

What Kind of "Captivity?"

by Steven M. Collins (Sioux Falls, South Dakota)

Many Christian denominations have an understanding of prophecy which expects a time of great trauma during the "latter days" of this current age prior to the return of Jesus Christ. The terms "Great Tribulation" and "Jacob's Trouble" have been applied by some to this prophesied time of trouble. In some of the churches of God, there has long been an expectation that this time of trouble would include some kind of "captivity" for God's people in the latter days of this age.

Even today, some Christians still believe that the modern nations of the tribes of Israel will be "taken" *(Continued on page 8)*

Born to Die

by Clyde Ferrell, Jr. (Mount Calm, Texas)

I was visiting a nursing and rehab center and while talking to one of the residents I asked her how she was doing. She said, she was just born to die. You know that is a fact of life that we all face at one time or another. It is a sobering thought that death is no respecter of persons and it can strike at any time to any age, no matter how rich, or how poor, how pretty or how ugly. It just happens.

Some time ago I was faced with death and the possibilities of it. In preparing the sermon for my step-mom's funeral it was quite a contrast to the last funeral I officiated. *(Continued on page 13)*

How to Stop Abuse Within The Churches of God

Both The Brethren

And The Ministry Are At Fault

by Richard Markland (Lebanon, Ohio)

(c) 2006 By Richard Markland

Many of the brethren or ministers reading this have been a member of God's way of life for decades.

The reason we are fragmented, and don't have a clue, is because we are loyal to a certain group *(Continued on page 14)*

Let the women keep silent in the churches--

What did Paul Mean?

by Dianne D. McDonnell (Arlington, Texas)

The apostle Paul wrote letters to churches to mediate in the problems of each church and set guidelines for them to follow. Many believe that Paul set up a rule that all Christian women must "keep silent" during church services. Some extend this to mean that women may not offer prayers, lead songs, read scriptures aloud or have any leadership role during or after *(Continued on page 15)*

"Homer Kizer's Trash in Pictures Rather than Words"

by Michael R. Zaeske (Kalamazoo, Michigan)

Homer Kizer is one of the most interesting characters I have ever met. I use the word "character" on purpose because I can not think of a more descriptive word to convey the way in which I think about him without stating something degrading or offensive.

For those not familiar with the name, I suggest that you do a Google search, or the equivalent, on the internet, using the key words "homer kizer" in quotes. If you do, you will discover that there are numerous examples that demonstrate *(Continued on page 18)*

True Christians Prefer TRUTH Over Tradition

by David Ben-Ariel (Toledo, Ohio)

If anybody is honestly interested in knowing whether or not this or that doctrine is actually biblical or merely traditional, all they have to do is objectively *search the Scriptures* like the noble Bereans did in Acts 17:11, after hearing Paul out, to see whether what he taught was true.

Examples:

The Church of God teaches, like *(Continued on page 19)*

Sometimes They Come Back

An Investigative look into the Assyrian
invasion and deportation of the
Ten Tribes of Israel -- Part #2

by Cam Rea (Kendallville, Indiana)

Event Horizon!:

When the Assyrians marched down the coast, it's most likely that the second wave of invasion waited for some time, before it began its march from the north advancing inland as described in (II Kings 15:29). This second wave of attack that Tiglath-pileser III sent, was the tip of the sword. While the *(Continued on page 4)*

Discipleship and Stewardship

A Cure for Doctrinal Chaos
and Organizational Disunity -- Part #7
by B. L. Cocherell (San Jose, California)

SUMMARY COMMENTS

A Student and Steward of Truth

Being a student and steward of the Father's truth and way of truth is not an optional commitment within the Father's earthly family and holy nation; being a student and steward is mandatory.

When you become a part of the Father's earthly family, you automatically become a student and *(Continued on page 3)*

LETTERS SECTION

the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net

Isaiah 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

Ezekiel 33:8-9 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (expose) them.

1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

("No Women?" continued from Issue #41)

No Women? (12-17-06)

by Ray Daly (Lincoln, North Dakota)

Dianne McDonnell continues:

Now that we've seen a correct translation and a misleading one; let's look at what is in the Greek. Here is a transliteration (which is Greek words written with our alphabet) for 1 Cor 12:7-- Hekástoo dé didotai hee fanéroosis tou Pneúmatos prós to sumféron.

The first word is "Hekástoo" which is the dative case of hekastos (hek'-as-tos), Strong's number 1538. This word means, "each or every" according to Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.

The Greek word for male is "aner" as we see in Mark 10:2 "...for a man to divorce his wife." You will note that "aner" (Strong's 435) is not present in 1 Cor 12:7, because both men AND women receive a Spiritual Gift from God which they are to use for the good of the entire church. Now, 1 Cor 12:11: All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to **each one**, just as he determines. (New International Version)

Only God can decide which Spiritual Gift goes to which person! None of the gifts are labeled as "male only" gifts! We find more about Spiritual Gifts in the rest of 1Cor. 12, Romans 12, Hebrews 2:4, and 1Tim. 4:13-14.

I'm sorry that you couldn't find hekastos in your concordances as it is a very common Greek word used in over eighty NT scriptures. I suggest you invest in P.C. Study Bible by Biblesoft, which has many Bibles and numerous reference books available. You will find it much more complete and much easier to use when researching Biblical truth.

As for Exodus 23:17, Our loving God does not demand that every woman attend

the Feasts that involve travel because He knows, having designed female bodies, how it can be difficult for women to travel during the last weeks of pregnancy. Having had to miss a Feast for that reason, I know how hard it is to have to stay home while others are enjoying God's wonderful Feast of Tabernacles. God does not order a woman to risk her baby's life for He is a merciful God.

Darwin & Laura Lee write:

In regard to Exodus 23:17, it is true that there may be cases where either a male or a female is not able to travel to one of God's Holy Day Feasts, whether it be due to pregnancy or some other illness or injury. We also missed a Feast one year. It was in 1999 when Darwin broke his leg (femur bone) and was in the hospital from September 14, 1999 to November 4, 1999.

What a person has to look at in the case of this verse is what does the rest of the Bible say? God did have all the Israelites traveling in the hot desert for 40 years and they had many children through those 40 years. Mary and Joseph were traveling at the time that Christ was born, for Christ was born in a town in which he did not live. On the other hand, some woman who are pregnant have been ordered to complete bed rest at some point during their pregnancy, a famous case in point would be that of Julia Roberts when she was carrying twins. Also we must look at Leviticus 23 where we are all commanded to

LETTERS
SECTION
CONTINUES
ON PAGE
19

The Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God

Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502

darwin-laura@earthlink.net
the-bible-talk-forums@earthlink.net
the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net

The Church of God Messenger is published in January, March, May, July, September and November.

Change of Address: Send change of address notices to Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502 or use the form at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/data/05-17-06.htm>

New Subscriptions & Renewals: Send new subscription & renewal notices to Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502 or use the form at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/data/05-17-06.htm>

To Unsubscribe: Use the form at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/data/05-16-06.htm> or go to:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/mailman/listinfo>

Price: Web Links, Works Files and PDF Files of this newsletter are free. Hard copies are by subscription price as follows: United States, \$12.84, Canada \$13.86, and all other countries \$22.20. All paid subscriptions listed here are for 1 year which would be 6 Issues. To give a gift subscription to someone who can't afford to pay the subscription price send to: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502 or use Pay Pal on our Web Site at:
<http://www.darwinlauralee.com>

To Submit Items for Print: Send to: the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net or Mail to: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502

The Church of God Messenger is an interdependent publication. All newsletters may be copied and given to others as long as they are copied in their entirety. You may obtain a PDF copy of any of our newsletters by emailing us at: the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net or by downloading it from our Web Site at:
<http://www.darwinlauralee.com>

Publisher: Darwin & Laura Lee

Editor: Laura Lee

Assistant Editor: Darwin Lee

Contributors: Christopher Abiazem, David Ben-Ariel, Jeffrey Caldwell, B. L. Cocherell, Steven M. Collins, Ray Daly, Wily Elder, Apolonio S. Federico, Clyde Ferrell, Jr., Robert Goldman, Richard Heath, Sandy Kile, P. F. Lazor, Darwin Lee, Laura Lee, Julius Lenkume, Richard Markland, Dianne D. McDonnell, Cam Rea, Michael R. Zaeske

Web Site: Laura Lee,
<http://www.darwinlauralee.com>

Shopping Mall OnLine: Laura Lee Enterprises
DBA Jewelry by Laura
<http://www.shopping-mall-online.biz>

("Discipleship and..." continued from page 1)

steward of truth and are to participate in a lifelong process of learning, practicing, and perfecting the concepts and principles of this truth under the tutelage of Christ and through the teaching and guidance of the holy spirit dwelling within you.

Moreover, as you begin to mature spiritually, you must begin to assume the functions and responsibilities that you have been called to perform as a member of the Father's family. It is at this point that the educational process and the practice of being a profitable steward within the Father's family has mostly broken down during this age of the church.

Since the demise of the early church, the teachings of Christ and the apostles concerning stewardship have been watered down and have given way to many of the teachings of counterfeit Christianity. Because of this, most of the spiritual leaders among the elect have assumed many of the functions and responsibilities that clearly belong to each individual member of the Father's family. The removal of these functions and responsibilities from their rightful owners has robbed many family members not only of opportunities to grow spiritually but also of potential opportunities to serve the Father, their fellow king-priests, and of the potential rewards for this service.

For most of the Father's family, the lack of understanding true discipleship and the lack of performance of true stewardship has existed for many centuries. Although the solution to this problem is simple, few are willing to implement it for various reasons that are in opposition to the letter and spirit of the Father's truth and way of truth. The reality is that, the solution will not be implemented throughout the Father's entire Family; however, it can be implemented and exercised on a personal level in the minds, hearts, and actions of those who truly understand their responsibility to be a willing and dedicated student and steward of the Father's truth and way of truth.

ACTIVE STEWARDSHIP

Because your performance as a steward within the Father's family will determine your eternal destiny, it is important to again state the following:

- The basic function of a steward is to care for another person's affairs or possessions with which the steward is entrusted.
- Under the stewardship of Christ, the Father has entrusted his children with stewardship over his truth and way of truth, which they are to learn and practice to the best of their

ability while administering their individual skills, talents, gifts of the spirit, and functions and responsibilities within his family as king-priests. See 1 Pet. 4:1-11.

- A steward within the Father's family is a student of the Father's truth, his way of truth, and his rules of conduct for his earthly family and is responsible for practicing and perfecting what is being learned. See Eph. 4:11-16.

Functions and Responsibilities

There are clearly functions and responsibilities of stewardship that belong to those in official positions of service within the Father's family, such as the ministry, teachers, prophets, and individuals assigned to assist widows. However, these individuals are not the only ones within the Father's family who are obligated to be stewards. Stewardship is a function and a responsibility assigned to each member of the Father's family. This is noted in many of Christ's parables and the teachings of the apostles.

The question is not whether or not all members in the Father's family of earthly king-priest are stewards, because all members are stewards. The question is what are the specific functions and responsibilities of a steward within the Father's family? In order to answer this question a person must diligently search and study the scriptures to know and understand these functions and responsibilities and their application within the family.

Clearly in order to perform certain stewardship functions and responsibilities, a person must be an active participant in a local congregation of the elect. However, the performance of many functions and responsibilities of stewardship within the Father's family do not require being a member of a local congregation.

The following is a short list of some of the many stewardship functions and responsibilities that apply to each member within the Father's earthly family of king-priests:

Active Stewardship

- Administration of your natural skills, talents, and spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:1-16; 1 Cor. 14:12)
- Function as an active team member within the Father's family (Eph. 4:16)
- Love for each family member (Rom. 12:9-10; 1 Pet. 1:22, 4:7-8; 1 Jn. 4:21)
- Understand your opportunity of salvation (2 Cor. 5:9-10; Phil. 2:12)
- Be a righteous example to the ungodly (Matt. 5:14-16; Eph. 5:8; 2

Pet. 1:19)

- Be responsible for your discipleship (2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 3:14; Rom. 14:11-12)
- Be responsible for your spirit and spiritual growth (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:18)
- Work out your salvation (Phil. 2:12; 1 Thes. 5:21)
- Take responsibility for the conduct and teaching of your children (1 Tim. 3:4,12; Prov. 22:6)
- Serve family members (Gal. 5:13-14)
- Practice God's law (1 Jn. 2:4; 3:24, 5:3)
- Preserve knowledge and understanding of the truth (Heb. 4:14, 10:23; Rev. 2:25, 3:3)
- Submit to authority (1 Pet. 3:1; Heb. 13:17; Titus 3:1)
- Share and be hospitable (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9)
- Visit the sick and remain pure (Jms. 1:27)

Problem Resolution

It is obvious from the many problems within the various congregations of the Father's family that few see the benefit or the urgency in handling ministerial, interpersonal, or collective problems in accordance with the Judicial system set forth by Christ and the apostles. However, problem resolution is an important function and responsibility of each member of the Father's family.

The cure for problems within the Father's family is amazingly simple--the cure is adhering to the Father's rules of conduct for his family members. However, few are willing to implement the cure because of peer pressure, a misguided sense of loyalty or duty, or the fear of loss of friends, fellowship, or position in the church. All of these are the wrong reasons for not carrying out one's stewardship concerning problem solving within the Father's family.

Rebuke, conflict resolution, or punishment of an errant Family member are mostly unpleasant experiences; nonetheless, these are functions and responsibilities of each steward in the Father's family. When problem resolution is administered correctly, it yields the fruit of righteousness.

Priestly Functions Within the Father's Family

- Help resolve personal problems (Gal. 6:1-2)
- Intercede to the Father on behalf of all family members (Eph. 6:18; Jms. 5:16)
- Intercede to the Father on behalf of an errant family member (1 Jn.

5:14-17; Jms. 5:16)

- Reprimand and forgive (Lk. 17:3-4)
- Practice the sacrifice of ministerial support (Phil. 4:16-18)
- Practice the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15-16)
- Serve and sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2)

DUE DILIGENCE AS A STEWARD

Your basic responsibility as a steward is to manage everything that the Father has given into your care, whether physical possessions, skills, personal skills, talents, and gifts of the spirit, or a position of service within his family.

Each steward is required to use what they have been given in order to increase their personal worth to the Father and accomplish something of value for him to claim as his own when they give an account of their life's work. See Matt. 25:14-30; 2 Cor. 5:10.

A person who is serious about their salvation will make an effort to become educated in the various aspects of stewardship within the Father's family, and then actively perform the functions and responsibilities that apply to them to the best of their ability.

SUMMARY

Although discipleship and stewardship are different in execution, one is dependent on the other because neither can fulfill the purpose for which it was designed without the other. Moreover, both discipleship and stewardship must be performed simultaneously in order for one to be a viable and productive member of the Father's family.

Discipleship is learning the Father's truth and way of truth and stewardship is practicing what one has learned. Discipleship and stewardship within the Father's family is to be a cooperative effort, not a competition to see who can obtain the highest position of honor and prominence within the family. Discipleship and stewardship should be performed to help build the family into a more spiritually mature entity in order to perform the work for which it was established.

The importance of discipleship and stewardship goes to the very core of one's relationship with God the Father, his son our Savior, one's brothers and sisters in the faith, and the work of the church. Clearly, if you are serious about your eternal destiny, you should pay careful attention to the many instructions concerning your discipleship and stewardship within the Father's family. The writer to the Hebrews said the following concerning the awesome opportunity offered to those called to salvation during this age: *"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make your*

enemies your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him [i.e., Christ]..." (Heb. 1:13-14; 2:1-3 KJV).

The Decision Is Yours

The decision of whether or not to become a willing, dedicated, responsible, and teachable student of truth and a faithful steward of the skills, talents, gifts of the spirit, and functions and responsibilities with which you have been entrusted belongs to you alone.

