

**The "New" Church of God Messenger**  
A Newsletter for the People of God  
August 14, 2021 --- Issue No. 28

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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**

### **Are there Still Elders in the Church?**

by **B. L. Cocherell (Nevada)**

Some believe and teach that the early church did not have an organized ministry which selected men who were given authority through the ritual of laying on of hands to supervise, teach, and govern congregations in an official leadership capacity. Some also believe and teach that men identified as elders in the early church were not spiritual leaders but were just older men with no official capacity.

The logic used to attempt to validate these two beliefs, is that the Greek words translated in most English bibles as ordained are not a correct translation of these Greek words and that these Greek words do not indicate a process through which men are given authority and positions of leadership by someone with authority to do so. So, this must mean that no men exist in an official leadership capacity within the church (i.e., there are no elders).

It is true that the English word ordained is not a correct translation of several Greek words in the New Testament, but instead is an interpretation of these Greek words which the translators thought would convey the essence and intent of the text.

The following are the questions answered in this study:

- Did the early church have an organized ministry which selected men who were then given authority to supervise, serve, teach, and govern congregations in an official leadership capacity?
- Does the English word ordained as used in English translations of the New Testament convey the writer's intent?
- Were men identified as elders in the early church just older men or were they in fact men with an official leadership function and responsibility?

#### **The Promise**

After Jesus asked Peter who he thought he was and Peter answered, "You are the anointed the son of the living God," Christ made the following promise:

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not overpower it (Matt:16:18 KJV Para.).

Christ assured his disciples that he would build a physical and spiritual organism on earth for his heavenly Father that would endure the test of time. Christ has kept his promise; his Father's collective earthly family has continued to exist throughout the centuries alongside a growing counterfeit of biblical Christianity.

In verse 18 the word build is translated from the Greek word oikodomeo, which is derived from the Greek word to be a housebuilder, i.e., construct or (figuratively) confirm.

Is it logical that Christ who created everything for the Sovereign God (See Eph.3:9; Col.1:15-16), which is perfect in design, construction, and functionality, would allow his followers to embark on a world changing mission in a chaotic, haphazard, and dysfunctional manner? Of course not.

#### **An Organized Ministry?**

Did the early church have an organized ministry that selected men who were then given authority to supervise, serve, teach, and govern congregations in an official leadership capacity?

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In order to understand what is said in the New Testament about the organizational and governmental structure of the early church, it is helpful to review some of what is recorded in the historical record about the Sovereign God's people who were called Nazarenes before and after 70 A.D.

It is clear from secular records and the Book of Acts that, prior to 70 A.D., the Nazarenes had established a council at Jerusalem which governed all of the followers of Christ. This council of apostles and elders under the presidency of James was in direct opposition to the Jewish Sanhedrin. The Nazarenes saw themselves as loyal Israelites who gave their allegiance to Jesus Christ as the Messiah and rightful king of Israel. Therefore, they felt justified in creating a governmental system with which to exercise authority, responsibility, accountability, and jurisdiction over all believers at home and abroad until Christ returns.

The appointment of James to the presidency of the Nazarene's council seems to be partially a political appointment, because he was of the royal bloodline of King David (he was the son of Joseph and the brother next in age to Jesus). This might explain why he had been chosen over Peter. Moreover, Acts 15 shows him officiating over the council of elders after the manner of the ancient priesthood. Because the disciples expected Christ to return in their day to set up the Kingdom of God on earth, it would be quite natural to have one of Jesus' relatives (Gal.1:19) in the position of the presidency representing him as the ruler of the spiritual nation of Israel.

A great deal that appears obscure about the early church's organizational and governmental structure becomes clear when it is understood that, before and after 70 A.D., there was a Nazorean council of elders which functioned much as the original Sanhedrin and this council exercised authority over the entire body of believers throughout the world.

In Acts 15, the apostles and others act exactly like the Jewish Sanhedrin in making decisions concerning the body of the elect. This council sent out men to supervise new groups of believers; Peter and John were sent to Samaria, and Barnabas was sent to Antioch. They dispatched a delegation to Antioch to investigate the admission of Gentile converts to the church. They adjudicated disputes and rendered doctrinal decisions (Acts 15:13-21). And they directed the collecting of money and other gifts from among the congregations and distributed them to those in need.

