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Articles

Avoiding the Devil's Details by Royce Mitchell, Jr. (Manvel, Texas)

There is among some of the brethren the tendency to want to make sure that everyone has exactly correct doctrine according to the Word of God. Some are kind and understanding of differences in understanding. Some are combative and accusative of the brethren.

Certainly, it can be understood that good-hearted brethren want others to be sure that they are right before God so that they are accounted worthy to stand before Him at the end. However, as former presidential candidate Ross Perot said in his campaign speeches, "the devils in the details." Our desire for the brethren to have the "right" understanding is one place where the devil can insert himself if we are not carefully watching ourselves.

2Ti 3:16 -17 says this: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This scripture combined with the Christ's saying that "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ..." (Jn 16:13) is taken to an extension that is not warranted by scripture.

Some of us have the idea that we are guided into all truth. Because of that, when we see any difference in doctrine between us and others, we react in ways that do not represent the Christ well.

As an example, I have heard the statement that "If you are not keeping the right (you fill in the blank) then you can't be worshipping the same God as I am." Inherent in that statement is that, since there is only one God, our friends must be worshipping that which is not God, a direct violation of the commandments laid down in Exodus 20.

"What's wrong with that?" Some will ask. "Getting it right is important to our salvation!" That is, I suppose, a fair question. However, it is one that demands an answer to another question beforehand. That question is "Where in the scripture does it say that 'except you know and understand every doctrine perfectly and walk in it that you cannot be saved?'" Of course, as we well know, there is no such statement in the scripture.

What about the scripture in 2Ti, then? The answer is contained right in the scripture. It says that ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. In whatever way we react to differences in understanding, it needs to be in the light of ALL of the scriptures!

For instance, when we read that the Spirit will guide us into all truth, we have to notice what is written as well as what is not written there. It does not say that the Spirit will guide us into all truth immediately, or even in our lives! We will indeed be guided into all truth, but in God's time, not ours. All of the wrestling with the Word of God over differences in some lesser dogma are an attempt, perhaps with good intent, to force an understanding on another to which, perhaps, the Spirit isn't yet leading.

This is not to say that we should not discuss the Way and how we see it in our interactions. Of course, we should! But the scripture (1Pe 3:15) says that we should be "ready to give an answer." Giving an "answer" presupposes a question!

For instance, if we go to someone and tell them that they need to be wearing tassels and not shaving our beards, but have not been asked about that, we have not obeyed the commandment telling us to be ready with an answer.

The Christ's brother, James, wrote this to us: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (Jas 4:17). Some take this as a mandate to make sure that everyone else is doing good. This scripture is not discussing getting everyone else right. It is discussing getting ourselves right. In other words, if we "know" that we ought to wear tassels, refrain from eating at a restaurant on the Sabbath, wear suits to church, or one of a myriad of differences we see in the Church, then we ought to be doing those things. What is not said is that we ought to be setting others on our path!

"Well, why not? Aren't we supposed to teach? What about the Ethiopian eunuch?" Indeed, we are supposed to be "apt

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to teach.” However, let’s not take the scripture out of context. Here’s what is said: 2Ti 2:24-26 “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Space prohibits a complete analysis of that scripture, but, within the context of this article, we should notice that the apt teacher should not be a striver, someone who wants to argue! We should note that any instruction we give ought to be done in meekness, that is, in a gentle spirit just as one would teach a little child.

The Christ summed up this attitude for us. Joh 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” We are not known to be His disciples by our correct doctrines or argument style. Everything we do with one another and, by extension, the world, ought to be done in love for one another.

Beyond this, in the scripture in 2Ti 2:24-26 the discussion is related to instructing those who “oppose themselves” and are in the “snare of the devil.” This scripture was never written to use our own particular dogma or difference to create a separation between ourselves and our other brethren. It was merely written to show how to help those who have slipped.