You must decide what to do with the awesome opportunity to become an immortal spirit-being within the Father's family and kingdom, because our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will not decide for you. Each individual can either quit, stand still, or go forward in their relationship with the Sovereign Father and their Savior. This decision is ours alone. Whether we succeed or fail is entirely our responsibility. Our eternal destiny is totally in our control. Regarding each individual's responsibility to choose, the Creator God told ancient Israel in Deuteronomy 30:15-16: *"See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess."*

The Creator God gave ancient Israel an opportunity of life or death, just as the Sovereign Father is giving the opportunity of life and death to those he calls to salvation during this age. This is why Paul said the following to the elect at Philippi: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure"* (Phil. 2:12-13 KJV). See also 1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 6:3-10.

The instruction to *"work out your own salvation"* means that you must manage your life in such a way that it conforms to God's laws, precepts, and principles. To do this, you must expend a sincere and diligent effort to learn the Father's truth and way of truth and diligently practice it within your life. Only

when you sincerely seek to learn, understand, and live according to the Father's laws, precepts, and principles and respect, love, obey, and please him, can he work his will and purpose in your life.

Whether or not you are fortunate enough to have fellowship with other members of the Father's family, it is your responsibility to contribute to the success of his earthly family of king-priests through being educated in his truth and way of truth and being the best steward within his family that you can be.

The Father and his son, our Savior, have committed themselves and their tremendous resources to helping us succeed and obtain the goal of salvation. In order to succeed, all one has to do is put forth an honest effort. See Matt. 6:25-34; Heb. 13:5-6; Jn. 14:12-14; Rom. 14:11-12; Phil. 2:12.

Because God the Father and Jesus Christ want us to succeed, they have given us a manual for success--the Bible. All we have to do is study that manual, take to heart what is recorded in it, and diligently apply what is learned in our life. If we do this, success is guaranteed.

Read the entire article at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/a2006-036-01.htm>

*****THE END*******

("Sometimes They..." continued from page 1)

coastal invasion was pushing south, we can speculate that parts of the army turned inland from the coast pushing somewhat east, and flanking the population in, while the larger northern army began its descent south into the tribal lands of Dan and Naphtali and beyond. Now Tiglath-pileser III makes mention of conquering Naphtali, and his conquest of the coast in his inscription.

*** on the border of the Land of Omri [viz. Israel] ... the wide land of Naphtali in its entirety, I brought within the border of Assyria. My official (tartan) I set over them as governor. Hanno of Gaza fled before my weapons. [16]

This inscription shows two different events at the same time. Notice that Tiglath-pileser III mentions of taking Naphtali in its entirety, and that he brought them into Assyria. Now notice what he has to say at the end. Hanno of Gaza fled before my weapons. What this inscription may indicate is that Tiglath-pileser's army had just completed the take over of Naphtali, while at the same time completing the final phase of conquering Gaza which was a Philistine city! This inscription seems to show us that prior to taking Naphtali, Tiglath-pileser's army had

been conquering the coastal regions of the Levant till it reached the border of Egypt. Now read (II Kings 15:29).

In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.

This verse which describes all of Naphtali taken into captivity matches Tiglathpileser's inscription. We also notice the cities of Ijon, Abelbethmaachah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. Everyone of these cities that are described in II Kings 15:29 have been unearthed in the last century, and show the signs of the Assyrian destruction and deportation of the people. But what else is interesting is that archeology has found many cities destroyed by Tiglath-pileser's Assyrian army. Below is a list of the cities associated with each tribe that were effected by Tiglath-pileser's invasion.

that he invaded both lower Galilee and Beth Nethopha valley, and it says he took into exile 13,200 people. This is the only shred of evidence that deals with a number.[18] In the end Tiglath-pileser III took many back with him. In his inscription he says,

The Land of Omri ***
all its people together with their goods I carried off to Assyria.

Pekah, their king they deposed, and I placed Hoshea over them as king. 10 talents of gold, 10 talents of silver, as their tribute I received from them, and to Assyria I carried them.

The land of Omri is Israel. As for taking all the people back with their goods is an exaggeration. I would say since a remnant was left behind to continue on because Tiglath-Pileser describes that the elders of the remaining tribes murdered Pekah. Tiglath-pileser makes mention of placing Hoshea on the throne. Which may indicate that Hoshea was an inside man for Assyria,

already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.

Notice what verse 13 says in (II Chronicles 28:12-13). This verse may be the key as to why we don't hear of any known battle, or even battles. The heads of Ephraim already knew of their sin, and knew of the coming destruction. It would be futile to fight God's wrath, or even add to it. Therefore, we could speculate, that the majority of Israel finally understood the Prophets that were sent in the past, and in the present like Oded, but now it was to late, it was time to pay for their sins. This is not to say that no small battles ever occurred. We can be sure that there were minor engagements at times among the people of Israel against the Assyrians, it's only human nature to fight when it comes to protecting ones family and goods, but there is no known full fledged battle or battles that ever occurred [20].

Even though the Bible speaks silently on the Issue Tiglath-pileser III mentions the Israelite forces in his military annuals: carried off [to] Assyria the land of Bit-Humria (Israel). [...its] 'auxiliary [army], [...] all of its people.

From this small fragment inscription Tiglath-pileser III not only tells us that he deported a large amount of Israel's people, but he also took the Israelite army and incorporated them into the Assyrian army as auxiliaries.[21]

Naphtali	Ephraim	Manasseh	Dan	Asher	Gad	Zebulon
Ijon	Janoah	Beth-shean	Dan	Rehob	Jabesh	Yokneam
Abel-Beth-maachah		Tel-Hadar	Tel Aviv			
Hazor		Megiddo				
Cinnereth		Jezreel				
Bethsaida		Taannach				
Kedesh		Dor				
		En Gev				
		Tel Qashish				

The cities above in the list that are highlighted are cities that were destroyed and never rebuilt, with the exception of Megiddo which the Assyrians would later reoccupy, and set up as the capital of the newly conquered region.

A man by the name Z. Gal conducted a survey of the region and concluded from his research the entire northern part of the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed. It appears as if lower Galilee was significantly deserted and its inhabitants exiled. The events of 733/2 BCE provide a tragic landmark in the history of the Israelite settlement in Galilee, whatever had not been destroyed by the wars was removed and laid waste by the exiles, and the region was not occupied during the 7th-6th centuries BCE! [17] From what archeology has found to the survey conducted, we can speculate that a majority went into exile. As for how many were taken, we don't know. For we don't have all of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions. Most of Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions concerning Israel are destroyed, or one tablet may read clearly, while the bottom half of the tablet is mutilated leaving us unfulfilled. There is only one tablet that has a number of how many were taken during Tiglath-pileser's invasion. It records

and possibly offering a great amount of money for the throne. Also we read that 10 talents of silver, and 10 talents of gold was to be the tribute which was most likely a first time payment till next year. [19]

No Battles?

Before we go any further some questions need to be asked. In the books of II Kings and II Chronicles, as well as what Tiglath-pileser's inscriptions say. We do not find any passages referring to any battle that may have taken place between Israel and Assyria. This makes one wonder if the Israelite army depleted itself of man power during the battle with Judah in II Chronicles 28:6. Or maybe there is another reason as to why we don't read of any battle taking place between the forces of Tiglath-pileser III, and Pekah of Israel, and we might know why?

Lets look at II Chronicles 28:12-13 (12) Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war, (13) and said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD

Hoshea, the last King of Israel:

This was the beginning of a nine year rule for King Hoshea in (II Kings 17:1). Hoshea had to pay a tribute to Tiglath-pileser III for putting him on the throne, and making the Kingdom of Israel vassals to Assyria again. Now when Tiglath-pileser III died around 727 B.C., we can speculate that Hoshea probably stopped paying the annual tribute, and because of this Hoshea would be visited again, by the new King of Assyria Shalmaneser V. Shalmaneser V would extract tribute from him as well (II Kings 17:3). What could be said about (II Kings 17:3) is that King Shalmaneser V, or an Assyrian official, was paying a visit not only to Israel at the time, but paying a visit to all the vassals of Assyria. By showing up with the Army, Shalmaneser V was making sure that to all who swore allegiance in the past, to continue on honoring that allegiance to Assyria. It might also be possible to say that Shalmaneser V was just making his rounds collecting gifts because he's the new King in town. This would not last long, for we read in (II Kings 17:4) that Hoshea stopped paying tribute, and pulled his support for the mighty Assyria, and looked else where for

protection, or even possibly to start up a new anti-Assyrian coalition. Either way both are plausible. King Hoshea would look to Egypt, and it's King So for that protection. This King So has been a matter of debate for sometime, and we're not going to get into who he possibly was. Now because of this treason to King Shalmaneser V, the Kingdom of Israel would be invaded again. King Shalmaneser V would besiege Samaria the capital of Israel for three years, but some say he died shortly before or after the fall of Samaria. In either case the event is recorded in II Kings 17:5-6. But there are two inscriptions by Sargon II where he takes full credit for the capture of Samaria, and the deporting of the cities population back to Assyria.[22] The first inscription is more about his military campaigns through out his rule, and is found on a prism known as MS 2368: BIT-HABAN, PARSHUMASH, MANNAEA, URARTU; THE HEROIC MAN WHO DEFEATED HUMBANIGASH, KING OF ELAM; WHO MADE THE EXTENSIVE BIT-HUMRIYA (HOUSE OF OMRI) TOTTER, THE DEFEAT OF MUSRU IN RAPIHU; BOUND TO ASHUR, WHO CONQUERED THE TAMUDI; WHO CAUGHT THE IONIANS IN THE SEA LIKE A BIRD-CATCHER; ALSO BIT-BURTASHA, KIAKKI AND AMRISH, THEIR RULERS; WHO DROVE AWAY MIT (MIDAS), KING OF MUSHKU; WHO PLUNDERED HAMATH AND CARCHEMISH; GREAT HAND CONQUERED, THE DEVASTATOR OF URARTU, MUSASIR; THE URARTIANS BY THE TERROR OF HIS WEAPONS, KILLED BY HIS OWN HANDS; WHO DESTROYED THE PEOPLES OF HARHAR, WHO GATHERED THE MANNAEANS, ELLIPI; WHO CHANGED THE ABODE OF PQA, LALLUKNU; WHO FLAYED THE SKIN OF ASHUR-L I, THEIR GOVERNOR; WHO IMPOSED THE YOKE OF ASHUR ON SHURD» FROM MELIDU, HIS ROYAL CITY; THE FEARSOME ONSLAUGHT, WHO HAD NO FEAR OF BATTLE,[23]

As you can read in this inscription the Kingdom of Israel is known as Bit-Humriya. Now the second inscription is one most of us are familiar with. At the beginning of my royal rule, I ___ the town of the Samaritans I besieged, conquered. ___ for the god ___ who let me achieve this my triumph ___ I led away as prisoners 27,290 inhabitants of it and equipped from among them soldiers to man 50 chariots of my royal corps ___ [24]

When one reads the inscription what many failed to notice, or maybe understand, is that it took three years to capture the city, because it was heavily defended. I highly doubt that many were women and children. After the city finally fell we notice something different in the inscription. 27,290 inhabitants were lead away as prisoners. Not a one was

killed. Sargon II wasn't known for his cruel treatment of captured cities when compared to King Asherbanipal II of Assyria. Also we can speculate that many more Israelites in the region were taken, and it seems that many may have fled into Judea at the time. Archaeological evidence shows that Jerusalem expanded 3 to 4 times its original size by the end of the 8th century BCE.[25] Now what is interesting is that Sargon II equipped the captured chariots with the people he captured from Samaria. 100 men would be the requirement for the 50 chariots. The remaining 27,190 most likely became an auxiliary unit for the Assyrian army. Also I want to mention that the same inscription above is found on the Nimrud Prism, and it says that Sargon II captured 200 chariots, and equipped them with the captured men.[26] But what is most interesting is Stephanie Dalley points out in her article that the Assyrian tablets mention that Sargon II allowed the Israelite charioteers to retain their identity! This Israelite chariot unit was the only foreign unit to keep it's name in Assyria's main Royal army. Sargon II must have respected them very much to give them such a position. [27] Below is what is left from the chariot list that bares the names of the Israelites that Sargon II captured, and incorporated into his Royal Army. This list is provided by Bob Becking in his book called **"The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study"**.

16 lb-ba-da-la-a	Da-la-PAP
17 Ja-u-ga-a	A-tam-ru
18 PAP?-id-ri	Ab-di-mil-ku
19 EN-BAD	Na-ar-me-na-a
20 Gab-bi-e	Sa-ma?-a
21 PAPid-ri Ba-hi-e	
22 PAP-i-u Ba-hi-e	
23 SU pdPA.U.GIN-in85	

The Samaritan cohort according to line 23 under the control of Nebu-bel-u-kin, can be seen as the remnant of the chariot brigades captured by Sargon II. According to the editors all personal names in this fragment are Westsemitic. This view must be modified.[28] What is interesting in this list is the name Sama. It's speculated that Sama was from Samaria, an Israelite who was the commander of teams for the royal Assyrian army, and had significant influence with the Sargonid family.[29] This was the last conquest by Assyria into Israel. The kingdom had now vanished. It was a gradual conquering of the Ten Tribes of Israel starting around 734 BCE, and would last till about 720 BCE. Many of Reuben, Gad, Naphtali, Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Ephraim, and some Levities, were the first to go along with their families and clans, (II Kings 15:29) and by 721 or 720 B.C. the rest of what was left of the tribes, had been taken into a land not of their own along with their

King Hoshea, (II Kings 17: 4,18) leaving only Judah behind (II Kings 17:18).[30]

Deportation and Relocation:

With the devastation of many cities, and provinces associated with the Northern Kingdom. Many people, and royalty, as in the case of Beerah prince of the Reubenites (I Chronicles 5:6), were taken back to Assyria for the relocation program Assyria set up with all those whom they conquered for the most part. What is interesting is that the Israelite royalty would be taken to live at the royal court. Tiglath-pileser III makes mention of this when he first invaded Israel during Pekah's rule, and also this would happen to King Hosea as well [31]. Also it seems that Tiglath-pileser's wife was of Hebrew origin, her name was Yaba. There was also Atalia the wife of Sargon II.[32] Tiglath-pileser III also took Damascus during the invasion of Israel, and slew King Rezin in the process. The Syrian people from Damascus were taken captive, and sent to Kir (II Kings 16:9). Once Gilead was taken, Tiglath-pileser III sent his Assyrian forces further south into the lands of Amon, Edom, and Moab, and making them his vassals. What must be understood is that Assyria was surrounding Judah. With the coast conquered, and the nations bordering Judah on the east, west, and south sides were all now paying tribute to Assyria. Judah was now surrounded by it's enemies, even if the enemies are vassals like Judah. It would be just a matter of time till another war came. Now for the Israelites that were taken captive, it would be a long march to their new home, and most likely taking the King's Highway which leads strait into the heart of Assyria. From there they would be assigned and sent to their new locations. Now lets take a look at 1Ch 5:26. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

The first wave of captives as we read went to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river Gozan. Now read II Kings 17:6. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Once again we see the same familiar names as before. Halah, Habor and by the river of Gozan. But now we read of them being placed in the cities of the Medes. Now read II Kings 18:10-11. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 And the

king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

Once again we see the same names as described in II Kings 17:6 with the term Medes added. But where are these places that the Bible describes? Lets start with Halah. According to the Talmud Halah is known as Holwan or Holman. This Holwan is found in the Zagros Mountains, which is east of the Tigris River. In later Assyrian writings it was referred to as Yasubi and Yasubgalli. Now what makes these two terms interesting is Yasubi means Joseph, while Yasubgalli means Exiles of Joseph. Also we find Sabatus River, or Sabbath River, which refers to the Lower Zab River that is near the city of Gomara, which was the Scythian capital of Sakkiz till the Scythians migrated to southern Russia. East of Halah/Holman and the river Sabatus, you will come upon two groups before you reach the city of Ecbatana which was a Median city. These two groups were called Sagartii and Syromedia. The Sagarti were known as Asakarti by Media-Persia. The Asakarti according to Jewish legend was the Tribe of Issachar.[33] While the term Syromedia means those that have been exiled from Syria and placed in Media. What is interesting is that the word Syrian means Arami in the Semitic language. In ancient times the word Syrians were included in the former Kingdom of Israel according to Ptolemy. Now lets take a look at the name Gozan.[34] The Gozan river seems to be the Ouzan river which is southwest of the Caspian Sea. The Ouzan is also known as Gouzan by the locals. Ptolemy refers to this river as the Cyrus River with the city of Gauzania on its banks. In the Talmud it's known by the name of Ginzak on the banks of the Gozan. Around the Gozan river region lived the Cadussi. The Cadussi were a Scythian group that were akin to the Sakae. This Cadussi group called themselves according to Pliny, Gaeli. This name Gaeli could have two meanings. The first could mean they were from Galilee, while it also could be derived from the Hebrew word Goleh, which can mean exile or it can mean to wander. But before we go on, we need to address the other Gozan River. This other river Gozan is called Gauzanitus by Ptolemy. This river Gozan is found east of the Euphrates River, and flows south till it eventually ends up connecting with the Khabur River. This Khabur River is also connected to the Euphrates. Now if you follow the Khabur River to the north you will come upon the city of Nisibis. The city of Nisibis is found in the region of Hadayb-Adiabene which according to the Talmud is the place of Habor also pronounced as Khabor where the exiles were placed.[35]

Now the term Medes that is added in seems to indicate where they could be found. Since Habor, Halah, and the river Gouzan, with the possibility of the Gozan River are found in Median territory. The only place on this list that may not be Median is Hara since it's further to the east, and is located on the border of what is today Iran and Afghanistan. In ancient times Hara was in the region of Magan and Meluhha who were vassals to Assyria, and were around the Bactrian and Indus valley regions.[36] We can speculate that once the deported Israelites were settled down, it's most likely that the Israelite's would adopt the customs and ways of their new Median nomadic neighbors.