#### **The Nazorean Council at Pella**

After the martyrdom of James (Jesus' brother) and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., secular history shows the leader of the Nazarenes to be Simeon, the son of Cleophas, who is mentioned in Luke 24:18. Simeon's father, Cleophas, was a Galilean and a descendant of David. Moreover, he was said to be a cousin of Jesus because his father was Joseph's brother. After 70 A.D., history shows the Nazarenes were in Pella with Simeon as president of the Nazorean Sanhedrin.

According to Hegesippus, the blood relatives of Christ continued in the presidency of the Nazorean council until the time of Tarjan Caesar. Hegesippus also says that Eusebius and Epiphanyes bore witness that the Nazarenes were persecuted when they lived in the East after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and that many Jews joined them.

It is clear from secular history that the apostles established a council of apostles and elders similar to the Jewish Sanhedrin. Even if this were not true, it does not negate the fact that the early Church had an organizational and governmental system in which the apostles and elders were in authority.

The decisions made by the council of elders surrounding the issues put forth in Acts, chapter 15 reveal that the elders did not have the right to act independently of the rest of the eldership, and that they were subject to the rule and counsel of a governing body composed of other elders.

The biblical and historical records clearly show that the early church had an organized ministry, which consisted of apostles and other men in a leadership capacity. This is what Christ built.

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**Authority**

When Christ gave instructions to his disciples about how to deal with problems within the Father's earthly family, he also gave them authority to make decisions which would affect the lives of those they were to serve, teach, and supervise in the future:

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt:18:18-20 NIV).

After Christ's death and resurrection, the biblical record shows the apostles making many decisions, and issuing instructions and decrees which became law and are to be obeyed and practiced by the Father's earthly family. These decisions, instructions, and decrees were not biblical law before they were rendered but had the full weight of biblical law after they were rendered. See Acts 15:1-29; 1 Cor.5:11-13; 1 Tim.5:19-20.

Although the organizational system that Christ established with a central governing authority no longer exists today (2021), its ministerial function still exists, because without it, the many instructions, decrees, and laws given by Christ and the apostles that are to govern the Father's earthly family cannot be practiced and what Christ built would disappear.

**Precept Upon Precept**

The biblical record is written in such a way that every word, sentence, phrase, and concept pertaining to any given subject are linked. The problem is finding this linkage. Although the prophet Isaiah meant the following principle to apply to the prophecies he documented, it also applies in principle to the entire biblical record:

"Whom shall he teach knowledge? and who shall understand what is heard? Those weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts (i.e., spiritually mature individuals). For precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little" (Isa.28:9-10 KJV Para.).

What follows is an attempt to find this linkage and apply it to the subject at hand and answer these two questions:

1. Does the English word ordained as used in English translations of the New Testament convey the writer's intent?
2. Were men identified as elders in the early church just older men or were they in fact men with an official leadership function and responsibility?

**WORD MEANINGS**

As with some English words, many Greek words can also express different nuances of thoughts, concepts, and meanings depending on what is attempting to be conveyed by the speaker or writer. This makes it extremely difficult to determine exactly what is being said in many biblical texts. However, this is not the case when it comes to understanding that congregations of the early church were not chaotic and dysfunctional and without an organized leadership but were in fact just the opposite; they were highly organized.

**Ordain and Ordained**

The English words ordain and ordained seem to be derived from the Latin verb ordinare (to order), which is from ordo (order ordained), (transitive) to order, arrange, prescribe, ordain.

Most English dictionaries define the word ordain as 1. A transitive verb, to put in order, appoint, invest (in an entry sense) officially (as by the laying on of hands) with ministerial or priestly authority. 2. As an intransitive verb, which means to establish or order by appointment, decree, or law. 2a. Ordained, something that has been established by order, appointment, decree, or law.

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**Elder and Elders**

The English word elder as an adjective (of one or more out of a group of associated people) means one of a greater age. Similar: older senior, first, firstborn, more grown up. As a noun, a person of greater age than someone specified.