What we need to realize is that God is capable of discerning our hearts just as well as everyone else’s hearts. Notice this in Heb 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

We should understand that God, who is a discerner of our thoughts, knows whether or not we have the doctrine right. He knows whether or not our brethren have the doctrine perfectly right. And, as previously shown, it is the Spirit that leads us into all truth—not the arguments we have, however well worded and finely crafted they might be! We ought not to be trying to do the work reserved for the Spirit, except as God leads them to ask us a question about those things. As well, those asking questions should be doing so with sincerity, not to create an argument!

For too long we brethren in the Church, not all of us but way too many of us, have felt, and acted, like our own brand of Christianity is the only right way and everyone else must be headed down the wrong path toward Satan. We then have taken it on ourselves to “correct” those “errors,” not realizing that we have one huge error that needs addressing. We need to love one another first and foremost.

There are many “styles” of worship in the Church of God. Some like to dance and shout. Some are more reserved. For instance, during the recent BSA conference, we were able to attend a local messianic type of service. There was much dancing and singing. It was uplifting, but it isn’t my cup of tea. Does that make their “style” worse than ours? Or better? It does neither. It is just different!

God desires each of us to look into His Word and to allow the Spirit to lead us. Men can be sincere, with good intentions, but wrong. Therefore, let’s look into His Word and, instead of finding our differences troubling, see them as God does—different flavors from the same wonderful Body of Christ. After all, the eye is not the hand, or the foot, is it?

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How to Understand Prophecy
by BibleStudy.org (Farmington, Michigan)

What is Biblical Prophecy? How can we understand it?

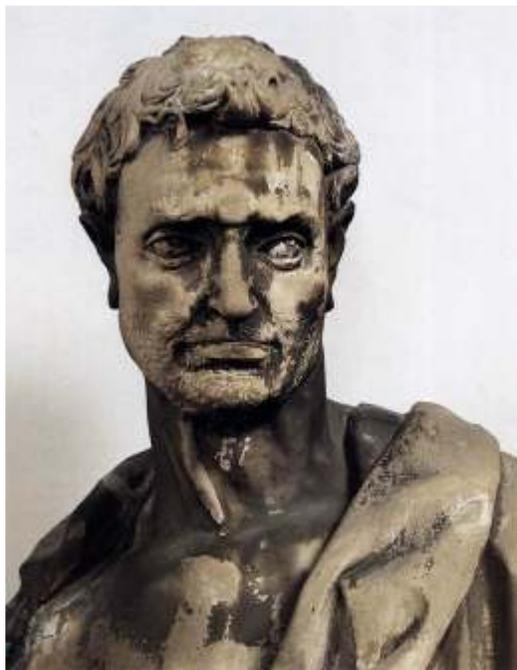
Simply put, prophecy is history foretold before it happens. God uses it to reveal events to occur in the future and to warn

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man to repent and change his ways. The Bible is the only book ever written that can demonstrate its supernatural inspiration through prophecy. Our Creator not only can predict the future, he also has the power to cause his predictions to occur in every detail!

Fulfilled Biblical prophecy is a major proof of God's existence. They attest to his authority and power to influence the course of events on planet earth.

Originally, one of the three main sections of the Old Testament was called the Prophets (see Luke 24:44). This division had six books total representing the prophecy writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, plus the twelve minor prophets (so-called because their prophecies are shorter). Manuscripts written by Joshua and Samuel are also in this section.



Jeremiah the Prophet
Donatello, 1423 - 26

This article explains several concepts and keys critical to understanding the roughly two-thirds of the Bible that is related to prophecy.

Duality

Many prophecies are dual in nature. Dual prophecy consists of pronouncements that have both a smaller and much larger fulfillment (known also as type and anti-type).

One of the greatest examples of duality in prophecy is the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Jesus then discusses false saviors and false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, global conflict, famines, pestilences, etc. culminating with the beginning of the Great Tribulation period (Matthew 24:21). All these events ultimately lead to the resurrection from the dead of all the saints and the second coming of Christ. After his prophetic outline Jesus states that "this generation" will not die until after all things take place (verse 34).