Who were the Medes?

The Medes were a nomadic group that lived in what is today the country of Iran, and also in the north western region of the Caucasus. They basically lived around the Caspian Sea region. Their origin is also very obscure. The Medes were known for their horsemanship in combat, and were also known for breeding horses in and around the Zargos mountain ranges.[37] The Median warrior would wear a felt hat turban. He would wear metal scale body armor that overlapped each row and was sewn into the leather or felt garment, and they also wore long sleeve tunics. The Median warrior also used a very large bow, and an assortment of daggers and no sword. Even though the Median warrior sounds heavy, he was much lighter and quicker than his Assyrian counterparts. This is one of the reasons why the Assyrians wanted the Medes in their army.[38] Since we discussed the locations of the Israelites and also who are the Medes. The next question or questions is how would the Assyrians treat the deported Israelites? What rights would the Israelite captives have? Could the Israelites move freely around? All these questions above and many more as well will be answered. So lets get started.

Settling in:

There are many accounts of the Assyrian King giving instruction as how to treat and provide for the refugees. The refugees would be fed along the journey, and treated by physicians to keep hygiene up, and to keep disease out. They would be given footwear if needed, and the women and children were provided carts for the long tract. Families were not divided as some think. The Assyrians wanted to keep the families and communities together, as well as their national identity. Assyria was not a melting pot of nations like here in the United States. The Assyrian's wanted to preserve the identity of the deportees for social and military strength, and to lessen the possible

acts of rebellion.[39] Once the refugees made it into the Assyrian homeland they were sent to deportee camps, before being sent to the region assigned to them. Kind of a debriefing center we could say. Peoples of the four quarters, of strange tongues and different speech, dwelling in mountains and plains. I took as spoil at the word of Ashur my lord. I made of them one purpose, I made them take up abode therein [i.e., inside Dur-Sharrukin]. I sent natives of Assyria, competent in everything, as overseers and supervisors, to instruct them in custom and to serve the gods and the king. ---Sargon II [40]

Now after the Assyrians settled the captives in the region assigned to them, the Assyrian monarch would make them feel welcomed and comfortable. This was done to keep any attempt of rebellion down, but also the Assyrian monarch took the role as spokesman for the god's, and it was his duty to accept all nations, and to keep the peace within the Assyrian Empire. Now many deportees like the Israelites were settled next to more aggressive deportees in order to keep the peace. Think about it. If a rebellious group kept causing trouble, the best way to counter it, is to bring a new group in that has been showered with the monarch's favor. The Medes for instance are a good example of not favoring the Assyrians all to well. This is the likely reason as to why the Israelites were settled in the cities and territories of the Medes. Most of the rebellious deportees despised the new arrivals thinking their working for the Assyrians to spy on them. In a way this could be true. Since the Israelites would be shown favorable treatment, they would likely be inclined to tell the Assyrian administrator in the province if anything suspicious was going on. But we also have to remember that it works the other way around as well. We could say both groups watched each other, but kept at least one of their eye's on the Assyrians.[41] Once settled in, the Israelites would begin the task of rebuilding. Deportees would be given a settlement that had been either previously destroyed by the Assyrians, or had never been destroyed at all. They would have begun by rebuilding the homes that have been mostly destroyed, or building new homes. Also they would have new fields to plough, and many children to raise. Also many were given the task of doing public works, some were artisans, others were scribes and the list goes on. It was life as usual once settled in. We can say that nothing really changed for the Israelites, other than the new location. [42] To give a good example would be Fort Sargon. Fort Sargon was built mostly by Israelites. Here is the tablet that makes mention of its construction around 714 BCE: Concerning

what the king, my lord, wrote to me: 'Provide all the Samaritans in your hands with work in Dur-Sarrukin', I subsequently sent your word to the sheiks, saying: 'collect your carpenters and potters; let them come and direct the deportees who are in Dur-Sarrukin'.[43]

Slavery:

Were the deported Israelites made slaves? The answer is no. The practice of slavery in Assyria was not common for deportees or prisoners of war. Once the deportees were settled into the region given to them, they were free to go about their business. They were also not treated as lowlifes as some would believe. There are also countless examples of the land being farmed by freemen, and not by slaves. The auxiliary units in the Assyrian army were freemen as well. Also there is no proof that the Assyrians ever put deportees into a life of slavery.[44]

Could the Israelites Bear Arms?

The answer is a shocking yes! The Israelite deportees also had the military advantage given to them by the Assyrians. We also have to keep in mind, that as the Assyrian Empire continued to grow, the native population of Assyria became so small to support the needs of their army, as well as to govern the regions of the empire due to its expanding size. This is where all the deportees come in.[45] Sargon II may have been the first Assyrian king to allow deportees to hold high administrative positions, and by allowing deportees into highest levels of government, it would allow them the power to dictate, and to administer to their people as well. The same could be applied to the Israelite deportees, like Hilkiyahu, a general in the Assyrian army under Sargon II, who was given the same rank as Sargon's brother, and made the seventh most important man in Assyria.[46] Now the reason Sargon II promoted this practice was to unite the people of Assyria into one people, but in turn it made the native Assyrians a minority. It was from Tiglath-pileser III that the practice of using deportees as auxiliary units in the Assyrian army, as well as homeland protection came from. This would become the norm, but Sargon II expanded it even bigger than before. These deportees were given the task to garrison their province or region with their own men, as well as provide troops to garrison the strategic areas within the empire, or to provide extra troops for war if needed. But their main role was to keep the peace within the confines of the empire as armed tribal auxiliaries. Sargon II was also the first king to provide Iron weapons, armor, and helmets to his army and auxiliaries. We also have to remember that many of the deportees had

their own specialty of combat they could contribute, and they were not forbidden to train in the art of war, but to expand in the knowledge of war, and to add to it. War was business in ancient Assyria [47]

-
- [16]Caiger, Bible and Spade, Ch 12
[17]Stern, Archeology of the land of the Bible Vol II, P. 46-48, 237
[18]Stern, Archeology of the land of the Bible volume II, p. 43
[19]Caiger, Bible and Spade, Ch 12
[20]King James Bible
[21]Chavalas, Younger, Jr, Mesopotamia and the Bible, p. 294
[22]King James Bible
[23]<http://www.schoyencollection.com/assyria/nhist.htm>
[24]King James Bible/ Luckenbill, The Records of Assyria, Vol. II, par 4.
[25]Armstrong, "Jerusalem One City, Three Faiths", p. 68
[26]Becking, The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological study, p. 42
[27]Dalley, Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the armies of Tiglathpileser-iii and Sargon-ii, Iraq, vol.xlvii, 1985, London, p.35
[28]Becking, The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological study, p. 75
[29]Chavalas, Younger, Jr, Mesopotamia and the Bible, p. 297
[30]King James Bible/ Gabriel, The Great Captains of Antiquity, p. 62
[31]Dalley, The Legacy of Mesopotamia, p. 62
[32]Chavalas, Younger, Jr, Mesopotamia and the Bible, p. 297
[33]Davidiy, The Tribes, p. 79
[34]Davidiy, The Tribes, p. 114
[35]Davidiy, The Tribes, p. 79-83
[36]Davidiy, The Tribes, p. 77
[37]Cameron, History of Early Iran, p. 171
[38]Boutell & Lacombe, Arms and Armour in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, p. 51
[39]Oded, Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, p. 23-25, 35-36
[40]Gabriel, The Great Captains of Antiquity, p. 61
[41]Yalichev, Mercenaries of the ancient world, p. 72-73
[42]Gabriel, The Great Captains of Antiquity, p. 58
[43]Chavalas, Younger, Jr, Mesopotamia and the Bible, p. 298
[44]Saggs, The Might that was Assyria, p. 134-135
[45]Gabriel, The Great Armies of Antiquity, p. 127
[46]Dalley, Foreign Chariotry and Cavalry in the armies of Tiglathpileser-iii and Sargon-ii, Iraq, vol.xlvii, 1985, London, p. 31
[47]Gabriel, The Great Captains of Antiquity, p. 63/ Davidiy, Origin, p. 29
-

Read the entire article at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/a2007-041-03.htm>

****to be continued in Issue #43****

("What Kind of..." continued from page 1)

captive" by a Nazi-like "beast" power which will arise in Europe. The Worldwide Church of God once taught that concept, but its teaching failed in 1972, and in the 34 years since that date, nothing has happened which indicates such an event will ever occur. Some Christian denominations still expect that a "beast" power is likely to emerge in Europe. However, many secular observers have noted the dramatic weakening of Europe on the world stage. Europe has largely disarmed and is under dire demographic threat from the millions of radicalized Moslems living in its midst. Indeed, the term "Eurabia" has been coined to describe the ongoing invasion of Europe by Moslem immigrants. Europe is a target ripe for attack, not a candidate to "carry captive" any other nations.

Is any "captivity" going to occur in the latter days ahead of us just prior to the return of Christ? Given the grim warnings of many prophecies about severe hard times before the end of this age, such a possibility must be considered. This article would like to point out that biblical "captivities" come in more than one form. By focusing only on the extreme captivity which ancient Assyria imposed on the kingdom of Israel circa 721 BC (i.e. a military invasion with forced relocation of Israel's conquered people to other regions), modern Christians overlook a much more common form of biblical "captivity."

This article will examine the biblical record of an alternate kind of captivity which repeatedly befell ancient Israel, and which could be happening again today not only to the modern nations of the tribes of Israel, but also to the entire world. The author of this article assumes that most readers are familiar with historical research indicating the USA, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, and prominent European nations were primarily founded by descendants of the migrating ten tribes of Israel. Evidence confirming that these western nations were founded by the migrating descendants of the ten tribes of Israel is found in the author's books which can be previewed at: www.bibleblessings.net.

Captivities in the Book of Judges:

After the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the book of Judges details a series of alternating periods of good years

(when the Israelites obeyed God) and bad years (when they disobeyed God). It is often overlooked that the good years far outnumbered the bad years in the book of Judges. Many decades of prosperity and peace are briefly mentioned in single verses while many chapters are devoted to the events of a few unhappy years. Consider Judges 3:11, 3:30 and 5:31. These single verses briefly mention three periods of peaceful obedience and "rest" in the land which totaled 160 years! The three preceding periods of time in which the Israelites were "captive" to foreign oppressors lasted a total of only 46 years (Judges 3:8, 3:14 and 4:3).

As the reader can see, the good years far outnumbered the bad years during the first 206 years of the Israelites in the Promised Land. At no time in the book of Judges, even when God's "anger was hot" against the Israelites in their times of disobedience, did He ever allow the Israelites to be carried "captive" into a foreign land. Foreign oppressors afflicted the Israelites while *the Israelites remained in their own lands*. Only in the final captivities of Israel and Judah did God allow foreign armies to successfully invade Israel and Judah and remove their people from the Promised Land.

Overwhelmingly, biblical precedents show that when God is angry at his people for disobedience, he allows events to occur in which foreigners oppress the Israelites *while they remain in their own land*. Let's look at the examples of servitude which God repeatedly imposed on disobedient Israelites in the book of Judges, and consider whether that kind of event is even now coming to pass in the nations of modern Israel.

Judges 2:11-23 summarizes the repeated cycles of obedience and punishment which the Israelites experienced within the Promised Land. It says of the periods of punishment when God was angry with the Israelites, that he "delivered them into the hands of *spoilers* that *spoiled them* and he *sold them* into the hands of their enemies" (verse 14). Notice that God "*sold them*" into the hands of "*spoilers*" who seized control of the goods and properties of the Israelites. The term "sold" is an economic term which indicates these servitudes occurred via economic or commercial activity. A Bible Concordance will confirm that the English word "sold" is based on the Hebrew word "makar" which is often used in passages mentioning the buying and selling of merchandise, land and slaves.

The very first time God brought an economic "captivity" (or servitude) upon the Israelites in the Promised Land is described in Judges 3:5-10. The Israelites disobeyed God and he "*sold them* into the hand of...[the] king of Mesopotamia." Mesopotamia was a considerable distance

from where the Israelites lived. How could the Israelites come under the domination of the Mesopotamians via economic/commercial actions? A brief history lesson offers a very likely answer.

Babylon invents "Capitalism":

One of the leading cities of Mesopotamia was Babylon. Centuries before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the Babylonians invented the economic system called "capitalism." The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1943 Ed., Vol. 3, "History of Banks," p. 67) notes that the Babylonians had developed a banking system "as early as 2000 BC." The same article notes that the banking system began as an invention of the sun-god temples, and it states: "the temples of Babylon...were also the banks." This *Britannica* article cites a document from that period which mentions a person who had borrowed silver and that: "He will pay the sun-god's interest. At the time of the harvest he will pay back the sum and the interest upon it." Farmers were even then borrowing money from banks to plant their crops.

The same article states that "about 575 BC," there was "...an institution that has been compared to the Rothschilds of 19th century Europe—the Iqibi Bank of Babylon...the records of this bank show that it ...loaned on crops, attaching them in advance...loaned on signatures and on objects deposited, and received deposits on which it paid interest." We see in this account that modern banking practices had their origins with the sun-god temples of ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia. The description of Babylonian banking practices in the 6th century BC gives us an insight into Babylonian banking practices in previous centuries as well.

Biblical warnings about Usury:

When God led the Israelites out of Egypt into the Promised Land, He gave them repeated warnings about the dangers of usury (borrowing money or things with an interest premium). Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:35-37 and Deuteronomy 23:19-20 all forbid the practice of usury in God's Theocracy, although Israelites were allowed to lend money at interest to non-Israelites. God was so aware of the enslaving powers of debt that he mandated regular debt-relief programs in the years of release (Deuteronomy 15) and the Jubilee Year (Leviticus 25). These institutions were designed to prevent debt from overwhelming and enslaving the Israelite population. Centuries later, King Solomon warned about the inexorable enslaving power of debt when he wisely observed: "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7).

When ancient Israelites forsook

God, they embraced sun-worship idolatry which included the banking practices of the sun-god temples. Marketers at the sun-god temples likely had "easy incentives" to entice Israelites to take out loans to buy things which they could not afford to purchase on a cash basis. This practice stimulates the economy in the short-term, but it has severe long-term effects when borrowers fall on hard times and cannot repay their loans. Then as now, lenders were entitled to foreclose on collateral backing the loans when borrowers could not pay their loan obligations. Significantly, the very first period of Israelite servitude to a foreign power was to the Mesopotamians, the very group which invented the banking system and capitalism as part of their sun-god worship.

