainty that the bread Jesus and His disciples used during the meal was the same bread that Jesus used to teach them the Passover symbol of the bread as representing His broken body (Matthew 26:26). His body did not contain any sin! Leaven is a primary biblical symbol of sin and corruption. Would Christ want His disciples to memorialize His sacrifice every year by thinking of Him as leavened, that is, sinful? Certainly not! We are to remember that He sacrificed Himself as the perfect, sinless Lamb of God to pay for sin in our stead (I Corinthians 5:6-7; Hebrews 9:11-14; I Peter 2:21-24). In fact, taking the Passover with leavened bread is tantamount to blasphemy, as it distorts and repudiates the sinless sacrifice of our Savior.

Because Jesus fulfilled all righteousness (Matthew 3:15)—meaning, He did everything perfectly—it is safe to conclude that the sop, and thus the bread in the Passover symbol, was unleavened.

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<https://www.cgg.org/>

Are Easter Celebrations OK?

by Royce Mitchell, Jr. (Manvel, Texas)

We are rapidly approaching that time of the year known to many as "Easter" but to those of us in the Church as Passover season. Many professing Christians believe that God is pleased with the keeping of Easter. Indeed, some of us in the Church see no harm in keeping it. But is that really what God expects from His people? And a better question might be "Do we care enough about what God thinks to conform our acts of worship to His will?"

To answer these questions, we must first learn exactly where the Easter traditions come from. The word "Easter" comes down to us from the celebration honoring the goddess of Spring, Eastrā. However, many scholars recognize that the rites and ceremonies adopted in today's Easter celebrations have descended to us from ancient times where the celebration was to honor pagan gods Tammuz and Ishtar.

Another tradition is the painted eggs and chocolate left in a basket filled with fake grass by an alleged "Easter bunny." Eggs have long been symbols of fertility in pagan religions. Rabbits are well known for their own penchant for reproduction.

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Another tradition is the Easter sunrise service. This tradition also is derived from the ancient pagan custom of worshipping the sun god rising. It is not the commanded worship of Abraham’s God.

Passover, on the other hand, is a reminder that our Lord and Savior suffered torture and death to remove the veil that separated us from God through the forgiveness of our sins.

Although the word “Easter” does appear in the King James version of the bible, it is a mistranslation of the Hebrew “Pascha,” or Passover. Otherwise, like Christmas in the winter, there is no support for engaging in any of the activities surrounding Easter for the bible believing Christian.

Many find the practice harmless. In truth, eggs, bunnies, hot cross buns and the other silliness surrounding Easter can’t harm anyone. But the real question is whether God wants us to be involved in these things.

Some say, “I use Easter as a reminder of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.” Or “That day is a day of worship for what Jesus did for us.” And, let’s face it, watching little ones scramble around seeking treats can be great fun to watch.

But is this reasoning acceptable to God? If we care about what God thinks then we ought to be concerned about things as to whether they are acceptable to God, shouldn’t we?

What, then, DOES God have to say about using pagan practices to worship Him? Some would say that God does not care as long as we worship Him. That same “some” would be ignoring the truth of the bible in saying such.

Notice what God has to say, “Take heed to yourself that you do not become snared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods, that I too may do likewise? You shall not do so to Jehovah your God. For every abomination to Jehovah, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods.” Deu 12:30-31.

There are many rationalizations one can use to come up with “permission” to engage in Easter celebrations. In truth, God lets us choose what we will do. But that is not the same thing as saying and doing what is right in God’s eyes. The simple truth of the matter is that God wants us focusing on our Savior’s sacrifice and resurrection using the days He prescribed for His people, not days that were used to honor pagan gods in antiquity.

As Christians, we came up out of the watery grave of baptism saying to God that we wanted to do what He wants us to do. Justifying doing something otherwise isn’t responsive to our promise to God, and I think that must sadden Him deeply.