How are we to understand Jesus' prophecy statement in Matthew 24:34? Did the generation who heard him utter his prophecies experience what he predicted? The concept of duality helps explain his predictions.

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The generation who heard Jesus speak did experience a type or smaller fulfillment of the events yet to occur in the End Time. Forty years after Jesus' death in 30 A.D., the total destruction of Jerusalem and its temple took place.

The Jewish historian Josephus writes that the city suffered a protracted siege by the Romans (known as the First Jewish-Roman War). During the siege, the Empire cut off access to Jerusalem, causing it to endure severe famine and starvation. The Romans crucified anyone found escaping, with the victims of such torture put on a hill and made to face the city as they suffered.

When Jerusalem's walls were finally breached in 70 A.D., the city was sacked then burned to the ground. Survivors of the war became Roman slaves. According to Josephus, the war cost the Jews the loss of more than one million people.

Biblical Symbolism

Often, the Bible uses symbols to express thoughts and ideas. For example, water (John 3:5, Ephesians 5:26, 1 John 5:6, etc.), fire (Acts 2:3, 1 Peter 1:7), and wind (John 3:8, Acts 2:2) are used to represent God's Holy spirit.

Sometimes the explanation of a symbol, especially when it comes to prophecy, is found in a verse close to where it appears. For example, in Revelation 1 Jesus tells us that the 7 stars in his hand represent 7 angels and 7 golden lampstands symbolize 7 churches (Revelation 1:19 - 20). Many other symbols are also in the Bible.

Time Sequence

The Bible sometimes gives us certain keys for understanding the time sequence of prophecy, such as a day can equal a year in prophetic time.

You will suffer the consequences of your sin for forty years, one year for each of the forty days you spent exploring the land (Numbers 14:34).

Another example is God telling Ezekiel to portray Jerusalem on a tile. He was to depict, like a child, a walled city with armies going against it, etc. He was then told to lie on his side for a certain number of days, with each day representing a year of punishment.

"Lie also on your left side . . . According to the number of the days that you lie on it (your side), you shall bear their iniquity. For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days" (Ezekiel 4:4 - 5)

Yet another example of time sequence or duration of a prophecy can be found in Revelation 13. Here we find the duration of the persecution of the beast and false prophet is "forty and two months" (Revelation 13:5). Yet, in Revelation 12, the same period is referred to by a number of days (Revelation 12:6).

Using the prophecy key that a day stands for a year in fulfillment, we can come to understand that there was a period of 1,260 years during the Middle Ages when true believers experienced persecution. It also tells us a prophetic year consists of three hundred and sixty days of thirty-day months!

Categories of prophecy

Placing prophecy in proper categories can help minimize confusion when studying the Bible. Some of the major and minor prophetic categories are below.

- Prophecies concerning Israel as a united nation
- Prophecies about the House of Israel (sometimes referred to as the lost tribes of Israel) or Judah
- Individual Israelite tribes (e.g., the tribe of Dan)
- Individual nations or peoples
- Prophecies regarding individuals, their descendants or both
- Prophecy involving God's elect
- Punishment, protection, and rewards foretold (e.g., Jonah telling Nineveh it will fall due to its sins)
- Prophecy revolving around the End Time

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- The return of Jesus, his rule and upcoming Kingdom
- The resurrections of the dead

The tribes of Israel

The context of a given prophecy is important, especially how it relates to Israel. The Israelites are at the center of God's plan to redeem all men. When studying prophecies concerning the time just before the return of Christ, it is important to note that references to Judah or its house primarily refers to the Jewish nation of Israel which has people from the tribes of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin.

Balance is key

Prophecy is important because it is a major proof of God's existence and shows that his plan of salvation is on schedule. An obsession with trying to understand it, however, such as trying to pin down a date for Jesus' return, can easily lead a person into doctrinal error or to following false prophets (Ephesians 4:14). True Christianity is far more than the knowledge of what will happen in the future.

