

Volume 1

Revealing the Myth of the Double-Minded God

The Assassination



of God's Character

Gentle Jesus – Violent God?

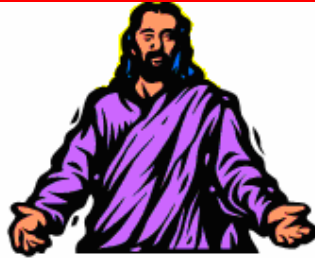
Last Updated – 19 July, 2008

Preface	6
Synopsis.....	8
God – Is He as Good as We Think He Should Be?	10
The Object of Satan's Attack.....	13
The Battle for the Mind	17
Mind the Mind!	18
How to Convince People that it's Alright to Do Wrong.....	19
The Doctrine of Destruction - When Everyone Got it Wrong	21
What Has Gone Wrong?	26
The Doctrine of Persecution – A Just War Against Heretics	32
Perceptions of God's Personality Form Legislation	37
Forming the Image to the Beast	40
When is a Sin not a Sin?	59
Who is Thinking to Change the Law – Thou Shalt Not Kill?	65
Is Knowing God's Character a Salvation Issue?	71
The Reason Why Satan Attacks God's Law	75
The Commandments are Binding on All Beings	82
The Law of Reaping and Sowing.....	87
Thou Shalt Not Kill – or is it Thou Shalt Not Murder?.....	88
The Law – Upheld and Obeyed by Jesus Christ	92
The Vital Protestant Principle	93
Freedom to Worship	94
Political Freedom to Kill	95
Religious Freedom to Kill?.....	100
<i>The Roots of “Just War” Doctrine</i>	102
Theological Foundations for the Inquisition.....	103
Rules and Rewards of “Holy” Wars	111
Why Do Religious Organisations Kill Heretics?	121
Character Assassination in Heaven	123
Character Assassination on Earth.....	124
Character Comparisons	126
Examine the Fruit of the Character	127
Christ's Character	129
Satan's Character	130
Justice and Mercy.....	131
Where is the Merciful Justice?.....	139
The Character of Sin.....	156
Jesus Corrected Traditional Mosaic Law.....	157
Wrathful God or Gentle Jesus?	168
What About the God Portrayed in the Old Testament?	174
The Life is in the Blood.....	188
Blood Letting	194
Human Sacrifice.....	212
Child Sacrifices in the Israelite Religion	214
Did the Israelite's God Require Human Sacrifices?	218
Child Sacrifice in Tribal Cultures.....	220
Cannibalism.....	225
Ellen White on Child Sacrifice	227
Circumcision – Which Covenant?.....	231
Ellen White Concerning Sacrifices	298
Prostitution.....	303

Marriage.....	319
The Trinity - A Pagan Concept.....	340
How did Jesus Express His Wrath?.....	353
God's "Wrath"	361
God Defines His Own “Wrath”.....	364
The Hedge.....	366
Who is the Destroyer – God or Satan?	369
Modes of Destruction	383
The Trinity's Character - Versus - the Father's Character	403
God is Not Double-Minded	407
Wrath Falls on Jesus.....	409
Wrath Falls on Humanity.....	412
Ellen White's Definition of the Character of God.....	413
Ellen White Explains The ‘Wrath’ and ‘Curse’ of God.....	422
Ellen White – Sinners are Destroyed by the Wrath of God.....	424
The Curse of God	434
Divine Wrath in The American Civil War (1861–1865)	442
The SDA Pioneer Position on the 6 th Commandment	456
Changes to the 6 th Commandment by the SDA Church	458
Satan's Work Confused with God's Work	461
Doing Bad Things with “Good” Motives	465
Physical Changes Caused by Sin	469
The Final Destruction.....	470
Vengeance is Mine and I Will Repay	487
Who Gets the Blame for the Plagues?.....	498

The Importance of Studying the Character of God

In a Nutshell – Look to Jesus



*“Looking unto Jesus - the author and finisher of our faith.”
Hebrews 12:2*

Why study the Scriptures?

Jesus: (Ye) search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life (John 5:39, 40).

Ellen White, Testimonies Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers, 1904

“All deceptive dealings, all untruthfulness regarding the Father and the Son, by which their characters are presented in a false light, are to be recognized as grievous sins.”

Which teachings are vital?

Jesus: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life” (John 6:63).

Ellen White, Pacific Union Recorder, 31 December, 1903

“I am instructed to say to our people, Let us follow Christ. We may safely discard all ideas that are not included in His teachings.”

What determines our eternal destiny?

Jesus: “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 7:20).

Ellen White, Education, p 108 (1903)

The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come.

Preface

The material contained in this book is presented as a personal theoretical opinion, formed by sincere and prayerful studies concerning the character of God. The reader is free to form their own conclusions. There has been no intention to insult, denigrate, vilify, or to create dissension or disillusionment with any particular views in regards to any sacred writings. This material is released as the presentation of a theory - not to disturb or offend those who might reject the theory.

The author of this book has not the intention to 'throw out the Bible' or to cause others to discard the perfect principles of Christ's life as found in the Bible. To the contrary, the author exhorts the reader to dig deeply into the Bible, to search out the hidden things of God (1 Cor 2:7). The searcher, however, may discover disharmony in the Bible, but this disharmony does not suggest that a fault lies with God or that God has not especially preserved the Bible. Contradictions exist only because of humanity's inability to understand God's character.

Men who were moved by the spirit of Christ to describe spiritual things - to the best of their human ability - still failed to understand or describe the true extent and depth of the loving character of God as seen in Jesus Christ. In their best attempts to write material to portray the character of God, humanity could not but fail when they inadvertently put their own concepts of God into their writings. These faulty concepts appear to be a direct result of their interaction with the surrounding pagan nations, of which either they conquered and enslaved or by whom they were themselves conquered and taken into foreign captivity. Thus pagan theology conceivably, many times, inadvertently influenced the Bible writers. In contrast, Jesus Christ revealed perfect love. He revealed exactly, the Father's character.

Hebrews 1:, 2

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

Christ's life and words clarify confusing Biblical statements for they are aligned with the loving standard upon which ALL spirits and writings must be tested – the 10 commandments – which are the very essence of the Father's character.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p 52

"The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom."

Ellen White states in the Desire of Ages, p 19

"By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible."

Gospel Workers (1892) p 125; Testimonies to Ministers, p 105

"We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but one who is infallible, -- He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."



***“Looking unto Jesus - the author and finisher of our faith.”
Hebrews 12:2***

Synopsis

The objective of this book, ***the Assassination of God's Character*** is to remind people that when searching for truth on any subject, the answer is found by looking to Jesus. While this strategy may seem over-simplified, it is ignored by many, if not most Christians.

In an act of deliberate slander, Satan has supplied misinformation about the Creator so that the real divine Being has been unknowingly replaced in the world's religions, by a false god. Many Christians simply do not know the character of the Father, because, unlike Satan, they fail to see it reflected perfectly in Jesus Christ.¹

The Creator is referred to in Acts 17:23 as "the Unknown God." While physically, no man has seen God at any time², humanity has the opportunity to see God – in character – in the life and words of His Son³ and to come to a saving knowledge through an intelligent understanding of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The battle rages because Satan has challenged the foundational principles of God's government. Humanity has long been ignorant of the fact that Satan has deceived millions into believing that the principles of his own spiteful rule are those of God's government. The deception was brilliantly engineered so that God would be blamed for Satan's evil and violent actions - and the vast majority of the world's population have unknowingly believed that lie.

The enemy's attack is upon the Creator. Ultimately, Satan's desire is to dethrone God and in order to do so, the devil plans to completely control of minds of earth's population. He has manufactured lethal lies about God's perfect character and has dispersed these falsehoods throughout the world, in 'holy books' and even as part of the sacred writings - under the guise of truth, through priests, ministers and teachers. This is dangerous indeed, for if devout people believe that God commanded a certain action, they are less likely to question that action and more likely to obey it- regardless of that action's morality and their own misgivings.⁴ (See Vol 2, objection #13 - regarding Abraham's belief that God required the human sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22). Many violent murders have been performed because it was believed that 'God' commanded these actions.