It is important to mention that in the New Testament there are only two Greek words which describe men as being old presbutes once in Lk.1:18, which means an old man and palaios once in Eph.4:22 and Col.3:9, which means not recent, worn out. Neither of these two Greek words are ever used in references to leaders of the early church described in English as an elder or elders.

**THIS REVIEW**

The following does not review scriptures in which the English words ordain or ordained are obviously referring to an apostle's decision about an issue, passing judgement, or giving an edict, instruction, or decree. Instead, it focuses on texts that refer to men selected and authorized to serve the elect in an official capacity.

The same criteria is used to determine if men identified as an elder or elders are just older men or are in fact men who have been and are being selected and authorized through a formal ritual to perform a function and responsibility in an official capacity among the Father's elect.

This criteria will allow us to more quickly determine whether or not the essence, intent, and meaning of a Greek word has been conveyed by its interpretation into the English words ordain, ordained, elder, and elders.

**Christ's Example**

The following accounts by Mark and Matthew show Christ choosing men for a specific task, and authorizing them with power to perform it.

Mark records that Christ said the following to twelve men he chose to be his companions and to share in proclaiming his Father's good news message:

"And he went up to a mountain and called to him those he chose: and they came to him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to cast out devils" (Mk.3:13-15 KJV Para.). Note: Words not in the original text are left out.

Here, the English word ordained is translated from the Greek word poieo, which basically means to make or do (in a wide application, more or less to direct).

The phrase he might send is translated from the Greek word apostello, which means to set apart, i.e. (by implication) to send out (properly, on a mission) literally or figuratively.

The English word ordained used in verse 14 is a correct usage of this word, because it describes what Christ did. He set these men apart to be with him and to send them to preach, and gave them the authority and the power to perform what they were to do.

Matthew gives a more detailed account of what Christ said when he gave these men the authority and power to proclaim his Father's good news message:

"And when he had called to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (v.1 KJV) . . . These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (v5-8 NKJV) (Matt.10:1;5-8). See also Lk.9:1-2.

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This is an example of Christ selecting men for a specific task and giving them the authority and spirit-power to perform their task.

As we will see, this example of selecting men and giving them the authority to perform the task given them was followed by the apostles as they went about fulfilling their commission to proclaim the gospel message and establish congregations of believers.

The apostle John records Christ saying the following to his disciples, which includes their selection, task, and the lasting results of their performance:

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you (NKJV). You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you" (Jn. 15:15-16 KJV Para.).

Here, the phrase have chosen is translated from the Greek word eklegomai which means to select. The word ordained is translated from the Greek word tithemi, which is a prolonged form of a primary theo (which is used only as alternate in certain tenses), which means to place (in the widest application, literally and figuratively); properly, in a passive or horizontal posture.

The word ordained in verse 16 tells us essentially that Christ personally placed these men in a position of authority and power to produce something of value that will endure. Here, the word ordained conveys the intent of the Greek word tithemi, because it conveys the essence and meaning of what Christ did.

### **Paul and Barnabas**

The Book of Acts shows Paul and Barnabas selecting and appointing men to leadership positions in the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch:

"And when they had preached the gospel to that city [i.e., Derbe], and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:21-23 KJV).

Here, the word ordained is translated from the Greek word cheirotoneo, which in the context of verse 23 means to select or appoint.

The word elders is translated from the Greek word presbuteros; comparative of presbus (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specifically, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, a member of the celestial council) or Christian "presbyter."

The substitution of the word ordained for the Greek word cheirotoneo in the context of verse 23 makes no sense if the men spoken of are just old men, because old men do not need to be selected or appointed to be old.

In verse 23, the English word commended is translated from the Greek word paratithemi; which can mean to place alongside, i.e., present (food, truth); by implication, to deposit (as a trust or for protection):

It also makes no sense that these men identified as elders were just old men presented and entrusted to God for protection (i.e., paratithemi). Unless they needed it because of the task they were given to perform.

What makes sense is that these men were selected, authorized, and placed in an official leadership capacity to supervise, serve, teach, and govern congregations of the elect in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

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**Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus**

If as some believe no men were set apart for leadership positions in the early church, why did the apostle Paul spend so much effort discussing this subject in his letters to Timothy and Titus?