In the end, if we do not have love, no matter how much we understand the intricacies of Bible prophecy, we have gained nothing (see 1 Corinthians 13)!

The Festival of Atonement
by B. L. Cocherell (Nevada)

The Day of Atonement is the fifth annual festival, and is probably one of the most complex, mysterious, and misunderstood of the festivals celebrated in ancient Israel. However, God has preserved the knowledge and understanding of his plan of salvation in all of the annual Festivals which he revealed to the Israelites after he brought them out of Egypt. In order to fully understand the meaning of the fifth festival, it is important to begin by understanding that Israel's physical deliverance from Egypt was prophetic of being freed from the bondage of sin and its death penalty through the atoning blood of Christ's sacrifice.

Delivered for a Purpose

The Creator God brought the Israelites out of Egypt because he had a job for them to do and a purpose for their existence as a nation. In order to help ensure their success in what he had planned for them, he needed to dwell among them and guide them. In order to dwell among them, he had to protect them from the power of his spirit-presence.

God Dwells with Israel

The dwelling of God with his people was one of the major reasons for the celebration of the Day of Atonement.

In his instructions to Moses, God said that the Israelites should build a sanctuary for him because he was going to dwell among them:

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex.25:8 KJV). See also Deut.23:10-14.

Because God was going to dwell among the Israelites, there were certain things he required them to do in order for him to be able to continue to dwell among them.

God Is Holy

God is a spirit-being from the spirit dimension of existence, and there are certain laws which govern his ability to interact with the physical dimension of existence when he is in his spirit-form.

From what is said in the biblical record pertaining to the Day of Atonement, it is apparent that one of these laws concerns the protection of the physical world from the energy of God's spirit-presence:

"And you shall be holy to me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that you should be mine" (Lev. 20:26 KJV). See also 1 Pet.1:13-16.

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"For I am the Lord your God: you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall you defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. For I am the Lord that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev.11:44-45 KJV).

"And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev.19:1-2 KJV).

God is a holy righteous being whose very nature and being requires that all things that come into close contact with him be of the same quality of existence. The death of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu is an example of what happens when there is a violation of the strict laws concerning the interaction between the physical and spiritual realms.

Any deviation or violation of these laws is defined as sin, which is in opposition to the nature and being of God. Therefore, anything or person which is not in harmony with these laws or does not exhibit a holy and righteous nature cannot interact with God in his spirit-presence without being destroyed unless God himself protects or shields the physical thing or person from the power of his spirit-presence.

This process of being protected or shielded from the power of God's spirit-presence and the transformation of humans into spirit-beings are two of the awesome lessons taught through the Day of Atonement.

Israel to Worship God

God gave Israel a worship system through which they could remain in a redeemed (physically justified) condition.

The sin offerings were a type of grace through which God set aside the penalty for their sins and covered or removed their physical defilement, which allowed them to come into his presence and commune with him. See Lev.4:27-31.

Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest went behind the veil to make an atonement for the whole nation of Israel. It is through the Day of Atonement rituals that Israel was reconciled with God, and it is through this festivals prophetic and symbolic meaning that those who have an agreement with the Father during the gospel age of salvation can find great comfort, assurance, and hope.

Exactly What is the Meaning of This Day?

The central theme of the Day of Atonement (past and present) concerns the process by which sin is removed from God's chosen people in order for God to be able to dwell in his spirit-presence among and within them. The following are the central concepts contained in this festival:

- Under the terms and conditions of the agreement with ancient Israel, the Creator God, who later became Jesus Christ, personally dwelled among the Israelites through the power and presence of his spirit.
- Under the terms and conditions of the agreement with the elect of God, both God the Father and Jesus Christ personally dwell within the elect of God through the power of the holy spirit.
- The Day of Atonement under the old agreement with Israel detailed the process by which the nation of Israel could be physically and spiritually reconciled to God once a year in order for him to continue dwelling among them.
- The process by which Israel was reconciled to God and through which they maintained their contact and communication with him was also prophetic and symbolic of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ through whom access with God the Father is gained and maintained.
- The Day of Atonement pictures the removal of all sin and the reconciliation between God and man through the forfeiture of an innocent life as a substitute for the life of the one who is guilty of violating God's law.