It is easy to see how the ancient Israelites gradually took on too much debt, and the Mesopotamian moneylenders in the sun-god temples legally foreclosed on the assets and properties of the Israelites in the Promised Land, resulting in a situation where Israelites were reduced to being serfs serving foreigners on the Israelites' former lands. When God's laws were not obeyed, there were no years of release or Jubilee Years to liquidate the debts or regain properties. The Israelites would "cry out to the Lord" for deliverance in these cycles of oppression, and God would send deliverers who would overthrow foreign domination and the people would then obey God for a time. Inevitably new generations arose which had not experienced the dangers of idolatry, borrowing money at the sun-god temples, etc., and the cycle of servitude would begin again.

Economic Captivities:

Notice how the book of Judges often describes the servitudes (or "captivities") of the Israelites in economic/commercial terms. In Judges 4:2, God later "sold" the Israelites into the hands of the Canaanites, and in Judges 10:7, God "sold" the Israelites into the hands of the Philistines and Ammonites. When the Israelites abandoned God's laws and served sun-god deities, they were "sold" into the hands of oppressors who ended up owning the goods and properties of the Israelites (Judges 2:14). Once we understand that the moneylenders were part of the sun-god temples, we can see how this economic oppression occurred repeatedly. As an aside, this also sheds new light on why Jesus Christ became so angry at the "moneychangers" who had taken up residence in the Temple of God (Matthew 21:12-13).

It appears that the ancient Israelites repeatedly lusted for short-term gratification and amassed debts too large to repay to the money-lenders at the sun-god temples. This

gave foreigners the legal right to gradually seize Israelite properties without having to invade Israel's territories with an army. As debt levels became unsustainable, foreigners would again own everything in the Israelites' lands and a new economic captivity was upon them. In none of the captivities mentioned in Judges did any foreign oppressor exile the Israelites to other lands. Why would they want to do that? It served their interests to retain the Israelites as oppressed "sharecroppers" or slaves, working the land they had formerly owned. Judges 6 shows Gideon was secretly threshing wheat to hide his harvest from Midianite overlords who would have seized it. The account of Judges 6:27-30 is consistent with a situation in which the Israelites had lost legal control of their land and crops, and Midianites were enforcing the consequences of foreclosure actions.

Secular historians have also noted the enslaving qualities of the Babylonian commercial system based on money lending and capitalism. Gwendolyn Leick's book, *The Babylonians*, states on pp. 88-89 that typical Babylonian interest rates were "20-33%," and adds the following about Babylonian business practices: "...they would squeeze from the primary producers as much return as possible...such 'capitalist' practices contributed...to the impoverishment of the farming population. More and more [producers] lost control over their means of production by having to sell their fields, boats, livestock and...enter into a serf-like dependency on their creditors." Leick adds that these money lending practices were "intimately linked to...temple institutions."

The recorded effects of Babylonian "capitalism" and money-lending led to the very kind of economic serfdom that the Bible records actually happened to the Israelites when they adopted the practices of sun-worshipping foreign nations. Interestingly, the ancient interest rates typically set by Babylonian bankers includes the range of interest rates charged on some modern credit cards. Let us now examine prophecies about "Babylon the Great" and the final "beast" system to gain some insights into what kind of "captivity" will befall the modern Israelite nations in the latter days.

Modern Capitalism and Its Risks:

Modern nations have forsaken God's laws to large degrees. While vestiges of God's laws remain in Western societies, economic and commercial practices have completely adopted the banking-based capitalism born in ancient Babylon. There are no "years of release" or "Jubilee Years," so people are going further into debt, gradually becoming economic serfs who scramble to pay their debt obligations. Millions of debtors

have lost assets in bankruptcy proceedings. Let's focus on events in modern America. The US government is so hopelessly in debt that it maintains an image of solvency only via a myriad of accounting tricks (putting much of the deficit "off budget," hiding the real costs of spending programs by placing their real costs in future budget years, hiding the real rate of inflation via "hedonic" CPI calculations, etc.). Many state and local governments, businesses and private citizens are also oppressed by huge debt obligations. A future economic crisis could result in a massive transfer of assets and properties from debtors to their creditors (as Proverbs 22:7 warns). When this happens, many millions of Americans will become virtual economic slaves (as did the ancient Israelites) as money-lenders seize people's homes and properties.

The debt owed by American governments, businesses and citizens is increasingly held by foreign creditors. Due to the shockingly-large debts run up by the US government in its budget and trade deficits, foreign lenders have hundreds of billions of excess dollars to "invest" (i.e. buy up assets and properties) in America. Many American businesses and properties are being bought up by foreign nations and businesses, and this "investment" of foreigners in America is actually a hidden form of foreclosure as ownership (and control) of American assets and properties is steadily transferred into foreign hands. When American port facilities were to be transferred to Arabs from Dubai, Congress had a brief spasm of protecting American interests by forbidding the sale. However, "borrowers are servants to lenders," so the Dubai Arabs instead quietly assumed ownership of \$1.2 billion worth of "manufacturing plants in the US that supply...parts to the Pentagon" (*Wall Street Journal*, "Dubai Firm's deal for Pentagon Supplier is Cleared," 4-29-06, p. A4). Because of the excessive borrowing practices of the American people and their governments, American assets will increasingly be transferred to foreign owners in the future. This trend is not a secret. Another *Wall Street Journal* article ("Economists worry about who holds US Debt" May 9, 2006, p. A8) examines the dangers of allowing foreigners so much control over the US economy. A book by CNN personality Lou Dobbs ("**Exporting America**") also examines this danger.

Because Congress is an elected body representing a nation of debtors, it is increasingly powerless to protect American interests. Consider Congress' threats to impose duties on Chinese goods which are greatly under-priced due to China's predatory monetary practices against the USA and the world. In an article in *The Week* magazine

("Should the US pressure China on trade?" May 5, 2006, p. 39), we find this observation: "...despite lots of tough talk, Congress will never retaliate with high tariffs, and China knows it. China could respond by cutting back on its purchases of US Treasuries, sending money markets into 'cardiac arrest.'" Because of America's "debtor-nation" status, China's President Hu came to America in 2006 as a creditor increasingly able to dictate terms to America. President Bush assumed the role of a debtor trying to put a happy face on increasingly strained Chinese-American relations. It was revealing that President Hu of China met with the corporate barons of Microsoft and Boeing before meeting President Bush (the Chinese President understood that multinational corporations are the real powers in Western societies and that the political leaders serve the interests of the multinational corporations).

Babylon the Great:

The Bible predicts that a "beast" power will arise in the latter days which will dominate "all kindreds, tongues and nations" (Revelation 13:1-7). Revelation 13:17 adds that this global power will dominate the world *via its ability to control "buying and selling."* In other words, prophecy indicates this powerful global entity will come to power via economic/commercial actions. This language reminds us of the many "captivities" which befell the Israelites in the book of Judges when they were "sold" into servitude to foreign nations with Babylonian banking/capitalist practices as part of their sun-worship system.

Revelation 18 reveals this end-time entity with power over "all nations" (verse 3) will be an alliance of the "*merchants of the earth*" (verses 3, 11 and 15) and the "*kings of the earth*" (verses 3 and 9). In other words, it will be an alliance of global, multinational corporations and the political leaders of many nations. It gives this end-time "beast" power a name: "Babylon the Great." This name indicates that this globally-dominant power in the end time will be dominated by the institutions invented in ancient Babylon. These institutions included capitalism, banking, etc. In the latter-days, the capitalistic system of ancient Babylon will grow "great" as it spreads its power over all nations. Has this already happened? Of course it has. The entire world is already dominated by global capitalism, and the enslaving power of debt is gradually bringing "all kindreds, tongues and nations" under its control.

Read Revelation 18's description of Babylon the Great. It enslaves men even as it markets all manner of merchandise to the world's nations. However, the leaders of both the "merchants of the earth" (verse 3) and

the governmental leaders (verse 9) are "waxed rich" as they live "deliciously." The leaders of global corporations are "waxed rich" in modern times as political leaders arrange global "free trade" agreements which allow the global corporations to become wealthy even as the people of the world are reduced to serfs. Consider the inexorable effects of free trade agreements: Many workers in China and undeveloped nations toil in sweat shops as virtual slaves, producing goods for the wealthier nations of Babylon the Great. Workers in developed nations are increasingly laid off from good jobs as manufacturing facilities are relocated to foreign nations. Much of America's industrial base has been effectively "stolen" by foreign nations as the "merchants of the earth" enrich themselves by making their products at slave labor wage rates in other nations instead of the normal wage rates in the Western world.

The current "hot button" issue of immigration is easily explained when one understands the prophecy of Revelation 18. The "merchants of the earth" want ever cheaper labor for jobs in the USA, and they benefit from millions of illegal immigrants pouring into the USA across the porous US-Mexican border. Because their workers are illegal, the mega-businesses of Babylon the Great can oppress them in low-paid jobs which act to pull down the wage scale all across the USA (further benefiting the global corporations). This does immense harm to America's security, economy and cultural integrity. States and local governments are financially overwhelmed by the costs of hosting a large class of illegals, drug smuggling abounds, etc. Does the US government have the right (and obligation) to secure its borders to stop this situation? Of course. But to the chagrin of many, the federal government refuses to enforce its own federal immigration laws and it drags its feet in order to prolong the status quo. Revelation 18 makes it easy to understand why this situation exists. The political leaders of the USA, who are drawn from the ranks of the large global corporations, are serving the interests of Babylon the Great by subordinating the interests of the nation and its citizens to the financial interest of the global corporations.

Christians do not need to look for some new "beast" power to arise in Europe. Revelation 18 reveals the end-time beast power will be Babylon the Great, an unholy alliance of the leaders of global corporations and national political leaders who shape economic and political matters to enrich themselves. It is here now. It is all around you. The Babylonian system of banking-based capitalism already dominates "all kindreds, tongues and nations." This reality

confirms the remarkable accuracy of biblical prophecy, confirming that the Divine Creator who inspired the Bible is able to direct world geopolitics to ensure his prophecies are fulfilled. That same Bible also prophesies that Babylon the Great will experience a complete collapse (or "fall") at the end of our age.

The Mark of the Beast:

If the "beast" system is none other than Babylon the Great, then it begs the question of "What is the mark of the Beast?" Since it involves "buying and selling" (Rev. 13:16-18), it clearly involves financial activity. While this article will not offer an authoritative answer to that question, it will try to motivate you to "think outside the box" about what it could be. Most Christian denominations often assume this "mark" will be some computer-read device which is implanted in your hand or forehead. Some people once thought it was bar-coded commercial products. Maybe such concepts will prove correct, but there are other alternatives.

Christians would be wise to heed an often-missed, but sober warning in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Christians commonly understand that the virgins are God's people at the end of the age, that the bridegroom who is about to return is Jesus Christ, and that the oil is symbolic of the spiritual condition of the saints. What is often overlooked is that NONE of them, regardless of their spiritual condition, realized that the return of the bridegroom was imminent. None of the "virgins" realized that the bridegroom's return was almost upon them until it was too late to change the nature of their spiritual condition. This parable warns us that the community of believers will NOT be expecting Christ's return when he arrives. How could this happen? It can happen because the believers misunderstand prophecy. This parable infers that as many prophecies are fulfilled in the world around them, believers will not recognize these fulfillments. They will be blinded by their own prophetic dogmas. Because they are awaiting and looking for events which will never happen, they are unable to see God's prophecies being fulfilled in a manner they did not expect. That message in this parable should make all of us humble enough to reexamine our prophetic dogmas and expectations.

Let's apply this lesson to the "mark of the beast." It clearly involves commerce as no one can "buy and sell" without this mark. However, the economic/political aspect of Babylon the Great will be joined to the religious aspect of Babylon the Great as a great religious deceiver will align himself with Babylon the Great and "do miracles" (Rev. 13:11-14). The Bible calls these two political

and religious leaders the beast and the false prophet. Eventually, this evil system will try to kill all of God's people (Rev. 13:15). However, when will that extreme position occur? Will it occur during the entire three and half years of the beast's final reign (Rev. 13:5), or will it occur only at the climax of this period after the protective power of the Two Witnesses ends when they are slain by this beast power (Rev. 11:7-9)? The Bible prophesies the Two Witnesses' power will exceed that of the beast and the false prophet for three and a half years (Rev. 11:3-6), so it is logical that the final, murderous fury of the beast power can only be released only after the Two Witnesses are slain. If this murderous rage of the beast power is unleashed only in the last three and half days of this age (Rev. 11:11) when the Two Witnesses are deceased, it makes sense that Christians would then realize the return of the "bridegroom" is imminent, but it will be too late to make any significant changes to one's character.

Christians also have *literally* applied the language in Revelation 13:16-17 about the "mark of the beast" even as they *allegorically* apply the language in Revelation 9 about the weaponry of the end times as being a representation of tanks, helicopters, and planes. Should we be consistent in our approach? What if there is also an allegorical component to the economic language of Revelation 13:16-17? Could "no man might buy or sell" simple mean that no one "will have access to money" or "participate in the marketplace" except through the lending systems of Babylon the Great? If so, that situation is almost a reality now.

Is the "Mark" Visible?

Let's consider another possibility about this mysterious "mark." Did you realize God also has a "mark" on his people? Ezekiel 9 addresses a time when the sins of the house of Israel and the house of Judah are very great (verse 9). It cannot reference the fall of the kingdom of Israel in 721 BC because Ezekiel wrote this prophecy approximately 130 years *after* Samaria fell; therefore, it was intended for a future time. It reveals that when God sends punishments upon the house of Israel (something prophesied to occur in the latter days in many prophecies), he first places a "mark" upon the "foreheads" of all those who "sigh and cry" at the abominations done in the land. God's mark is placed (and seen) by beings personified as "men" who are in the presence of God, a "cherub" and God's altar. These "men" have to be angels with the appearance of men and one of them with a "writer's inkhorn" is told to make sure this mark is on the heads of the righteous so that they will be spared when God's destructions

are poured out on the land.

There is no evidence in Ezekiel 9 that humans will be able to see God's "mark" on the foreheads of the righteous. Perhaps God's "mark" is the presence of the Holy Spirit in their minds (the forehead being the seat of consciousness). Only the angels administering God's punishments need to see this "mark" of God on the foreheads of the righteous in order to know who to spare. This "marking" of God's people in Ezekiel 9 is strikingly like the event foretold in Rev. 7:1-3 where angels "seal" the righteous before God's punishments are poured out on the rest of mankind. This again appears to be a mark visible *only to angels*, not to humans. Could the "mark" of the beast in one's forehead also be invisible to humans, but obvious to angels? Could the "mark" of the beast be the lack of God's spirit in one's mind (or "forehead"), while God's "mark" is the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's mind?

Revelation 9:4 shows an angel unleashing plagues on those without the "seal" of God "in their foreheads." This prophecy says the mark will be "in" one's forehead, which implies that one's thoughts are being referenced. Again, the context indicates that only angels see this mark. The mark of the beast is on the "forehead" and the hands." Our actions and deeds reveal our thoughts. Perhaps the "mark" prophesied in Rev. 13 simply refers to one's thoughts ("the forehead") and deeds (done with "hands"). People will surely show their allegiance to God or the final beast system in their thoughts and their deeds. Presenting these options will, hopefully, motivate readers to think in broader terms for prophetic fulfillments than they have in the past. One lesson of the parable of the ten virgins is that many Christians will still be waiting for expected prophetic events (perhaps including the "mark of the beast") to become a reality when, in fact, the prophecies about such events will have already been fulfilled in a manner which they did not expect.

What is "Coming Out of Babylon?"

Some readers, mindful of Revelation 18:4's statement about "coming out of Babylon," may feel that they are obligated to forsake all banking services and the many other aspects of a capitalistic economy. To do that completely, one would need to "live off the land" as a backwoods "survivalist." Is this reaction necessary? This author thinks not. We need a balanced approach.

