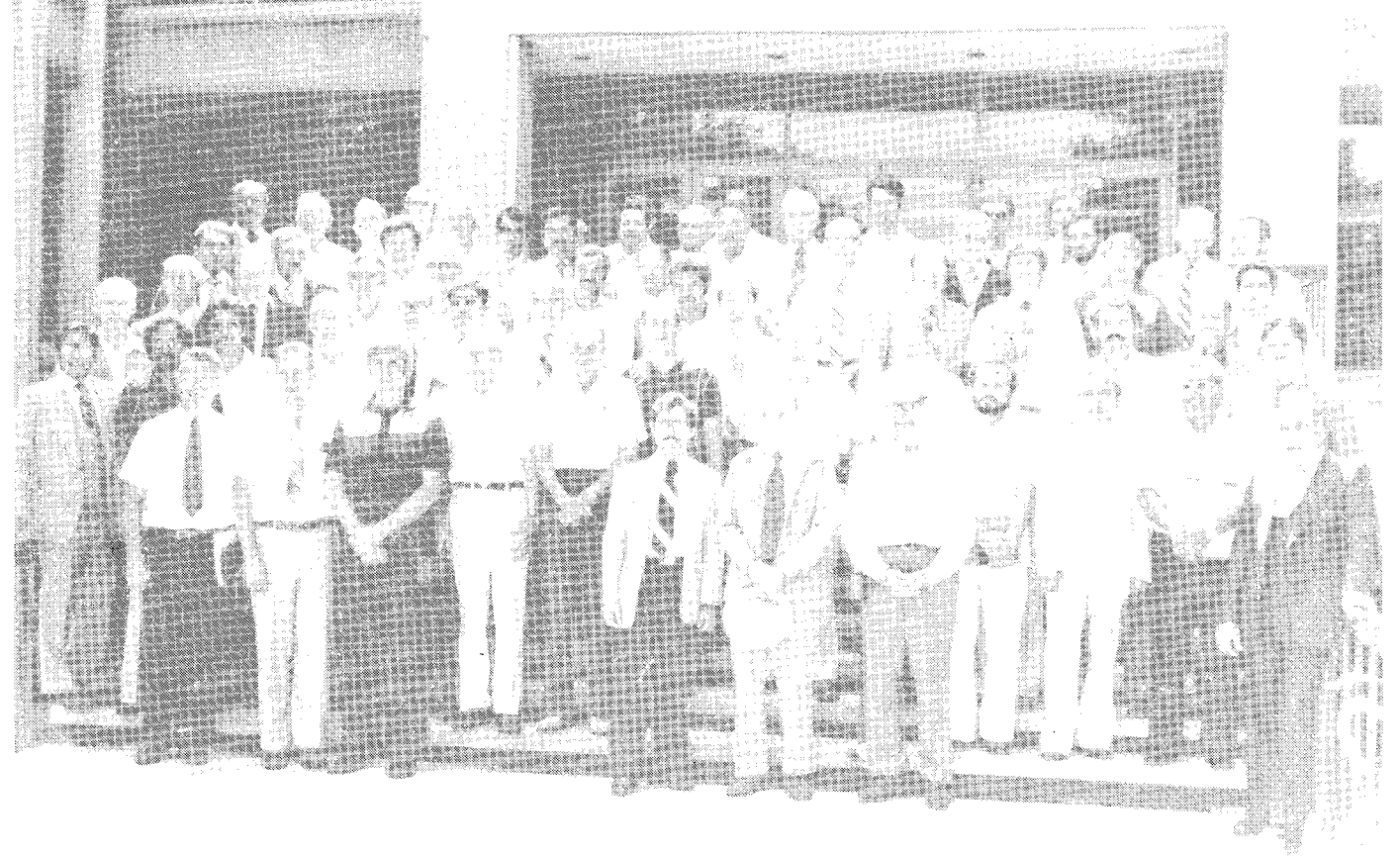


THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNCIL

# Ministerial Forum

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## What Do You Believe?

### IS JESUS GOD?

It seems that we hardly hear anyone agree or disagree on issues presented in the Forum. Dr. Myron Houghton presents part two of his article on the *Character and Nature of Jesus Christ*. But even he is surprised at the silence expressed by the ministry of the Church of God (Seventh Day). Perhaps we were wrong all this time. It is possible that our ministry always believed that Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and we thought there was a different understanding.

### IS IT A SIN TO EAT PORK AND OTHER ANIMALS LISTED IN LEVITICUS?

We received one letter on the issue of the *clean and unclean*. We would like to hear from you on these matters. With whom do you agree? Do you have some questions that were left unanswered by the expositors? Do you still believe the same way as before, or have you been persuaded otherwise? Is there a difference between *being ceremonially unclean* and *moral sin*?

### IS IT A SIN TO DRINK WINE?

Does the Bible teach that it is a sin to drink wine or any other alcoholic beverage? The article in this issue claims that drinking wine or any alcoholic beverage is a sin. What do you teach and what do you believe? What do we do with members who want to use wine instead of grape juice during the Lord's Supper? Did Jesus drink wine or grape juice?

### WHAT METHOD DO YOU USE TO INTERPRET PROPHECY?

Perhaps you did not know but your methodology affects your point of view. The Early Church Fathers often interpreted Scripture according to their philosophical background. On the other hand, it seems to me that sometimes we mix all views of prophecy. Perhaps we should say that the Church of God (Seventh Day) employs the eclectic style.

### WHAT IS THE MINISTRY?

The laity have been thinking about what is the ministry. What is your biblical understanding of the ministry? What did you think about the analysis of the *shepherd and flock* model? Do ministers perceive the flock as dumb sheep? Some young men seem to display a mistrust about the ministry. What have we done to deserve such mistrust? We need to examine ourselves. It is a fact we cannot deny. Some, not all, lay members feel that the ministry needs to be more accountable, especially the Executive Board. We as the ministry need to refrain from practicing deception and from denying that we need to improve our image before the laity. Ω

*Daniel Dávila*

## Letters to the Forum:

### *A Response to Genesis and Man's Food*

The study of the relationship between the clean and the unclean and sacrifices in the book of Genesis is an interesting one. In the articles by Bro. Palmer and Bro. Be-night, interesting points are made for both sides. But, it appears to me that perhaps two erroneous positions may be emerging. Limiting our study here simply to the book of Genesis will NOT lead us to any definite conclusions, but I think that we need to be clear in our assumptions about what Genesis is really saying or not saying.

*Two basic assumptions have emerged.*

- 1) The clean and the unclean designation in Genesis was strictly for the purpose of identifying which animals were to be used for sacrifices; and
- 2) The clean and the unclean of Genesis has an obvious correlation to the clean and unclean of Leviticus.

My position is that *Genesis*, on its own, does not make any of these assumptions. Genesis observes that there is a clean and an unclean, and that there were sacrifices but does not provide the explanation of the purpose for sacrifices or clean and unclean designation. Again, Genesis merely observes that sacrifices were made and that there was a clean and an unclean.

I have been led to believe that the first sacrifices, or offerings, were voluntary in nature --- meaning that there were no rules for what was acceptable or unacceptable when it came to sacrificing. But the emphasis does appear to be upon an act of worship or devotion to God and that the intent, attitude and the faith of the person offering the sacrifice made it either acceptable or unacceptable. Certainly the acceptability of Cain and Abel's offerings was not whether one was flesh or grain, but a matter of faith and the condition of their heart. I don't think that a case can be made here for the point that the clean and unclean apply to sacrifices, especially since no official sacrificial system was being followed.

But, neither does Genesis say that the purpose of the designation of clean and unclean animals was for the purpose of identifying what animals could or could not be eaten. *Genesis doesn't contain any lists of acceptable animals for either purpose of sacrifices or food.* All of that comes later

in the book of Leviticus where we have details of the sacrificial system as well as the clean and the unclean.

What we are left with then simply is that the book of *Genesis DOES observe a distinction of clean and unclean.* To say that the purpose of such designation was for sacrifices doesn't seem to me to be consistent in light of the fact that there was no official sacrificial system in Genesis. The terms of sacrifice simply are not found in this book. Further, to say that the designation was for identifying what animals were acceptable as food also seems to me to be inconsistent since God gave no record of the eating of meat until after Noah. Genesis simply observes a distinction of clean and unclean.

I suggest that we need to be cautious about making the Bible say what we want it to say. If other subsequent portions of the study of the clean and unclean uncover the purpose of the designation, fine, but let's not force the Bible to say what we want it to say.

I conclude that Genesis does not provide us the answer. But, Genesis DOES observe there was a clean and unclean. That, in and of itself, may prove to have great value in the subsequent studies on the topic. Ω

- Kenneth Knoll,  
S. W. Dist. Superintendent  
McAlester, Oklahoma

# TOWARD A BETTER SELF-IMAGE

*"The Church of God isn't used to professionalism; we're used to seeing things done crudely."*

*"If you want to find a Catholic church, look for a tall cathedral. If you want to find a Church of God (Seventh Day), look for a hole in the ground."*

## THE REAL ISSUE

The two quotes above are not fictitious, and they are not the sentiments of dissident members. They are candid responses from two influential and respected individuals at each end of the age spectrum in the Church. Their observations are just the most recent in a long line of similar comments that I've noticed over the last six years. I've heard young adults complain that they couldn't bring friends to church because of the low *quality* of spiritual life there. I've heard senior adults remark about their embarrassment to bring friends to church because of the poor quality of special music. The list goes on, and I'm sure you could catalog your own collection of similar comments. Regardless of the specific complaint or the degree of truth in it, all of these expressions have one thing in common; a poor self-image. Problems have solutions; read on.

## WHERE DOES IT START?

*The problem of a poor self-image starts with performance.* Whether in the pulpit or in programs, if the standard of performance is mediocre and lack luster, church members can become conditioned to not expect much out of church. Once that low level of expectation is established, the membership develops an attitude that says, *Don't expect much out of me.* When such a situation exists in a church, motivating the membership to *Go make disciples* becomes next to impossible.

Church members who feel unimpressed, uninspired, uncomfortable, or embarrassed about their church, are not likely to witness to their friends and neighbors. The longer they feel this way, the greater the danger to a church. One of two things is apt to happen. First, long-time members will develop an inferior self-image that makes them unwilling to initiate or support out-

reach programs. This will lead to the slow demise of a church.

The other response that some members will feel is frustration at the lack of vitality and opportunity in such a church. Usually young adults and new church members are most likely to feel this response. While they may not personally adopt a poor self-image in relation to the church, they will fail to identify with that church. This will lead them to become increasingly alienated and to eventually drop out of that local congregation.

## THE SMALL FLOCK SYNDROME

Another factor that can contribute to the development of a poor self-image among church people is *The Small Flock Syndrome*. *God doesn't want you to be successful, He wants you to be faithful* is a statement typical of a prevalent false teaching today. It is often used to justify the smallness of a church and to excuse any lack of effort in evangelism.