¹ *Ellen White, Review and Herald 29 October, 1895*

"Satan saw the image of God in the character and person of Jesus Christ."

² John 1:18

³ John 14:9

⁴ **God ordered parents' deaths.** "God told me to" kill his parents, Philip Badowsky, 22, testified. He read the bible before shooting his parents, then dismembered them with a chainsaw on Dec. 2, Nixon, Tenn. Source: *Chattanooga.com*, Dec. 10, 2004

"Act of obedience." Edwin B. Baxter, 33, of Oregon, was convicted in December of attempting to circumcise his 8-year-old son. The fundamentalist Christian, who sat with a bible in the courtroom, decided to circumcise his son on Sept. 3 after reading the Old Testament: "I had no reason to think I would be in violation of any of God's laws. I felt it was an act of obedience." He put his son in a dirty bathtub on some towels and used a hunting knife, then called 911 when his son began bleeding profusely. His wife is pregnant with their 10th child. The boy recovered. Source: *The Columbian*, Dec. 8, 2004

Barbarous to barber. Umm Ali of Baghdad, Iraq, claims religious militants, whose strict reading of Islamic teachings requires that men wear long beards, killed her son for trimming men's beards. On Jan. 27, Sadiq Abdul Hussein was cutting a customer's hair when a man with a scarf over his face walked in the door and opened fire with an assault weapon, killing him and wounding his customer. Source: *Associated Press*, Feb. 7, 2005

Abortionist must die. "The defendant's attorney argued that the killing of those who performed abortions was 'consistent with biblical truth.'"--*The New York Times*, Nov. 1, 1994 <http://ffrf.org/fitoday/2005/april/appleman.php>

History attests that traditionally held beliefs suppose that God ('the gods') have dual personalities; ie. They can behave in ways that are both good and evil. They can be nice but also nasty. They can contribute both blessings if obeyed, but also curses if disobeyed. They can be happy, but also vengeful, wrathful and violently angry. In short, the God/gods' characters are composed of love **and** lovelessness; of unselfishness, **but also** selfishness; kindness **and** cruelty; creators and saviours of life **and yet** destroyers and divine killers. While 'the gods' positive character traits are appreciated by humanity, the negative traits are not. These powerful but wrathful gods are feared, and many offerings are required to appease their anger in a protective strategy so that the gods do not strike erring humans with death. Curiously, these violent and wrathful acts of divine vengeance are considered 'righteous' acts simply because a supposedly 'divine' being commits the act. These beliefs are firmly lodged in the vast majority of the world's religions, penetrating even into the Christian religions and into their holy books. Examples of these traditional beliefs are given in this book.

In the world, there exist only two principles of action and government:

- Love (Unselfishness toward others in every situation i.e. Do unto others as you would like them to do to you, even at the risk of death to oneself); and
- Selfishness ie. the absence of Love (Without love only selfishness remains and is shown against others at the betterment of self in every situation).

The inhabitants of the world are invited by the Creator to logically examine these principles and to choose to give their allegiance to their chosen leader – either God/Christ and Satan. As they choose to follow the principles of their God/gods, human characters are formed in the image of their Master/master and thus their eternal destiny is determined.

The Assassination of God's Character examines the underlying principles of love which God declares governs His universe and how His divine character has been misrepresented by Satan.

Ellen White, Review and Herald 29 October, 1895

Satan saw the image of God in the character and person of Jesus Christ.



God – Is He as Good as We Think He Should Be?

The Bible tells us that God is Love. But is God loving in every situation? In the life of Jesus it can be readily seen, that this loving principle is applied in **all** His actions. Christ announced and applied the Golden Rule of love in all situations i.e. He did to others, only those things which He would have wanted done to Himself.

Matthew 7:12

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Dr Tim Jennings, 3ABN interview with SDA Pastor John Lomacang

"When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden, He created them without fear. 'Perfect love casts out fear.' They were created in perfect love. In this world there are two antagonistic principles at war. God's principle of self-sacrificing love which was summed up in Christ's statement, 'Greater love hath no man that he give his life for a friend' which means, 'I love you so much, I will do anything for your health, your welfare, your good, including if necessary, I'll give my life that you might live.' Which is at war with Satan's principles of fear and selfishness, commonly known today as, 'survival of the fittest' which says, 'I love myself so much, that I'll do anything to promote myself, exalt myself, advance myself, including if necessary, kill you, that I might live. Give my life that you might live. Kill you that I might live. These two principles are at war in this world right now and as we pursue the principle of self-exaltation, the principle of selfishness, survival of the fittest, it only incites more fear, more anxiety, more worry, more stress and so we're out to get more, get more, the more we get, still not enough, we got to get more, we're afraid we could lose it at any minute. Perfect love however....(unclear) When we stop looking to self and when we start caring about God and caring about others and we want to give to make others' lives better, we're no longer concerned with what happens to ourselves. And that prefrontal cortex sends a calming signal down to the amygdala. The fear goes away and a merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

Dr Jennings explained perfectly that God simply cannot be 9/10th good and 1/10th evil. Jesus came to 'show us the Father' (John 14:8, 9) and by looking to Jesus' character, we can see that there is no evil, no violence in Him⁵, no limit to divine love.

There has never been a time when God abandoned the divine principles of love – the Golden Rule. There is never a situation where God's laws of unselfish love must be put aside. There is never a situation where God's principles – His love - is not an effective response. There is never a time when the severity of a situation necessitates that God's principles of love must be replaced and Satan's principles applied.

God always keeps His own commandments and never instructs anyone to break any of its principles, for anything outside of God's principles, is not of love.⁶

5 Just as the prophet Isaiah predicted, there was no violence in the Messiah, (Isa 53:9) who was the Son of God, so there is no violence in the Father.

6 Matthew 7:12 "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matthew 22:37-40 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The Father's character is not a mixture of good and evil. God's spirit - His pure, loving way of thinking, is the basis of His character. These principles of absolute and complete unconditional love are reflected in His law and His government and were demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ.

The principle of unselfish love, as seen in the law, was the principle with which Satan has attempted to find fault.⁷

God originates life - not death and destruction. Permanent death comes upon sinners as a consequence of sin which 'reigns in your mortal body,' when the sin within them – joined to every cell in their 'body of death' - destroys them (Romans 6:12, 23; 7:5, 24; James 1:15; Isaiah 33:11; Ezekiel 28:18; Isaiah 29:5. See also video presentation by Dr Tim Jennings, 3ABN interview with Pastor John Lomacang).

It is sin (a selfish spirit/mind) which reigns in the flesh/body, which brings forth permanent death.

James 1:15 "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Romans 8:2, 3 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from **the law of sin and death**. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**."

Isaiah and Ezekiel also note that death is a 'natural' consequence of sin. Death is not a 'curse' originating from God. This message is repeated by AT Jones and EJ Waggoner in the 1888 message, and it was also related by Jesus in a vision to Ellen White.

Satan has attacked the truth about God and has been maligning His character and His law for over 6,000 years, attempting to credit God with the traits of his own satanic, evil character.

Doctrines are formed AFTER a judgment of God's character. Righteous doctrines are formed based on a correct judgment or understanding of God's character, while faulty doctrines are formed on faulty conceptions of His character.

⁷ Ellen White (2 statements), Signs of the Times, 16 Jan, 1896; and 22 Dec, 1914

"Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God. Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might stand as the head and representative of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges." #2 "Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation, the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last only glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever."