Let's consider biblical examples in determining what "coming out of Babylon" means. The prophet Daniel was apparently one of the three most righteous men who ever lived (Ezekiel 14:14), yet he served as King Nebuchadnezzar's appointed regent

over ancient Babylon itself! Daniel 2:48-49 shows that Daniel accepted the appointment, and his three friends later received high appointments in the government of Babylon (Daniel 3:30). Neither God nor Daniel and his three friends saw any conflict in serving God while being in high administrative positions in the government of Babylon. When the Babylonian Empire was replaced by the Persian Empire, Daniel was promoted to being "First President" of that new empire, under King Darius himself! Ezra and Nehemiah served in high positions in the Persian Empire, Esther became Queen of Persia and Mordechai was promoted to a very high Persian office (Esther 9:4, 10:3). Since God "changes not" (Micah 3:6), we can expect that God will have a similar viewpoint today on how his people today should relate to "Babylon the Great." These biblical heroes had all "come out of Babylon" in their hearts and minds even as they physically lived in Babylon (or its successor empires), and even served in its ruling structure.

We need to realize that we live in a fallen world. God's government will not be present on the earth until God's son, Jesus Christ, returns to establish and administer it. Therefore, all people face the inescapable reality of living now in humanly-devised systems of society. Even with its many sins, capitalism, the modern descendant of ancient Babylon's economic/political/religious system, is far preferable to other "-isms" devised by mankind (communism, socialism, fascism, etc.). With such righteous people as Daniel, Mordechai, etc. at the helm, the capitalist system of ancient empires surely had a "kinder, gentler" impact on people than when prideful and greedy people were at the top. The same is to be expected in our time. The oppressiveness of the Babylonian capitalist system is directly related to the character of its leaders. When Christian leaders governed America, the enslaving power of debt was restrained and the interests of the nation and its people were placed ahead of the interests of the "merchants of the earth." As Christianity has waned as a force in western societies, those priorities have been reversed.

In the time of Christ and the apostles, the Roman Empire was the successor to the system of Babylon (as is clear from the "great image" vision in Daniel 2). Jesus led no revolt against "the system," and he refused to be a tax resistor (Matthew 22:15-22). Paul told Christians to pay Roman taxes, customs duties and tolls in Romans 13:6-7, and to be good citizens (Romans 13:1-5, Titus 3:1). Paul was both a Christian apostle and a citizen of the Roman Empire (Acts 16 and 22)! Peter repeated these themes in I Peter 2:13-17. We can easily see that neither Christ nor the apostles told

Christians to "flee from the Roman empire," or "don't pay Roman taxes" as any part of their need to "come out of Babylon." Modern Christians should also follow the instructions of Christ and the apostles by paying our taxes and being good citizens in our modern nations. What then is expected of us in coming "out of Babylon?"

I Timothy 5:8 states that Christians are "worse than infidels" if they do not provide for the needs of their families. That command exists regardless of the economic or political system in which you live. This means that you need to provide food, clothing, shelter, etc. to yourself and your dependents. Unless you are wealthy in our society, this means that you will periodically need a mortgage to buy a house, a loan to purchase a car, etc. Are you condemned by God as part of "Babylon the Great" if you simply do such things to shelter and transport your family? The above biblical examples from both the Old and New Testament indicate the answer is "no." However, the truth of Proverbs 22:7 still governs all modern economic activity. All borrowers become "servants" to their lenders. The greater your debt levels, the more you become an "indentured servant" to money-lenders in Babylon the Great's capitalist system. A common reason for amassing too much debt is simple greed: People want more "things" than they can afford so they accept "servant" status to a moneylender in order to enjoy *now* what they cannot afford to buy *now*. What is ironic is that much of people's servitude to Babylon the Great's debt-based system is voluntary! Has any money-lender ever held a gun to your head and ordered you to borrow money for something? People voluntarily *choose* their degree of servitude to Babylon the Great's system based on how deeply they go into debt.

Many people have chosen a high degree of debt-servitude to "Babylon the Great" by buying an expensive house they "had to have," or a luxury car that some advertiser said they "deserved." Revelation 18:11-13 foretold that the end-time "Babylon the Great" system would have "slaves" and *make merchandise* of many things, including "the souls of men." Because our recent historical experience includes the Holocaust of World War II, Christians tend to *assume* this prophecy has to be fulfilled by some horrific concentration camp experience. Babylonian capitalism has no desire to kill you in a death camp, but it can make financial slaves of people via loaning money at interest. Media articles have documented that many millions of people are little more than "wage slaves" living from paycheck to paycheck due to high debt payments. Many national, state and local governments,

businesses and people are so heavily in debt they could not financially survive an economic crisis.

Conversely, if you are a money-lender, you are also a part of Babylon the Great. There is really no way out of the system of Babylon the Great. Even if you decide to rent instead of buy a home in order to avoid a mortgage, your rent money still goes to a landlord or real estate developer who will use your money to pay off the debt incurred in building your rental unit. If you simply deposit money in a bank, have certificates of deposit or a money-market account, you are a "money lender" to the bank (although one could plausibly assert that if you receive less than the real rate of inflation in interest on your deposits, you are not lending money via usury). Again we need a balanced approach to "coming out of Babylon."

Many Christians have focused on "coming out" of the *religious* aspects of Babylon the Great even as they voluntarily become "slaves" of Babylon the Great's *financial* system by amassing high debt burdens.

Prophetic Implications:

Unless you are wealthy, you will periodically need to go into debt to buy essential housing and transportation for your family. However, applying God's financial laws in our society is still possible. All Christians should carefully minimize and manage their debt levels, and have a plan to (hopefully) get out of debt so you do not become a "debt slave" to Babylon the Great. Living within your means is a prudent manner of "coming out" of Babylon the Great's financial system. There is a syndicated radio program hosted by Dave Ramsey which helps people minimize and/or get out of debt. His program is based on biblical principles, and he also has a website (<http://www.daveramsey.com/>). Readers who want to apply biblical financial principles to modern life are encouraged to consider his advice about getting out of debt. As you implement biblical principles in your financial affairs, you will also "come out of Babylon" financially.

Christians must not have their hearts in the numerous and complex financial options of today's Babylon the Great system (which will collapse at the end of our age). Our hearts and minds should be in the coming Kingdom of God, not in building an empire of "mammon" for ourselves in today's society. Based on the prophetic implications of modern world events, the greed-based system (Revelation 18:14) of Babylon the Great is nearing its end. Where is your heart and mind? Is it in amassing wealth and many possessions via the economic system of

Babylon the Great? All investment vehicles (stocks, bonds, currencies, derivatives, etc.) require you to bet on whether something is going up or down in the vast "financial casino" of Babylon the Great. Remember that in any casino, the odds are stacked so the "house always wins." All the investment options of Babylon the Great will cease to exist when Jesus Christ returns. However, your character and the fruit you bear for the kingdom's sake will remain.

Revelation 18 prophesies that the debt-based, capitalistic money system invented in ancient Babylon will grow to a point where it dominates the economies and politics of all nations in the end times. That has now happened. The explosion of debt in modern societies has transformed nations, businesses and millions of people into debt-slaves. If a world crisis occurs which devastates borrowers, the modern nations of the house of Israel (and other nations as well) will enter an economic "captivity" like the ones experienced repeatedly by the Israelites in the book of Judges. Foreign money-lenders and "investors" will "foreclose" on the properties and assets of the modern Israelite nations just as they did on the Israelites in the time of the Judges. Each time the Israelites entered such an economic/political captivity, they cried to God for deliverance. Each time, God did send a deliverer. However, biblical prophecy tells us that at the end of our age, the captivity of all mankind to Babylon the Great will not be ended by a human deliverer. The final deliverer will be Jesus Christ himself. It is no coincidence that right after Revelation 18 (the chapter predicting Babylon the Great's fall) is Revelation 19, the chapter describing the return of Jesus Christ at the head of his heavenly armies which will destroy permanently the political, economic and religious institutions of Babylon the Great.

Christians need to stop obsessing about a Nazi-like "beast" power emerging in Europe which will "carry you captive." Instead they need to open their eyes to the economic captivity to "Babylon the Great" which is spreading steadily over the entire earth, and is growing more oppressive with each passing year. The book of Judges records that the Israelites were blind to the onset of the economic "captivities" which occurred when they forsook God's laws and God "sold" them into the hands of other nations. People in the modern world are just as blind, and the cycle is happening again in the modern world. When people are fully captive to Babylon the Great, they will again cry out for a deliverer. You can read about the deliverer's arrival in Revelation 19:11-21.

Article found on line at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmesseng>

[er0042/a2007-042-01.htm](http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmesseng/er0042/a2007-042-01.htm)

*****THE END*******

("Born to..." continued from page 1)

The difference in preparing a funeral for an 83 year old and a 25 year old will make you really think about the future.

The young lady was 25 years old when she died. As a young teenager she had been a close friend of my children and many times had eaten at our table with our family. Her brother was and is my sons best friend to this day. It is ironic that before her death in a terrible car crash, she had donated one of her kidneys to her ailing brother and it saved his life. She died so young and had such a giving spirit it really makes you ask, why would God let such a thing happen to such a person, with so much life left to live? That was a hard funeral to officiate but knowing the truth about the resurrection made it a positive truth to look forward too. She will live again and her future will be brighter than it has ever been.

My step mom was 83. She had been suffering with Alzheimer's for several years, and the last year and half she had been under hospice care. Her only future was the hope of the grave and that of the resurrection. The thing that made her death so traumatic was, she had been married to my dad for 46 years and I've never known a more devout couple. Dad had been her primary care taker and when dad had his heart attack, I had to put her in the nursing home. Right before dad had his surgery she had a heart attack and she ended up in the same hospital where he was. The hospital couldn't do anything for her so before they sent her back to the nursing home they put her in a room right across the hall from dad. She seemed to calm down a bit and he got to see her for a while. She was taken back to the nursing home and that was the last time he saw her alive. She died right before he went into surgery. I believe it was her time to die as she had led a full life and her good years were all behind her.

Isn't it interesting how all roads lead to the same place, "The grave"? The pull of the grave could not even be avoided by Jesus Christ. Christ was born to die and so are we. I find it ironic that Jesus had to die a horrible death in order that we humans could someday gain eternal life. What a gift God gave to the world. (John 12:27, Heb 9:27, Eccl 3:1-8)

As time goes on we will all have to face the end of our road. The question we must all ask is, "What kind of road did we leave behind?" Was it a road filled with regret and disappointment or was it a road filled with love, giving, caring, sharing and putting

others welfare above our own? How will it be for you and me? Only time will tell as we are all born to die and we should make the best of our allotted time.

Article found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-02.htm>

THE END**

("How to Stop Abuse..." continued from page 1)

and believe we are with an organization that God is exclusively working with. If Luke 11:17 says "...a house divided against itself cannot stand", I have to draw the conclusion that God is saying we will stay in the condition we are in as long as we insist things will be done our way. We are divided and there simply isn't a strong foundation of growth with any one particular group. Luke 11:17 has taken on a whole new meaning because we won't admit that by being divided, it is against God's will.

I honestly do not believe the preaching of the gospel, in the way God wants it to be preached, has ever been done. Perhaps a small glimpse of it did take place during Herbert Armstrong's tenure, but the abuse by ministers destroyed so much of any sense of established credibility, plus the high living standard of God's "apostle" accomplished very little in the overall picture. There are still groups that can't shake the HWA syndrome and move on. Of course, I am certain some ministers and brethren have the hair raised on the back of their necks by now.

We are simply a group of people who respect men, but we are not willing to admit it. Ministers in many churches of God have become equivalent to cardinals in the catholic church. Far too many brethren don't know how to make decisions on their own without the approval of a minister. Some brethren have been coming to church for decades and are still counseling with ministers and certain ministers just can't stop being spiritual babysitters. The ministry overall is not allowing members to think on their own two feet and brethren are among the most naive group of people anywhere. I do not mean everyone, but for many brethren who attend the established churches of God, a self made cocoon is the spiritual comfort zone they embrace. The ministers thrive on members who go along without questioning decisions. Step out of line, and Gestapo tactics are used. I learned first hand what it was like and I thank God I stood up to the abuse and said enough is enough.

The best thing that ever happened to me was to be disfellowshipped from Living. I wonder, however, who is actually worst-Living or Philadelphia? Since I no longer

attend any particular group, I have established a stronger and far closer relationship with God because I have to think for myself and rely upon God to guide me. I would say it is about time since I've been in God's way of life for over 40 years. I had to stand on my own two feet while watching my wife die of cancer last year and I haven't counseled with a single minister throughout this period of time with false charges filed against me by the Federal judicial system. Why? Because most ministers don't have a clue what the real world is like, but live in a self made cocoon that is totally out of touch with reality. God promises to guide me if I look to Him-not a minister.

If I were to categorize two of the most abusive churches of God, I would have to say Living and Philadelphia are neck in neck. Restored has a bad track record as well, but I am not familiar with Dave Pack's format, but from what I have read, he is totally off base as well.

Gerald Flurry has become the self-made modern day apostle and is a one man show with members no longer allowed to have contact with family members who are with another group. How this can ever be classified as love is beyond me, but this is what happens when brethren blindly follow a man and don't think for themselves. Is it any wonder a number of people say many brethren have reminded them of number 2 yellow pencils. Gerald Flurry is a self-delusional false minister who can't live without power.

Rod Meredith cannot stop talking about his scrapping boxing days and a message of gloom and doom continues. He hammers away at subjects left over from years ago and doesn't say anything new except how the brethren fall short of what they should do. He never did stand up and be counted when the shootings occurred in Wisconsin, but passed the buck on to other men. He has always talked the talk, but ran in the other direction when it came to personal accountability. To this day, I still make the claim that the messages from Rod Meredith had a detrimental affect upon my wife as she was dying. Only sermons by Fred Coulter helped Linda to realize God accepted her as faithful.

If I were to say all the churches of God need to close doors, it would come across as blasphemy to some brethren. Why do I say this? It is because the ministry and brethren need to know what it is like to make decisions on their own without having a church to lean on. The days of churches being social clubs would be over. This is going to some day become a reality and many brethren and ministers will not know how to handle it because there will no longer be a cocoon to comfort them.

We need to stop being children and

grow up. We need to think for ourselves, without relying upon organizations to hold our hands in order to be in the Kingdom of God. I am embarrassed that I was ever associated with Worldwide, United, Global and Living. There were rewarding moments, but overall I was left with the feeling that I couldn't make decisions on my own without a ministers approval. I thank God that I woke up because I now look to God for help each day in a way I never did before. Only now do I understand who God is and how He is working in my life. I just wish other brethren and ministers could think for themselves instead of thinking they have to be a part of something. We have to be very insecure if we think we have to be in a certain group in order to make it into God's Kingdom. It's the equivalent of saying God prefers a Chevy over a Ford.

If the ministry would stop being spiritual politicians and babysitters and learn what the real world is like, God's church would be far better off. Some ministers don't know anything else and I do not identify with a single one because my life is on a totally different level. I am not superior, but I no longer feel inferior by the abuse certain ministers dished out. Many ministers are totally naive when it comes to knowing what the real world is like and the abuse of their position to this day shows how disconnected they are with God. They are among the most insecure individuals anywhere because they are addicted to power and make poor decisions.

I hope to never be a part of a particular group again. I simply want to be a part of God's way of life and this doesn't mean I cut myself off from brethren either. I simply want to make decisions by looking to God and stop living in a world that doesn't exist by attending a particular church that makes me feel I am strapped tight to their agenda.

Many brethren need to stop being children and think for themselves. The men who claim to be chosen by God need to stop tooting their horn. They need to stop lording it over the brethren by allowing members to be free from the watchful eye of a one man dictatorship who is equivalent to BIG Brother. Brethren need to stop looking up to the college of cardinals and rely upon God. This is not happening. God is going to test every single member at some point and I have to say that I feel sorry for brethren who are dedicated to an organization, yet are fooling themselves by thinking God comes first. All ministers need to read Ezekiel 34. This is a message to God's ministers. This is one chapter the ministry won't touch.