In its extreme form, the *Small Flock Syndrome* makes virtues out of smallness and mediocrity by relabeling them as *humble efforts*. Bigger churches, professional approaches, and even success are viewed as *worldly*. Yet in spite of all this self-deceptive effort to justify lack of success in discipling others for Christ, the words of Jesus still define the Biblical standard of success:

*Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (Matthew 25:21).*

In the parable of the talents, it is clear that faithfulness is synonymous with success. The *few things* were the resources

the master had given his servant. Using those resources, the good and faithful ones risked on faith to achieve the master's goal of increase. They were successful and rewarded for it. The one who attempted to maintain what he was given was not only a failure in the master's eyes, but a *wicked and slothful servant* as well. The implications from all this are clear; the servant who is not concerned with increasing the size of the flock of his Master is not a shepherd but a hireling.

### STEPS TO IMPROVEMENT

*How can you improve the self-image of your congregation?* First of all, get off dead-center. While it's true that there are no storms in the doldrums, it's equally true that you're not going anywhere while you're in them. If your church isn't experiencing any failures, it's likely that you're not having any successes either. Your people need experience to build their confidence, and successful experiences to build a positive self-image. One of the reasons we come to church is to learn, and there is no substitute for experience. You can learn as much from your failures as your successes, so stop fretting over the potential of making mistakes. Set goals, give your people a sense of direction, and report frequently on your experiences and progress together.

### PROMOTE

*Promote the work of the Church.* This doesn't mean to just advertise it, but to advance it. Many pastors regard church promotion as something distasteful or as an intrusion into the affairs of their church. This is unfortunate and self-defeating in the long run. Your attitude speaks louder than your words. If your congregation senses a disinterest on your part for a program, don't expect them to be interested, involved, or supportive of that program.

### INFORM

Keep your church informed. Don't make a classic but fatally false assumption. Just because your people receive a bulletin every Sabbath, a newsletter and calendar every month, and the Messenger every quarter, don't assume that they've read any of it. Your duty to inform your church is not over just because the information is in print. Repetition gets results is an axiom that we the children of light can safely appropriate from the world around us. Even if your people did read everything once, they can't possibly remember it all. Share news and

announcements with them as though it was the first time they've heard it. That will be a safe assumption more often than not. Draw their attention to news and articles in the Messenger. It's the primary information vehicle for the Church of God, but most of our members read very little if any of it. You can improve morale and self-image by informing your people about all the good things that are happening in the Church of God (Seventh Day). I can't stress to you strongly enough how important the role of the pastor is in communicating to his people about the programs and progress of the Church as a whole. When you build awareness, you help to build a positive self-image.

### INSPIRE

Lastly, strive for excellence in your ministry. Don't let the half-truth that *the ministry is a calling, not a profession* become an excuse for mediocrity. Yes, you are called, but you are called to make a Profession of Faith; a profession in an active vocational sense, not just a passive verbal one. Mediocrity, like sin, means *missing the mark.* Mediocrity demoralizes but excellence inspires. Excellence in ministry gives people a new vision of themselves and what it means to be the Church of God.

### SUMMARY

The problem of poor self-image is not a universal one within the Church of God. There are many congregations with a positive self-image and dynamic fellowship. But where the self-image problem does exist, it needs to be recognized and remedied. The purpose of detailing the subject has been to offer insight and encouragement to anyone who may need to address this problem, whether now or in the future.

There is much that the Lord is doing through His Church today. *In just our first year of effort toward our 1990 growth goal of 100%, we have seen an increase of 9.4%!* We need to recognize that God is blessing our efforts, and share this good news with our people. Inspire them, inform them, and encourage them; it will go a long way toward building a more positive self-image, and to building up the Body of Christ in numbers.  
\*\*\*\*\*

The Media Outreach Agency produces a quarterly cassette newstape that highlights the work of the agency and of the Church's outreach work in specific local situations. Copies are free upon request from the M.O.A.

Ω

# The Laity's Message to the Ministry

by Roy A. Marrs



From left to right: Dr. A. Carlin, B. Fischer, ... Scott.

## INTRODUCTION

The Administrative Committee of the North American Ministerial Council invited lay people to present a program called *A Message to the Ministry*. Roy A. Marrs who chaired the presentation assigned Bob Scott, member of the Midway Church of God (7th Day), Shawnee, OK, to discuss *What the Church expects from the Pastor*; Barbara Fischer, member of the Sacramento, CA, Church of God (7th Day) to discuss *What Lay People Have to Offer to the Church in Talents and Gifts*; and Dr. A. L. Carlin, member of the Church of God (7th Day), Stanberry, MO, to discuss *The Three Greatest Needs of the Church*.

### I. WHAT THE CHURCH EXPECTS FROM THE PASTOR

Bob Scott polled other fellow parishioners where he is a member, and came up with ideas for the presentation by noting points of concern most often voiced.

As viewed through their collective thoughts, a church expects the pastor to be ready to deal with a flock that may depart from the usual "shepherd-flock" model, in

that unlike sheep, they may not always be ready to follow. Because, unlike sheep, they aren't necessarily stupid enough to be led just anywhere.

In leading a flock, a pastor is expected to exhibit genuine friendliness, love, concern and compassion to the flock and to the community. The flock wants the pastor to be known in the community and to know the community. The church expects the pastor to stay with his calling and not become so involved in avocations that the flock is neglected. The church wants the pastor to be loyal to the church and her teachings, not working against the unity of the church by discrepant teachings.

The pastor is expected to get his sermons before Sabbath so he is available to teach a class or help out in class discussions. He is of much more value to the flock if he arrives well ahead of services so as to greet and encourage others, setting an example of promptness.

The church expects the pastor to be a leader. Leadership is like a coach. Line

them up in position so as to be a winning team.

He is expected to feel accountability to the local church, to the District Board and overseer. He is expected to be honest in word, deed and intent. Feed the sheep.

## II. WHAT LAY PEOPLE CAN OFFER THE CHURCH

Barbara Fischer divided her presentation into three parts: (1) Why the Church needs to use the laity's skills; (2) What lay people can do; (3) How lay people's talents can be identified.

### A. WHY THE CHURCH NEEDS TO USE THE LAITY'S SKILLS

Barbara Fischer pointed out that lay people need to serve the church, not just in baking cookies for bake sales or operating a church bazaar. Lay people need to be active in the planning and playing of the game and not just child-like spectators on the outside of a fence looking through knotholes hoping for a glimpse of what is going on.

### B. WHAT LAY PEOPLE CAN DO

Lay people are the real points of contact with the world, a vital factor which cannot be overlooked. For an example of the potential of this fact, consider the results of one lady in the Sacramento Church. She spoke with another person about Christ and the church. The family was won and began studies in their own home to reach others. Their son, John Roina, was won to the faith. Today, he is an active full-time employee of the General Conference in planning Media Outreach.

Laypersons have not only the gift of teaching, as the family referred to above, but they also bring technical skills of great use and value.

Because many laypersons have a modest feeling about their talents, it is the pastor's responsibility to work with them, visit with them in the home, at work, during sports activities, to learn of these talents and make use of them. There are many skills to be discovered. These skills include leading prayer bands to tap spiritual resources for uplift of the sick and needy, and for the leader's success in the church.

There are contractors, accountants, doctors, nurses, magazine editors, persons skilled in leading youth activities, others skilled in public relations.

### C. HOW LAY PEOPLE'S TALENTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED

These cannot be identified and utilized without leaders of the church really knowing the members. Knowing the skills of the members, leaders can set realistic, obtainable goals. The church now offers growth seminars which ought to be utilized to facilitate getting on with discovering and using lay talent. It was suggested that to continue the joyful exercise of a lay person's talents, the lay person needs to be commended publicly for work well done.

She referred to the special endearment and warmth a child receives from toys such as a *teddy bear*, and compared it to the comfort, security and warmth we feel as adults when allowed to exercise our talents and public acknowledgement is given with a commendation for work well done, whether just bearing up cheerfully during a trying week or doing some major thing all must notice.

## III. THE THREE GREATEST NEEDS OF THE CHURCH

Dr. Carlin noted that the needs of the church are special as we near the end of the age. We need to recognize the special nature of end-time society. This has been done in some measure, evidenced in up-grading the publications of the church, development of Media Outreach programs, and much more attention to an expansion of the foreign work.

Three very special needs of the church include: (1) the personal conviction on the part of every member of the body that it is our God-ordained function to witness; (2) second, every member needs to understand the unique mission of our church, to know what the church is about; and (3) we need to deal with broken relations and learn to deal with them before a rupture of relations results in broken homes, in loss of young ministers, or other talents of the church.

In support of those three great needs, we need to cultivate joy in our relationships. The ministers need to be examples for the laity to follow in joyful witnessing, in knowledge of the unique role of the church.

We need a counseling ministry with spiritual and trained qualifications, that enable them to stem the tide of broken homes and severed church relationships.

These are unique needs of the church, special needs relating to the fact that the end of the age is upon us. There is a great need for counseling for all ages, ministers must be honest enough to admit they can't handle certain things like counseling, etc. There is a need for counseling within the ministerial circle, one on one. Ω

# **What Christians Should Know About BIBLE TEACHING ON THE USE OF WINE\***

by Stanley J. Kauer

In the United States today there is a great problem of drug abuse. Millions of people are addicted to the use of habit forming drugs and thousands die each year from such use. We are inclined to think that the drugs here referred to are such things as heroin or opium. But it is a fact that the greatest problem drug is alcohol found in beer, whisky and wine. Alcoholism kills more than any other drug disease. But a great many people use alcoholic drinks in moderation and apparently suffer no ill effects. But the danger is always present that the moderate drinker may lose control. Those who become alcoholics started out as social drinkers and never intended that they should become addicted. And so the alcohol problem continues to cause much suffering and death.

It has been argued by some that drinking alcoholic beverages may be compared to driving a car. Many thousands are killed each year in automobile accidents, but no one says that because of that fact people should stop driving cars. Rather it just means that people should learn to be careful. And so they say it is the same with alcohol. People should learn to be careful and not drink to excess. And it is said that the Bible upholds the moderate use of alcoholic wine. Let us study to see just what the facts are about this matter.

## **Meaning of Words Translated Wine**

According to Strong's Concordance, in the Old Testament two Hebrew words are used to refer to fermented or alcoholic wine. They are *yayin* (no. 3196), and *shekar* (no. 7941). A different Hebrew word means unfermented grape juice or *must*. This word is *tiyrosh* (no. 8492). By the use of this concordance it is easy to check to see which

word is used in the Hebrew and translated *wine* in the Bible. And it is important to note this difference when studying to see what the Bible teaches about how God's people should regard the use of alcoholic drinks.