The EG White 1888 Materials p 526, 527; Manuscript Release #1037; MS 25, 9 Jan, 1890
"The Lord Jesus awakens an interest in man by **encouraging him to draw nigh and become acquainted with His character.** 'This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent' [John 17:3]. **We do not contemplate as we should the character of God.** 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life [John 3:16]. **Although Satan has misinterpreted God's purposes, falsified His character, and caused man to look upon God in a false light, yet through the ages God's love for man has never ceased."**

The 144,000 will 'know their God' i.e they will know His character (Daniel 11:32). Through Christ's spirit in their minds, they will reproduce His character (Rev 12:17; Rev 14:1) and demonstrate to the universe that unselfish love is the only sane principle of government and more than sufficient for every situation.

In fact, the experiment with sin will not be concluded until God's character is revealed, in the person of Christ's saints.

Ellen White, 1 Testimonies for the Church, p 59

"The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were the words God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us, who could wash one another's feet, and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet."

While the wicked demonstrate the violent and selfish principles of Satan's government, the 144,000 demonstrate their Father's spirit. Just as Jesus refused to defend Himself and 'reviled not again,' (1 Pet 2:23) so the saints, full of Christ's loving spirit, demonstrate the same gentleness in their characters. They also, refuse to retaliate or to defend 'self.'

When the wicked rush to harm the saints, **it is the saint's non-violent, loving response that convinces the wicked of their sin. The wicked realise that the saints are trusting God with their lives and they confess that love is stronger than violent domination and selfishness.** God's gentle, unfailing, unending love is demonstrated to be the perfect law for universal government.

Christ's Object Lessons, p 69, 415

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth."

When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own..... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love."

The Object of Satan's Attack

If God's character is the basis of His government; and if God's character is embodied in the 10 commandment law; and if the 10 commandment law is 'hung' on the two commandments – love to God and love to humanity – then wouldn't it be logical to expect Satan to attack God's character which is the basis of His divine law, which is the basis of His government?

Ellen White, Signs of the Times, 16 January, 1896

“Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God.”

Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p 68-69

*“But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; **but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: 'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.' John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. **It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.** (69) **From the first the great controversy had been upon the law of God. Satan had sought to prove that God was unjust, that His law was faulty, and that the good of the universe required it to be changed. In attacking the law he aimed to overthrow the authority of its Author. In the controversy it was to be shown whether the divine statutes were defective and subject to change, or perfect and immutable.”***

Ellen White, Signs of the Times, 22 December, 1914

“Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation, the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last only glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.”

In attacking God's character, Satan has struck at the very government of God's kingdom. Tradition has a very strong hold on the minds of most Christians and especially concerning this subject regarding the origin of death and destruction. 'Come let us reason together,' (Isa 1:18) and evaluate our beliefs upon the law of God and upon the testimony/witness of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 8:20) and refuse to base our faith on the human inspired or even satanically inspired, traditions of men (Matt 15:9; Rev 12:17).

Traditional views of an angry, wrathful, vengeful god who commands the destruction of babies and children..... (1 Samuel 15), are so very destructive to the character of the One True God who begs us to believe that He is love (1 John 4:8, 16) and that His love never fails, is never exhausted, is never violent, angry, etc (1 Cor 13).

The evidence to support the 'violent character of God' position is simply not present in the holy, gentle, pure, kind, loving life of Jesus Christ - in whom was no violence (Isa 53:9). The Son of God came to show us the Father's character (John 14:9) and it contrasts diametrically with that of the pagan gods throughout the Bible - Moloch, Ashtoreth, Baal. These pagan gods were those which enimated wrath and caused fearful observance in their followers. These pagan gods commanded violence and genocide on 'heretics.' Refer to the stele found of the Moabite King Mesha in his worship of Chemosh which was inscribed during the time of the Biblical character Jehu. The king boasted that **his** god Chemosh told him to 'kill every man, woman, child etc' and to make multiple sacrifices so that his Moabite people could possess the special land that Chemosh gave them. It is an interesting comparision with Joshua's experiences as recorded in the Old Testament. (A table which compares these two religious leaders and the Mesha Stele, appears in a later section of this book).

Did Jesus do a faulty job of revealing and demonstrating His Father's character? Did He only show us the 'good,' kind, **merciful** side of God, and deceive us about the 'bad' nasty, violent, **just** side of God's character? Of course not. The Son of God was a perfect and complete representation of 'the brightness of His Father's glory/character and the express image of His Father's person' (Heb 1:3).

It is sin and Satan – not God- who brings destruction. A rejection of God and His law of love, results in unavoidable consequences. When God's nature-sustaining laws of love - which are life-giving - are broken, death and destruction are inevitable.

Satan made accusations against God's character. He set out to prove that force and selfishness are stronger than passivity and unselfish love – in fact, that they are necessary laws in any government. Jesus came to prove that Satan's claim was false.

Love did win that battle. Love proved that unselfishness conquers every difficulty - without using any of the devil's violent weapons.

The weapons that Christ used to overcome Satan are the weapons available to all humanity when they give their allegiance to God.

2 Corinthians 10:4, 5

“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (5) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of **Christ.**”

Ephesians 6:10-18

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For **we wrestle not against flesh and blood,** but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith,

wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Christians are not to 'wrestle against flesh and blood' but to have faith in the principles of love and in the character of the Author of Love and to permit Him to defend them.

If God's people are to be prepared to meet their God (Daniel 11:32), they must know their God – must know His character and be able to distinguish His character from that of Satan's character - for God's holy, loving character will be 'in their foreheads' (Rev 14:1).

God' people cannot afford to assume the position so often expressed by those who do NOT know the character of God, which is often stated as: "it doesn't matter to me if God kills people or if He doesn't. I'll serve Him anyway. It's not a salvation issue."

Such a position is not honouring to God. God asks that we study His character and when we are drawn to Him, through His loving traits, then we will want to serve Him as we realise that His law of love is the only sane, liberating law in the universe. Our allegiance will not be based on 'blind faith' but on faith in the loving character of God. God's law – the 10 commandments – is a transcript of His loving character (Patriarchs and Prophets p 52).

Therefore God's people might need to be especially careful that their position on God's character, does not actually accuse God of:

- possessing the same character traits as Satan;
- utilising the same tools/weapons which Satan employs;
- lying through Jesus' words that love is **always** the fulfilling of the law, when perhaps sometimes it is necessary to employ violence;
- lying that some evil conditions **don't** necessitate the setting aside of the 10 commandments, because love simply does not work in extreme cases and genocides must be commanded;
- not only being the Creator, but also the destroyer;
- not only being the originator of life, but the destroyer of life- not only the destroyer of death, but also the originator of death; and
- possessing the fruit of the spirit of love (Gal 5:22, 23), but also possessing the fruit of Satan's spirit (Galatians 5:19-21).

What is Character Assassination?

The Free Dictionary by Farlex, gives one definition of character as:

character (n)

The combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another.

The Free Dictionary by Farlex, defines character assassination as:

character assassination (n).

A vicious personal verbal attack, especially one intended to destroy or damage a public figure's reputation. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/character>

Character assassination. Some call it "Bloodless Murder."

Eugene Harder, pastor of New Hope Community Church writes:

"When was the last time that you were slandered? Can you remember when someone spread a vicious lie about you? Do you remember how powerless you felt? Can you recall the anger that welled up with-in you, that urge to get even? Do you remember how you wanted to buy a full page ad in the local paper that would proclaim you innocence? Do you remember how some friends believed the lie and turned their backs on you? Perhaps you can recollect how the lie was wrapped in a half-truth. Your enemy took part of a sentence that you spoke and put a twist on it that you never intended it to have. That twist cast you in a negative light. Welcome to the world of bloodless murder." (Character Assassination – Bloodless Murder)
<http://www.newhope.bc.ca/secure08.htm>

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Exodus 20:16

- The ninth commandment specifies that it is against God's law of love to malign or assassinate a person's character.
- The third commandment applies the same principle to divinity – to God's character.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Exodus 20: 7

The Lord's name represents His character. The law is a transcript of God's character.