I am not the only person who feels this way. I hear from brethren who are completely turned off by the status quo and now think for themselves. I appreciate their strengths and to know they are standing on their own two

feet. I also don't put brethren down who attend certain groups because God is working with individuals who are loyal to Him. There are brethren who attend for the fellowship and don't look to a man. I do believe, however, that the brethren who are independent minded in their loyalty to God, above men, is in the minority.

I believe without a doubt in my mind that God and Christ are taking a hands off approach towards the brethren who look to the ministry and the ministers who thrive on such an attitude. They are not growing as they should, but think the same as in the 70s and 80s era of the church. There are, however, brethren who are growing because they don't look to the ministry for decisions and are able to think for themselves. These are the real troops in God's army.

Of course, how many brethren will disagree by saying they believe a certain leader has been chosen by God, and are not remotely willing to admit their loyalty is misplaced? This is one self-delusional statement by members who can't look beyond a man and won't come close to admitting it. Sometimes men are mentioned more than God. We simply don't see the state we are in and no wonder Christ says He will spit certain brethren and ministers out of His mouth.

We are in sad shape, yet it is always the other person. We simply are incapable of seeing our true condition because ministers still rule over members. It's embarrassing when I think of how small the churches are, yet ministers are on a high because they are able to have the ultimate say so.

I now have a life. My loyalty is to God and ministers are at the bottom of my list of respectability. They were in the way and still are for many brethren. I fired the college of cardinals in the churches of God almost three years ago and I can now breath for the first time. I can't get away from the memories fast enough, but I am running as fast as I can.

Article found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-03.htm>

THE END**

("Let the women..." continued from page 1)

services. To limit the women of God in such a way is a serious thing, and we must be very sure that Paul's words are being understood correctly.

We are handicapped when we read the letter Paul wrote to the church at Corinth because we do not know exactly what events Paul was responding to. They knew-- but we have to read very carefully and ask in prayer

for God to help us understand the situations that prompted Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, the New Testament book of 1 Corinthians. Please take a moment now to pray to God for understanding and wisdom.

In 1 Cor. 11:13 Paul deals with a controversy about whether women should have their heads covered while praying and prophesying. Jewish women wore head-covering veils; gentile women did not. Evidently the two cultures were in conflict over women's head coverings, but not whether women should participate! He concludes that long hair becomes a covering for women who pray and prophesy publicly. Note that Paul's words here do NOT stop the women from praying and prophesying aloud during church services as some would assume.

Acts 21:9 reveals that Phillip the evangelist had "four virgin daughters who prophesied." A true prophecy is a message from God to a specific person or church. Would any minister of God refuse to let a woman deliver a true message that God had given her for the people of God? We have every reason to believe that converted Christian women such as the daughters of Phillip were participating in church services-- using their own God-given spiritual gifts, and Paul did not oppose their participation.

Yet the church at Corinth was having some problems that had to do with false prophets or prophetesses. Paul must deal with the problem without shutting down the church's access to the true prophets and prophetesses of God. It was a touchy situation.

The Key that unlocks the "keep silent" passage!

To understand Paul's comments in chapter 14 about women "keeping silent" there is one critical KEY passage that comes first! Many have overlooked it and read right past it-- but once it is understood the entire passage begins to fall into place.

We start in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. Lets examine it verse by verse using the very literal New American Standard Bible. Brackets {indicate words added by translators that are not in the Greek} and parenthesis (indicate the author's comments or explanations).

1 Cor. 12:1-3

1 Now concerning spiritual {gifts,} brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

2 You know that when you were pagans, {you were} led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. **(We realize that some that attend the Corinth church are still involved with**

pagan idols. He points out that the members were once led astray themselves. Paul leads his readers towards compassion and reconciliation towards those that are still unconverted "pagans" in their midst.)

3 Therefore I make known to you, that no one¹ speaking by the Spirit of God says, "**Jesus is accursed**"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. **(Why is Paul making such an obvious statement? Doesn't everyone already KNOW that anyone saying, "Jesus is accursed" is not speaking by the spirit of God? Paul goes on to explain and defend spiritual gifts, talk about love, and finally reprimand women or wives causing disturbances in chapter 14. The only way the words "Jesus is accursed" fits into the rebuke that follows is if Paul is reacting to a specific incident reported to him that he needs to deal with. In these statements he is first bringing up the subject of what has happened in the Corinthian church! Misguided persons--still considered pagans--have disrupted services with a false prophecy of "Jesus is accursed!" and opposing true prophets have countered with, "Jesus is Lord!" in reply!)**

Paul teaches that ALL receive spiritual gifts

Notice that in these verses immediately following the above verses, Paul is **defending** the concept of spiritual gifts given to **every single** true believer-- both males and females:

1 Cor. 12:4-11

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

6 And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all {persons}. **(Here he teaches that both men and women are given manifestation of the Holy Spirit -- spiritual gifts-- for the benefit of the entire church, not just for their own benefit.)**

7 But to each one² is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge

according to the same Spirit;

9 to another **faith** by the same Spirit, and to another **gifts of healing** by the one Spirit,

10 and to another the effecting of **miracles**, and to another **prophecy**, and to another the **distinguishing of spirits**, to another **{various}** kinds of **tongues**, and to another the **interpretation of tongues**.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to **each one**³ individually just as He wills. **(Paul is going out of his way to enforce that "each one" is given a spiritual gift/role or part to play in God's Church. God gives these roles as He desires-- only God can decide what spiritual gift is given to each man and woman! Paul does not say anything to indicate that "these public roles are the male gifts, and these private roles are the female gifts" as some teach. Paul is making it PLAIN that he does not wish to exclude anyone or anyone's spiritual gift, but verses 2 and 3 show us that someone-- possibly a woman-- has said, "Jesus be cursed", and this was not from God's Spirit! Paul warns them of the error of this message, yet also defends the rights of all true believers-- both male and female-- to participate in church services.)**

Prophecy and Love

The next portion of Paul's letter, chapter 13, is still on the subject of prophecy as he moves closer to dealing with the specific problem. He tells them that love is more important than prophecy as he tries to change their attitudes to loving attitudes to heal the disruption that has upset and angered their congregation.

1 Cor 13:2 And if I have {the gift of} prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. (NAS)

Moving into chapter 14 Paul writes, "Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual {gifts}, but especially that you may prophesy."

Paul keeps returning to the subject of prophecy because the problem that he is trying to solve involves a woman who is falsely presenting herself as a prophetess. The daughters of Phillip are true prophetesses, but this woman is still "led astray to the dumb idols".

He points out that prophecy should edify the church, 1 Cor 14:4, and talks against speech that has an unclear meaning, a

babbling, in verses 5-13. This unclear speech may relate to the worship of "dumb idols" in the city of Delphi just north of Corinth. People from all over the world came to Delphi to hear babbling that was supposed to be from a "god"!

Women or Wives?

We must also bear in mind that the Greeks had only one word for both woman and wife-- the word "gune"⁴. The same word that Paul uses in 1 Cor 14:34 is translated "wives" in many passages such as Matthew 19:8, "Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your **wives**...'" and many others including Ephesians 5:25 and 1 Peter 3:1.

So when Paul writes, "Let the women keep silent" he uses a word with two meanings! He may well be referring to "wives" who are unconverted and untaught-- the very one that "prophesied" that "Jesus was accursed" as recorded in 1 Cor 12:3. The church at Corinth would know exactly which wife or wives he meant! For us today, we must rely on context clues to reveal whether Paul was talking of women in general or specific wives.

Corinth and a woman minister

Corinth was a large seacoast city on the Gulf of Corinth, and its eastern port was called Cenchrea.⁵ This port area of Corinth was the home of Phoebe, mentioned in Romans 16:1 as a "diakonon" which is translated "servant" in this passage. This same exact word is translated "minister" in "is Christ then the **minister** of sin?" Galatians 2:17.

Paul refers to himself in Ephesian 3:7, "I became a **minister**" and in Col. 1:25, "I am made a **minister**" using the same exact word. Also see 1 Cor. 3:5, "**ministers** by whom ye believed", as well as 2 Cor. 3:6, "**ministers** of the new covenant".⁶ This woman minister traveled to Rome carrying the book of Romans, and is highly praised by Paul. See the article "**Traveling through Time**" for more information about her. Since Phoebe was a minister from the eastern port of Corinth, it is a major proof that Paul did not restrict Phoebe and others from playing a major role in churches of that area.

Critical background information: The Oracle of Delphi

Just across the bay from Corinth was a major attraction of the ancient world, the Oracle of Delphi. On the southern slope of Mt. Parnassus, female priestesses presided over a stone temple and delivered answers for those seeking guidance from the "god" Apollo on everything from romance to whether to wage war. A prophetess about fifty-five years old would receive a question

written on a lead tablet and would descend to the basement of the temple where she breathed fumes of ethylene, a sweet-smelling gas that produces feelings of euphoria. The gas drifted up from a fault line under the temple. Modern researchers have verified the presence of this gas and it can still be detected today.⁷ The priestess would utter "prophecies" while she was in a trance-like state, and these would pour out in a garbled state. Male priests "interpreted" these sounds. Interpretations were usually vague and ambiguous--increasing their chances of being perceived as accurate.⁸

The Oracle of Delphi existed for twelve centuries and was very famous in the ancient world. The congregation in Corinth was well aware of it and many probably witnessed the "oracle" in person. The unconverted mates of church members might still have been involved in similar pagan worship, as Delphi was only about forty miles north of Corinth, across what is known today as the Gulf of Corinth.

Control yourselves!

Paul writes, "For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;" 1 Cor 14:31. Notice he doesn't say that all MEN may prophesy, but that ALL can prophesy if it is done "one by one". In verse 32 he adds that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets"; meaning that true prophets are not out of control or in some gas-induced trance, as were the priestesses of Delphi. Prophets of God have control over their spirits and their speaking.

A God of Peace in all the churches of the saints

Verse 33 clearly illustrates that this entire issue was about confusion and disruption in the church, not Paul seeking to take away the rights of Christian women to participate. 1 Cor. 14:33 for **God is not {a God} of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.**⁹

Wives/Women keeping silent

1 Cor 14:34 Let the {or ***those**} women (the same word as "wives") keep silent in the churches {church}; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

*The Greeks have many forms of the word "the" but this exact word is "**hai**" 3588. In all the following New King James scriptures the same word in the male form -- "**hoi**" is translated "**those**": John 6:14, "**those** men" ; John 8:29 KJV, "**those** things"; Romans 8:5 "For **those** who"; Romans 8:8, "**those** who are in the flesh" NKJ; 1 Cor 10:18, "**those** who eat"; 1 Cor. 15:18, "**those** who have fallen asleep"; and 1 Cor. 15:23,

"those who are Christ's"; Gal. 3:9, "those who are of faith"; Gal. 5:24, "those who are Christ's"; Gal. 6:13, "those who are"; 1Thes. 5:7, "Those who sleep"; 1 Tim 3:13 "For those who have served well; 2Tim. 1:15, "all those in Asia"; 2 Tim 3:6, "those who creep". By using the feminine form of this word, "*hai*", Paul is saying, "Let those wives keep silent..." Not ALL women, just those causing confusion!

Paul is urging the churches to start a policy of limiting the participation of "those" wives, unconverted wives, who must subject themselves to their converted husbands, not causing any further disruption. Paul's reference to "the Law" may be a reference to Genesis 3:16 which relates to being subject to a husband in marriage.

Editor's Note:

Genesis 3:16 is a misunderstood scripture which some take as a command (law) for men to rule over women. This scripture is not a command (law) for men to rule over women, but is the consequence or result of what sin has caused to happen. Genesis 3:16 should be read as a statement stating a consequence or result of sin and not as a command (law) for men to rule over women in marriage or any other relationship between men and women. There are many other scriptures throughout the Bible showing that men should rule their wives/families as Christ rules the Church. Laura Lee

Wives with converted husbands

1 Cor 14:35 And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; ..." The phrase "if they desire to learn anything" expresses doubt whether these wives were wanting to learn. He implies they were just there to cause problems! Clearly Paul is dealing with specific wives because these being reprimanded have converted husbands they may ask at home. Wives with unconverted husbands could NOT "ask their own husbands at home, nor could unmarried women or widows.

He continues, "for it is improper for a woman (wife) to speak in church (the last two Greek words are-- *en ekkleesia*, which can also be translated among the true believers.) The Greek *en* is translated "among" in Matt. 27:56, "among which was Mary Magdalene" and Romans 8:29, "among many brethren" and countless other scriptures.¹⁰ Paul says that this unconverted wife may not speak among the "*ekkleesia*" among the converted male and female members participating in services!

The word "*ekkleesia*" translated "church" does not refer to a church building but to the entire congregation of Christian believers-- both men and women! *Ekkleesia*

is defined by Thayer's Greek/English Definitions as "an assembly of Christians gathered for worship." It also means "called out" ones. This disruptive wife who babbles blasphemous "prophecies" is not a part of the baptized believers (the *ekkleesia*), and she is not to speak among the converted Christian men and women as do the women with the true spiritual gift of prophecy. The passage should be translated as follows: 1 Cor 14:34-35 Let those wives keep silent among the called out ones; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a wife to speak among the called out ones.

God only talks to you?

Paul's next words of biting sarcasm reflect his anger at this would be prophetess: 1 Cor. 14:36 "Was it from you that the word of God {first} went forth? Or has it come to you only?" This proves that prophetic blasphemy has caused this uproar, the false prophecy of 1 Cor 12:3 delivered by a woman acting in a manner much like a prophetess of Delphi speaking for Apollo! She uttered a garbled "prophecy" and interpreted it as "Jesus is cursed." To be sure that this woman who considered herself a prophetess accepts his ruling in this situation Paul adds-- 1 Cor. 14:37-40 If anyone thinks he¹¹ (or she) is a prophet or spiritual, let him (or her) recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize {this} he (or she) is not recognized. Yet Paul is NOT limiting the brethren of the church, the men and women given spiritual gifts, for he tells the "brethren," the converted men and women-- to desire to prophesy! Therefore, my brethren (men and women of the *ekkleesia*), desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. Paul's last words of chapter 14 show he is dealing with disorder-- and those causing it. "But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner."

A Curse on the person cursing Jesus!

Paul ends his letter with a threat towards the one who announced in services, "Jesus be cursed" mentioned in 1Cor 12:3. He concludes, "If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him. (The Greek could mean him or her.) O Lord, come!" 1Cor 16:22, NIV.

No "Male" or "Female" Gifts

Further proof that Paul did not limit women's participation in the church services of the churches is found in this same letter in 1 Cor 12:28-31.

28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, {various} kinds of tongues. (Paul lists prophets second in the order of responsibility before God.)

29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not {workers of} miracles, are they?

30 All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?

31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts....

Chapter 12 deals with spiritual gifts and Paul considers all the church offices listed above, apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. as spiritual gifts, given by God, not man! There is not a single scripture that lists some of these as "male" gifts and some of these as "female" gifts. Paul argues that each person receives a gift, and advises all to "desire the greater gifts"! Would he say that if any of the top five gifts were "off limits" to women?

1 Cor. 12:7 But to each one¹² is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Women are given spiritual gifts by God to use for the common good of the people of God. Paul did not take away the right of women to use these spiritual gifts in services-- a woman with a gift of encouragement must be allowed to encourage. A woman with a gift of faith must be allowed to offer a prayer of faith. A woman with a word of wisdom must be allowed to publicly share her wisdom with the congregation. A woman with a musical gift must be allowed to lead joyful songs of praise. A woman with a gift of teaching must be allowed to teach truth. (See "Paul and Woman Teachers" for an explanation of the very misunderstood 1 Tim 2:12.) God does NOT limit His women. God sees women as equal to serve Him with whatever gifts He has given them to use for the common good.

If women are unable to participate during church services, then many are unable to contribute the gift God has given to them. Each spiritual gift is given for the benefit of the church as a whole-- the inability to participate in church services is like God giving a woman a beautifully wrapped, expensive gift--a present that would help her entire church-- and then telling her that she cannot open it! Would God do such a thing? No, He does not. Neither must men. To quote the words of Craig S. Keener, "...it is a dangerous thing to turn people from their call, or to oppose their call if it is genuinely from God."¹³

End Notes:

1 In this verse, The King James Version

reads, "no man" but "man" is not in the Greek. The word is a form of 3762 "oudeis" meaning no one. It can include both men and women.