## **Fermented or Alcoholic Wine**

The first mention of wine in the Bible is in Genesis 9:21. Noah had planted a vineyard and of the grapes he made wine, *yayin*, fermented, alcoholic. He drank and became intoxicated and lost his senses. As a result he neglected to cover his body. His son Ham saw his nakedness but did not cover him. Because of this Ham and his descendants were cursed. Alcoholic drink then brought a curse and unhappiness and so it has ever been.

The next mention of wine in the Bible is in Genesis 14:18. Here it is recorded that Melchizedek "brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God." This would seem to be a forerunner of the Lord's Supper. The word translated wine is again, *yayin* or fermented, alcoholic wine. Now let us compare this record of a priest and wine with Leviticus 10:8-10. "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy and between unclean and clean." The word used is again *yayin*, alcoholic wine. Melchizedek was a priest of God and he brought forth bread and wine. Note that it does not say that he or anyone *drank* that wine. Then later in the Bible we read that the priests of God were not to drink alcoholic wine and it is listed among things "unholy and unclean." The Bible does not

*\*This study is the first in the series which is in three parts.*



contradict when we read it as it is and not read into it things which are not there. We might wonder about the alcoholic wine which Melchisedek brought out, if they did not drink it, what was done with it? To get our answer we turn to Exodus 29:40 and Leviticus 10:9 and other texts which tell us that in connection with the morning and evening sacrifice at the tabernacle, there was to be a "drink offering" of wine, *yayin*. This might sound like a drinking of wine but it was *not*. In Numbers 28:7 we read "And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin. . . in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering." The New American Standard version states that the wine was to be "poured OUT." Thus the "drink offering" was not drunk by the priests or anyone, but was poured out at the altar. We might wonder why and we are not told. But we know that God has made everything for a purpose and it is good when so used. Alcohol is a strong disinfectant and preservative. The blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the base of the altar, and with it, some strong, alcoholic wine, thus serving a useful purpose.

All through the Old Scriptures, where alcoholic wine is mentioned it is either condemned or connected with sorrow or sin, or is poured out in connection with animal sacrifice.

#### **Other Mentions of Fermented Wine**

In Genesis 19:32 the daughters of Lot made him drunk with wine so that he might lose his senses and commit incest. Of the enemies of Israel it is said, "Their wine is the poison of dragons..." Deuteronomy 32:33. In I Samuel 25:36,37 we read of the wicked Nabal getting drunk with wine and soon thereafter he died.

King Xerxes of Persia naturally drank fermented wine. Nehemiah 2:1. King Ahasuerus got drunk on wine and wanted to expose his wife, Vashti.

The verses which directly condemn wine are well known. Proverbs 20:1 "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

"Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs 23:29-32).

It is often contended that these verses *condemn* only drinking wine to *excess*. But we find *no commendation* for drinking wine *in moderation*. It is true that fermented wine is referred to as a medicine. In Proverbs 31:6 we read, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of *heavy hearts*." This medicinal use is evidently what is referred to in I Timothy 5:23. "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake...." These verses do not commend the use of wine as a beverage but rather in small amounts, as a medicine when needed. (We note that Daniel and his three Hebrew friends would not drink ANY of the wine offered by the king of Babylon. This great king no doubt had the very best wine so far as fermented wines are concerned. Daniel and his friends might have used it "in moderation," but they would not do so. They considered the use of any of it as defiling. "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank...." In these verses and many more, the word for wine is *yayin* which is fermented, alcoholic wine.)

#### **Grape Juice, Non-Alcoholic Wine**

Many believe that the word "wine" in the Bible must always mean fermented or alcoholic juice. But this is NOT the case. In the Old Testament or Old Scriptures there are the two distinct Hebrew words translated "wine." The one, *Yayin*, means fermented juice. The other, *Tiyrosh*, means fresh pressed juice or "must", unfermented. And this latter word is used many times. *It seems unfortunate that both words are simply translated "wine" for this makes it confusing in the minds of many readers.* But we are admonished to study the word to be sure we are rightly dividing it. And this is one very important division.

#### **Examples of Unfermented Wine**

In Genesis 27:28 as Isaac gave his blessing to Jacob he said, "...God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." The word here translated "wine" is *Tiyrosh*, which means unfermented grape juice. Isaac did not pray that Jacob would have a great amount of fermented wine, but rather the luscious grapes with their healthful juice.

One of the most puzzling verses to people who think the word wine always means alcoholic, is *Judges 9:13*. Here in the parable of the trees the vine says "...should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man,

*Continues on page 12*

# The Character and Nature of Jesus, Part II

by Dr. Myron Houghton

## Introduction

In the March issue of the *MINISTERIAL FORUM*, Part One of my article on *The Character and Nature of Jesus* appeared. ALL IS QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT! (In other words, there was no violent reaction to it!) In fact, I had to go to outside sources in order to find some objections to my basic statement. In Part Two, now, I would like to set forth once again what I believe about Jesus Christ (this will refresh your memory) and then try to deal with five basic objections to this point of view.

## The Statement

Jesus is the Son of God. He is not God the Father but has always existed with the Father as a member of the Godhead. He shares the Father's nature, and is, therefore properly called *God*. In His functional relationship to the Father, Jesus always has been and always will be subject to the Father's will. When Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born to the virgin, Mary, a human nature was united to His eternal divine nature. As the eternal Son of God, He is worthy of our worship and obedience. Such worship and obedience brings glory to God the Father.

### OBJECTION No. 1: The Nature of God's Unity

*If there is only one God, how can Jesus properly be called "God"? If Jesus is God, then His Father in heaven is not God; otherwise, there would be two Gods!*

ANSWER: There are two parts to my answer: (1) When we say we believe in one God, we are not talking about how many Persons exist in the Godhead but rather (we are ~~no we want~~ talking about God's very nature) Turn in your Bible to John 10:30-39. In this passage, Jesus claims to be one with His Father (v. 30). The people understand His claim as blasphemy because *thou being a man, makest thyself God* (v. 33). They did not think Jesus was claiming to be God the Father. After all, He had said, *I and My Father are one*. The response of Jesus is significant: First He shows them that their own Bible describes mere men as gods (with a small "g"). Then He asks, Why do you condemn me for saying that I am God's Son (and therefore one who shares the same nature with Him)

since the Father is the One who set me apart and sent me into the world? (verses 34-36). (2) The second part to my answer is this: we must come to the point where we will choose between the Bible as final authority for what we believe and our human reason. In the final analysis, we must decide if God's word really is true when it says (Jesus is eternal (*in the beginning was the Word - John 1:1a*), when it says Jesus was personally preexisting with the Father (*and the Word was with God - John 1:1b*), and when it says Jesus really shares the divine nature along with the Father (*and the Word was God - John 1:1c*).

### OBJECTION No. 2: The Nature of Jesus' Death

*Can God die? How could Jesus be unconscious and still be God?*

ANSWER: The solution to this problem lies in the fact that Jesus was both human and divine. As a human being, with a human nature and a human body, He could and did die. BUT the basis of His personality is rooted in His divine nature (in other words, His being a person rested in the fact that He possessed a divine nature). This becomes clear when we realize that He existed with the Father before He was born in Bethlehem (as article #3 of the *Doctrinal Beliefs of the Church of God (Seventh Day)* states). So, my own understanding of what happened at Christ's death is that while He died (in His humanity), as a Person with a divine nature, He remained conscious and active. I Peter 3:18, 19 seems to confirm this interpretation. *God was not asleep!*

### OBJECTION No. 3: The Nature of Jesus As Firstborn

*Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus is the firstborn of every creature. Doesn't that make Him God's first created being? And doesn't Revelation 3:14 (where Jesus is described as "the beginning of the creation of God") support this view?*

ANSWER: I will respond to Revelation 3:14 first. But before I do, I want to ask a question: What is the difference between an

ordinary angel and an archangel? The dictionary I have on my desk says an archangel is an *angel of high rank*. The same dictionary defines an archbishop as a *bishop of high rank*. You may be asking, *So what! Why is he asking questions like this?* And my answer is that the Greek word translated *beginning* in Revelation 3:14 is *arche* and that is where ARCHangel and ARCHbishop come from. In other words, the Greek word translated *beginning* in Revelation 3:14 really means *first* and sometimes refers to *first in time* and sometimes means *first in rank*. I have in front of me a Greek New Testament with a literal English translation of each Greek word directly underneath those Greek words. And instead of calling Jesus *the beginning of the creation of God* it says *the chief of the creation of God*. It is clear from John 1:3 that Jesus is the creator of everything. The verse says *All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made*. Now I ask you, if Jesus created EVERYTHING, did He create Himself? Obviously not!

This brings us to Colossians 1:15. This verse tells us TWO things about Jesus. First, it describes Jesus as being the *image of the invisible God*. What does this mean? How can you have an image of someone or something that cannot be seen? The commentary on Colossians by J. B. Lightfoot says that *image* in Colossians 1:15 means likeness, representation and manifestation, and compares this Greek word to a different Greek word, used in Hebrews 1:3. In Hebrews 1:3, Jesus is described as *the express image of His (God the Father's) person*. The word translated *person* means *what makes God the Father God*. Even the Jehovah's Witnesses translation states Hebrews 1:3 in this way: *Jesus is the exact representation of His (God the Father's very being)*. So, in the very first sentence of Colossians 1:15, Jesus is said to be the representation of God the Father's very being.

The real question is, What does *first-born* mean in Colossians 1:15? In order to answer this correctly, we must rephrase the question. Instead of asking, What does *first-born* mean, we should be asking, since Jesus is described as *firstborn of every creature*, what IS the relationship of Jesus to every creature? And the very next verse gives us the answer. Colossians 1:16 says that Jesus is the creator of all things. Notice that verse 16 begins with *for*. This means verse 15 says Jesus is firstborn of every creature, verse 16 explains this as meaning that He is first in rank over all creation because all things were created by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). The Jehovah's Witnesses translation recognizes that Colossians 1:16 contradicts their understanding in v. 15 of

Jesus as the first created being, and so, without ANY proof for doing so, they add in v. 16 a word to change the meaning! Their translation of Colossians 1:16 reads, *because by means of him all [other] things were created*. But the verse really says, *because by means of him ALL THINGS were created* and it is clear that Jesus did not create Himself! Jesus is first in rank over all creation. In Psalm 89:27, God says concerning King David: *Also, I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth*. Here *firstborn*, clearly means *first in rank*.

#### OBJECTION No. 4: The Nature of Jesus' Subjection

*How can Jesus really share His Father's nature when Jesus Himself said that His Father was greater than He was (John 14:28)?*

ANSWER: There are two parts to my answer: (1) First, notice that Jesus did NOT say *My Father is BETTER than I*. The husband and wife are equal in terms of their essence (they are both fully human) yet a wife is to be subject to her husband in terms of function. (The Bible uses this very illustration when speaking of the relationship between Christ and His Father - I Corinthians 11:3). Your hand is not inferior to your head even though your hand is in subjection to your head. (2) In the statement I gave at the beginning of this article, I fully recognized the functional subordination of the Son of God to His Heavenly Father, and so it should not present a problem to us.