Why Is Atonement Necessary?

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa.59:1-2 KJV).

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to record that sin separates a person from fellowship with God. It is because of this separation that God devised a method by which this barrier (sin) between him and his people could be removed. The

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removal of this barrier makes it possible for there to be communication and fellowship between God and humans.

The scriptures clearly show that, when the spirit-presence of God comes into contact with impurity, the impurity is destroyed. Therefore, the Israelites were given very strict rules as to how to perform the necessary rituals to remove physical contamination in order to be protected from destruction while being in close contact with God's spirit-presence.

Through a sacrificial system and the rituals of purification, God is able to alter, transform, or shield people and things from the power of his spirit-presence in order to dwell or commune with them in his spirit-form.

The Word 'Atonement'

The English word *atonement* is not a translation of the Hebrew word *kippurim* or *kippur* nor does it mean *at-one-with*, as some assume. The word *atonement* is only an interpretation of the Hebrew word *kippurim* and it is a purely theological concept, which refers to the process by which physical defilement (impurity) and physical or spiritual sin is covered or set aside.

The English phrase *Day of Atonement* is the Hebrew phrase *yom kippurim* or *yom kippur*. *Yom* means *day* and *kippurim* comes from the root phrase that basically means *to cover up*. It may also mean *expiation*, which is defined as the extinguishing of guilt by the suffering of a penalty. *Kippurim* encompasses the means by which a person who is estranged from God is placed back into harmony with him and the result of being in harmony with him.

Atonement is Both Method and Result

Therefore, the conceptual meaning of atonement (*kippurim*) contains both the method by which something is done and the result of doing it. When an atonement was made through the sacrificial system (the method), the breach between God and man was healed (i.e., the result of sin was removed). God and man were then in harmony (the result). Therefore, the sacrifice of animals as an atonement for sin was required to restore and maintain the relationship between God and man.

Physical And Spiritual Sin

It is important to understand that the word 'kippurim' and its cognate verb forms are applied to the purging away of ceremonial and physical defilement, as well as setting aside the penalty of physical and spiritual offenses.

Often, when reading scriptures concerning sacrifices for sin, it is difficult to determine whether it is physical or spiritual defilement (i.e., sin) which is being addressed. There is a great distinction made in the sacrificial system between those things that were done in order to cover or remove ceremonial and physical defilement and those which were done to set aside the penalty for physical and spiritual defilement.

However, the purpose of atonement was the same for each type of sin, whether physical or spiritual. The goal was to keep the tabernacle or temple and the Israelites in a pure and sinless condition in order for God to dwell among them and commune with them:

"You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so that they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them" (Lev.15:31 Para.).

Black Citizens of America

by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

"Their Past History"

The following information comes from a number of sources, but for those that would like to have an overview of what I am reporting, they can look up a book written by J.N. Andrews, and L.R. Conrad. Titled: "Early Christianity in Africa".

Consider this one quote from their writing. "Africa received the light of the Gospel in the first century of the Christian Church." Other sources show that this "light" came as a result of the Levite Barnabas and his nephew Mark taking the Gospel message to Ethiopia, just after Paul and Barnabas had parted company for a while.

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We have an Old Testament witness of a close relationship of the Ethiopians with the Jewish religion. This was when the "Ethiopians" helped Jeremiah, when the latter had been thrown into an empty water pit. As well, we have a New Testament witness that shows Philip going with the Gospel message to an "Ethiopian Eunuch", whom was on his way home after attending Jewish services in Jerusalem. Notice the influence this Ethiopian Eunuch had in Ethiopia. "A man of Ethiopia. An eunuch of great authority under Candace...Who had charge of her treasure and had come to Jerusalem to worship." Acts 8:26+

Another report states that at the end of the first century AD, the Ethiopians (now Christians) received the new Canon directly from the hands of "Mark". Known also as John. It would have been this John Mark that wrote the book of John, and the three letters of John. This Canon was exactly the same as the New Testament books we have today. With the exception of the book of Revelation, which was not a part of said Canon. I won't cover it here, but it is Scripturally and historically supported that it was John the Baptist that wrote Revelation.