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Does God Hate Love?

by Nathaniel Burson (Big Sandy, Texas)

Yes! What you have been taught by men today about love is a LIE, and God HATES IT! Understand, God does not hate TRUE, GODLY Love As a matter of fact, He IS love (1 John 4:8) but He hates DEAD Love! Allow me to explain what I mean by this.

How to Love

If you go to church, you are probably told every week to LOVE the brethren. And, more than likely you never hear what that love IS, or how to give it! You are probably told that love is simply showing concern or affection for other people, but **what does the BIBLE say** love is? It is time you cast off the traditions and preconceived notions of a Satan-deceived world and dug out the REAL TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE!

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Mark 12:30 *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Most people can quote this scripture but without telling you HOW TO LOVE, it is meaningless! How does the Bible define LOVE? Read the clear truth in your own Bible!

Romans 13:8 *Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

And now read the summary Paul gives us!

Romans 13:10 *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW!* If you love someone, you will not break the Commandments of God against them! In other words, if you LOVE me, you will not steal from me! This is the SIMPLE truth that Satan and his ministers, many of which claim to be part of the Church of God, have CLOUDED, and CONFUSED in this modern world! (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

Loving Your Enemies

Love is not a nebulous, complicated FEELING you are commanded to have towards your fellow man it is simply obeying the law of God, and NOT HURTING OTHERS. A good example of this is how you treat your enemies. In the Old Testament, you were allowed to hate your enemies in other words, to hurt them if they hurt you.

Leviticus 24:20 *Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.*

But in the New Testament, you are not to hate even your enemies. How do you SHOW this love for your enemy? By obeying the law of God towards him!

Matthew 5:43-46 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?*

Does God expect you to hug your enemies? To work up a happy feeling when you see them? WHAT DOES HE MEAN by this?

He means exactly what the Bible says! You must allow the BIBLE, not MEN, to tell you what love is!

2 John 1:6 *And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. THIS is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.*

This means that even though a man steals from you, you cannot STEAL FROM HIM! “Love” is nothing more complicated than this!

Love Towards God

HOW do you show LOVE TOWARDS GOD? Let us read the answer Christ gave you.

John 14:15 *IF ye love me, keep my commandments.*

If you say you “Love the Lord”, then you MUST keep the commandments. Jesus Christ Himself said so and HE should know what He wants you to do better than your minister!

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1 John 2:3-4 And hereby we do KNOW that we know Him IF we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, IS A LIAR, and the truth is not in him.

Not only do you NOT love him, but you can't even KNOW him *unless* you keep His commandments And if you claim to “Know Jesus”, and don't do this, well, I don't say you're a LIAR, but YOUR BIBLE, THE VERY WORD OF GOD DOES!

The Simple Truth About LOVE

Now, it's time to get to the bottom of this word, “Love”. What is the REAL meaning of it? If you truly LOVE someone, it means you want **THEIR GOOD MORE THAN YOUR OWN**.

Take time to think about this! To really GRASP the meaning! This means that IF you love someone, you are going to think about what THEY would want.

To take an extreme example, you might see a fine car, unlocked, with the keys in the ignition. You might really want this car. But then ask yourself Would this man want me to steal his car? and of course the answer will be “No”. If you love this man, even though you may want his car, you WANT HIS GOOD MORE than your own so when you OBEY the commandment of God that says “Thou Shalt Not Steal”, YOU SHOW LOVE TO HIM.

Matthew 7:12 *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

This scripture is the BOTTOM LINE of what love is. To “Love your neighbor as yourself”, you don't just SAY you love him, you don't give him a hug or a handshake and then do what YOU WANT, That philosophy ABOUND in the world today, but it is LOVE WITHOUT WORKS. And Love without works is DEAD.

1 John 3:18 *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth*

To LOVE other men, you have to do WORKS that show it “these works might be anything from picking up a hitchhiker, to not sleeping with another man's wife” but there must be WORKS to show your love. Take the example James gives you... **(Editor's Note: To pick up hitchhikers can be dangerous. Use discretion should you decide to pick up hitchhikers. Thank you, Laura Lee)**

James 2:15-16 *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*

So, you see that YOUR BIBLE shows that if you LOVE someone, you must show works. And these works are nothing more than asking yourself what YOU would want done to yourself, then doing it to him. To say it one more time -

Love is nothing more than wanting another person's good **MORE THAN YOUR OWN**.