#### OBJECTION No. 5: The Nature of Jesus' Limitations

*The Bible says that Jesus grew in wisdom (Luke 2:40, 52) and it even says that Jesus did not know the time of His return (Mark 13:32). How could He be God and not have all knowledge?*

ANSWER: Obviously the references in the Bible to limitations in Jesus' knowledge are speaking of His humanity and not His divinity. Philippians 2:5-8 explains how this can be. Verses 5 & 6 say that Jesus was *in the form of God*. Since *form* is used again in verse 7 to refer to Jesus being in the *form of a slave*, we know *form* means more than outward appearance. Jesus was not merely acting like a slave; He was a slave! And Jesus was not merely acting like one who shared the divine nature; He was divine! Verse 6 goes on to say that Jesus did not try to cling to His equality with God but emptied Himself (literal rendering of *made Himself of no reputation*). Now what does this mean? Does emp-

### Character and Nature of Jesus . . .

tying Himself of equality with God mean He ceased to be divine? Verses 7 & 8 explain the meaning: Jesus gave up (or emptied Himself) of 2 things: (1) He emptied Himself of the glory He shared with the Father before He was born in Bethlehem: see John 17:5 and article #3 of the *Doctrinal Beliefs of the Church of God (Seventh Day)*. This is what is meant by His being made in the likeness of men (verse 7). (2) He emptied Himself of the independent use of His divine attributes. This is what is meant by His being in the form of a slave (verse 7). While Jesus possessed all of the divine attributes, He did not use them unless the Father so instructed Him. That is why Jesus could condemn those who said they worshipped the Father but rejected Jesus (cf. John 5:18, 19; John 8:54).

### Conclusion

Do not be afraid of singing with your whole heart the chorus of the hymn "Living For Jesus" (#162 in WORSHIP IN SONG):  
*O Jesus, Lord and Saviour, I give myself to Thee, for Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne. My life I give henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.*

### Bible Teaching on the Use of Wine . . .

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and go to be promoted over the trees." *It is preposterous to think of God being "cheered" by drinking alcoholic wine.* But this is NOT what the verse says. The word here translated "wine" is *Tiyrosh* and it means fresh grape juice, surely a most healthful and cheering drink. God has given it for our blessing and benefit.

Another puzzling verse is II Samuel 6:19 where it is said that David blessed the people by giving to each "...a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine...." Here the word is *yayin*; fermented wine. And this would seem to contradict the other references. But again "How readeest thou?" Look carefully. The word "wine" is in italics meaning it is supplied by the translators. It is *not* in the original. And when the New American Standard Bible was translated, with more ancient manuscripts available the verse does not include any reference to any drink. It reads "Further he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a cake of bread, and one of dates and one of raisens, to each, one."

Thus it is clear that David did not give out intoxicating drink to his people, and the Bible teaching continues to harmonize. Ω

To Continue

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# Which Prophetic Interpretation?

## The Futuristic Interpretation of Prophecy

by Hollis Partlowe

**T**WO SUBJECTS are getting much attention in Christendom today—spiritual gifts (especially tongues) and eschatology (prophecy). In this article let's focus on the latter by answering the question, "How do we interpret the prophetic passages of God's Word?"

It's my opinion that the prophecies should be interpreted just like the rest of the Bible—in a literal sense—that is, to explain the original sense of the Bible according to the normal and customary usage of its language.

The presence of figures in Scripture doesn't militate against literal interpretation. Literal interpreters are not hindered by that which is figurative. There is no need to change to a different method of interpretation.

The system of interpretation is vitally important. If one student interprets a prophecy literally and another interprets the same passage figuratively or "spiritualizes it," their conclusions will be worlds apart.

Take the whole Book of Revelation, for example. Four different methods have been advanced to interpret this final book in the canon of Scripture.

1. *The Spiritual Approach*: the purpose of the book is simply to teach fundamental principles. No prophetic value is seen.

2. *The Preterist Approach*: John the author describes only events taking place in the Roman Empire during his lifetime, especially toward the end of the first century. It's of little value today.

3. *The Historical Approach*: This concept of the book, especially the prophecies about the seals, trumpets, and bowls, focuses on particular events in the history of the world that relate to the welfare of the church from its beginning to the present. However, it offers no yardstick by which to determine exactly what historical events are referred to in a given passage. Consequently, there is little if any uniformity among students who hold this view. The interpretations seem endless.

4. *The Futurist Approach*: This view affirms that, for the most part, the visions of this book will be fulfilled toward the end and at the end of this age.

While the first three chapters of the Revelation must be interpreted historically, this fascinating book will be more correctly interpreted if the futurist approach is used. This writer holds what he chooses to call the conservative view of the futurist interpretation of prophecy.

### Outline of the Book of Revelation

- Chapter 1 Introduction of the book
- 2-3 Seven letters to seven churches
- 4-19 The tribulation (70th week of Daniel)
- 20 The millennium
- 21-22 Eternity—New Heavens and New Earth

If this simple outline is followed, the final book of the Bible will make better sense. The first verse of the book contains

## The Historical Interpretation of Prophecy

by William M. Wachtel

**C**HURCH OF GOD Bible students hold to a pre-millennial understanding of prophecy—that is, the Lord Jesus Christ will return *before* the Millennium, the thousand years of Revelation 20. This doctrine has been characteristic of our people as far back as we can trace in the records that have survived to the present day. But the same records reveal *two* alternative viewpoints among Church of God students in regard to the prophetic events to occur before the end of the present age and the appearing of Jesus. These two contrasting views have been named Futurism and Historicism.

Futurism, as its name suggests, sees the fulfillment of most "latter days" prophecies as yet in the future; while Historicism sees a definite fulfillment of many such prophecies within and throughout the present Church Age. For this reason the latter is sometimes called the Continuous-Historical view. It must not be supposed that all Futurists are agreed among themselves as to specific details of prophetic interpretation, nor that Historicists are unanimous as to details, either. Rather, Futurism and Historicism are broad terms to designate two basically different *approaches* in the interpretation of prophecies concerning the "latter days."

### Daniel 2, the Foundation

The second chapter of Daniel has been called the "A-B-C's" of Bible prophecy. Daniel's inspired interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream provides a broad panorama and a basic outline of human history and the course of empire from Babylonia's heyday right down to the final overthrow of man's rule at the establishment of the kingdom of God. Daniel pictures a succession of empires beginning with Babylon itself, the head of gold. Within the Book of Daniel are named the two empires to follow Babylon—Medo-Persia (5:28, 8:20), and then Greece (8:21; 10:20). The Book of Daniel does not name the fourth empire, but describes it as one "strong as iron" (2:40), able to break in pieces and bruise other kingdoms, making them subservient to its will.

### Identity of Daniel's Fourth Kingdom

The New Testament and secular history unite to reveal the identity of Greece's successor, for it was the emperor of Rome who made the decree that "all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1). History verifies that Rome was indeed "strong as iron," able to subdue all nations. In a series of battles between Greece and Rome in the years 197 B.C. to 146 B.C., Greece was decisively defeated and became part of Rome's expanding dominions.

The government of the Roman emperors in the West lasted until A.D. 476 and in the East until 1453, making the Roman empire by far the longest in duration as well as the most resolute in its domination of the world. Gibbon's

## The Futuristic Interpretation, Parlowe

the true title of the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." (Since the book is focused for the most part on the return of Christ and the events immediately preceding that event, it seems to me that to interpret it as a history of the church age would be a mistake.)

The first two methods can be dismissed as being unworthy of serious consideration. While no system of interpretation is infallible, the futurist concept is the only one that makes extensive use of the literal interpretation of God's Word. If the Bible doesn't mean what it says, what does it mean? With any other method the possibilities are endless, and one man's opinion is as good as another. I'd much rather believe what God's Word says than what man says it says, which is true with all other systems of interpretation.

Most historical interpreters believe that the prophecies concerning Israel are fulfilled in the church, while futurist interpreters interpret them in a literal sense. They insist that Israel is Israel—that Israel refers to the physical descendants of Abraham through his grandson Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. Accordingly, they see events in Israel and the Middle East today as being of great significance. In fact, they see the whole focus on God's prophetic Word on that part of the earth.)

Most interpreters of the historical approach have simply updated the thinking of the Protestant reformers who believed that the Pope was the antichrist. In my opinion that is inaccurate. Furthermore, the Roman church has been steadily declining in popularity, and there would have to be a radical change in its appeal before it could amalgamate all these diverse people within it.

During the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, the reformers taught that the Pope was the antichrist. While it's understandable that one living at that time could come to that conclusion, it's clear now that that is not the right interpretation. However, some students still insist on holding to the view of the reformers. In my opinion it's totally untenable.

### The Antichrist in Prophecy

The antichrist is the beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1-10), the willful king (Dan. 11:36), the "little horn" (Dan. 7:8), the man of sin (2 Thes. 2:1-8) who is in existence when Jesus comes; "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (verse 8).

This man is the end-time political ruler of both the revived Roman Empire and the whole world. To interpret these prophecies as being fulfilled in a succession of popes through the centuries of the church is very poor exegesis, to my way of thinking. No succession of the Roman Empire (political or religious) has ever achieved the kind of power depicted in Revelation 13 and 17 and other prophetic passages.

### The 1260 Days (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:5)

Historical interpreters hold that a day equals exactly one year in prophecy. The 1260 days spoken of by Daniel and John supposedly predicted that the Pope would be taken prisoner by General Berthier, the Marshal of France, in 1798.

The 1260 "years" pertain to the papal supremacy of 538-1798 A.D. This idea can be seen by this equation.

$$\begin{array}{r} 538 \text{ A.D.} \\ +1260 \text{ "years"} \\ \hline 1798 \text{ A.D.} \end{array}$$

This is a good example of a historical interpretation which hides the real meaning of the passage.

The focus of both Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 13:5 is on the tribulation, the last seven years of this age, just before God's kingdom is established on earth. "A time and

## The Historical Interpretation, Wachtel

classic *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says, "But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. . . . To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly" (Vol. 1, p. 73).

After describing the fourth kingdom, Daniel said that it would be divided, the various parts not cleaving together as one any more. (2:41-43.) And yet in this division the element of iron would remain as a characteristic of strength in the midst of the weakness and disunity symbolized by the clay. Secular history provides ample evidence that this is exactly what occurred when Rome ceased to be ruled by the emperors and when the barbarian tribes of northern Europe overran the Empire and divided it up into the kingdoms which developed into the modern nations of Europe. The Historicist sees no break here in the continuity of the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. The image Nebuchadnezzar saw is one unbroken figure until the end, empire following empire in continuous succession until the whole is destroyed by the sudden intervention of the kingdom of God.