But back to the story line. Christianity in Black Africa. It seems that the Ethiopian Church carried the Gospel message to the rest of Black Africa. Which ran all the way through central Africa. Not only were they Christians per se, but they were Sabbath observing Christians. And, like the early Pilgrims in America, they were "deists". Keep this "deist" comment in mind for later in this report.

The above was the way Africa was up until the c.1100's AD. This was the time when the militant minded Islamists came from Arabia. When we read "militant minded Islamists", think Amalekites. Or today's terrorists and their forced converted allies. These Islamists began to force the black Christians to either choose Islam or choose death. It seems that most of the Christian blacks chose death. Though some changed to Islam, and today are the terrorists of Africa.

However, there came a time that said Islamists needed money to continue to function. So, they began to set aside the most likely blacks, and "sold them as slaves" to the eastern countries. Arabia, India, and further east. There is some evidence that pockets of these "Sabbath" observers still exist in some areas of south Asia.

The warfare against black Christians continued westward. Then came the time when European interests began to settle in the islands of the Caribbean. Their purpose was to grow food for their European peoples. But they needed labor. So, they began to buy black servants from the Islamist forces that needed the money. In a sense, by purchasing said blacks from Africa, many blacks were saved alive. Had they not been sold, they would likely have been killed, or forced to become terrorists themselves.

Actually, said blacks likely would have been much better off if there wasn't a major problem. One which is likely, how the "servant blacks" became known of as "slaves". Said major problem being the following.

The blacks were, as mentioned earlier, "Sabbath observing Christians, and deists". However, their owners from Europe were "Sunday observing Christians, and trists".

In conclusion. It would seem obvious that most of the problems that came about in the US, was not so much one of differing colors, but rather of differing "days of worship", the Sabbath or Sunday, and the number of those that were worshipped. Two or three.

Another Fine Old Mess!

by John Jewell (London, England)

Do you remember the Laurel and Hardy films or movies of years ago? Every now and again one will pop up on television. One of the catchphrases used by Oliver Hardy was "this is another fine old mess you've got me into." It's a phrase that with a slight adaptation would fit the way the world is right now. Re-stated it looks like this "regarding the planet what a fine old mess we've got ourselves into!"

I've also just been listening to a discussion on BBC World Service's "One Planet" series. The three contributors made some good points highlighting the fact that our economic and environmental systems are just not working. They are based on wrong principles. One comment made was "we are living beyond our means regarding the environment. Our capital is about to run out."

The emphasis especially by the United Kingdom and the United States has been on constant growth. Everything is dedicated to the increase of the GDP or the Gross Domestic Product with a total disregard as to whether or not the environment can sustain that approach. We forget that everything we use comes from the environment. We ignore the fact that we cannot, and should not, use resources faster than the planet can regenerate them.

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We cannot, and should not, produce pollution faster than the environment can absorb it. The European nations have a better understanding of this than either the UK or the US. Today, we are the two nations that face the worst troubles and consequences of our profligacy.

The reality is that everything is either coming from, or returning to, the earth, to the planet to be regenerated. What is needed is a steady state system worldwide, where we balance what we extract with what we put back. But just how is that to be achieved given the attitudes and direction of China and India to name but two. They now want to have things, to have "stuff", just like the western nations, mainly the US and the UK - the planet cannot sustain this.

China and India are both disaster areas. Even if those, and other, nations would agree to restraint it is absolutely certain that the United States would not. And Britain would not. We therefore face a catastrophic situation. It is finally being accepted by the world at large that the basic reason for climate change is mankind's own actions. But do you see any changes being seriously suggested.