Ellen White, Desire of Ages, p 764

*"But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. **The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable.** Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law."*

The Battle for the Mind

Humanity was made in the physical and spiritual image of God. Through sin, the human race lost its glorious covering – the pure, unselfish spirit of Christ. Sadly, with the introduction of sin, the human mind began to embrace selfish principles. As an emergency measure, to prevent Satan's domination over humanity, Christ implanted an enmity to Satan's principles within the human mind – but not in the human body. This action provided the human race with another probationary opportunity. Human beings would be free to choose which principles they would obey, but they would be hindered by 'fleshly lusts' – selfish desires - that begged to be satisfied through the body. Satan's desire is to consolidate his control over human minds, by tempting them through their sin-affected bodies.

God does not afflict or coerce His subjects, for these strategies were invented and are employed by Satan. God desires our allegiance, but instead of using force, He asks us to 'come let us reason together' – to see the 'big picture.' God appeals to our minds and asks us to make unselfish decisions based on mental assent. He invites us to study His principles and to make an intelligent decision based on the obvious results. The Truth has nothing to hide from investigation and Love is always accompanied by freedom of choice.

The Bottom Line is:

- The battle for human minds is about selfishness versus unselfishness.
- It's about complete selfishness versus complete Love.
- It's about the great controversy between the principles of God's government and the principles of Satan, His attacker's government.

When we are convinced that God's unselfish principles are the only sane basis for universal government, we are free to make the decision to give our allegiance to Him. We develop faith in all God's principles. God's principles of unselfishness (demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ and written in the 10 commandments) become the great standard to which we aspire to imitate through renewal with His spirit/mind.

In all situations where we are required to decide 'right' from 'wrong', we can reduce the action or thought to 'the bottom line' – the standard of Unselfish Love.

Jesus made this discernment very easy. He said, in Matthew 7:12

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Mind the Mind!

“As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Proverbs 23:7

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Proverbs 4:23

“The only security for any soul is right thinking.”

Ellen White, Ministry of Healing, (1905) p 491

“Wrong habits of thought, when once accepted, become a despotic power that fastens the mind as in a grasp of steel.”

Ellen White, This Faith I Live By, p 222

“Evil thoughts destroy the soul.”

Ellen White, In Heavenly Places, ch 158

“In no case can Satan obtain dominion over the thoughts, words, and actions, unless we voluntarily open the door and invite him to enter.”

Ellen White, Adventist Home, p 402

“The brain nerves which communicate with the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man and affect his inmost life. Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind.”

Ellen White, 2 Testimonies for the Church, (1870) p 347.

“The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. ‘Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him’” (1 John 3:15).

Ellen White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 1896, p 56

“Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities” (Voltaire).

How to Convince People that it's Alright to Do Wrong

Satan's specialty!

- **Transforming People into Perpetrators of Evil**

For a well-researched article on the dynamics behind educating ordinary people to commit evil deeds against their fellow human beings, see **Transforming People into Perpetrators of Evil** (The Robert L. Harris Memorial Lecture - *Why Does Genocide Continue to Exist?* by Dr Philip G. Zimbardo, Ph.D., Holocaust Studies Center, Sonoma State University, 1999; Holocaust Lectures, 9 March, 1999, Stanford University) Stanford, CA 94305 **Download entire article from website:**

<http://www.sonoma.edu/users/g/goodman/zimbardo.htm>

- **The Stanford Prison Experiment**

Conducted by Dr Philip G Zimbardo, PhD.

In the early 1970's, an experiment on the psychology of imprisonment was carried out at Stanford University by Dr Philip G Zimbardo and his colleagues who created their own jail in the basement of the psychology building. The results revealed that ordinary people can and often do behave in abusive and aggressive ways when placed in positions of power.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KXy8CLgqk4>

- **The Milgram Experiment**

Conducted by Dr Stanley Milgram, PhD

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milgram_experiment

The Milgram experiment was a famous scientific experiment of social psychology. The experiment was first described by Stanley Milgram, a psychologist at Yale University, in an article titled Behavioral Study of Obedience. The article was published in the Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology in 1963 and later discussed at book length in his 1974 Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View. It was intended to measure the willingness of a participant to obey an authority who instructs the participant to do something that may conflict with the participant's personal conscience. The experiments began in July 1961, three months after the start of the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Milgram devised the experiment to answer the question "Could it be that Eichmann and his million accomplices in the Holocaust were just following orders? Could we call them all accomplices?" (Milgram 1974)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milgram_experiment

In the Stanley Milgram Experiment, an ordinary person was recruited to act in the role of a 'teacher.' The teacher was to assist a 'learner' to associate certain unrelated words together and was basically a memory test. The teacher was told that the scientists were conducting the experiment to determine if/how the use of punishment helped students to learn. Each time the 'learner' gave an incorrect answer, the teacher was instructed to push a series of levers and so cause an electric current to surge through the 'learner's' body. While initial shocks began at a low voltage, the teachers were instructed to increase the 'punishment', (adding an extra 15 volts with each incorrect answer), until they were delivering a 'lethal' voltage to the learner. (Unbeknown to the teacher, the learner was an actor and no electrical charge was actually delivered to the learner.)

During the experiment, many of the ‘teachers’ expressed emotional anguish and even protested their task, however 65% consented to follow the administrator’s instructions - and delivered painful and sometimes ‘lethal’ shocks to the learner. At no time did the administrator use any form of threat, sarcasm, criticism or physical force against the teachers. The teachers were told that they would be assisting the learner to learn. When teachers protested their task, they were told the entire experiment would have to be terminated unless they continued. Many teachers submitted to that pressure and continued to deliver painful electric shocks to the ‘learners’. The experiment results ‘shocked’ psychologists, who predicted that the vast majority of ‘normal’ people, on moral grounds, would refuse to administer a painful, let alone a **lethal** shock to a stranger, who was known to be innocent of any crime.

“Those groundbreaking and controversial experiments have had—and continue to have—long-lasting significance. They demonstrated with jarring clarity that ordinary individuals could be induced to act destructively even in the absence of physical coercion, and humans need not be innately evil or aberrant to act in ways that are reprehensible and inhumane. While we would like to believe that when confronted with a moral dilemma we will act as our conscience dictates, Milgram’s obedience experiments teach us that in a concrete situation with powerful social constraints, our moral sense can easily be trampled.”
<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/pto-20020301-000037.html>

Hypnotism was not used in the Milgram experiment. To view the Milgram experiment (reconstructed) visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6GxluljT3w>

- **The Heist**

Derren Brown (mentalists, hypnotist) endeavoured to ‘suggest’ to four ordinary people that they commit an armed robbery without ever mentioning his actual goal to them. His techniques which involved NLP strategies, suggestion and association, were successful on three of the four participants. Some participants were shocked by their own behaviour. This video reveals again, how ordinary people were easily manipulated to behave violently and illegally without their conscious awareness. (Viewing the video is not recommended by the author of this book as it contains actual footage of hypnosis being practiced on the unsuspecting participants).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p958woXcYcl&feature=related>

- **Mind Control ‘Conversion’**

Derren Brown, a self-proclaimed atheist, used suggestions to ‘convert’ other atheists to Christianity in a short ‘church’ meeting. Half the congregation is ‘converted’ and then Derren Brown then used suggestions to ‘re-convert’ them to atheism. An explanatory video also appears of these ‘conversions’ at the link shown below. (Viewing the videos is not recommended as actual footage of hypnosis is practiced on the unsuspecting congregation).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Sq-YUdq1OI&feature=related> (part 1)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DyINVUN_3I&NR=1 (part2)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHz4BA8zJZ8&feature=related> (explanation)

Voltaire stated that “Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.” That might be so, however, those who can confuse you morally, so you can’t distinguish a right action from an evil action, can also make you commit atrocities - In God’s name.