2 The Greek word used is "hekastos" 1538, meaning "each, every"; The King James is in error to translate, "to every man".

3 The word is "hekastos" 1538 each, every; The King James is in error to translate, "every man".

4 Strong's number 1248, meaning a woman or wife. The actual word used in 1 Cor. 14:34 is "gunaikes" the plural form.

5 Thayer's Greek/English Definitions, 2747 Cencrea = "millet" the eastern harbor of Corinth (that is, its harbor on the Saronic Gulf) and the emporium of its trade with the Asiatic shores of the Mediterranean

6 Strong's 1249 *diakonos* Translated "minister" or "ministers" in Eph. 6:21, 2Cor. 6:4, 11:15, 23. Col. 1:7, 23, 25. 1Tim. 4:6 in the King James Version.

7 Reported in the Star-Telegram March 24, 2002, Page 23A, and Clinical Toxicology, April 2002.

8 World Book Encyclopedia, 1962 Edition, Vol. 4, Page 102.

9 Some Bible versions incorrectly punctuate this verse by ending it with a comma rather than a period.

10 See Matt. 2:6 "among the princes", Matt 4:23, "among the people", Matt. 11:11, 16:7,8; 20:26,27; 21:38; 26:5; Romans 1:5,6,13 and numerous other places throughout the New Testament.

11 The "he" is not in the Greek but is taken from a verb in the second person, and could be "he" or "she".

12 The King James incorrectly translates "to every man" but "man" is not in the Greek.

13 Quoted from *Paul, Women and Wives*, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.1992, page 120.

Article found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-04.htm>

THE END**

("Homer Kizer's Trash..." continued from page 1)

Mr. Kizer has an expert command of the English language. Indeed, in a statement concerning his educational credentials in his internet posted curriculum vitae he states that his background includes being awarded a "Master of Fine Arts [Degree], Creative Writing (awarded May 1995) by the University of Alaska in Fairbanks." And, in this writer's opinion, it is therein that we discover the nucleus of Mr. Kizer's most prominent flaw. For reasons this writer does not understand with respect to why he might have done so, it appears that many of Mr. Kizer's numerous articles published on the

internet are truly fine examples of "creative writing" replete with misconstrued facts, distorted published or spoken explanations, and a seemingly wanton disregard for adhering to Biblical principles which specify how one should treat his fellow man. This should be abundantly apparent to even the most casual reader of any of Mr. Kizer's articles if they would only take the time to acquaint themselves with the facts in the public record, for which Mr. Kizer conveniently has included links in conjunction with many of his published works.



8175 Port Drive--Homer & Carolyn Kizer's PABC (See all 28 pictures at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-05a.htm>)



8175 Port Drive--Homer & Carolyn Kizer's PABC (See all 28 pictures at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-05a.htm>)

It is also this writer's opinion, that most of Mr. Kizer's recently published works are, in part, at best, or often, even in total, works of pure fiction presented in a style which suggests they are more akin to journalistic reporting as opposed to the bits of "creative writing" that they exemplify. Most of these so-called expository articles, published under the label "Homer Kizer Ministries - The Port Austin Odyssey" and his

"Commentary from the Margins" involve the heavy use of what in newspeak is termed "spin" to further the author's presumed objective of destroying the works of Mr. Norman Scott Edwards, a close friend of this writer and a key personality discussed in many of Mr. Kizer's voluminous writings.

This writer does want to take a moment and publicly thank Mr. Kizer for putting within a mouse-click all the relevant documents which can be used by a rational individual to piece together the truth concerning the unfolding of three years of events at what is presently known as the **Port Austin Bible**

Campus (PABC), not to be confused with the **Port Austin Bible**

Center (also promoted by the acronym "PABC" in Mr. Kizer's writings) which was created, presumably, by Mr. Kizer's wife, one Carolyn Smith-Kizer by simply filing a "Doing Business As" document (commonly referred to as simply a DBA) at the county level of government. Much of the confusion, perhaps, concerning the events associated with **PABC** originates with the fact that two legal entities with similar sounding names were each "headquartered" just across the street from each other.

It needs to be stated that this writer has personally read almost everything Mr. Kizer has published on the internet regarding circumstances and situations involving and revolving around events that have transpired at or near the **Port Austin Bible Campus**, a property owned (held in trust is the legal terminology) by a legally recognized Trust established under the laws of the State of Michigan in the year 2004. The **Port Austin Bible Campus**, from its beginnings to the present, has been overseen (but not owned) by Mr. Norman Edwards, the Trust's sole trustee, since its establishment, who has assumed the duties of administering the overall day to day operations there. This writer has served as the Port Austin Bible Campus' Facilities Manager, an unpaid volunteer position, since January of 2006. The ministry office Mr. Edwards uses on a daily basis is located in a building called "**Windy Hill**" (Click on Photo Albums) at 8180 Port Drive. The building across the street at 8175 Port Drive was the headquarters for the other **PABC** operated by Homer Kizer and Carolyn Smith-Kizer.

In late June of 2007, this writer had cause to enter the building previously

occupied by Homer and Carolyn Kizer. So, he is, therefore, now familiar with the inner portions of both of the PABC "headquarters" buildings. Having worked with Mr. Edwards and his **PABC** ministerial undertakings for better than two years, it can be assumed that this writer is not exaggerating when he states that the interior of the building that Mr. Edwards works in is fairly normal in its appearance. After Mr. Kizer and his wife were evicted from the property where they had lived and operated a **ministry**, across the street, this writer was granted access to the property in order to arrange for getting the building secured with new locks and keys. It was the way in which Mr. Kizer left his former **residence/PABC** headquarters building after he had moved that prompted this writer to submit this article, along with **recent photos**, to the publisher of this **newsletter**.

When this writer entered the former residence of Mr. Kizer, he was totally shocked! The smell of urine was overpowering. This writer does not know (nor would even care to speculate) whether this pungent, nose-burning odor originated from the manure which was never cleaned up (Mr. Kizer used to raise turkeys in the back two rooms of the building in which he lived) or from the numerous cats that were seen to frequent the premises (he also raised, bred, and sold tailless Manx cats), two of which, Mr. Kizer, either knowingly or unknowingly, abandoned in his transition from one residence to another. It was determined by this author, to his satisfaction, that if this author had not entered the building when he did and allowed at least one of these cats an escape from inside the locked building to the outside world (the second cat was thought to be out of doors all the while), it surely would have died from lack of food and water. This author did not, but considered contacting county animal control, but decided against it because the cat could not be captured and seemed to still be ok.

So, while Mr. Homer Kizer has been extremely skillful in trashing the ministerial work of Mr. Edwards in his publications on the internet, let you, the readers of this article, see how he was equally adept at trashing the building in which he and his wife, cats and turkeys all lived in for nearly two years by skillfully playing off the legalities of who technically owned the building and who was his presumed landlord, if anyone truly were his landlord, to live there virtually rent free all that time. This writer states Mr. Kizer lived there "virtually" rent free because he can not determine for sure whether or not this is factual. However, everything else stated in this article is presented on the basis of the first hand knowledge of the author. Finally, if a picture is worth a thousand

words, let these **pictures** write an unforgettable treatise concerning the REAL Homer Kizer.

Article found on line at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-05.htm>

THE END**

("True Christians Prefer..." continued from page 1)

Jesus, **"the meek shall inherit the Earth."** Traditional Churchianity denies it and says folks "go to Heaven." They have many such misunderstandings, idolatrous traditions and pagan myths like about being **born again and Heaven and Hell**.

The Church of God keeps the same seventh day Sabbath as Yeshua and the early Church of God, both converted Jews, Israelites and Gentiles. The professing Christian world, under influence of Constantine -- not Christ -- keep pagan SUNDAY.

The Bible only states *the seventh day is the Sabbath* of the Lord, the Lord's Day, and that God is consistent and doesn't change but warned that some would "think to change the times and the laws" (Daniel 7:25).

The Sabbath-keeping Church of God keeps the same **biblical festivals**, the holy days of the LORD, that Yeshua and the early Church of God kept (both converted Jews, Israelites and Gentiles), with a new and improved understanding, in spirit and in truth, not just according to the letter of the law.

Traditional Churchianity is hostile to God's holy days and have replaced them with their pagan Roman hollow days, even though biblical prophecy shows such baptized paganism will soon be history as Yeshua, the King of Israel, teaches Torah from Jerusalem and commands all nations to observe the **"Jewish holidays."**

It is because of such glaring differences between TRADITIONAL Christianity (following its Roman leaders and Gentilized Jesus), and the Sabbath-keeping **Church of God** following the Jewish Jesus, exposed by the plain truth teachings of **Herbert W. Armstrong**, that Mr. Armstrong was so hated by many of the angry religious leaders who couldn't refute what he said and weren't prepared to change for the better. They chose tradition over truth, just like many religious leaders did in the days of the Prophets and in the days of Yeshua. *Nothing new under the sun.*

Article found on line at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/a2007-042-06.htm>

THE END**

**LETTERS
CONTINUED
FROM
PAGE 2 ..**

keep these Feasts of God. That would include men, women and children.

In Exodus 23:17 it says: "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God." In Deuteronomy 16:16 it tells us more: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty."

From Deuteronomy 16:16 we can understand more clearly why the word male is used in both verses. Because the males were the main bread winners, it was the males who were responsible to bring the offerings to the Lord for their families. These verses in no way imply that women and children were not traveling to the Feasts. The point of these two verses is that the heads (bread winners) of the families were responsible to appear before the Lord with an offering. In most cases the head (bread winner) of any given family would be male. If there are no males in any given family, then the eldest woman would more than likely be the head (bread winner) of the family and would appear before the Lord with the offering.

Dianne McDonnell writes:

Ray says there were "no women and children present" in the miracles of Jesus feeding the crowds, but I suggest he look more carefully at his Bible. In truth, there WERE plenty of women and children present in both the feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000. See Matt 14:21 and Matt 15:38; both state "besides women and children". The apostles were doing crowd estimates and made a rough estimate of the men there—but they recorded that there were also many women and children present both times.

Sir, be careful of what you say, because our Savior said, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Matt 12:36-37.

Paul said of Spiritual Gifts, "So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we

should teach;" Rom 12:6-8 (Today's English Version Bible.)

The hour is late, it is time for both males and females to start **using ALL** of our combined Spiritual Gifts to serve God's people and lead others to Him! Dianne D. McDonnell

Darwin Lee writes:

So we see as in the above statement by Ray Daly, that "there were no women and children present" is a **false** statement. So if Ray Daly being a man and "teacher of God and approved by God" and only men are allowed to teach and Dianne McDonnell being a woman and teaching the facts and truth on that issue, then who would you look to as being God's servant?

Entire Letter found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/l2007-041-06.htm>

*****THE END*******

Needs One Bible (3-25-07)

by Apolonio S. Federico (Philippines)

Apolonio S. Federico writes:

Dear Darwin & Laura,

I have been receiving your fine **'Newsletter for the people of God'** in good faith through your generosity as I can't afford the cost of the publication.

I and my wife are wide-readers and seekers of spiritual truth. However, my penury has been the biggest problem in my quest, because most of the useful books are beyond my financial capacity. May I then humbly appeal to your benevolent heart if you can spare me a copy of the Bible (NKJV) due to my financial deprivation which constrained me to request it for free.

We have weekly 'Home Bible Study' with an attendance of twenty five more or less brethren, a sacred namer, some former ex-WCG's, an RC member and a couple of SDA's. Those believers who are currently gathering at home, in a small fellowship group, here we are learning and will continue to study the Word of God, the Scriptures.

God bless you and your ministry for the kindness you bestow on his servants. Thank you, shalom.

Faithfully,
Apolonio S. Federico

Laura Lee writes:

The only funds we collect here any longer are for the hard copy newsletters that we distribute.

If anyone reading this can provide at least one Bible to Apolonio, please contact us with your contact information and we will

pass your contact information on to Apolonio and he can contact you directly if he still needs a Bible.

Letter found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/l2007-042-01.htm>

*****THE END*******

Dreaming (12-22-05)

by Robert Goldman (Ione, California)

Robert Goldman writes:

Dear Darwin & Laura Lee,

Hello! I pray things are well with y'all and prospering all around! I had to write again with a question that came to mind the other day. Do Y'all know anyone or ministry that y'all are connected with that is gifted in the area of the prophetic -- vision and dreams? I noticed in your latest information section that a person relayed a prophetic insight about the **gas and oil prices** going up, which had reminded me of a dream a brother on another yard here had last year on the same subject -- gas price at the pump was \$5.00 a gallon and electricity went off.

I've been needing to connect with someone that is mature in this area of prophets today, that functions in this area. 1 Corinthians 14:29,31; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6; Acts 2:17, which provides revelation, knowledge, or prophecy or instructions from the spirit of God so the church is built up -- and ready for things ahead. (1 Corinthians 14:6) I've come to understand some insights, through the spirit of God, on **dreams** that this is a way (one of the ways) Yahshua speaks to the church -- **parables** which are stories with a word from god, but in a cryptic message -- a tongue or language which needs interpretations -- decoded! Proof that Yahshua speaks this way to His people -- Mark 4:33. And uses other parts of the body to interpret or decode the parables in dreams and visions. (1 Corinthians 14:26)

You know I've had a lot of problems in this area; talking about it! I've tried over and over to find someone in the body to help me with this. And I run into fear a lot -- because no one wants to take the time (no time excuse) or no understanding. I get blown off as being crazy! Sad but true, I expected so much more from those in the body of our Savior. So I hope to maybe find what I'm looking for with the vast number y'all are in contact with thru your journey's. So please if you can help me it would be a true blessing and answers to lots of prayers!

Darwin & Laura Lee write:

We don't know anyone like you are describing.

Robert Goldman writes:

I dream a lot, ever since I gave my life to the Lord. Some I can understand, but a lot goes unexplained. I just need those other pieces of iron to interact with, to become sharper in this area that Yahweh has placed in my life. It's almost been nine years since I gave my life to God -- but there's still pieces of the puzzle that need placement at this time! I've studied real hard and a lot these past nine years in this place and learned a lot by living and reading His word. I'm always hungry and searching for more -- going outside the so called religious box. That's why I like what I see and read coming across your newsletter. Y'all allow growth and don't keep people dumb-down! As I've seen in many church and ministry settings!

Well thank you for your time and help in this matter! An I look forward to seeing and hearing what this seed will produce. May God enlighten you and prosper what he's started with y'all! Shalom unto you and your family. In Yahshua's name "The Word of Yahweh", Robert Goldman

Letter found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/l2007-042-02.htm>

*****THE END*******

Arlan Weight's Article (03-23-07)

**by Richard Heath
(Vero Beach, Florida)**

This letter is in response to an article titled **"The Night Israel Came Out of Egypt"** by Arlan Weight which was printed in newsletter **Issue #38**.

Richard Heath writes:

First, allow me to wish you and yours' a profitable and inspiring Passover season.

Next; I want to publicly applaud brother Weight's article on **"The Night Israel Came Out of Egypt"**. In my opinion, it was exemplary and instructive. So much so that I would like to exchange thoughts with the author, if possible.

I receive snail-mail (as you know) at: (Address Removed) and would like to know if you could pass that on to Arlan. If he would prefer e-mailing; I can be contacted at: (Email Address Removed)

Laura Lee writes:

Your entire email was snail mailed to Arlan Weight. Now it would be up to him to contact you.

Richard Heath writes:

Your **newsletter** is a worthwhile publication, and is a source of diverse research. Although you don't agree with

others on many points (including myself!), you seem to have the honesty necessary to bring new or different items 'to the table.'

Laura Lee writes:

Do I not agree with others or do the others not agree with me? That is a two way street you know!

Thank you for the very nice compliment. Actually though, the readers send the topics to us and we just simply let them know what we think according to scripture. This means that sometimes we will agree with the writer and sometimes we won't. The hardest part is when people get so mad they leave or cut us off because we didn't see it their way. It's that old corporation mentality which says it's my way or the highway for you. This is where patience comes in. God's people need to understand above all that no two people will ever agree on every single thing in this life, so why are brethren continuing to cut other brethren off from themselves because one absolutely has to be right?