Mr. John McCain in his bid for the presidency said he would do nothing to damage the standard of living of the Texas farmers. President Bush said many times he would do nothing that would harm the oil companies or prevent the American citizen from driving his car. It was their right. By the way, does anyone yet know what Mr. Obama would bring to the presidency. He speaks of "change" - but what change?

The color of the presidential skin? I don't think so. Changing what? Change for better? In what way? Change for the worse? Probably! That's the track record of the politician of today's US and UK. Mr. Obama is asking the American elector to sign the biggest blank cheque in the history of the world.

There was a speech recently given by Mr. Obama. In it he outlined a need to do something about the millions of Americans who have lost their homes because of the "credit crunch" and the many others who are faced with loss of jobs and a subsequent inability to make the mortgage payments. Many thousands of Americans now live on the streets as a direct result of the greed and incompetence of others.

Following Mr. Obama's speech one young lady was interviewed. She said how wonderful it was that Mr. Obama, if he became president, would take care of her mortgage payments, and would cover the big rise in the cost of food. Mr. Obama has now become president and has still to outline a program for the United States. He has now to walk on eggshells! It is no wonder he has never voiced a definite program. Predictably, he not only got a huge endorsement from the lower paid level of the people, but a number from the right-wing section of society voted for him as well. Presumably because he wasn't George Bush! Mr. Obama has now to be very careful what he does, that is if he is not to be a one term president! He has to satisfy the needs, desires and aspirations of the lower classes who are mainly Democrat and at the same time not offend the right wing or Republican. And there are many in the U.S. who feel he is too socialist in outlook. These two almost irreconcilable pressures are going to prevent Mr. Obama being as effective as he might like to be in foreign affairs.

He has publicly said how he wants to bring American troops out of Iraq; however the time frame is rather longer than the American citizen might like. He is talking about some time in 2010. He says that he wants to see more troops, and more troops from the EU, in Afghanistan. The penny has still not dropped after all the time fighting in Afghanistan that the situation there is impossible. Perhaps the British approach was always the best and that was to pay the farmers well to produce cocaine. It could then be brought back to Britain and then either converted into morphine for medical use or destroyed.

This would have built an opinion locally against the Taliban. History is otherwise against any resolving of the problem of Afghanistan. Mr. Obama is also the victim of his background - he is American born, just! He was born in Hawaii 47 years ago. Hawaii is not exactly mainland America. It has no rednecks such as inhabit Georgia and Texas, the average Hawaii citizen is Polynesian, somewhat similar in color to Mr. Obama. And the way of life is totally different. All these things in addition to his Kenyan background, his father is now dead, but he has many family members still living in Kenya. However, Mr. Obama, somehow and no one knows exactly how, went to college and then to the Harvard School of Law. These are both expensive. However, they will have been instrumental in giving him the ability to move within the American political system.

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
December 11, 2021 --- Issue No. 45

The late president, John F. Kennedy, presented policies that were similar to some of what we know of Mr. Obama. Policies that were regarded as socialist. He wanted, as Mr. Obama does, to shift income from the highly paid to the lower paid. His assassination in Texas was hardly surprising. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for the murder but was himself shot in public by Jack Ruby. The rumors of a conspiracy to murder JFK have never gone away to this day.

The U.S. is still a "gun-society" -- we have been many times to the States and have spent a lot of time in Georgia. To see a pick-up drive by with a gun rack clearly seen through its rear window is nothing unusual! To then, however, be warned never to catch the eye of the driver of a pick-up was a bit un-nerving! The same is true in Texas.

So is the election of Mr. Obama with his subsequent coronation in January to bring about a genuine new society driven by the brotherhood of Man? I fear not! It is more likely to see even more alarming pressures and situations arise. The problems of this planet are beyond the wit of any one person to solve, even if he is a brilliant, new president loved by everyone, perhaps that should be almost everyone! We wish Mr. Obama well, we hope he survives this first term without too much harm to either himself, the nation or the planet, and then quietly retires, while he still can, and provided the world has not already entered into its final meltdown.