The Doctrine of Destruction - When Everyone Got it Wrong

Ellen White, Signs of the Times, 5 February, 1894

"At the time when sin had become a science, when the hostility of man was most violent against heaven, when rebellion struck its roots deep into the human heart, when vice was consecrated as a part of religion, when **Satan exulted in the idea that he had led men to such a state of evil that God would destroy the world, Jesus was sent into the world, not to condemn it, but, amazing grace! to save the world.** The unfallen worlds watched with intense interest to see Jehovah arise and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth, and Satan boasted that if God did do this, he would complete his plans and secure for himself the allegiance of unfallen worlds. He had arguments ready by which to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the world's above; but at this crisis, instead of destroying the world, God sent his Son to save it. The apostle caught a glimpse of the plan, and he kindled into inspiration upon the great theme. Language cannot express his conception, but ever falls below the reality. John exclaims: 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.' Before the coming of Christ to the world evidences abundant had been given that God loved the human race. But in the gift of Christ to a race so undeserving was demonstrated the love of God beyond all dispute. **This gift outweighed all else, showed that his love could not be measured.** We have no line to measure it, no plummet by which to sound its depths, no chain by which to encompass it, no standard with which to compare it. All we can say is that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus said, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.' He gave his life for the sheep. The only-begotten Son of God accepts all the liabilities that fall upon the transgressor of the law, vindicates its unchangeable and holy character. The death of Christ removes every argument that Satan could bring against the precepts of Jehovah. Satan has declared that men could not enter the kingdom of heaven unless the law was abolished and a way devised by which transgressors could be reinstated into the favor of God, and made heirs of heaven. He made the claim that the law must be changed, that the reins of government must be slackened in heaven, that sin must be tolerated, and sinners pitied and saved in their sins. But every such plea was cast aside when Christ died as a substitute for the sinner. He who was made equal with God bore the sin of the transgressor, and thereby made a channel whereby the love of God could be communicated to a fallen world, and his grace and power imparted to those who came to Christ in penitence for their sin."

Ellen White, 6 Testimonies for the Church, p 9, 350

"...And that His word might ever be clear and distinct in their minds, He proclaimed amid thunder and lightning and with terrible majesty the law which He had given in Eden and which was the transcript of His character. And the words were written on tables of stone by the finger of God. Thus the will of the infinite God was revealed to a people who were called to make known to every nation, kindred, and tongue the principles of His government in heaven and in earth' (p 9). 'True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character'" (p 350).

Signs of the Times, 20 January, 1890 p 6

*"Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. **He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, that men might lose the true views of God's character, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth.** He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. **The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. **The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, **but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work.** The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature."*

Signs of the Times, 7 March, 1895, p 4

*"The plan of Satan was by his lying philosophies to widen the breach that existed between God and man. **He argued that man could not keep the law of God, and therefore that God had been obliged to change the laws which he had made, and had abolished the rule of his government.** Satan's work was to keep the agitation against God in progress, and **keep the question to the front as to whether God was light and love or not. Satan had charged God with his own attributes, and thus sowed in the hearts of men the seeds of enmity against God, for man accepted the statements of him who was a liar from the beginning.** Uniting fallen man with himself, he kept a series of **false theories in regard to God** in continual circulation, asserting them to be truth, in order that he might cover up the truth, and interpose his shadow between men and the way and the life."*

Ellen White, Counsels on Sabbath School Work, p 47, 48

"How different would have been the Scriptural record of the history of Israel, a nation so highly favored of the Lord, if they had carried out the instruction given them from the pillar of cloud by the Son of the living God. But they did not diligently follow the admonitions given. They failed to teach their children the requirements of God; and the sad results are pictured before us in a nation rejected of God. They separated so far from the wisdom of God that when the Great Teacher, Jesus, the world's Redeemer, appeared, they cried, 'Away with Him!' The tradition of men was more highly revered than the commandments of God. False practices and human inventions had taken the place of the pure teaching of God. That which was to have become a part of their being, was regarded as of small consequence and little worth. When Christ came into the world to exemplify true religion, and to exalt the principles that should govern the hearts and actions of men, falsehood had taken so deep a hold upon those who had had so great light, that they no longer comprehended the light, and had no inclination to yield up tradition for truth. They rejected the heavenly Teacher, they crucified the Lord of glory, that they might retain their own customs and inventions. The very same spirit is manifested in the world today. Men are averse to investigating truth, lest their traditions should be disturbed, and a new order of things should be brought in. There is with humanity a constant liability to err, and men are naturally inclined to highly exalt human ideas and knowledge, while the divine and eternal is not discerned or appreciated."

God's Loving Character is Perfectly Reflected in the Life of His Son and in the Principles of the 10 Commandments
- but not always in Human Laws.

There is a strong sense of "deja-vu" in the new anti-terrorist legislation being passed by the westernised world. In 1376 AD, similar legislation was, with pressure from the dominant religious system, introduced into certain European governments. The result was a bloodbath powered by a church/state union. It was a lengthy, merciless massacre of true Christians. The pattern was set and repeated throughout the centuries.

It is prophesied that it will happen again – and it is happening again.

The religio-political system is almost ready to fire into action:

- the church assumes it has a right to declare someone a heretic and to punish (kill) heretics;
- the churches are banding together and are enticing governments to legislate religious laws and "biblical" penalties;
- the church and state will unite to "convert, torture or exterminate" heretics.

"Force is the last resort of every false religion."

Tuesday, 28 Feb, 2006 (p 122) Seventh-day Adventist Adult Teachers' Sabbath School Bible Study Guide (1st Quarter, 2006)

"Abusive behavior is the conscious choice of a person to exercise power and control over another. It cannot be explained or excused... Victims are not responsible for causing the abuser to abuse. Abusers distort and pervert love, for 'love does not harm' (Rom. 13:10 NIV)."

Seventh-day Sabbath-keeper Roger Williams understood the evil of forced religion. Because of his desire to possess the freedom of religious thought and practice, Williams emigrated to the 'new' country of North America.

Sadly, even in the new country, Williams encountered religious persecution for his unorthodox beliefs – i.e. that the church should have no power to force the conscience. Williams was outspoken on this issue and it was not long before his life was threatened by the religio-political power in that country.

Fleeing through a blizzard at a time when he was suffering badly from a respiratory infection, Williams eventually escaped from persecution at Salem and found safety among the more tolerant, 'pagan'⁸ native dwellers at Narragansett Bay.

Later, Williams founded the charter of Rhode Island colony – a stepping stone to the famous document that separates politics from religion – the Constitution of the United States of America.

Roger Williams declared:

"To force religion on an unwilling convert is nothing less than the rape of a soul. The sword of man can force an entire nation into a formal religious pretence, but that is worthless before God, but it is only the sword of His spirit that can rightly rule over matters of conscience."

"Reverend" James Robison, as vice-president of the Religious Roundtable, gave a sermon to a huge crowd, in which he thunders:

"Let me tell you something else about the character of God. If necessary, God will raise up a tyrant, a man who might not have the best ethics, to protect the freedom interests of the ethical and the godly." *Life and Liberty for All Who Believe*, video at www.theocracywatch.org/audio-video.htm

⁸ It is interesting that the 'pagan' inhabitants displayed more Christlike characters through their tolerance of Williams, than did the educated, but intolerant, professed Christians who demanded Williams recant or forfeit his life.

Should present-day Christians look for an unethical **military-type** leader as their Saviour - their Messiah? Wasn't this the same mistake that the Jews made, prior to Christ's first advent as a baby in Bethlehem?

Should Gentle Jesus be portrayed as an avenging warrior? The apostate Protestantism movement is already presenting Christ in just this way - as an avenging warrior; a furious, wrathful god, coming back to the earth in glory, to destroy those who refuse to obey him. See "The Rise of Dominionism" <http://www.theocracywatch.org/audio-video.htm>

A news headline in 2001 reveals that the way for political-religious sermons was already paved through legislative actions.