We try to be fair to all people. The letters section definitely has a way of presenting both sides of any argument or discussion that one wants to bring up and then the readers can decide for themselves what they want to believe.

Richard Heath writes:

Please keep up the good service (i.e. "ministry!") to the scattered brethren, and may the Mighty One of Israel (YHWH) grant you His blessings. Sincerely, Richard A. Heath

Letter found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/12007-042-03.htm>

THE END**

Lisa Burnett Update (1-26-07)

by Sandy Kile (Palisade, Minnesota)

Sandy Kile writes:

Hope you are well and in good spirits. Keep up the good work and thank you for all you do! Could we get an update on **Lisa Burnett**?

Laura Lee writes:

We tried to make contact with her a few times, but she does not answer back. Has anyone else heard from Lisa Burnett? If you have heard from her, could you please send us an update? (For those who do not know who Lisa Burnett is, go to: <http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0037/12007-037-13.htm>)

[er0037/12007-037-13.htm](http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/12007-042-04.htm)

Letter found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/12007-042-04.htm>

THE END**

Life in Prison (9-29-06)

by P. F. Lazor (Ione, California)

P. F. Lazor writes:

Dear Darwin & Laura,

Thank you for (another) **COG Messenger Newsletter, (Sept./Oct. 06)**. I believe this is the first I received with this title. Shall I assume this is a new name given to your same **newsletter** I've been getting these few years? It had some excellent articles - as they always do.

LETTERS SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 23

QUESTIONS SECTION ==

the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net

QUESTION #64

What did Christ mean when he told his followers to wipe the dust off their feet when not received well?

According to Linguist/Historian EW Bullinger, this is an example of a figure of speech called paroemia. Paroemia is a wayside saying in common use.

"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matthew 10:14).

People who reject truth can do harm in two ways: by distracting others who may be ready to be called and by wasting the time of the person bringing the truth.

Christ told his disciples how to react to people rejecting their presence and their words. "Shake off" is from the Greek "ektinasso", the symbolic meaning of which is "express extreme contempt". The idea was to shake off (dust) for the cleansing of one's self, having been made dirty by the actions and words of those who reject the truth.

Answered by: Wily Elder (North Miami, Florida)

Item found on line at:

<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/q2007-042-01.htm>

THE END**

KIDS KORNER ==

the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net

PRAYER REQUESTS & UPDATES ==

PrayerRequestsAndUpdates@darwinlauralee.com

THE MESSAGE BOARD (ADS & INFO) --

the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net

SABBATH SCHEDULE--BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

- October 20, 2007**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #194 & Lesson #195
- October 27, 2007**----Open for Hosting--Please Sign Up
- November 3, 2007**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #196 & Lesson #197
- November 10, 2007**----Open for Hosting--Please Sign Up
- November 16, 2007**----Bible Study
- November 17, 2007**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #198 & Lesson #199
- November 24, 2007**----Open for Hosting--Please Sign Up
- December 1, 2007**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #200 & Lesson #201
- December 8, 2007**----Open for Hosting--Please Sign Up
- December 15, 2007**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #202 & Lesson #203
- December 22, 2007**----Open for Hosting--Please Sign Up
- December 28, 2007**----Bible Study
- December 29, 2007**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #204 & Lesson #205
- January 5, 2008**----Open for Hosting--Please Sign Up
- January 12, 2008**----Teaching the Law-- Lesson #206 & Lesson #207

If you want to host Sabbath Services and need 2 Sabbaths in a row for your presentation and/or would like to have your presentation listed on our Sabbath Schedule in our newsletter which is sent out to the public, the next deadline for that would be: December 15, 2007. On those Sabbaths of Open Hosting where no one signs up, we will just play a cassette tape by any of various speakers. All Sabbath Services are Hosted by Darwin & Laura Lee unless otherwise stated.

SABBATH SERVICES

Every Saturday at 2:00 PM at 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota (701) 258-7172
Front Door Open at 1:00 PM for Fellowship

BIBLE STUDY

Every 6 weeks on Friday at 8:00 PM at 320 N. Griffin St., Bismarck, North Dakota (701) 258-7172
Front Door Open at 6:30 PM for Fellowship and Pot Luck Meal (Bring Food)

Eulogy on Richard Nickels

by Christopher Abiazem (Nigeria)

JOHN 11:21, 23: LORD IF THOU HAST BEEN HERE, MY BROTHER HAST NOT DIEN. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, THY BROTHER SHALL RISE AGAIN.

I have not met Richard Nickels in person other than communication by letter writing and email since early 2001. Richard Nickels has been of great help to the Church of God here in Nigeria in such a wonderful and surprising way to the point that Nickels does not care to know the name of your denomination. All that mostly appeals to Nickels is God's name, commandments and the Bible.

Our churches and Pastors here in Nigeria lacked nothing because Nickels is always lending a helping hand, sending books leaflets, Magazines, Tracts, Bibles and all what it takes to keep the church alert. Nickels also made us to know the names of overseas churches, ministries and individuals that teach the true word of God. Nickels

ensures that all books of interest reaches us; just mention the book and in a very few days the book is in your mail box "free of charge".

Bible lessons and study materials are compiled in a very interesting and educative way that Pastors from other churches are all the time coming to us for Bible knowledge. I am not trying to exaggerate anything, all I know is that I have a right to say what I know is true and say it to the Glory of God.

The church here in Owerri was traumatized when the news of **Nickels death** reached us. Every one of us was in uncontrollable tears, no one could look at each others face. Yes we know that every life in this world has an end but that of Nickels was seriously and suddenly cut away from us.

Who can take up from where Nickels stopped- seeing God's children as one indivisible body no matter the name of their congregation, creed or belief. Oh how great we miss you Richard.

We know that the Lord was there, He saw your ill health and purposely refused to heal you so as to make you have some rest and fortified for the work in New Jerusalem, for it is evident that He requires you more

than we need you. Your rest is the Lord's great interest in that you have done the work and His reasons are perfect. The Lord heard Shirley and your children, saw all their depressions, agonies and how they were all the time by your side to the end yet the Lord did nothing as His keen and humble desire was to take you. We know you are in the Lord's bosom and that your good works here on earth brightens everything about you to Eternity.

We the church of God in Owerri wish Shirley, her children, relatives, members of the **Sabbath Sentinel**, members of **Give/Share Newsletter** and all who had the opportunity to have been or known Richard Nickels, the fortitude and courage to forge and stride ahead in the paths of the promulgation of God's word. By a rough calculation it will cost over 150 Billion dollars to evangelize and create a solid awareness of the true word of God here in Nigeria but Richard Nickels in his magnanimity, has cut one third off the said sum through his God given talent and dedication. Members and Associates of the **Give/Share, Sabbath Sentinel**, the **Church of God News** to mention but a few, are pointers to the paths

that were trod by Richard Nickels.

RICHARD NICKELS may we work like you. We know we miss you, but we are sure we must see you face to face in New Jerusalem at the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Item found on line at:

http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/i2007-042-01.htm

THE END**

A New Agricultural Revolution!

by Jeffrey Caldwell
(Redwood City, California)

I've just now viewed a marvelous and very hopeful short movie with an introduction by Charlie Sheen! It's called "The Greening of Eritrea: Seawater Brings Hope to Africa's Coast".

Eritrea is the newest African nation, founded in 1992; the local Eritrean club meets in my landlord's garage here. The focus of the film is a clever project using seawater for the culture of shrimp and fish, then sending the water enriched by their wastes to fields of pickle weed and mangroves, using them for small animal fodder, building materials and fuel, while at the same time building new agricultural soil, improving the local microclimate and providing work for hundreds of people in the pilot project. These techniques offer hope for 25,000 miles of arid coastlands around the world!

To see the film about this praiseworthy project click on the link for the video on the homepage of [The Seawater Foundation](#).

Item found on line at:

http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/i2007-042-02.htm

THE END**

Check out our newly remodeled Web Site Home Page at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com>

Subscription Update For Those Who Are Unable to Pay a Subscription Price for "The Church of God Messenger":

Gift Donations Received:
Previous Balance: **\$131.44**

08-31-07 -- MZ -- \$12.92
09-04-07 -- SK -- \$7.00
09-04-07 -- SK -- \$7.00
09-07-07 -- GS -- \$14.32
09-20-07 -- RL -- \$5.00
10-04-07 -- TK -- \$37.16
Total = \$83.40 THANK YOU!

Total Gift Donations:
\$214.84

Subscriptions Requested:
09-09-07 -- Rhoda Young

1 Year Subscriptions Paid:
Rhoda Young -- \$12.84

Amount Left: \$202.00

Subscription Requests Pending at this Time: None

LETTERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21 --

Laura Lee writes:

Yes, it is the same [newsletter](#). We finally gave it a name starting with the **33rd Issue**.

P. F. Lazor writes:

Thank you for putting me in the Prayer Request/Updates box. It says as a description of my condition, "dehydrated." While that is true, that only pictures a tiny aspect of the reality that has lasted some 2½+ months, "Torture" would be a much more accurate description if limited to a one - word description, "Torture in prison" even more telling. I am glad to be momentarily out of that condition (partially), but the sad fact is they will be putting me thru it again (& then again & again & again, if I don't die from it next time; & next & next). They dehydrate then starve me till I'm near dead

and just about beyond the point where the body can be saved, and then infuse me with I-V's (& juice this time), to where I'm hydrated again and thus can eat again. In the prison infirmary they even fed me relatively edible food (-which proves they can get and have relatively non-toxic food but won't issue it as a general rule to prisoners). As soon as they've gotten me out of critical condition, they immediately remove the juice and edible food, so I cycle back into dehydration until it gets so extreme that I can't eliminate and therefore can't eat - and on and on and on goes the cycle. In and out of extreme cachexia which each time pounds and weakens the body further toward death from the repeat cataclysms on the body until finally death will result. I've been thru the cycle generally 100's of times, and 13 of these very close to death where it was doubtful I could be kept alive (brought back from too much damage - point of no return). It's a very real form of TORTURE-RUSSIAN ROULETTE, which eventually, INEVITABLY will result in death.

So, you can see, this is quite a bit more than mere "dehydration."

The coup de gras, this time, was a guard, Mr. Hernandez, stealing my Hot Pot (along with many other items of my personal and legal property - enough items to fill a full page, when listed out). This marks more than 85 times in 23 years that robber - guards have simply looted my personal property, robbing whatever they desired. Sometimes even "grand theft" - over \$500's, and other times over \$2000's worth at a time - not to mention the priceless and irreplaceable legal document and music compositions, art and etc.

But the hotpot was the way I could distill a little water to get by - which now is gone and prison regulations bar them from coming in again. (The type which boil, as needed for this). So, what little bits of water from the tap I try now, makes me so sick and gives me other such extreme reactions (severe pain in different areas), that it will soon drive me back into the dehydration - starvation cycle. I can tell how much Satan loves it by the glee expressed by prison nurses, MTA's, guards, doctors and administrators when they see me tortured right to the brink of death hoping this time I won't bounce back to life in time. I think most readers of your [newsletter](#) (and most of the public, at least in the USA, are not aware and will not accept that most prison employees are thoroughly demon possessed; hence this recurrent scenario for their sport and joy).

In the midst of this, I have been able to pray for, bless, forgive, and have mercy toward these relentless persecutors. It is a

cleansing and spiritually embellishing experience - one that for many years had been impossible for me to do, but I have been able to now.

The experience of the damage to my mind, aside from the damage to the body, is so stark and searing and blight -stricken in every layer of my being, that with my best efforts my mental capacity, memory, state of confusion and specific capability impairment is much like having advanced Alzheimer's disease. So, I hope recovery from all that will come (though the next cycle will no doubt result in another bout of this), and I hope this letter is reasonable coherent and legible (they've stolen my typewriter again too -- 24th one).

Blessings to you and yours, and thank you for remembering me.

P. S.: You can publish my letter if you wish; and please keep me in prayer and on the prayer list.

Letter found on line at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/12007-042-05.htm>

THE END**

Letter to Dixon Cartwright (7-22-06)

by Darwin & Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

This letter was sent to The Journal and a version of it was printed in the July 31, 2006 Issue on page 2.

Dear Dixon,

Your article, "Disfellowshippers should take a break", was very good. Thank you for speaking out. We were disfellowshipped by the UCGIA back in October of 2000, so although we very much empathize with Dan Cafourek's plight, please tell him not to hold his breath on the apology he wants from UCGIA, as it probably won't happen in this age.

We have a Web Site at: <http://darwinlauralee.com> and if Dan Cafourek or others are interested we would certainly post their "disfellowshippment" stories on our Web Site if they send them to: the-cog-messenger@earthlink.net or mail them to: Darwin & Laura Lee, PO Box 2333, Bismarck, ND 58502. If people have been disfellowshipped and they did not document it as some have, then email anyway, giving your name, tell us who disfellowshipped you and give us a brief summery of what happened (hows and whys), if you know them, and we would be glad to post it. If we get enough response to this, we will create a

whole section on our web site just for this purpose. Let's hold these people accountable for the way in which they use the doctrine of Disfellowshippment to cause harm to many. To date we carry the following "disfellowshippment" stories on our Web Site: Ned Dancuo in Issue #2 at: <http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0002/nissue0002.htm>, David Ben-Ariel at: <http://darwinlauralee.com/literature000002.htm> and our own at: <http://darwinlauralee.com/literature000005.htm>

Also, on another subject, Steve Collins article, **What Kind of "Captivity?" (As Titled in The Journal-- "Just What Kind of Captivity will Babylon the Great Bring?")** was excellent. We have an article posted on our Web Site at: <http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0033/a2006-033-03.htm> titled "What is the Mark of the Beast?" which could possibly help to add to what Steve Collins has already said.

On our Web Site at: <http://darwinlauralee.com> we have some new things, one being a "God's Holy Days" section which will be expanded with time and will include many things for people to use in their study of the Holy Days of God. We also have a new section called "Study Your Bible", where you can not only go to read articles, but you can also leave your comments, agreements, and disagreements on any given article.

We have changed the way we do our email lists. They now run off of our Web Site and include the following unmoderated lists: "Advertising List" (to advertise your church events or related items), "Archeology Exchange", "Humor & Poetry", Prayer Requests & Updates", "World & Local News" and one moderated list, "Questions Section" for the purpose of asking and answering Biblical Questions. To subscribe to any or all of these lists, go to: <http://darwinlauralee.com/data/05-17-06.htm> We also post ads and web links on our site, as well as printing them in our 24 page newsletter. Darwin & Laura Lee

Letter found on line at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/12007-042-06.htm>

THE END**

Newsletters and Fellowship (6-13-07) by Julius Lenkume (Kenya)

Julius Lenkume writes:

Dear friend,
I visit your web site and please with your

unique church. I would like to receive your newsletter and also fellowship together though live far away from each other. I am a pastor and work with 10 churches, who do interdependence work for God's kingdom. All are autonomous and Sabbath keepers. We also keep the feast days. We are commonly known as church of God Maasai Mission. Hope to hear from you, Julius

Laura Lee writes:

Dear Julius,

Hi, our newsletters can be downloaded and printed out free of charge from our web site at: <http://darwinlauralee.com/> If you need a hard copy of our newsletter mailed to you, we have to now charge for that due to rising costs and you can pay for that through Pay Pal by going to: http://darwinlauralee.com/jewelrybylauraindex.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=14&products_id=132 If you want to be added to our email list and receive either a Works File or a PDF File of our newsletter free of charge then you would have to fill out our subscription form at: <http://darwinlauralee.com/data/05-17-06.htm> We hope this information helps. If you still have questions, then email us back. Also something that may be helpful to you and your church is that we also have Biblical articles which are shorter in most cases than our newsletter, posted on our Web Site that you can download and print out.

Letter found on line at:
<http://darwinlauralee.com/thecogmessenger0042/12007-042-07.htm>

THE END**