There is one more TRUTH, one more bit of CONFUSION to blast away before you TRULY UNDERSTAND LOVE. This TRUTH is in showing love to God.

You show Love for God the same as you do for any other man. By wanting His good, and His will more than your own Just as Christ did not seek His will, but the will of His Father.

John 5:30... *I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

And we know that Christ loved the Father. And He showed this love by seeking His Father's will and keeping His Commandments. **You** can show this same Love for Christ and His Father by KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS. Not loving Him in word, or just saying you love him that is a dead love. But by loving Him with ACTIONS, and WORKS. This is the ONLY TRUE WAY to “Love the Lord”, which many of the DECEIVED MASSES in the world today claim to do!

1 John 5:2-3 *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.*

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For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

The one thing that destroys love in the world, the only thing that CAN destroy TRUE, GODLY love, is SIN.

1 John 3:4 *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*

And Christ prophesied almost 2000 years ago that LOVE would disappear in this endtime world today! And He told us why!

Matthew 24:12 *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

Because INIQUITY, or LAWLESSNESS is EVERYWHERE today, the love of many is disappearing! The TRUE LOVE of wanting the good of others MORE than your own is being replaced with SELFISHNESS, with GREED and syrupy, MEANINGLESS, DEAD LOVE Because LOVE, WITHOUT WORKS, IS DEAD!

It is time that YOU turned this around in yourself, time that you STOPPED following LIES and DECEPTION and THROW OUT THE SPIRITUAL GARBAGE OF THIS WORLD AND GET BACK TO THE BIBLE AND SHOW THE TRUE LOVE TOWARDS GOD AND YOUR FELLOW MAN!

A Blast from the Past

Physical Illness and Demon Possession (Part 1)

by Don Esposito (Carteret, New Jersey)

There have been many misconceptions about mental illness and demon possession. As a matter of fact, there have been many misconceptions about healing in general. I want to, in this article, clear up from scripture some of these misnomers.

First of all, it is naive and wrong to assume that every person with mental health problems has a demon. I have personally been blessed by Yahweh to cast out demons from people over the years of my ministry on numerous occasions. I have also experienced and counseled different people with mental illness, and there is a difference. This does not mean that someone with mental illness may not have a demon. But to say that all people with a mental illness are demon possessed is pure prejudice. Many times, mental illness such as **manic depression** is caused from an unnatural chemical imbalance in the brain. Today, through advances in science, many of these cases can be treated with a simple treatment, and many of these people can live a normal life. Other people have mental illness from a hormonal imbalance that again can be treated with a safe and natural remedy.

Well, how do we know the difference? It may sound over simplified, but in most cases the Holy Spirit will convict you one way or the other, if we are letting it lead our lives. The problem is most people are not. They are being led by emotions or feelings, or even worse their own human conscience (heart, mind) **which is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer.17:9)**. Once when at a prayer meeting, a woman started speaking in gibberish that she claimed was a tongue prayer. The spirit in me not only rejected it, but also literally was pressing against my chest almost lifting me off the floor. (Phi. 14:7) States: **"And the peace of Yahweh that surpasses all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mind through Yahshua Messiah."** Through discernment of the Holy Spirit, I will know almost immediately when a demon is present. But what if one does not have this gift of discernment? How will he know the difference? Let us look at some biblical examples for the answer.