13 July, 2001: USA: Bill introduced in House to allow political preaching: Rep. Waler Jones (R-NC) has introduced a bill that would allow priests, pastors, ministers and other religious leaders to recommend political candidates and parties from the pulpit. IRS regulations for the past 50 years have prohibited such speech if the congregation is to retain its non-profit registration. Jones said: 'Everyone in the pulpit should be treated fairly and equally. And they should have the freedom to help voice and educate their congregation, their parishioners as to some of the social ills of this nation and what needs to be done.' http://www.religioustolerance.org/news_01jul.htm

In the following material, it is demonstrated that **the anti-christ system is using Old Testament verses from the Christian Bible, to justify their anti-christ doctrine that it is not a sin to murder heretics.**

James 2:10

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Jesus predicted there would be a time when supposed "Christians" would **kill** God's real people, (whom they supposed were heretics) thinking they were honouring God. But they did these things because they didn't KNOW the Father, nor His Son.

John 16:2, 3

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (3) And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

**Christ empowered Christians to love their enemies –
not to kill them !!**

Murdering 'heretics' is anti-christ theology.

***"Those who can make you believe absurdities
can make you commit atrocities" (Voltaire).***

What Has Gone Wrong?

There has been a gross misunderstanding about the One True God. It is a Biblical principle that 'by beholding, we become changed.' How do we 'behold' or view God? What is He really like? Into whose image will human characters be transformed? - Into the same character which they perceive their God possesses.

It seems that some are keen to by-pass this important concept of examining the character of God, because they are more comfortable to accept the 'status quo,' or their parents' opinions, or their ministers' opinions. But isn't choosing which God to serve even more important than choosing a marriage partner? Surely, a person would appreciate an opportunity to examine a prospective partner's character, before agreeing to marry them in a life-long contract. How much more important is it to determine God's character, which has a bearing on more than the time of a human life-span, but for eternity.

The investigation of God's character thus demands serious study. Not only does the decision to worship a particular God have serious consequences for our eternal life, but it also has major bearing on our present life in this world. People imitate the character traits of their god, and their characters are shaped in the mold of the God they worship. If people believe their god condones and commands murder, then it is likely that worshippers will condone these actions, and will justify these actions as being "God's will."

Concerning the God of the Christian Bible, it appears that even the characters of the prophets of the Old Testament, though zealous to serve God, were not immune from being fashioned after the faulty concept they had of God's character. They failed to see clearly the loving concept of the Father's character which is the basis of His universal government. Consider Jeremiah's writing and David's psalm (hymn).

Jeremiah 18:23; 11:20

"Yet, LORD, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me: forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal thus with them in the time of thine anger. But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause. "

Psalms 109: 2-20

"For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. (3) They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. (4) For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. (5) And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. (6) Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. (7) When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. (8) Let his days be few; and let another take his office. (9) Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. (10) Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. (12) Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. (13) Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. (14) Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. (15) Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. (16) Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. (17) As he loved

cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. (18) As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. (19) Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. (20) Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.”

Both Jeremiah and David appear to be offering rather selfish prayers. Both prophets are requesting that the Lord inflict serious damage upon their enemies because they have maligned their characters and lied about them. They’ve also fought against him – in David’s opinion - without a valid cause.

Compare Jeremiah and David’s prayers with that offered by Jesus. Jeremiah and David prayed that their enemies would be destroyed by God, whereas Jesus prayed for His abusers/murderers to be forgiven.

When He was nailed onto a cross, Jesus did not seek revenge on His enemies, but He prayed for them, confirming with His example, His instruction given in the sermon on the mount of Olives (Matthew 5:44).

Where was the basis of David’s theology? Which law motivated both his and Jeremiah’s prayer? No doubt it was not the principles of the 10 commandments - which forbade even angry thoughts against another (Matthew 5:21, 22) –that motivated the prophets at this time, but fear for their own safety.

It seems likely that David’s prayer was motivated by the ‘other’ law which the Jews considered sacred - the Mosaic law. This set of statutes, while containing many positive principles, also contained some well-known statements which appeared to justify the principle of revenge.

Exodus 21:23-25

“And if [any] mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

It is very interesting that the ‘eye for an eye’ law is found, not only in the Mosaic law, but in the Koran (Qu’ran) – the Islamic holy book, and also in the ancient Babylonian law, the Code of Hammurabi (written down centuries before the Hebrews formed a nation).

Paul Tobin a self-confessed atheist, presents evidence which suggests that pagan religions influenced the Israelites' perceptions of their God Yahweh. Taken from his website at <http://www.geocities.com/paulintobin/moses.html#1>, we find the following startling information which is sourced from **Barthel, What the Bible Really Says**: p119 Riedel et.al., **The Book of the Bible**: p34 :

“Everyone is familiar with Moses receiving the Ten Commandments in two stone tablets from God in Mount Sinai. However, this story is originally Babylonian. One of the most well known ancient code of law was the Code of Hammurabi, so name after the Amorite king Hammurabi who lived around 1700 BC. On the great Babylonian stone monument, known as the stele of Hammurabi, a drawing inscribed on it shows the great Amorite King receiving the tablets of the law from the sun god, Shamash.

The similarity does not end here. On the stele too is inscribed the laws that made up the Code of Hammurabi. The general similarity between the code and The “Book of the Covenant” (Exodus chapters 21 to 23) and the legal codes of the

books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy cannot be denied. The Mosaic laws were obviously written under the influence of the Babylonian code. [3] In some cases even the wordings are uncannily close to one another. For example take this one from the code on the principle of an-eye-for-an-eye:

'If a citizen shall put out the eye of another, then let his own eye be put out....If a citizen shall knock out the teeth of another who is higher in rank, then let his own teeth be knocked out.'

We can accept the existence of the Hammurabi stele and its inscribed code without becoming atheists like Paul Tobin, and we can contemplate the significance of its inscription without becoming 'heretics' to the truth as it is found in Jesus' testimony.

Perhaps this pagan, Babylonian code might explain why the principles in the Mosaic law appear contradictory.

Jesus (and later Paul)⁹ revealed that God's commandments require human beings to love their neighbours.

The Jews had perceived that in the Mosaic law, the term 'neighbour' referred only to other members of the Jewish nation, but in the parable of the Good Samaritan, ***Jesus included enemies and heretics as neighbours***.

How this parable must have boggled the minds of the Jewish people! They believed that, according to the books of Moses, their ancestors were commanded by God to KILL the pagan, heretical inhabitants of Canaan – not to bind up their wounds and care for them! No wonder the Pharisees accused Jesus of teaching against the law of Moses¹⁰ (Mark 2:24-27; Luke 23:2; John 5:10-16; 10:33-36; 19:7). In response to this false claim, Jesus assured them that He was not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them (Matt 5:17).¹¹

More than just issuing this commandment to love their enemies and their neighbours as they loved themselves, Christ promised to empower His followers to do so.

⁹ Matt 5:43,44 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. :9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling of the law

¹⁰ **Luke 23:2:** John Lightfoot's Commentary:

[We found this fellow perverting the nation.] "A disciple corrupting his food publicly, as did Jesus of Nazareth." "To corrupt their food publicly," is a phrase amongst the Rabbins to denote a mingling of true doctrine with heresy, and the true worship of God with idolatry. This was the accusation they framed against our Saviour at this time, that he taught heterodox and destructive principles, such especially as would tend to turn off and alienate the people from their obedience to the Romans. Aruch recites this passage of the Talmud more cautiously; for instead of *as Jesus of Nazareth did*, he hath it, *as Jeroboam did*.

¹¹ Stephen was also accused of speaking against the law of Moses in Acts 6:11 “Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and [against] God.”

In certain places, the Mosaic law also required this loving principle.

Leviticus 19:18,

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I [am] the LORD.”

However, in stark contrast, the Mosaic law also commanded the Jews apply torturous punishments, including the death penalty to their neighbours if and when they became enemies or ‘heretics.’

The Mosaic laws were given to the Israelites, but they misunderstood a vital concept of the Mosaic law. The Jews mistakenly believed that God’s law of ‘love thy neighbour’ applied only to Jews, but in the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus corrected this misunderstanding. God’s law applied to all humanity. All humanity was ‘their neighbour.’