In Paul's letter to Timothy, he mentions his own status as a preacher, apostle, and teacher along with the fact that he was specifically selected to perform these functions and responsibilities:

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth, and do not lie;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (1.Tim.2:7 KJV Para.).

The word ordained is translated from the Greek word tithemi, which is a prolonged form of a primary theo (which is used only as alternate in certain tenses); to place (in the widest application literally and figuratively); properly, in a passive or horizontal posture.

We know from the Book of Acts, chapter 9 that Paul was selected by Christ to proclaim the Sovereign God's good news message to non-Israelites. We also know from other scriptures that Paul was given many supernatural abilities and authorized to use spirit-power to help him perform this task.

In verse 7, the substitution of the word ordained in place of the Greek word tithemi does convey the thought that Paul was selected by Christ and placed in his function and responsibility as a preacher and apostle. **(To Be Continued Next Week.)**

**The Difference Between True Repentance  
and Temporary Regret**  
by Brenda Branson (Hanson, Kentucky) Copyright © 2004

In the story of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, there were two men who were sorry for their actions—Peter and Judas. Peter truly loved Jesus and boasted that he would even die for him if necessary. However, when Jesus was arrested and taken to the house of the high priest for a trial based on trumped-up charges, Peter's resolve crumbled at the first taunt from a servant girl who recognized him as one of Jesus' followers. Peter boasted a bit too loudly and trusted in his own strength to get him out of difficult situations. When he came face to face with real trouble, Peter found himself weak and unfaithful. ***Have you ever been there?***

Jesus warned him to expect rough times ahead, and even predicted that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed at the dawn of the next morning. The first time Peter denied Jesus he should have recognized that he had fallen for Satan's trap. But reckless and impulsive Peter continued to lie and protect his own self-interests as he was backed into a corner. ***How many corners have you lied and manipulated your way out of?***

The second denial was a more willful and deliberate sin than the first since the denial was accompanied by an oath—calling on God to be a witness to the truth of his testimony. The second denial compounded the lie with blasphemy, and in the third denial he added cursing and swearing. Cursing and swearing was not the same as our four-letter words which are commonly used today. To curse meant to assign a curse on himself that he would die at God's hands if his words were untrue.

Peter had really dug himself into a deep hole of deceit and hypocrisy. When the rooster crowed the second time, Jesus turned and looked into Peter's eyes. Immediately, Peter remembered Jesus' prediction, and was so ashamed that he ran out and wept bitterly.

Judas was also a trusted disciple of Jesus who acted as the treasurer of the group. Jesus predicted his behavior in the upper room during his last Passover feast with the disciples. Judas did not boast like Peter about his love for Jesus. Instead, he hid his evil heart and concealed his true character from the others. He had already conspired to betray Jesus before sitting down to the table with him, and his greed for the 30 pieces of silver revealed a heart of evil and rationalization.

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Judas may have thought he could keep his money while Jesus escaped arrest and trial just as he had in the past. He may have convinced himself that if Jesus was really the Messiah, his betrayal would have no serious or lasting consequences.

Judas had allowed Satan easy access to his heart as he began stealing from the disciples' treasury. Bit by bit, he resisted truth and embraced a lie until he was able to rationalize his actions and retain his respectability while perpetrating evil right under the noses of his fellow believers. Even when Jesus indicated to the disciples that one of them would betray him, no one suspected Judas. ***Do you know church leaders who lie and get away with malicious evil because no one believes they could possibly be guilty?***

When Judas saw the consequences of his sin, he experienced guilt and tried to offer restitution by giving back the 30 pieces of silver. He confessed his crime and affirmed Jesus' innocence. The scriptures even say Judas “repented.” But the Greek word used for Judas' repentance meant “deep regret.” It was not the usual Greek word for being truly sorry, hating the sin, and refusing to get involved in that particular sin again. Judas hated the consequences and feelings of guilt, but not the sin itself. Peter demonstrated his character by *instant repentance* while Judas simply wanted to get past the guilty feelings.