The first thing a believer must understand is the difference of being led by an evil spirit and being possessed by an evil spirit. James 4: 2-12 tells us that we are drawn away from Yahweh when we lust after the things of the world. All good things come from Yahweh; all evil comes from Satan. What we must realize is every time we give in to lust, greed, anger, or any other fruit of the flesh we are being led by evil spirits. 1 Kg. 22:22-23 tells us Yahweh sent a lying spirit out in the mouth of the prophets to deceive Ahab the King of Israel. Ahab was allowed to be deceived because he was given over to lust, greed, and murder. If he had been obedient to the law of Yahweh and had stayed under the protection of the everlasting Covenant he would never have been allowed to be deceived by the lying spirit. **(Ja. 4:5) "Do you think that the scripture says in vain, The Spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy?"** This is speaking of our human spirit. (1 Cor. 15:42-43) tells us we are sown in corruption, and dishonor. That is why we must put our grace on daily. When we are not humbly asking for and putting on our grace daily, we are risking giving ourselves over to the influence of evil spirits. And there are all kinds of them. There are lying spirits, there are angry spirits, and there are silly spirits, sexual ones, and also spirits of lust, greed, and covetousness. Many will look at a handicapped person because he may look different, and think

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oh, he has a demon, but will never look at their own self-righteous judgmental gossiping self, to see that it is Satan and his demons who are bringing and tempting all these evil traits that we give in to. Brethren, we need to take the plank out of our own eye, before we can take the speck out of someone else's. Many times, what handicapped people need more than condemnation is love, and moral support. Also, prayer for healing. (*Jn. 9: 1- 7*) **When asked who sinned that this person was born blind, Yahshua 's answer was "that neither the man or his parents sinned, but that the works of Yahweh might be manifested in him."** Maybe someone is handicapped so hands can be laid on for healing and Yahweh can be glorified. Or maybe Yahweh is more glorified in the person's weakness and infirmity. **Paul stated in (1 Cor. 12:10), "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Messiah's sake: FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG."** We know of a wonderful little 15-year-old handicapped girl in Israel. If you look at her you may think that she has **Down syndrome**, but she does not. She has had many spinal operations and is in severe pain most of the time. She also has the mind of a child and cannot speak. But she is always happy, and never complains, and has been baptized and is led by Yahweh's spirit. She is so overjoyed when a new believer is baptized, or when we worship Yahweh and Yahshua. And it is interesting that she cannot speak, but when she prays, I can hear the words in my mind. She also has the gift of discernment that when a person with an evil spirit comes in, she knows right away. Now I ask as in John 9, who sinned that this girl was born this way? As Yahshua answered, neither her nor her parents sinned but that the works of Yahweh should be manifest in her. She has several beautiful spirit filled sisters, but no one is writing or talking about them. They are all amazed at Patricia, who was told at birth that she would be a love child. That she is, Praise Yahweh. (*1 Cor. 1: 27*) **But Yahweh has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and Yahweh has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty."**

I do not argue with the fact that all sickness does come from sin ultimately. Whether our own or Adam and Eves. But we must watch not to judge a sick or handicapped individual, always assuming they must have done something wrong to be that way. Sometimes they are that way to show the glory of Yahweh in their life. It takes a very courageous and strong of faith person to be able to glorify Yahweh each and every day through a health problem. Instead of judging these people we need to be more supportive. Was Nebuchanezzar demon possessed when he ate grass like a wild animal for 7 years? No, he wasn't, but again it was to show the supremacy of Yahweh over the whole earth. Was the woman in Lk. 13:16, who was bound by Satan, and hunched over for 18 years demon possessed? There is no indication of that in scripture, yet the demon was able to keep her hunched over but did not possess her.

I would now like to discuss what actual demon possession is, and how it comes about. (**See Part 2 Next Week**)

(This article has been updated and re-printed from "The Church of God Messenger" November/December 2001—Issue No. 6)

Junia, a Woman Apostle

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

Did you know that there were other apostles after the 12 disciples? Many people do not realize that Paul considered himself an apostle and referred to certain other leaders as apostles as well. Paul and Barnabas were called apostles, Col. 1:1, Acts 14:3,4; also, Silvanus and Timothy, read both 1 Thes. 1:1, and 2:6. But the most amazing reference to an apostle beyond the 12 is in Romans 16:7.