The Jews believed that they were a privileged people – and in deed they were privileged. Not only did they receive God’s moral law on Mount Sinai, but they were also offered the Word of God in human form when Christ was born as a Jew. However, instead of appreciating these blessings by serving and witnessing to other nations, the Jews became proud of their privileged position and considered other nations inferior to their own. These neighbouring countries, while **geographically** considered to be neighbours, were not **theologically** considered as such.

Some Mosaic laws are obviously inspired by God. Such laws are based on the principles of love for God and for humanity – loving one’s neighbour as oneself (e.g. the laws which are beneficial for health and hygiene), but what about the **other** Old Testament laws that advocate death and destruction (supposedly) at the command of the One True God? These laws are ‘very strange’ and appear to be based on a very different principle to unselfish love.

The nature of these ‘very strange’ Mosaic laws are demonstrated perhaps more clearly when read in the context of an open letter which was addressed to Dr Laura Schlessinger. Dr Laura is a US radio personality who offers advice to listeners who call her radio show. Recently, she stated, (as an Orthodox Jew), that *“homosexuality is an abomination according to Leviticus 18:22, and cannot be condoned under any circumstance.”*

While it is understood that the 7th commandment forbids sexual immorality, it does not condone or command the murder of those who disregard that commandment. However, the Mosaic law does apply the death penalty to this sexual practice.

The writer of the open letter to Dr Laura was quick to notice that the death penalty is applied by the Mosaic laws. The writer also highlighted the fact that the Mosaic laws also specify and legislate as **holy** - certain, very **unloving** behaviours.

The open letter to Dr Laura Schlessinger states:

Dear Dr. Laura:

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the other specific laws and how to follow them.

1. *When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odour for the Lord - Lev.1:9. The problem is my neighbours. They claim the odour is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?*
2. *I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?*
3. *I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual cleanliness - Lev.15:19-24. The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offence.*
4. *Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighbouring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not to Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?*
5. *I have a neighbour who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?*
6. *A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination - Lev. 11:10, it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?*
7. *Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?*
8. *Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temple, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev. 19:27. How should they die?*
9. *I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?*
10. *My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? Lev.24:10-16. Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws (Lev.20:14)?*

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging."
 (End quote open letter to Dr Laura. Her website is <http://www.drlaura.com/main/>)

This open letter demonstrates the confusion regarding the Father's law of love and the Mosaic law which also includes the death penalty, and even legalises other unloving acts. What is the Christian to do in this instance? Study! Compare everything with Jesus Christ.

It must be noted that there are no 'genuine, original manuscripts' or records of the original laws given by God to Moses, in existence today. Those 'holy' writings which are generally accepted to have been written by Moses, are now known to have been oral traditions and oral histories. These traditional beliefs were only committed to writing – as recorded today in the Bible - in or around the 7th century BC.¹²

Because of the resulting confusion, it was necessary for humanity to see the character of God in word, in action, and in person. The One True God sent His only begotten Son into the world to reveal His true character to those who had been deceived by Satan and effected by the beliefs of the pagan religions of the nations round about them.

Jesus came to show deluded and deceived humanity what kind of life would please His Father and He revealed His Father's character perfectly. When Philip asked, "show us the Father," Jesus replied that "he who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

While exposed to the violence of demon-possessed men and suffering extreme physical and mental agony, Jesus Christ revealed to us the superior character of the Father.

Luke 23:34

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Perhaps it was likely that Christ's prayer on the cross, also extends to Christians today, who still "know not what they do" when they believe the lie that God condones violence and the breaking of His own law of love.

In order to study the character of God, the next section deals with attempts made by those who endeavour to justify religious persecution.

¹² Recent historical and archaeological research appears to reveal that by 700 BC most of the Old Testament was written down although the book of Psalms was recorded in its present form later - by 586 BC. (*Who Wrote the Bible*, Robert Beckford, Compass, ABC broadcast on 9 April, 2006; see also "*Lost Worlds – the Bible Unearthed*" video SBS broadcast three part series 16 July, 23 July, 30 July).

The Doctrine of Persecution – A Just War Against Heretics

The Catholic Encyclopedia on CD-ROM, concerning the death penalty for heresy, states:

"The Christian teachers of the first three centuries insisted, as was natural for them, on complete religious liberty; furthermore, they not only urged the principle that religion could not be forced on others -- a principle always adhered to by the Church in her dealings with the unbaptised -- but, when comparing the Mosaic Law and the Christian religion, they taught that the latter was content with a, spiritual punishment of heretics (i.e. with excommunication), while Judaism necessarily proceeded against its dissidents with torture and death. (2) However, the imperial successors of Constantine soon began to see in themselves Divinely appointed "bishops of the exterior", i.e. masters of the temporal and material conditions of the Church. At the same time they retained the traditional authority of "Pontifex Maximus", and in this way the civil authority inclined, frequently in league with prelates of Arian tendencies, to persecute the orthodox bishops by imprisonment and exile. But the latter, particularly St. Hilary of Poitiers (Liber contra Auxentium, c. iv), protested vigorously against any use of force in the province of religion, whether for the spread of Christianity or for preservation of the Faith. They repeatedly urged that in this respect the severe decrees of the Old Testament were abrogated by the mild and gentle laws of Christ."
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08026a.htm>

Dr Jason David BeDuhn, Associate Professor of Religious Studies in Northern Arizona University has done extensive studies on the formulation of the doctrine of 'Biblical' persecution. Some extracts from his research appear below and are taken from his book called **Augustine, Manichaeism and the Logic of Persecution** p 153-160)

"The term 'Manichaean' has gained currency in public discourse during the last couple of years, as a characterization of the political rhetoric of violent confrontation between good and evil. This usage reveals just how much Manichaeism still serves as the West's heretical shadow, as well as how poorly this shadow tradition is understood even today. Of course, it is true that Manichaeism understands the world dualistically, and affirms the real existence of an absolute evil within it. But far from being militant crusaders, the Manichaeans were instead one of the most persecuted religious communities in history. There is no readily apparently overarching cause or motive for this fact, but only a series of regional religious conflicts in which Manichaeism always seemed to wind up as heresy against a stronger and politically-connected orthodoxy, be it Christian, Zoroastrian, Islamic, or Taoist. In fact, a pattern emerges in which Manichaeism occupies the place of primary pressure for a developing state totalitarianism in religious matters: in Persia in the last third century, in Rome briefly at the same time and then resuming in the late ninth century. In each, Manichaeism was used to initially define the unacceptable in society, to try out the methods of discovery and destruction, before turning the state apparatus against other groups. This treatment served only to confirm the Manichaean conception of a world riddled through with evil forces and intentions, ready to wreak violence on the righteous. (continued over page).

*(Dr BeDuhn continued) These oppressive governments, secure in their purpose, offered little explicit justification for the steps taken. We must take advantage of the one case among the many where we have a considerable body of rationalization from the persecuting side, namely, the writings of Augustine of Hippo, in an effort to fathom the logic of persecution and to compare it with the opposing logic of the Manichaeans themselves in order to better understand why one religious community felt justified and even compelled in the name of the truth, while the other rejected persecution as a logical outcome of the very "Manichaean" discrimination between good and evil in the world. Augustine worked at one of the most crucial moments in Christian history, and found himself attempting to bridge the gap between the persecuted Church of the past and the persecuting Church that was just starting to emerge in his lifetime (mostly in the form of imperial legislation that sought to suppress paganism and rival forms of Christianity.) It would be possible, on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount and other early Christian teachings, to assert that God permits the suffering of his saints at the hands of the wicked without resistance, and without allowing a reciprocal act of violence. "Resist no evil" as an ethic could form an unbridgeable chasm between the persecuted and the persecuting churches. God could allow the wicked to establish their own condemnation through unauthorized acts of evil, without himself authorizing any violent act. This was precisely the Manichaean position based exclusively on the New Testament, but not that of Augustine and others who brought into the equation the portrayal of God found in the Old Testament. Her God acts in the world, protecting the righteous, punishing the wicked, chastising the wayward. Augustine repeatedly quotes Proverbs on the good of disciplinary chastisement. **The Old Testament material bridges the gap between the God of the persecuted and the God of the persecutor, synthesizing a God who can be both....** In Augustine's early debates with the Donatists, he was able to cite from the Old Testament violent acts performed with the authorization of God. But the Donatist Fortunius challenged him to cite even a single such instance from the New Testament, and Augustine was forced to admit he could not (Letter 44.9-10)."*

Originally Augustine did not believe that he could logically justify punishment of the wicked based on the New Testament writings, however, he finally found justification for this theology in Acts "where Christ smites Paul on the road to Damascus."