### Is There a Gap?

Many Futurists see a time gap between the iron legs of imperial Rome and the feet of iron and clay depicting the divided empire. Some have even made drawings of the image showing it broken at the ankles and floating in the air above the feet. The divided condition is then viewed as entirely future to the time of imperial Rome, with centuries separating the legs and the feet. Historicists reply that this is unnatural and foreign to the image as pictured, and that history itself verifies that the divided condition followed directly after imperial Rome and, indeed, continues down to our own day.

The "strength of the iron" that continued after the demise of the emperors and breakup of the imperial system came to reside in the person who appropriated to himself the emperors' official title—*Pontifex Maximus*, "Supreme Pontiff." His authority to rule in their stead was acknowledged by the kings and nations of Europe throughout the Medieval period and until very recent times. The Pontiff and the institution he represents have ruled with an iron hand for centuries over the diverse clay of the nations, working either behind the scenes or else with undisguised force, to impose his authority. These facts of history are on public record, and they establish the accuracy of this interpretation.

### Daniel's Four Beasts

Daniel 7 contains the famous prophecy of the four beasts that appear to represent the same four empires described in chapter 2. Further details are added, however, especially with regard to the fourth. Without discussing every particular at this point, it may be said that Historicists generally regard the "little horn" (v. 8) as the papacy or line of pontiffs. History certainly reveals how they "made war with the saints" (v. 21) for centuries, putting to death some fifty million persons for conscience' sake. (Some historians estimate many more than this number.)

When to this is added the incredible blasphemy that all such horrors were carried out "in the name of Christ" at the behest of the self-styled "Vicar of Christ," it becomes evident that this personage has spoken "great words against the most High" (7:25). Many of our forefathers fled to this continent to escape the vile persecutions that have now been so easily forgotten by us, their children. A reading of *Fox's Book of Martyrs* would do most of us a lot of good.

### Paul's "Man of Sin"

In 2 Thessalonians the Apostle Paul tells of the coming of

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times and the dividing of time" equals three and one half years as does 42 months (30 days to the Jewish month) or 1260 days. The seven-year period is also known as Daniel's seventieth week (9:27). The week (or seven years) is divided equally into two periods of three and one half each or 1260 days. The last half is generally called the Great Tribulation. It's the time of "Jacob's [Israel's] trouble" (Jer. 30:7).

Moreover, it's the period of Israel's persecution just prior to her redemption and restoration as a nation in the millennial reign of Christ. It's Israel's time and has nothing to do with Catholicism and the popes in particular.

Certainly, Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8 is describing an actual eschatological individual, not a mere principle, or even a succession of persons. The context plainly places him in the end time, for he will be personally slain by the returning Christ (verse 8). Clearly we have here the prophetic individual elsewhere spoken of as "The antichrist," a name which well sums up his character and career. This man emerges in the very end time as the final Gentile ruler and will fulfill his prophetic destiny as world ruler.

Students who hold the historical interpretation of the Revelation identify the beast out of the sea as the Roman popes. The reference to the sea portrays the invading Goths descending on the Roman Empire, the German people who overran the Roman Empire in the early centuries of the Christian era. This is straining Scripture to the breaking point, to my way of thinking.

Another difficulty with the historical view of the Revelation is its lack of uniformity, with literally dozens of explanations on a given symbol depending on the time and circumstances of the expositor.

### The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11

Once again, if one follows the historical interpretation, he is led to believe that these two witnesses are the true church and the Bible, or the Old and New Testaments. Events of this prophecy are seen to correspond to the French Revolution marking the end of the prophetic period of papal supremacy from 538-1798 A.D. This is another good example of a non-literal interpretation which hides the real meaning of the passage.

Doubtless, the right timing is one of the keys to prophetic understanding. The time period of Revelation 11 is clearly the tribulation, the last seven years before establishment of the kingdom. These two witnesses are real men that God will raise up at that time. They are to prophesy 1260 days (3½ years). They have God's power like Moses and Elijah had; they can shut the heavens, stop the rain, turn water to blood, smite the earth with curses, etc.

Furthermore, their ministry is in Jerusalem, "where also our Lord was crucified" (verse 8); they are killed, and their dead bodies lie in the street for three and one half days, etc. To make a long story short, we have a choice of literal interpretation (remember the definition of literal interpretation) or several others which admittedly do not give adequate explanation of the passage.

The purpose of the prophetic expositor is to find the right interpretation of a given passage and show adequate fulfillment. Prophecy is history written in advance, but it's not written like history. Dates are not given as is the case with history. The Bible is dated by the reign of kings, for the most part, and is not very specific as far as dates are concerned. Consequently, one should use mathematical exactness sparingly in studying the fulfillment of prophecy. The long list of dates often given by some expositors supposedly to show fulfillment of certain prophecies is not very impressive or convincing.

If we try to make every little event of history fulfill some prophecy, people will lose confidence and respect in us. Our credibility will be weakened. God forbid that we should drift in that direction.

### The Historical Interpretation, Wachtel

the "man of sin . . . the son of perdition" (2:3). His coming must precede the return of Christ, and is associated with the "falling away." The latter is a translation of the Greek, *he apostasia*, "the apostasy." Such a departure from the faith had been foretold by the apostles. (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Pet. 2:1-15; Jude 4-19; Acts 20:30.)

Historians point out how early the church began to forsake the New Testament doctrines and practices, once the apostles had died. By the third and fourth centuries the simple congregational government had been replaced by an intricate hierarchy of bishops and councils. The hope of the kingdom on earth had been replaced by the tradition of a home in heaven for one's immortal soul. And, most disastrous of all, the truth about the one God of Israel, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, had been superseded by trinitarianism—in effect placing an idol of human invention before the eyes of those who claimed to be Christian worshipers. Historicists contend that no apostasy of future times could ever be so complete and so fundamental as was the dreadful and wholesale departure from the truth that took place then.

Paul continued by saying that the Man of Sin would exalt himself above God, and take his seat in the "temple of God." Futurists have generally assumed that this phrase refers to a restored, literal temple to be built by the Jews in Jerusalem before Jesus comes. But it should be noted that *everywhere else* in Paul's writings "the temple of God" refers to the body of believers as a whole or as individuals. In other words, the term is figurative and not literal in Paul's writings, unless 2 Thessalonians 2:4 is the only exception.

The pontiff has surely taken his seat in what was (before the apostasy) and still claims to be "the temple of God"—the church of the living God. The "Holy See" means the "Holy Seat," and the pope claims to speak infallibly when he teaches *ex cathedra*, "from the seat" of authority. Papal theologians outdid one another for centuries in the scramble to manufacture titles of deity by which the faith might address the pope. As recently as 1894, Pope Leo XIII stated in an encyclical: "We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty." At his coronation, the pope is given this charge: "Receive this tiara, embellished with three crowns, and never forget that thou art the Father of Princes and Kings, the *Supreme Judge of the Universe*, and on earth, Vicar of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour." Moreri, a Catholic historian, wrote: "To make war against the Pope is to make war against God, seeing the Pope is God and God is the Pope." Such quotations could be multiplied from historical sources, but these should suffice to show how exactly and how blasphemously the papacy has fulfilled the prophecies regarding its deification.

### Conclusion

Time and space do not permit this article to discuss other texts that relate to "latter days" prophecies. Our attempt has been to show how a few important prophetic passages may be explained and—we hope—clarified on the basis of the Historical interpretation of prophecy.

*Editor's Note: The Restitution Herald editor, Russell Magaw, noticed that the majority of their readers took the futuristic view, but several readers preferred the historical view of prophecy. Therefore, he decided to print both views side by side in the February, 1981, issue. I feel that we need to clarify our methodology of prophetic interpretation. This is the reason why I decided to seek permission to reprint this article. I hope it will help us evaluate our methodology of interpreting prophecy. It seems to me that most of us are eclectic (we select or use all methods).*

# Another Look at Zechariah 14:16-20

by Fred Walter

*Editor's note: The purpose of presenting this study is to offer a forum on the issues. The author welcomes comments or inquiries.*

Zechariah 14 has been understood by Bible students in varying ways, based on differing concepts. This is just as true among Sabbatarians and even within the Church of God (Seventh Day) as among others.

The majority of views come down to at least two major points of view. The one major point of view dictates that Zechariah 14 is to be understood in its entirety from a literal perspective. At that point, students who accept a literal interpretation then take "separate paths" to come to their final conclusions. Two of the most popular paths of the FIRST VIEW are:

- 1) *Zechariah 14 confirms that the Hebrew festivals, or at least the Feast of Booths, are (is) for all ages, since they (it) will be kept in the millennium, the period of time being described in this chapter;*
- 2) *Zechariah 14 does acknowledge that the Feast of Booths will be kept in the millennium; but the description implies a DISPENSATIONAL application. We do not have to keep it now, and the saints will not keep it in the millennium. Only the unsaved will keep it.*

These are the two primary approaches of fundamentalist Sabbatarians, of which I am aware.

The *SECOND MAJOR POINT* of view among Bible students is that Zechariah 14:16-20 is speaking literally for the benefit of its readers who lived prior to and during the time of Christ - SO THAT THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND IN TERMS FAMILIAR TO THEM, and because the passage found partial fulfillment in the period of the post exile (that is, after the Babylonian captivity, up to and including the time of the Roman captivity). But it

should be understood in our times as being symbolic and figurative. This point of view enjoys a rather limited audience within the Church of God leadership, though those who do are quite firm in their conviction.

Some of the reasons given for this latter position are based both on the text itself and on other scriptural considerations. I will try to detail these reasons further because I feel they at least deserve weighted consideration.

The proponents of this latter school of thought point out that, within the text itself can be found a pattern which suggests figurative understanding. Verse 20 refers to words being written on the bells of the horses. They are: "Holiness Unto the Lord." The horses symbolize war, and now they are part of the new kingdom of peace. The reference to "every pot in Jerusalem and Judah" as being "holiness unto the Lord" is to be understood symbolically, point out the proponents of this interpretation. The allegory of the pots is a reference to feasting following sacrificing, which is borne out further in verse 21.

To recognize further the symbolic language, the students of this approach also refer to verses 17-19, particularly verses 17 and 18, where they point out that the family of Egypt will be punished for not keeping the feast by not receiving any rain, in addition to a further plague. Of course, we know that Egypt is an arid country, receiving very little rain now. That country's agriculture is watered by the waters of the Nile rather than by rain. So the threat of no rain seems little punishment. Therefore, according to the proponents of this position, the punishment should be understood symbolically or figuratively.

This train of thought is bringing us to some particular points. If we can under-

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stand that certain parts of this prophecy can be understood figuratively, we can begin to develop an overview that may be quite significant.