In his book, “The Murder of Jesus,” John MacArthur writes, *“Tears of repentance can in no way atone for sins. But genuine sorrow is nonetheless an important sign of true repentance, signifying that a change of mind and heart have truly taken place. Not all sorrow signifies true repentance, however. Judas was remorseful over what he had done and tried to return the blood money to the ruling priests. His guilt over what he had done finally even motivated him to go out and kill himself. But that kind of sorrow is a worldly sorrow that only leads to death. It may involve sincere remorse over the consequences of one's sin—regret over the loss of prestige or friends or influence. But it reflects no true change of heart, and thus no true grief over the sin itself.”*

*Peter's sorrow was of a different sort. It was the deepest possible sorrow of heart—mingled with shame over his sinful behavior, hatred of the sin itself, and a desperate longing to be restored to a right relationship with Christ.”*

This depiction of Peter's repentance is a model for all relationships, especially in an abusive marriage where the sincerity of an abuser's repentance is being evaluated. Does he/she:

- admit that *their* abusive behavior is a sin and refrain from blaming someone else for their actions?
- feel ashamed for the sinful behavior?
- hate the sin itself so much that they will get help to keep from repeating it?
- have a desperate longing to restore their relationship to Christ and their family?

When someone has this kind of true repentance, God steps in to redeem them from their worst failures and restore their lives and homes. John MacArthur writes, *“He drew them back, forgave them, commissioned them for service, and empowered them to succeed where they had once failed so miserably.”*

When you have suffered at the hand of another person, it may be hard to determine whether or not they are sincerely sorry. It is right to be cautious and to question their motives when they say they're sorry. However, if you see true repentance, based on the model above, be aware that God's grace and mercy is at work in their lives. As you allow His mercy to flow through you toward the offender, you will facilitate the first step toward restoration and reconciliation.

## Other Items

### The Holy Ghost by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

Someone wants to know about the Holy Ghost. What is the name of the Holy Ghost?

**Mat 28:19** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

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My understanding at this time is that there is no name for the Holy Ghost or the set-a-part spirit. My understanding is that the spirit of the Heavenly Father could be likened to the electricity that flows through a power line. "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Yehovah [the LORD] unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Yehovah of armies [the LORD of hosts]." (Zechariah 4:6)

We will notice that greetings from the apostles never included greetings from the holy spirit. For example, in 1 Corinthians 1:3 Paul says "Grace *be* unto you, and peace, **from** Elohim [God; and singular in this sense] **our Father**, and *from* the **Lord Yayshua Messiah.**" (no greeting from the Holy Spirit). For many other similar examples from Paul see 1 Cor. 1:9; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 6:23; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 1:3.

The apostle James also gives like greetings in James 1:1. Peter also in 1 Peter 1:1. Jude the half-brother of Yayshua gives a similar greeting in Jude 1:1.

Who is our fellowship with? The apostle John gives this answer, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and *truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Yayshua Messiah.* (1 John 1:3) Notice, it does not say any fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

What about 1 John 5:7-8 someone might ask? These two verses are often mentioned as "The Johannine Comma", most scholars understand the words that show a trinity of Beings were added as margin notes in the medieval days and became incorporated in some later Bible versions. See for example: <http://www.bible-researcher.com/comma.html>. Verse 7 & 8 could be more properly rendered as, "For there are three that bear record, the spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree in one." The Father gave His spirit to our Savior Yayshua (Matthew 3:13-17). Water and blood were spilled by Yayshua (John 19:34-37).

The KJV of Matthew 28:19 has, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is my personal belief this verse has been toyed with the same as 1 John 5:7-8. I believe it should read per indications from other Scriptures, "18 All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in **My name**; 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."

As mentioned, the other Scriptures that correlates with Matthew 28:19 is Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:47-49, John 14:13 ("And whatsoever ye shall ask **in my name**, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.") and John 15:16 ("Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that **whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name**, he may give it you.")

What is interesting, and I believe supports my understanding regarding Matthew 28:19, is in Acts when people were recorded as being baptized in Yayshua's name **only**. See Acts 2:37-38; Acts 8:16; Acts 10:48; Acts 19:5. Also see 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Galatians 3:27 ("For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.").