For many years many thought Junia(s) was a man--or if they admitted she was a woman, they discounted her as just someone highly regarded by the apostles. Recent scholarship proves she was both a female and an apostle! But let's start by looking at each piece of this scripture puzzle.

Romans 16:7

"Greet Andronicus and **Junias (Junia)** my relatives who have been in prison with me. **They are outstanding among the apostles**, and they were in Christ before I was." NIV (The NAS and NASU both use "outstanding", the KJV uses "of note" meaning notable.)

English	Greet	#1.	Andronicus	and
Greek	aspasasthe	Andronikon		kai
Strong's	782	408		2532

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#2. <i>lounian</i> 2458	Junia <i>tous</i> 3588	(the) <i>tous</i> 3588	#3. <i>sungeneis</i> 4773	relatives	
my <i>mou</i> 3450	and <i>kai</i> 2532		#4. <i>sunaimalootous</i> 4869	fellow prisoners	my <i>mou</i> 3450
who <i>hoitines</i> 3748	are <i>eisin</i> 1526		#5. <i>episeemoi</i> 1978	outstanding	#6. among <i>en</i> 1722
the <i>tois</i> 3588	#7. <i>apostolois</i> 652	apostles	who <i>hoi</i> 3739		also <i>kai</i> 2532
#8. <i>pro</i> 4253	before <i>emou</i> 1700	me	were <i>gegonan</i> 1096		
in <i>en</i> 1722	Christ <i>Christoo</i> 5547				

Andronicus means "man of victory".

lounias-Junia, a common Latin female name meaning "youthful", a **Christian woman at Rome**, mentioned by Paul as one of his kinsfolk and fellow prisoners, Thayer's Greek Definitions. Also see the following pages for more proof.

relatives - Could mean related by blood, of the same race, or of the tribe of Benjamin.

fellow prisoners - They had once all three been imprisoned together, most likely for being Christian leaders. Paul would have gotten to know both of them very well.

outstanding - **Episemos** ep-is'-ay-mos - **remarkable, eminent** Strong's Greek-Hebrew Dictionary.

among - **En**, translated "among" 97 other times in the NT, in Matthew 20:26 "to be great **among** you" uses the same word. Expresses the idea of being within a group.

apostles - These were not of the 12, but apostle (meaning one who is sent) remained a spiritual gift, 1 Cor. 12:28, and we have biblical proof that **others became known as apostles** as they received this spiritual gift or calling. Paul and Barnabas were apostles, Col.1:1, Acts 14:3,4.; also, Silvanus and Timothy, read both 1 Thes. 1:1, and 2:6.

before - These two were "in Christ" before Paul, meaning baptized before Paul was, and thus preceded him as Christians. Andronicus and Junia had more experience than Paul!

WAS JUNIA "AMONG" AS "ONE OF" THE APOSTLES, OR JUST HIGHLY REGARDED BY THE APOSTLES?

Many mentally read this scripture and add several of their own words—"They are (said to be) outstanding among (here they substitute "by") the apostles." Changing "among" and adding the other four words totally changes the meaning of this scripture! However, these four words—said to be/by—are not in the Greek text. In studying scriptures, we cannot just randomly add words or change the words that are there! For the meaning "by" Paul would have used one of two totally different Greek words—para or pros—rather than using en which implies selection from within a group. **1**

Paul never relied on the opinions of other apostles to back his teaching or his praise. **2** He knew these two very well, having been in prison with them. Why would he be saying that others thought they were outstanding? He knew them best and he was praising them as "**outstanding (or eminent) among the apostles.**" Paul considered them apostles just as he considered himself to be an apostle. They were part of the group called apostles, they were apostles, and were setting an outstanding example.

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary states, "Paul describes them as being **prominent among** the apostles, and as having been Christians before him."

The United Bible Societies Handbook Series, an acknowledged authority composed of a board of respected translators, first acknowledges that they are a male/female team, "Adronicus and Junias ... could easily have been

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husband and wife, or brother and sister." They acknowledge that some misunderstood the sentence, "to mean 'the apostles know them well,' but **a far more acceptable interpretation** would imply that these...**were counted as apostles and were well known**, for example, **'as apostles they are well known.'**" **3**

WHY WASN'T A WOMAN AMONG THE ORIGINAL TWELVE APOSTLES OF JESUS?