Passover was the primary Jewish festival because it was their *Independence Day*. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) also celebrated the giving of the Law and represented the first fruits of the harvest. The Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths) concluded the agricultural year, at which came the ingathering of summer fruits and harvest. Therefore, *Tabernacles* best represents the commemoration of the final ingathering of all nations and the renewal of nature into harmony as a whole. This festival seems to me to be the most appropriate for the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Moving back down to the reference to the "horses", to "pots", and to "sacrifice", further comment is appropriate. What "figurativists" see here is that the distinction between secular and sacred, within the land of Israel, will have been abolished. Everything will have become holy because it will be dedicated to a holy purpose. The inscription on the horses (symbols of war, as already pointed out) is the same inscription found on the high priest's mitre: "Holiness Unto the Lord" (see Exodus 28:38). The pots will be transformed into sacred vessels in consecration to God.

"What about the *sacrificing*?" This thought needs to be understood in terms of New Testament concepts. Hebrews 10:1-4 and following (especially including verse 10) makes clear that "blood of bulls and of goats" could not "take away sins." Verse 10 amplifies by stating that our sanctification has come "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE FOR ALL!"

It has always seemed strange to me that Christ would have a kingdom in which He is reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords and in which *sacrificing of animals is being conducted in a show of totally ignoring His completed sacrifice on the cross!* That certainly does not sound like a place in which He is in control. Keep in mind that this would be going on in Jerusalem, the center of worship and the seat of Christ's throne.

It is my conviction that this relates to the issue the writer of Hebrews is addressing in chapter six, the first six verses. Note especially, beginning with verse 4:

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

Most people try to fit this scripture into a meaning separate from its context. Namely, a lot of Bible students try to imply that somehow *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit* is the implied subject being addressed here because that is the only unpardonable sin. The context does not allow such interpretation, nor does the text itself. What is being addressed is the fact that there were those who would claim to have accepted Christ, *then would turn around and reject His full and final sacrifice for sin on the cross*, and would try to "do it" another way. In other words, they would return to "weak and beggarly elements," as suggested in another place (Galatians).

There is no other way to salvation than through the cross of Christ. To reintroduce sacrifices or their appertinent trappings, including Hebrew festivals which found their meaning in sacrifices, is to reject the ONLY WAY to life eternal, acceptance of the atoning work of Christ. There is no other door.

How then could Christ openly condone festival observance, with accompanying sacrifices, etc., in His kingdom? I do not believe He does.

Additionally, I would like to point out that the animal sacrifices are not the main feature of the imagery expressed. Throughout the prophecy existing institutions are offered to illustrate the wonder of the age to come. The point that is being made, as I understand it, is the exclusion of any and all unworthy elements from the holy worship of the great King of kings.

One more point - the vision seems, to many, to defy historical identification. Though some scholars suggest it refers to the Roman takeover of Israel, the language appears to be symbolic and eschatological; that is, it refers to the coming kingdom of Christ. The vision is ideological. Throughout we detect Messianic representations. This vision offers the assurance that the day is coming in which God will be "all in all." *Continues on page 26*

# *Judgments of God on False Christianity*

*(800 A.D. to 1800 A.D.)*

*by K. C. Walker*

To understand the judgments of God, we need to realize that God is a Spirit, and that His judgments are directed by the force of His Spirit.

Isaiah the prophet declares, "For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

He further declares, "And for the spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate" (Isaiah 26:6).

God executed judgment on pagan Babylon of the Roman world as he had declared by the prophets. He must execute judgment on papal Babylon as the prophets also declared.

## *Statement of Judgment on Papal Babylon*

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (Daniel 7:26).

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the SPIRIT of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (II Thessalonians 2:8).

"And the beast was taken, and with him the FALSE PROPHET that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Revelation 19:20).

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 16:2).

Here are statements of judgment which refer to papal Babylon, beginning with our introduction to the "man of sin" by the prophet Daniel, to the judgment of this system in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

## *Daniel 7:26*

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end."

"His dominion" in verse 26 takes us back to verse 25 which states: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

So the judgment of verse 26 is on an enemy of God, called a "little horn" in verses 8,11,20-22. This "little horn" apparently came out of the fourth beast seen in a vision by the prophet Daniel. Verse 17 tells us that these four beasts, seen in the vision, represent "four kings" or kingdoms, as verse 23 explains. It is evident that the "fourth beast" (verse 23) represented the kingdom of the Roman Empire. Ten horns are seen on this fourth beast which we are told represent "ten kings" that would arise out of the fourth beast (Rome). From among these ten horns (kings) would arise the "little horn," which would make "war with the saints, and prevail against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High..." (verses 21,22).

Here is pictured an instrument of judgment, namely: "the saints of the most High."

Yes, God's people would be instruments through which the Spirit of God would work to dissolve the power of this "little horn."

## ***The Ten Horns and the Little Horn***

As verse 24 tells us, "The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall arise out of them...." The verse reveals that the "little horn" would come on the scene after the rise of the ten kings (or kingdoms) on the ruins of the Roman Empire.

Historians seem to agree that pagan Rome came to an end in A.D. 476. That which brought it to an end was the invasion of the Roman Empire by Barbarian tribes of people from outside the Roman world in the third and fourth centuries A.D. They divided up the territory of Rome into various states, or kingdoms. These tribes were the Heruli, Suevi, Burgundians, Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Franks and Anglo-Saxons.

After the formation of these ten kingdoms would arise the "little horn" which would uproot three of these kingdoms. So, from A.D. 476 we would expect to see an eleventh horn or power to arise, opposing the true people of God, and changing "times and laws" for a "time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).

Note what took the place of paganism, or what developed on the ruins of pagan Rome.

### ***History***

"Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire, and took the place of paganism.

"Christianity began to wear the garb of heathenism. The errors that later overran the church began to take root. Christianity as it existed in the dark ages might be termed baptized paganism." From Warey's Church History.

John Henry said, "Eusebius tells us that Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own. Temples dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasion with tree branches, incense, lamps, candles, votive, offerings, holy water, holy days, and seasonal processions, vestments, tonsures, the ring in marriage, turning to the east, images, are all pagan origin and sanctified by their adoption into the church: (Essay on "Christian Doctrine," p. 372).

It is almost needless to say of the "little horn" that it was the development of the spiritual authority of the church of

Rome, sitting crowned on the grave of pagan Rome. This religious system exercised both religious and political authority over her subjects for more than one thousand years.

### ***Time Period of the "Little Horn"***

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).

"Time and times and the dividing of time" is the period allotted to this little horn. Remember that verse 26 tells us this horn's judgment would begin before he was finally dethroned from his position of power.

This period of "time and times and the dividing of time" is spoken of in three different ways. It is spoken of as 1260 days in Revelation 12:6. See also verse 14. Then it is spoken of as forty and two months in Revelation 11:2; 13:5.

Counting the time period from the 1260-day statement of Revelation 12:6, and counting a day for a year we would have 1260 years of reign for this "little horn." Seeing it is evident that it represents the religious and political system of the church of Rome, it could not be a mere three and one half years as some try to apply this prophecy. Every knowledgeable person knows that the church of Rome ruled with an iron hand over the peoples of Europe for more than one thousand years. Our own national heritage here in the U.S.A. attests to this truth. Religious liberty here is the product, the outgrowth, of the persecutions our founding fathers experienced at the hands of the force of the church of Rome in Europe.

In this study we are to determine the judgment of this system as was foretold by Daniel the prophet (Daniel 7:26).

### ***As the Apostle Paul Sees This System and Judgment***

To the church in Thessalonica Paul wrote, "Let no man deceive you by any means..." (II Thessalonians 2:3). Here he is warning of the possibility of a deceiver in relation to the second coming of Christ. Paul seems to understand that a super deceiver is to come, possibly due to his knowledge of the prophecy of Daniel.

Paul further tells what will bring about the development of this "super

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# UNCLEANNES AND MOSES' LAW

by Carl Palmer

(A Representative of the General Council)

## INTRODUCTION

In this study we wish to examine THE "UNCLEAN" LAW AS A WHOLE to see when it was given as well as to determine what areas it covered. As a study on the Sabbath question would not be complete without placing it in its proper setting among the other nine commandments, even so, a study of any portion of the "unclean" law should be viewed in its relationship to the whole law on the clean and unclean.

The Bible records the giving of the unclean law to Israel in the fifth through the fifteenth chapters of Leviticus. This law covers six major areas:

- (1) touching dead animal carcasses, Leviticus 5:2;
- (2) eating meats classified as unclean, Leviticus 11;
- (3) giving birth to a child, Leviticus 12;
- (4) leprosy, Leviticus 13-14;
- (5) issues, including running sores, sexual intercourse (semen), and a woman's menstrual issue of blood, Leviticus 15;
- (6) touching a dead person.

Any one of these things would cause a person to be unclean.

It seems fair to state that this unclean law should stand or fall intact, or good reason should be shown why part should be kept while the rest is to be discarded.

## THE QUESTIONS OF SIN AND UNCLEANNES

Now let us go back to the unclean law and take a closer look at it. Did the fact

that a person was declared unclean mean he/she sinned? Did a woman commit sin when she had a child? Did a married couple sin when they had sexual intercourse? Did a person sin by touching a dead member of his family? Did they sin by touching a dead animal? Was a leper a sinner just because he was a leper? Most people would say the answer to the above questions is "No." However, those who hold to the unclean law today select only the portion relative to eating and say that this is a sin. Is that logical or consistent when the six subdivisions are all a part of the same law? We will agree that knowingly eating something unclean was a sin, but it was the sin of disobeying, which also would apply to an Israelite who refused to be circumcised, not because there was moral or inherent sin. In like manner, not being circumcised was only a sin of disobedience for that dispensation and had no inherent sin, or it would still be in effect today.

How did a person become clean under the unclean law? "Common to all purity rituals is the time factor: until evening for the lesser degrees of impurity (e.g., Leviticus 11:24,25,27) and seven days for the greater degrees (e.g., Leviticus 12:2; with certain exceptions, the purity of the leper is dependent on his complete recovery)" (The Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 13, page 1406).

*Three degrees of uncleanness may be distinguished. (1) That lasting until even, removable by bathing and washing the clothes; as contact with dead animals. (2) That lasting seven days, removable by the 'water of separation,' as defilement from a human corpse. (3) From the diseased, puerperal, or menstrual state; lasting as long as this continued; in the*

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# UNCLEANNES AND MOSES' LAW

by Dale Lawson

(A Representative of the General Conference)

## INTRODUCTION

A study of the laws of cleanness during the time of the administration of Moses and enforcement of Levitical law serves to strengthen the position that one should not eat those animals declared by the Bible to be unclean.

It is during that time period and in that portion of Scripture that one finds definition given to the law of clean and unclean meats. It is there that God clearly states His purpose for instructing His people concerning what they should not eat. By comparison, it is interesting to note that it is in this same time period and portion of Scripture that God gives definition concerning the Ten Commandments. While casual reference may be made to them (some of them) in the book of Genesis, no place in that book does He enumerate them.