## **A Blast from the Past**

### **The Christian Sabbath**

by Catholic Mirror 1893 (Baltimore, Maryland)

**CATHOLIC MIRROR--BALTIMORE, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1893**

(From page 8 of the *Catholic Mirror* of Sept. 2, 1893)

#### **THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH**

THE GENUINE OFFSPRING OF THE UNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HIS SPOUSE. THE CLAIMS OF PROTESTANTISM TO ANY PART THEREIN PROVED TO BE GROUNDLESS, SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY, AND SUICIDAL

Our attention has been called to the above subject in the past week by the receipt of a brochure of twenty-one pages, published by the [International Religious Liberty Association](#), entitled, "Appeal and Remonstrance," embodying

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resolutions adopted by the General Conference of the **Seventh-day Adventists** (February 24th, '93). The resolutions criticize and censure, with much acerbity, the action of the **United States Congress**, and of the **Supreme Court**, for the invading of the rights of the people by closing the **World's Fair** on Sunday.

The **Adventists** are the only body of Christians with the Bible as their teacher, who can find no warrant in its pages for the change of the day from the seventh to the first. Hence their appellation, **Seventh-day Adventists**." Their cardinal principle consists in setting apart Saturday for the exclusive worship of God, in conformity with the positive command of God himself, repeatedly reiterated in the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments, literally obeyed by the children of Israel for thousands of years to this day and endorsed by the teaching and practice of the Son of God whilst on earth.

Per contra, the **Protestants** of the world, the **Adventists** excepted, with the *same* Bible as their cherished and sole infallible teacher, by their practice, since their appearance in the sixteenth century, with the time-honored practice of the **Jewish people** before their eyes, have rejected the day named for His worship by God, and assumed, in apparent contradiction of His command, a day for His worship never once referred to for that purpose, in the pages of that Sacred Volume.

What Protestant pulpit does not ring almost every Sunday with loud and impassioned invectives against Sabbath violation? Who can forget the fanatical clamor of the **Protestant** ministers throughout the length and breadth of the land against opening the gates of the **World's Fair** on Sunday? The thousands of petitions, signed by millions, to save the Lord's Day from desecration? Surely, such general and widespread excitement and noisy remonstrance could not have existed without the strongest grounds for such animated protests.

And when quarters were assigned at the **World's Fair** to the various sects of Protestantism for the exhibition of articles, who can forget the emphatic expressions of virtuous and conscientious indignation exhibited by our **Presbyterian** brethren, as soon as they learned of the decision of the **Supreme Court** not to interfere in the Sunday opening? The newspapers informed us that they flatly refused to utilize the space accorded them, or open their boxes, demanding the right to withdraw the articles, in rigid adherence to their principles, and thus decline all contact with the sacrilegious and Sabbath breaking Exhibition.

Doubtless, our **Calvinistic** brethren deserved and shared the sympathy of all the other sects, who, however, lost the opportunity of posing as martyrs in vindication of the Sabbath observance.

They thus became a "spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men," although their **Protestant** brethren, who failed to share the monopoly, were uncharitably and enviously disposed to attribute their steadfast adherence to religious principle, to Pharisalical pride and dogged obstinacy.

Our purpose in throwing off this article, is to shed such light on this all-important question (for were the Sabbath question to be removed from the Protestant pulpit, the sects would feel lost, and the preachers be deprived of their "Cheshire cheese") that our readers may be able to comprehend the question in *all its bearings*, and thus reach a clear conviction.

The Christian world is, morally speaking, united on the question and practice of worshiping God on *the first day* of the week.

The **Israelites**, scattered all over the earth, keep *the last day* of the week sacred to the worship of the Deity. In this particular, the **Seventh-day Adventists** (a sect of Christians numerically few) have also selected the same day.

**Israelites** and **Adventists** both appeal to the Bible for the divine command, persistently obliging the strict observance of Saturday.

The **Israelite** respects the authority of the Old Testament only, but the **Adventist**, who is a Christian, accepts the New Testament on the same ground as the Old: viz., an inspired record also. He finds that the Bible, his teacher, is consistent in both parts, that the Redeemer, during His mortal life, never kept any other day than Saturday. The Gospels plainly evince to him this fact; whilst, in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, not the vestige of an act canceling the Saturday arrangement can be found.