A woman might well have been killed because of the moral outrage in that day and time against a woman being one of the disciples. Traveling around together in the three- and one-half-year training period demanded maleness of the core group of disciples. The women who did travel with them were not formally called disciples and thus could be accepted by that culture.

Remember, all of the twelve apostles were Jewish males. Did that mean that from then on, all apostles or leaders had to be Jewish? There were no American apostles or Canadian apostles, did that mean that Jesus would never later call American or Canadian ministers to serve him? The twelve were selected in a specific time period and to have a woman apostle in the original twelve would have brought about persecution and accusations of immorality. Jesus never said anything that would exclude later female apostles in the group that Paul was a part of. After the twelve we see that there was at least one woman, believed to be married, who was called to be an apostle—Junia. As early believers, she and her husband may well have been among the 120 disciples mentioned in Acts 1:15.

IS THERE PROOF THAT THE TERM "APOSTLE" CONTINUED BEYOND THE TWELVE?

See number seven on the chart for scriptures proving that others were called apostles in addition to the original twelve and Mathias. Men such as Paul, Barnabas, Silvanus and Timothy were all later apostles. Also see Thayer's. **4**

We also find other scriptural proof that there were many that were called apostles in the New Testament beyond the twelve. 2 Cor. 8:22-24 is translated "messengers of the churches", but it is the same Greek word, apostolos, Strong's 652, and could be translated as "apostles of the churches"! In Phil 2:25 Epaphroditus is also called an apostolon or apostle, but once again it was translated "your messenger" rather than apostle.

DO EARLY COMMENTATORS RECORD THAT JUNIA WAS A FEMALE APOSTLE?

Dr. Leonard Swidler states, "To the best of my knowledge, no commentator on the Text until **Aegidius of Rome** (1245-1316) took the name to be masculine." **5** So until the late 13th century, historical references all agreed that Junia was female, as did the men below.

Origen, of Alexandria who lived toward the end of the second century (c. 185-253).

See Epistolam ad Romanos Commentariorum 10, 23; 29.

John Chrysostom, 4th century, (337-497) wrote, "Oh! How great is the devotion of this **woman**, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of **apostle!** (Homily on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans XXXI).

Jerome (340-419) wrote that Junia was a female. (Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum 72, 15.) Also **Hatto of Vercelli** (924-961), **Theophylact** (1050-1108), and **Peter Abelard** (1079-1142) **6**

HOW DID JUNIA BECOME KNOWN AS A MALE?

The change took place in approximately 1298 which was during the reign of **Pope Boniface VIII** (Benedict Gaetani, reigned from 1294-1303). You will remember that the first person to record the two as "men" was **Aegidius in Rome**, a contemporary of **Pope Boniface VIII**. The Catholic Encyclopedia goes on to tell us that this pope was accused of infidelity, heresy, simony, gross and unnatural immorality, adultery, magic, loss of the Holy Land, death of **Celestine V**, and more. When **King Philip IV of France** brought these charges against him five archbishops, 21 bishops and some abbots sided with the king! **7** This evil man had persuaded the pope before him, **Celestine V**, to resign, and then following his own election as pope, imprisoned the elderly man until his death. **8**

One famous quote from **Boniface VIII** is, "It is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff." **9**

A papal decision that dealt directly with religious women was the papal bull known as **Periculoso**, which was the first word of the Latin text. This decree of 1298 announced that all nuns, no matter their rank, or what rule they observed and no matter where their monasteries were located—all nuns were to be **perpetually cloistered!** Unless a nun became contagiously ill, she could not leave her monastery or invite "unauthorized persons" into the monastery. **10** Once they had been free to come and go on their own religious business and ministries, now nuns were to be totally separated and no longer free to come and go as they wished. This was a milestone decision and transformed monasteries into virtual prisons! One order of nuns threw the bishop delivering this decree out of their convent and tossed the edict along after him! One reason given for this decree was for their safety, but soon afterwards many safe monasteries out in the country were closed and relocated to cities, so this reason did not really seem valid. **Boniface** may well have wished to limit the

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power and influence of the women of the church. Many nuns protested but the edict remained and continues to this day. Nuns never regained the freedom they had before the edict of 1298.