Consider with me some observations from Scripture concerning certain laws of cleanness from Levitical time as compared to observations from Scripture concerning the law of clean and unclean meats.

## THE INCLUSION PRINCIPLE

There is a rather obvious truth concerning God's expectations for His people during the time of the enforcement of Levitical law. That truth is, that God's laws for His people which were kept and are to be kept outside the time of Levitical law, certainly are included in the obligations of God's people during the time of Levitical law. In fact, it is there that enumeration, definition and specifics are given. Obviously then, one would not conclude that because certain responsibilities of those who would serve God are more clearly defined in Levitical writings, that must be the point of origin. Consider some examples with me:

1) It is in Deuteronomy 6:5 that a commandment to...love the Lord, thy God with all

thine heart...is first mentioned in Scripture. However, this is not the origin of the principle to love God and we are all aware that Jesus even quoted it as a portion of summary of the Ten Commandments.

2) Circumcision does not originate with Levitical law; it is simply included and more fully defined in Levitical law.

3) The Ten Commandments do not originate with Levitical law. They however are enumerated and given definition in Levitical law.

4) The Sabbath does not originate at Mt. Sinai. It is simply included as a responsibility of God's people also for Levitical time.

Likewise, the law of clean and unclean does not originate with Mt. Sinai and Levitical law. It is simply included in and given definition in the books of the law. The law of the clean and unclean is first referred to in Genesis 7. The Hebrew word for *not clean* from Genesis 7 is *loh tahor* and according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, it means *not pure in a phy., chem., cerem., or moral sense*. The Hebrew word for *unclean* is *tame* and is used in Levitical law in reference to the law of the clean and unclean meats. In that sense it means *foul in a religious sense-defiled-polluted*. The person who ate unclean meat then defiled himself. As one can see by the meanings, the end result is the same. Both Hebrew words leave unclean meats to be defiling in every way. No place in definition or in Scripture does a statement occur suggesting that the purpose in either Genesis 7 or Leviticus 11 is for sacrifice. Obviously, only clean animals could be used for sacrifice because unclean animals in the *temple of God* were not acceptable then, neither are they now. The existence of the law of clean and unclean (not clean) is in Genesis 7 and then is simply defined and included in Levitical law.

## PURPOSE

Let's examine the biblically stated purpose for the law of clean and unclean. There

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*leper's case, for life. (A.R. Faussett Bible Encyclopaedia and Dictionary Critical and Expository, Grand Rapids Zondervan Publishing House, p. 707).*

A study of Leviticus 11, which deals with touching carcasses and with eating unclean meat, reveals no mention of a sacrifice. Instead, we find that the two things necessary for cleansing were washing and waiting for sundown. How many other sins (?) can you name that needed no sacrifice to rectify them? *Washing* and *time* were the two basic elements in the cleansing of all uncleanness, although some instances, like childbirth, did take a sacrifice.

To illustrate this point let us say a man ate something unclean just after sundown. He is convicted and, since he wants to serve God, he washes and earnestly seeks God for forgiveness. Regardless of how earnestly he repents he is not clean until the next evening. On the other hand, if the same man had eaten unclean meat just before sundown and repented of it he would be clean as soon as the sun went down, even while he still had unclean meat in his stomach. Once again this reveals that we are not talking of moral sin since we become clean through blood (Jesus' blood in this age) and our sincere repentance. There is no limit or waiting period.

Deuteronomy 14:21 is an interesting passage. It has been shown that eating an animal that dies of itself causes a person to become unclean (Leviticus 11:39, 40), and yet Deuteronomy 14:21 said to sell it to a stranger. Anything that is basically a sin has always been as wrong for the gentile as it was for an Israelite. A case in point would be murder. God would not instruct the Israelites to cause a gentile among them to commit a sin -- or was it only wrong for the Israelites (as in the matter of circumcision)?

Another interesting passage is found in Leviticus 7:24 which reads: *And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it.* Leviticus 11:8 and 39 forbade the Israelites to touch dead carcasses, even those of clean animals. Those who disobeyed became unclean. Yet Leviticus 7:24, while forbidding Israel to eat the fat from dead carcasses, permitted them to use it for any other purpose. How could they use the fat without touching the carcass? Which verse takes precedence in this case?

If Leviticus 11:39 takes precedence, which forbids the touching of dead carcasses, then Leviticus 7:24, which permits the use of the fat, is entirely meaningless. If, on the other hand, Leviticus 7:24 takes precedence, then God permitted and encouraged disobedience to the unclean law because using the fat necessitated touching the dead carcass. Leviticus 7:24, which permitted the use of fat from dead carcasses, would be unthinkable if Leviticus 11 were dealing with moral sin.

## A CEREMONIAL LAW PECULIAR TO ISRAEL

*The law of Moses made clear distinctions between clean and unclean, the holy and unholy (Leviticus 10:10). Uncleanness was primarily ceremonial defilement, not moral, unless done wilfully. It kept a man from the service of the sanctuary and from fellowship with his coreligionist. Ceremonial defilement was contracted in several ways, and provision was made for cleansing (J.D. Douglas, The New Bible Dictionary, n.p., n.d., n.p.).*

The deeper we go into a study of the unclean law the more evident it becomes that IT WAS NOT DEALING WITH MORAL OR INHERENT SIN BUT WAS DEALING WITH TYPES.

The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Vol. 13, page 1407, under the heading "Purity and Impurity") states in reference to the unclean law that the *Things susceptible to impurity are; man, utensils, food, and drink. By man, only an ISRAELITE is meant* (emphasis ours). This definitely states that only an Israelite became unclean by transgressing the unclean law. This shows that the unclean law was a type, applying only to the nation of Israel and not a moral law for all men, as was the Ten Commandments.

*Amongst causes of defilement should be noticed the fact that the ashes of the red heifer, burnt whole, which were mixed with water, and became the standing resource for purifying uncleanness in the second degree, themselves became a source of defilement to all who were clean (Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. 13, p. 1406).*

The very thing required for cleansing those who were unclean caused those who touched it to become unclean. This also indicates that we are dealing with ceremonial

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is in the Bible, a single stated purpose for the law of clean and unclean. Notice it from Leviticus 11:43-47.

*Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth,... For I am the LORD your God; ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy... For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. This is the law of the beast, and of the fowl...to make a difference between the unclean and the clean....*

God simply says that He made distinction between the unclean and the clean because He did not want His people to make themselves abominable by eating unclean animals. Then He says that He does not want His people to eat unclean animals so that they may be holy.

This brings to mind a principle existing in Scripture that urges God's people to be separate from the ways of those about us who disobey God. That principle is so clearly stated in the New Testament concept, in such texts as II Corinthians 6:17; Romans 12:1, 2; I Peter 1:15, 16 and I Peter 2:9. God had already stated that principle to His people in Leviticus 20:24-26 emphasizing the law of clean and unclean. He said,

*I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean...and ye shall not make your souls abominable... And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

God tells Israel that He wants them to be separate, not to eat unclean animals and be HOLY. In verse 23 God informed Israel that He *abhorred* the ways of those nations around them.

Consider with me the proposition that the law of clean and unclean was given only for Israel and not for Gentiles who would also serve God. That proposition simply fails to hold up in Scripture. We recognize that the nations around Israel were heathen and idolatrous. However, individuals among them had seen the power and glory of God and had chosen to become His servants. The Bible says that to Israel was given the *oracles of God*. (Romans 3:1,2). Gentiles who saw the power of God and became converts to Him did so through Israel. That does not mean they

lived in Israel. When Solomon dedicated the temple he prayed,

*Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake...when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear...*

Then it is stated in Leviticus 24:22,

*Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the LORD your God.*

Multitudes of texts and examples in Scripture show that Gentiles who would serve God were obligated to the laws He gave to Israel.

## LAWS OF CLEANNESS

There are certain laws given to Israel that governed their lives in relation to personal defilement or uncleanness. If one touched the carcass of anything unclean unknowingly, when it was brought to his attention, he was declared to be unclean until that evening. He was then commanded to wash himself and offer certain offerings to the LORD (Leviticus 11:25-28 & Leviticus 5:1-7). If a woman gave birth to a child she was declared unclean for certain days. Then she was assigned days of purification and at the end of those days she had to offer certain offerings to the LORD (Leviticus 12). If a person had leprosy, he was declared to be unclean and had to live without the camp. When a leper was healed and cleansed, he was required to wash and offer certain offerings to the LORD (Leviticus 13, 14).

The same laws of cleanness were given relative to running sores, seed of copulation, menstrual periods, and eating anything that died of itself (Leviticus 15 and 17:15, 16). The person involved was declared unclean until evening or a certain period of time and then he had to wash himself and offer certain offerings. If he did not do so, he had to bear his iniquity (Leviticus 17:16). It is clear that any disobedience of God's instruction was sin, so that if a person failed to wash and offer those specified offerings to the LORD he became guilty.

However, it is impossible to put those laws of cleanness in the same category with the law of clean and unclean meats. Here are reasons given that prove the point. → 25

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al rather than moral defilement.

When Israel went into the Promised Land, God instructed them that they were to have nothing to do with the gentile inhabitants lest they be enticed to serve their idols. Israel disobeyed this instruction and worshiped false gods, and, as a result, were punished for it. Leviticus 20:24 (last part), 25 and 26 states:

*I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore (because of this) put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

Most Bible authorities we have checked state that keeping the Israelites separate from the gentiles was one of the main purposes for the unclean law. A Dictionary of the Bible by William Smith under the heading, "Unclean Meats," states that,

*As orientals have minds sensitive to teaching by types, there can be little doubt that such ceremonial distinctions not only tended to keep Jew and Gentile apart but were a perpetual reminder to the former that he and the latter were not on one level before God. Hence, when that ceremony was changed, we find that this was the very symbol selected to instruct St. Peter in the truth that God was not a "respector of persons" (Page 723).*

## AN EXPLANATION OF THE ABOMINABLE

There are those who hold that the abominable in Revelation 21:8, 27 include those guilty of eating meat defined as unclean according to Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

The word abomination is defined as something filthy, abhorrent, detestable or disgusting, etc. It is apparent that this feeling would vary from person to person. Gentiles (including Egyptians) were shunned by the Israelites. At the same time the Israelites were an abomination to the Egyptians (Genesis 43:32).

The lamb represented the best to the Israelites but was an abomination to the Egyptians (Genesis 46:34; Exodus 8:26). The thought of eating grasshoppers and locusts is very abhorrent to some, but John the Baptist didn't seem to share those feelings of disgust (Matthew 3:4). With this in mind, let us determine just what all was abominable and to WHOM.

There are many things in the Bible which are described as being ABOMINABLE TO GOD, including idolatry, immorality, sexual perversion, gossiping, lying, pride and many others. But nowhere in all the Bible does it say that eating unclean meat is an abomination to God.