The **Adventists**, therefore, in common with **Israelites**, derive their belief from the Old Testament, which position is confirmed by the New Testament, endorsing fully by the life and practice of the Redeemer and His apostles the teaching of the Sacred Word for nearly a century of the Christian era.

Numerically considered, the **Seventh-day Adventists** form an insignificant portion of the **Protestants** population of the earth, but, as the question is not one of numbers, but of truth, and right, a strict sense of justice forbids the condemnation of this little sect without a calm and unbiased investigation; this is none of our funeral.

The **Protestant** world has been, from its infancy, in the sixteenth century, in thorough accord with the **Catholic Church**, in keeping "holy," not Saturday, but Sunday. The discussion of the grounds that led to this unanimity of sentiment and practice of over 300 years, must help toward placing **Protestantism** on a solid basis in this particular, should the arguments in favor of its position overcome those furnished by the **Israelites** and **Adventists**, the Bible, the sole recognized teacher of both litigants, being the umpire and witness. If however, on the other hand, the latter furnish

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arguments, incontrovertible by the great mass of **Protestants**, both cases of litigants, appealing to their common teacher, the Bible, the great body of **Protestants**, so far from clamoring, as they do with vigorous pertinacity for the strict keeping of Sunday, have no other resource [recourse] left than the admission that they have been teaching and practicing *what is Scripturally false for over three centuries*, by adopting the teaching and practice of what they have always pretended to believe an apostate church, contrary to every warrant and teaching of sacred Scripture. To add to the intensity of this Scriptural and unpardonable blunder, it involves one of the most positive and emphatic commands of God to His servant, man: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

No **Protestant** living today has ever yet obeyed that command, preferring to follow the apostate church referred to than his teacher the Bible, which, from Genesis to Revelation, *teaches no other doctrine*, should the **Israelites** and **Seventh-day Adventists** be correct. Both sides appeal to the Bible as their "infallible" teacher. Let the Bible decide whether Saturday or Sunday be the day enjoined by God. One of the two bodies must be wrong, and, whereas a false position on this all-important question involves terrible penalties, threatened by God Himself, against the transgressor of this "perpetual covenant," we shall enter on the discussion of the merits of the arguments wielded by both sides. Neither is the discussion of this paramount subject above the capacity of ordinary minds, nor does it involve extraordinary study. It resolves itself into a few plain questions easy of solution:

- Which day of the week does the Bible enjoin to be kept holy?
- Has the New Testament modified by precept or practice the original command?
- Have **Protestants**, since the sixteenth century, obeyed the command of God by keeping "holy" the day enjoined by their infallible guide and teacher, the Bible? and if not, why not?

To the above three questions we pledge ourselves to furnish as many intelligent answers, which cannot fail to vindicate the truth and uphold the deformity of error. **(To Be Continued Next Week.)**

**(This article has been updated and re-printed from “The Church of God Messenger” January/February 2002— Issue No. 7)**

## **Demon Possession and How it Comes About! (Part 2)**

**by Don Esposito (Carteret, New Jersey)**

I have stated previously that all bad acts and sin ultimately come from sin and Satan. We sin when we are drawn away by our lust and are led by evil spirits. All of us are led away into sin from time to time. But what I would like to discuss now is all out demon possession and how it comes about, and how to get rid of it.

A demon cannot literally enter a person unless he of his own free will allows that to happen. Yahweh will allow demons to tempt us, to ultimately draw us closer to him, and to teach us valuable lessons in our spiritual walk. Job the 1st chapter verses 6-12 is a perfect example of this. Look at verses 8-12 ***“And Yahweh said unto Satan, hast, thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that fears Yahweh, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered Yahweh and said, Does Job fear Yahweh for nothing? Has thou not made a hedge around him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? Thou has blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And Yahweh said unto Satan, behold, all that he has is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand. So, Satan went forth from the presence of Yahweh.”***

What many people seem to forget is the simple fact that Satan is powerless over us. That he can only do what Yahweh allows. That he was defeated by Yahshua at Calvary 2,000 years ago, and he only has the power that we give him by not being close to Yahweh and living to the lust of this world. ***(Ja. 4:7) “Submit yourselves therefore to Yahweh. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (Lk. 10: 19) “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”***

Demons have no power over a human being as long as he is in the will of our heavenly Father. What I have personally experienced is that most demon possessed people have given their soul over to demons by some sort of either witchcraft or some mind-altering substance such as drugs, or alcohol. Even pornography can be mind altering and give an in, to demons. The erroneous tales of demons just taking over anyone they wish is Hollywood. It is impossible as we read in James for a demon to enter a person against his or her will. It is only when someone has lost control of his will or senses through some avenue as drugs that the demon will enter.