Monasteries of women were famous for producing their own copyists and illuminators of manuscripts. ¹¹ Therefore these nun bible copyists and educated nuns among them such as **Gertrude the Great** (1256-1302) who wrote Herald of Divine Love, would have been able to cite Junia as an apostle from the biblical record of Romans. Did **Boniface VIII** also rule that Junia would henceforth be considered a male? Conclusive evidence eludes us, but we do know that at about the same time as this edict against nuns, medieval biblical commentators began referring to Junia as a male! The first-person Dr. Swidler sites to do so is **Aeigidus of Rome**. If this is the same man as **AEgidius Colonna**, the Archbishop of Bourges who helped **Boniface** write one of his major papal bulls—then we have a direct link to **Boniface VIII**. ¹² Another shocking change occurred at about this same time.

"JUNIA" BECOMES "JUNIAS"

"Without exception **the church fathers in late antiquity identified Andronicus' partner in Romans 16:7 as a woman** as did minuscule 33 in the 9th century which records Iouinia (Greek for Junia) with an acute accent. Only later **medieval copyists** of Romans 17:7 could not imagine a woman being an apostle and **wrote the masculine name Iouinias (Junias)** with an s. **This later name Junias did not exist in antiquity**; its explanation as a Greek abbreviation of the Latin name 'Junianus' is unlikely." ¹³

At about the time of **Pope Boniface's** edict removing the freedom of nuns in 1298, copyists began writing the name Junia as Junias! Yet recent research has shown that the newly created name, Junias, didn't even exist at the time of Paul!

"This hypothetical name Junias is, however, as yet unattested in ancient inscriptions, but the female Latin name Junia occurs over 250 times among inscriptions from ancient Rome alone. Further, the ancient translations and **the earliest manuscripts with accents support reading Iouinian as Junia**. Finally, Junias would be an irregular form. Therefore, critical scholars today increasingly interpret the name as the feminine Junia." ¹⁴

Junia was a very common Latin female name, and we have no record of any Roman male bearing the name Junia. But medieval copyists began copying the name with an "s" to hide Junia's sex, not knowing that the name Junias "did not exist in antiquity"! So Junia received a fictitious name, possibly at the command of **Pope Boniface VIII!**

APOSTLE IS LISTED AS ONE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS GIVEN BY GOD.

God Himself gives the ability to do these jobs, "And in the church God has appointed first of all **apostles**, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues." 1 Corinthians 12:28, NIV.

Apostle is listed first by Paul as one of the most important of the spiritual gifts because these individuals are responsible for evangelizing, setting up churches, organizing them, handling the problems that arose, ordaining elders for each church and generally coordinating, supervising and serving a number of congregations. Again, it is God that gives these individuals the ability—as a spiritual gift—to do a certain job. Ordination was usually done long after the person was already getting the job done through the leading of God's Holy Spirit. You will notice that Stephen was performing miracles and preaching even though his ordination had been to deacon, see Acts 6:1-10.

Since Junia was given this highest spiritual gift along with her husband Andronicus, it is obvious that women can also be given the calling (spiritual gift) of serving God as a prophet, teacher, or any of the other spiritual gifts. In the scriptures that explain spiritual gifts there is no indication that any gift is limited to males only. Both men and women are to work together using whatever talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts they have been given by God to serve, in a servant manner, the people of God.

Aida Besancon Spencer, Beyond the Curse, page 102.

Galatians 1:18-24

United Bible Societies Handbook Series, (1961-1997) for Romans 16:7

Thayer's Greek Definitions 652 apostolos—a delegate, a messenger, one sent forth with orders a) specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ b) in a broader sense, applied to other eminent Christian teachers.