The Hebrew word used in relation to unclean animals as an abomination is shegets or shagats (Strong's Concordance No. 8262 and 8263). The majority of the time when used, it definitely states that the unclean animals were an abomination to the Israelites (i.e., Leviticus 11 and verses 10-12, 20, 23, and 43). The rest of the time it only says they are abominable but doesn't say to whom (i.e., Leviticus 11, verses 42, 43; Isaiah 66:17, etc.). But NEVER does it say that they are an abomination to God.

Somebody will say the Bible infers they were an abomination to God and, since the Lord never changes, they still are an abomination to Him. If this were true, then how much of the unclean law was an abomination to God? Or do we fall back once more to the position that only ONE point out of the SIX included in the unclean law was an abomination to God?

The very word unclean in the Hebrew means something foul, filthy and detestable, which is practically the same meaning as abomination.

The position that only one point of the unclean law was abominable, will not stand the test of close scrutiny, since Leviticus 11:11 states that the touching of their carcasses is an abomination. Thus we would become abominable by emptying a mouse trap or touching a dead fly. Leviticus 7:21 states:

*Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which pertain unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.*



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This verse refers to the touching of any unclean thing as being abominable and it includes the uncleanness of man. This uncleanness of man is explained in Leviticus 15 and includes running sores, sex (verses 16-18) and a woman's menstrual issue of blood. Was this, and is this, considered an abomination to God? No! The things defined as unclean in the unclean law are not now and never were considered an abomination to God! If they were ever an abomination then they would still be so at this time. This would mean that included among those that would be lost for all eternity (Revelation 21:8, 27) would be all lepers, women giving birth to children, married couples who have sexual relations, those touching dead people and animals, along with those eating unclean meat.

How can it be said that only part of the unclean law is still in force? How can it be said that God only considers ONE point in SIX to be an abomination when the whole law is described as an abomination?

When the position is accepted that the unclean law was a type of the gentiles and thus were to be considered unclean there is harmony in God's Word.

*Strong's Concordance* defines the words translated unclean as follows: (1) No. 2930: *Tame, To be foul, especially in a Ceremonial sense (contaminated): defile (self), pollute (self), be (make, make self, pronounce) unclean, utterly.* (2) No. 2931: *Tame, foul in a religious sense; defiled, infamous, polluted(tion) unclean.* (3) No. 2932: *Tumah, religious impurity: filthiness, unclean(ness).*

Strong primarily defines these words as being unclean ceremoniously or religiously, not morally, and the rest of the Bible seems to support this view.

### CONCLUSION

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT CHILDBIRTH AND PROPER SEX WERE EVER AN ABOMINATION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD?

To repeat, in closing, the unclean law was given as a whole in Leviticus 5-15 of which the following would make a person unclean: touching dead animals or dead people, leprosy, childbirth, sex, as well as eating certain meats. It was given INTACT and it should STAND or FALL as a WHOLE! Ω

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1. These laws of cleanness are not simply included in the Levitical code from other portions of scripture. The only reference to them is in the Levitical law. With the law of clean and unclean meats and other matters that is not the case. They are simply included and given definition in Levitical law.
2. Due to certain circumstances, individuals were declared unclean (defiled) for a limited period of time and then if they washed and offered certain offerings, they were clean and not guilty. Never was such provision of limited uncleanness made for those who ate unclean food. That disobedience would fall into simple rebellion to God's law. It was not just until sundown and neither would it help to wash.
3. While a person was not to disregard laws of uncleanness because he would be not pure in a ceremonial and moral sense - in fact, contaminated, a person was not to eat unclean meat because it was AN ABOMINATION unto Him. The Hebrew word for abomination is *sheget* and means *filth*. The Hebrew for abominable is *shagat* and means *to be filthy, to loath, abhor and utterly detest*. That is what God said unclean meats were to His people.
4. The purpose of certain laws of cleanness had to do with personal cleanness with limited times, offerings and washings. The purpose for the law of clean and unclean related to holiness because unclean animals simply were not to be eaten. They were an abomination to the people of God.

### CONCLUSION

The inclusion of the law of clean and unclean in the Levitical code does not mean that it originates there. Scripture teaches otherwise. The law of clean and unclean is not to be categorized with Levitical laws of cleanness. The law of clean and unclean has a different purpose from the Levitical laws of cleanness. The law of clean and unclean should be observed by Christians today. Ω

From page 19, *Judgments of God* . . .

deceiver." "For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (II Thessalonians 2:7).

This would indicate that the falling away was in progress, but he informs us of something hindering the rise of the "man of sin." "Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

When one recognizes that the head of the church in Rome came to fill the vacant position of the Emperor of Rome, this would lead us to believe that the end of pagan Rome is what is seen here by the writer.

Constantine was the last Emperor to reign from the City of Rome. His removal of the capital of the Empire to Constantinople is what opened the way for the rise of the Roman church to both political and religious control of the western part of the Roman Empire, leading to the so-called "Holy Roman Empire."

Verse 4 seems to point to this super man (deceiver) as claiming heaven's authority. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

The words, "sitteth in the temple of God," simply means, "taking charge of God's church, claiming, as does the Pope of Rome, to be the final authority of heaven."

It is interesting to note that in all places where Paul spoke of the temple of God, he simply has reference to the Church of God, which is the body of Christ.

The judgment of this man of sin and his religious system is given thus: "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (verse 8). This indicates he will survive to the coming of our Lord, but not before judgment will set in.

### **To Consume and to Destroy**

To *consume* and to *destroy* are the same words used in Daniel 7:26: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to CONSUME AND TO DESTROY it unto the end."

Is it possible that Paul was receiving part of his inspiration from the judgment scene as found in Daniel 7? We will note before we finish this study that the Apostle

Paul gave other valuable statements from this chapter. His understanding of God's plan in dealing with man surely reveals his knowledge of the writings of the prophets.

Daniel 7:26 indicates a gradual removing of the "little horn" power; first, by the consuming process of the "spirit of his mouth" (II Thessalonians 2:8).

We will note later in this study that Christ (the white horse rider of Revelation 19) overcomes the nations with a sharp sword, which proceeds out of his mouth.

Remember that the writer of the Hebrew letter tells us, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Of Christ we are told, in Revelation 1:16, "And out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword." This certainly is not a carnal assault by our Lord on His enemies.

We will note later who handles this sword for our Lord in this great manifestation of judgment.

Inasmuch as the judgment comes on the false Christian church founded on the ruins of Pagan Rome, it follows that the word, *destroy* as found in both Daniel 7:26 and II Thessalonians 2:8, means that ultimately this deceptive religious system will come to an end, possibly at the second coming of Christ. Ω

*To Continue*

From page 17

## **ANOTHER LOOK AT ZECHARIAH**

Finally, I would like to suggest that this prophecy as given by Zechariah, likely during the time of the Babylonian exile, was designed to give hope to Israel for a better time in language they would understand. The prophecy seems dualistic. That is, it was designed to give Israel immediate hope and to give all men eternal hope; hence, its Messianic overtones. *Qualifying prophecies without Bible sanctions is opening up a Pandora's box of dualistic and prophetic passages.*

In other words, Israel received hope for a coming freedom in the form of a kingdom in her own land; and, spiritual Israel, the believers of all ages, can look forward to a coming kingdom of peace under the reign of the same universal Messiah. The language is less to be understood in exact literal detail (that is: sacrifices, etc.) than it is to be understood symbolically and eschatologically. Ω

## COMMUNICATION AS THE KEY TO COUNSELING

by Daniel Davila

### INTRODUCTION

Most of my graduate training has been in pastoral counseling. I have also practiced this field as a chaplain and as a pastor. At the present time, the Denver Church of God (Seventh Day) bulletin announces my name as the *counseling minister* for the local church. Several parishioners and prospects have been referred to me for counseling. My counseling has covered different levels: strong-willed children, teenagers, marriage counseling, career crisis counseling, pre-marital counseling, divorce counseling and grief counseling.

I have given the above introduction in order to assure the reader that what I am talking about is not pure theory, but things that have worked for me in actual practice. On the other hand, I do not want to sound arrogant. What has worked for me might not work for another person. I want to share with you the basic principles of counseling in a series on Ideas for Pastoral Counseling.

### COMMUNICATION AS KOINONIA

The word *koinonia* (κοινωνία) appears 20 times in the New Testament. The translation given in English is *fellowship, contribution, communion, distribution, and communication*. When *sun* (συν) is put together with *koinoneo* we get the word *sunkoinoneo*, (συγκοινωνέω). This word, *sunkoinoneo*, means, "'communicated with' in Philippians 4:14; 'have fellowship with' Ephesians 5:11; 'be...partakers of,' Revelation 18:4 (R.V., 'have fellowship') (W. E. Vine, Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.) p. 216).

*Koinonia* can be interpreted as communication, but it has a greater meaning. It is not only verbal but one of learning to have communion with one another and practicing this fellowship. This communication is displayed in the participation in the body of Christ during the Lord's Supper when we come as the body of Christ to partake of the one bread. Even though the word *koinonia* is not mentioned in I Corinthians 12:25, 26, it is clear that that is what the Apostle Paul has in mind, *that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

The preceding passage speaks of sharing one's joys and hurts. That is what counseling is all about.

### A COUNSELOR NEEDS TO LISTEN

A counselee expressed anger and mistrust at his wife's pastor because during their separation the minister sided with her. Both agreed that the pastor had shown preferential treatment. The Scripture tells us that *partiality in judging is not good* (Proverbs 24:23b). Part of the problem is that the minister failed to listen objectively to both of his parishioners. His partiality was, perhaps, grounded on the relationship of the woman to the church. She was a member but her husband only sympathized. As a consequence of this pastor's mistake, both quit counseling with him and started attending the Church of God (Seventh Day).

Some pastors are too anxious to give solutions. This type of pastor fails to listen. It is almost like a physician prescribing medicine when he has not yet diagnosed the illness. There is a need to listen attentively. One former chaplain supervisor of mine used to tell me, "Remember to listen with the heart. Think with your heart and feel with your mind." Proverbs warns that *if one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame* (Proverbs 18:13, R. S. V. ).

The best thing to do in counseling is to stay with the counselee. Stay with his/her concepts, his/her feelings and perceptions of life. Do not correct or justify a wrong. Stay in touch with what s/he is saying. Again, the key is to listen attentively and objectively.

I am not suggesting any passive listening, but reflexive listening. In the next issue I will comment on *reflexive listening* and the Rogerian style for pastoral counseling.

### KOINONIA FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

In counseling the parishioner shares his most intimate emotions and seeks our help. The pastor then must see this as a time of participation in the life of another brother/sister. That is why it is indispensable to be kindly sensitive with an attentive and objective ear. The beginning of pastoral counseling is the beginning of intense listening to the one who shares his/her most intimate life. Ω

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