Remember, evil spirits lead us all astray when we give in to our own lusts and sin, but that is not demon possession.

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Demon possession is where the demon is actually dwelling inside the person. Besides mind-altering substances, any form of witchcraft such as **tarot cards**, fortune tellers, **Jewish Cabala** reading can bring demon possession. In this world today **horoscopes** and **Palm readers** are looked at as harmless vices, but I am telling you from firsthand experience they are not. Many of these people are being controlled by demons, and Yahweh's peoples should stay completely away from them. (1 Sam. 28:3-23) Tells the whole story of King Saul who went to the witch of Endor, and his imminent demise. He literally had the Kingdom ripped out of his hand for going to this fortune teller. This was such a heinous act that (Ex. 22:18) tells us "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live".

Today this is looked upon with scorn. Many people are involved in **Wicca**, and say it is harmless, but it is giving an avenue for evil spirits to dwell. Most people in this wicked age that we live in give their minds over daily to hours of pure ungodliness on TV, and watch every form of soap opera, and horror movies to give the adversary an edge. We have to guard our minds from the wicked pollutions that Satan has in his world to tempt us away from Yahweh. It must be taken seriously. Many even in the body of believers, are so numb to the ungodliness of this evil age that they don't even know the difference any longer. We have to, as the body of believers, put on the mind of Yahshua Messiah, and live holy lives acceptable to Yahweh.

If someone is possessed by a demon, how does he get rid of it? First of all, you must realize that it is not your power to cast out the demon, but our King of Kings Yahshua Messiah. **(Acts 19:15-16) "And the evil spirit said Yahshua I know, and Paul I know but who are you? And the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded."**

We must never go on our own power. If the demon asks your name, tell him "You come in the name of Yahshua Messiah." Your name is not important. Then you use the authority that Yahshua gave you (If you have been given that authority) to cast the demon out in his name. You must believe totally in the one who sent you (Yahshua). If you lack faith, it will not leave. Then after the demon is gone, you must explain to the person who had the demon that he must keep his house clean lest 7 more come back with the first one, and the end of that person will be worse than the beginning. The person must **repent** of the sin, **revoke** the act that brought the demon and **replace** the act with a positive deed. That is the only way to stay clean. I will say that although demons are rampant in this world today, all out demon possession is rare. But it is getting more and more common as we are getting closer to the end.

We as the people of Yahweh more than ever need to be praying for the gift of judgment and discernment. Judgment is nothing more than knowing right from wrong. Yet is so lacking in the body today. There is such a spirit of immaturity. We are getting close to the great tribulation, and the return to earth of our Savior Yahshua. If ever there was a time to wake up, and start maturing like never before, it is now. There is real spiritual warfare out there, and it is only going to get worse. We must as the body of believers be able to discern a poor handi-capped person who needs love and encouragement from a sick demon possessed person. The only way to do so is by much prayer, and fasting, and putting on true Holiness, that without you will not see Yahweh (Heb. 12; 14).

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

## **Iron Sharpening Iron**

**New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)**  
**As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.**

### **In regard to: Was the Sop Leavened or Unleavened?** **(John 13:26-27)**

**Article by John W. Ritenbaugh**  
**Comments by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)**

This short article is a great help in ferreting out the apparent discrepancy of eating leavened bread or unleavened bread for Christ's sacrifice. Why would Christ use leavened bread (artos) for introducing the New Testament symbols for His body, when Exd.: 34:25 is quite specific that we are not to eat leavened bread with His sacrifice. **Exodus 34:25 (KJV)** Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover be left unto the morning.