Leonard Swidler, Biblical Affirmations of Women, Westminster Press (1979) p. 299

Charles Trombley, Who Said Women Can't Teach, Bridge Publishing (1985) p. 190

Catholic Encyclopedia, 1913 edition, article on **Pope Boniface VIII**

New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 edition, Vol. 2, article on **Pope Boniface VIII**

From papal bull, Unam Sanctam, Nov. 1302, as quoted in The Encyclopedia of Religion, 1995, Vol. 1, PP 288-289.

Elizabeth M. Makowski, Canon Law and Cloistered Women, <http://cuapress.cua.edu>

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Book review of Women in the Days of the Cathedrals by Regine Pernoud, translated by Anne Cote-Harriss, p. 2.
Online:<http://www.ignatius.com/magazines/hpr/Hprbooks.htm> (This Web Link No Longer Works. Laura Lee)

Catholic Encyclopedia, (1913), "Pope Boniface VIII"

"Junia", The Anchor Bible Dictionary, (1992), Vol. 3, p. 1127

Women in Scripture, editor Carol Meyers, (2000), article "Junia" by Bernadette J. Brooten, p. 109

(This article has been updated and re-printed from "The Church of God Messenger" January/February 2001— Issue No. 7)

Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: Were the Early Great Kings of Persia Israelites?

Article by Cam Rea

Comments by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

This is in response to Cam Rea's report on whether any of the kings of Persia "were Israelites".

While history and Scripture supports there being some Israelite influences within the realm of Persia, Scripture and history does not support Persia's kings being Israelite. The book of Esther doesn't give any inclination of this, though the "Judeans" living within said empire, did indeed come to have strong influence. But there is no evidence that any of the Judeans ever became rulers in Persia.

However, there were at least two- and one-half Israelite tribes living next to Persia. These being the half tribe of Manasseh, and the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Which tribes settled "east of the Jordan". It was in the 700's BC when the armies of Assyria invaded that area, taking several peoples captive. Including the Israelite tribes. Those of Manasseh were settled as a buffer in northern India. While Reuben and Gad were settled on the border of Asia. Which would have put them next to the countries of Persia. And, it would have been very likely that these Israelites would have had normal relationships with the Persians. Since in a sense, they were related to the Persians. We find this in the following Scripture. One which to date, I have not found discussed amongst the historical Sabbath keepers' writings.

In Gen. 25 we read of Abraham's descendants. First are listed the sons of Abraham's second wife, Keturah. Which sons were settled in Arabia, east of Israel. These were also removed from this area by the Assyrians or fled from the Assyrian's. The point is, these sons of Keturah wound up in Macedonia, and were the "Grecian Empire", that defeated the Persians. Which at that time, made the Israelites "kings in the former Persian Empire" area. Keturah's sons today are the nations of Eastern Europe. Including the "white Russians".

But going on in Gen. 25. We are told that Abraham gave all to his son Isaac. But note what it tells us in 25:6. "But, of the CONCUBINES, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived. EASTWARD, unto the EAST country." Or, quite far from Isaac's lands that his son Jacob would one day bring Israel to.

Thus, it seems that the Persians were of Abraham, and thus they would have had a decent relationship with the tribes of Israel mentioned above. Such countries as Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (Somewhere I seem to remember that there were "seven" sons of the concubines?) would be those of Abraham's concubines. For even though there is bad relations today, it was not always so. At one time, the Shah of Iran was a friend of the US. Until, that is, the descendants of Haman the Amalakite took power. Haman, as you know, wanted to kill all of the Judeans in Persia. Because he was an Amalakite. He and his sons were hanged. But his sons wives and children were allowed to live. And as mentioned, they rule in Persia for the most part today.

Again, there may be some relationship with the meanings of Persian kings, but it is very unlikely that any were Israelites. Which tribes mentioned, lived outside of Persia's borders. As buffers for Assyria.