There is yet another penny to be dropped! It still seems that most people really do not believe that the planet does face imminent destruction. Well, to be more accurate, the very large ball that is planet earth isn't necessarily going to be destroyed at this point. But that is what is fast approaching everything living on the surface.

Shortage of food is a huge problem. A number of nations from the Caribbean right across the Atlantic, Africa and the Indian Ocean to Indonesia are experiencing food riots. For so many people just the basic food is becoming impossible to buy so high has the price now gone. Prices of wheat, rice and maize, basic food for multiple millions of people across two thirds of the globe have nearly doubled in just under a year with the price of rice reaching record levels. Add to this severe drought, devastating floods, more and more frequent earthquakes and violent storms and life becomes impossible. Throw in to this witches' brew of Macbeth, violence, with genocide a main ingredient and it is apparent that for all these millions they do face extinction.

Yet, what was, in the 1960s, called the Population Bomb has not gone away. It was recognized at that time that there are limits to the number of people the planet can support. The population is rapidly approaching 7 billion and within about 12 more years can be reasonably estimated to reach 8 billion. With the rapidly increasing advance of deserts alone, it will become less and less possible to feed even the number we have now. This will of itself create pressures which will only be relieved by war and violence that will threaten the survival of mankind.

Food shortages will also generate disease. Another consequence of the "population bomb" exploding is the question of where are the increased numbers to live. What work are they to do? These are huge problems which are not going away. And is this a problem just for the third world? No! New EU rules concerning agriculture could well considerably reduce agricultural production in Britain. There is no way Britain can feed its present population let alone the 70 million that the British socialist government apparently wants it to go to.

And have you noticed that we have heard very, very little recently about another problem that threatens life in Britain? But it hasn't gone away. This year the weather in Britain has been very wet, windy, and generally cold. It has been accompanied by a number of floods. The weather pattern being described as worst in living memory, or worst since records began.

I've remarked how we aren't going to see global warming in Britain, its going to be global cooling for us. We rely on the Gulf Stream for our moderate weather and as long as it continues to flow at the right, constant rate we continue to be blessed with that weather which has given us a very productive land. We've checked reports from the National Oceanography Centre regarding it and note that three years ago there was a report that the Gulf Stream warm water flow has weakened by 30% in just 12 years. In May 2005 it was noted that the sinking of the cooled water in the Greenland Sea has weakened to less than a quarter of its former strength. A few weeks ago, someone we know well stayed with us, he is a leading scientist at one of the world's most renowned oceanographic stations and I said to him "we could see the Gulf Stream suddenly stopping" His reply was "you could say that!"

So, who is to save the planet and everyone on it! Will it be Mr. Obama? The UN? The British Labor Party with Gordon

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Brown? The bible tells us clearly that if this human life was all that there is we have nothing to look forward to. The bible shows us a wonderful future reality which brings real hope. But we, you, and I, have to see it, embrace it. Turn to God and to Jesus Christ now while we still can.

Other Items

Chocolate Torte (Unleavened Recipe)

Sent by Rich Daniels (Shawano, Wisconsin)

Bottom Layer = Crust

1/2 cup or 1 stick of butter

1 cup Flour

1 Cup Pecans

Mix. Put in oven at 350 degrees till light brown

Let Cool

Second Layer

1 Package 8 oz. Creme Cheese

1 Cup sugar

1/2 container of 9 oz. Cool Whip

Mix. Put on crust.

Third Layer

1 Package Chocolate Pudding = Instant

1 Package Vanilla Pudding = Instant

3 cups of Milk

Mix and spread

Last Layer

Top off with rest of Cool Whip.

Holy Days 2022

Passover – April 16, 2022 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Unleavened Bread – April 16-22, 2022

Pentecost – June 5, 2022

Trumpets - September 26, 2022

Atonement – October 5, 2022

Tabernacles – October 10-16, 2022

Last Great Day – October 17, 2022

Have a Really Great Sabbath