Dr BeDuhn continues:

"For Augustine, the fact that both God in the Old Testament and Christ in the New can inflict violent punishment on sinners lends sanction to human institutions of punishment. In his 185th letter, Augustine asks, 'How then are kings to serve the Lord with fear, except by preventing and chastising with religious severity all those acts which are done in opposition of the commandments of the Lord?... In that he is a man, he serves Him by living faithfully; but in that he is also king, he serves Him by enforcing with suitable rigour such laws as ordain what is righteous, and punish what is the reverse....It is indeed better ... that men should be led to worship God by teaching, than that they should be driven to it by fear of punishment or pain; but it does not follow that because the former course produces better men, therefore those who do not yield to it should be neglected.

For many have found advantage... in being first compelled by fear of pain, so that they might afterwards be influenced by teaching, or might follow out in act what they had already learned in word...Whilst those are better who are guided aright by love, those are certainly more numerous who are corrected by fear.'

"The Christian persecutor there acts for the good of the sinner and heretic. Using the example of an ignorant child playing with snakes, Augustine maintains that restraining people by force from behavior that harms themselves is a good deed (Letter 153:4). 'For the person from whom is taken away the freedom which he abuses in doing wrong is vanquished with benefit to himself (Letter 138:14). And in a letter to a local governor Augustine insists, 'It is not their death, but their deliverance from error, that we seek to accomplish by the help of the terror of judges and of laws, whereby they may be preserved from falling under the penalty of eternal judgment' (Letter 153:4) With the sanction of Christ's example in coercing Saul on the road to Damascus, Augustine argues, 'Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return, if the lost sons compelled others to their destruction?... Is it not a part of the care of the shepherd, when any sheep have left the flock, even though not violently forced away, but led astray by tender words and coaxing blandishments, to bring them back to the fold of his master when he has found them, by the fear or even the pain of the whip, if they show symptoms of resistance? (Letter 185:23)"

Augustine believed that he had justified the church's use of punishment by claiming that Jesus has inflicted punishment on Saul on the road to Damascus. One must consider whether Saul's reaction through exposure to the glory of Christ does in fact, constitute persecution by Christ. The words of Jesus reveal that Christ was not using force or coercion against Saul, but that He was in fact, revealing to Saul, that Saul was persecuting Him instead.

Acts 9:3-6

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: (4) And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. (6) And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Saul's reaction to the 'glorious light' was an indication of what occurs to a sinful human being when they are exposed to the presence of divinity. Christ did not 'smite' Saul and cause his blindness. Blindness came upon Saul because he, a sinner, had glimpsed the partially veiled glory of the Son of God. Verse 18 describes the return of Saul's eyesight as "scales" falling from his eyes when Ananias prayed for him.

Acts 9:18

"And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

In love, Christ healed Saul from this affliction at the very moment that Saul exercised faith in Him. This is comparable to the experience which occurred to three of the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James and John were witnesses to the event where God the Father visibly communicated with His Son. The Son's face and body became visibly bright when the Father came near to Christ. Note the disciples' reaction to being exposed to divine glory – and note Christ's compassionate response to their affliction.

Matthew 17:2, 5-8

“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.... (5) ... behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (6) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. (7) And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. (8) And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”

Perhaps the disciples also were blinded by divine glory until Jesus touched them, just as Ananias touched Saul to effect his healing.

Augustine's theology of “justified” persecution included the death penalty.

“Augustine's initial attempts to justify capital punishment as a form of restraint on the sinner, preventing worse sin, is inherently incoherent within Christianity until the later development of a purgatory concept to accommodate it.... Augustine assumes that when God causes calamity to befall the faithful, it is a matter of punishing unrecognized fault, serving a useful reminder to vigilance, or testing one's faith (ContraFaustum 22:20). If God wilfully permits the persecution of his saints for his larger purposes, then certainly he permits the persecution of the wicked and perverse by the saints to the same ends. And if God's sense of justice is served by the suffering of all those who have inherited Adam's sin, then certainly he accepts his saints as the agents of this justice on those who reject forgiveness and by their recalcitrance threaten all. Building on Romans 13, he asserts that all political authority is approved by God... Augustine inadvertently provides the classic Nuremburg defense, that one remains innocent when obeying a command given by one in a position of sufficient authority, regardless of how it relates to any human standard of good or evil. By the same logic every action – be it that of a Gandhi or that of a Hitler – is vindicated as acts of God's will, insofar as they were successfully enacted in a world under God's absolute control....In rejecting such a God, the Manichaeans reject the justification of persecution, either as promoted by God as a means to god ends, or permitted by him as a chastisement of his chosen ones. Persecution, like all acts of violence, can only be instigated by evil. God does not allow persecution, but works tirelessly to free his saints from it... The logic of dualism entails the idea that God is not the only force to contend with, that God does not control all events in the universe, that not every existent thing or possibility of action must be rationalized within a unified supreme will. For the Manichaeans, therefore, there was a perfect logic to suffering and persecution: the world was a battlefield between good and evil, the individual was part of a voluntary mission to wage this war, the composition of the human body as a mixture of good and evil meant that many individuals could be turned to the enemy and when they were they would ignorantly persecute their fellow soul. Thus persecution is the natural state of this world. The good by definition suffers. The leaders of religion especially draw down upon themselves the hostility of the forces of evil.” (Dr Jason David BeDuhn, Associate Professor in Religious Studies at Northern Arizona University. Quotations from Augustine, Manichaeism and the Logic of Persecution p153-160)

<http://www.nau.edu/human/religion/beduhn/Augustine,%20Manichaeism,%20and%20the%20Logic%20of%20persecution.pdf>

It can be seen, that against this historical background, the doctrine of “justifiable” persecution - giving sanction to the murder of 'heretics' - is deeply established in the Roman Catholic church through the writings of Augustine.

Not surprisingly, many other Christian denominations, following in the steps of Rome, have also accepted this doctrine – on Augustine's assumptions - as being 'Biblically’ established.

Perceptions of God's Personality Form Legislation

Reported by Lauren Smith at The Wall of Separation, Official Weblog of AU.org (Americans United)

September 15, 2006

Extracts from the original article appear below.

God And Politics In America: What Baylor Researchers Found

A new report released by the Baylor University Institute for Studies of Religion has revealed some intriguing details about religion and politics in the United States. The study, titled "American Piety in the 21st Century," is considered to be most comprehensive and insightful undertakings in the field to date. **The survey of over 1,700 adults went beyond previous studies that tracked how many Americans believe in God or how religious affiliation affects the outcome of elections.** Using questions never before posited to the American public, the Baylor University researchers wanted to find out **how Americans perceive God's personality and how different perceptions influence political leaning....** Fully one-third of Americans identify as **Evangelical Protestants.** **The proportions of American Catholics and Mainline Protestants are nearly equal, with shares of 21 percent and 22 percent of the population, respectively.** Those identifying as Jewish (2.5 percent), Black Protestant (5 percent) "Other" (4.9 percent) and unaffiliated (10.8 percent) round out America's religious make-up. The report offers some interesting insight on those who don't identify with any particular denomination. The researchers say traditional ways of classifying religious affiliation are often problematic because "unaffiliated" can be incorrectly interpreted as "not religious." Previous surveys which claimed 14 percent of the population is unaffiliated, says the Baylor report, "have over-counted the religiously unaffiliated by 10 million Americans." Interestingly, nearly 63 percent of the respondents who identified as "unaffiliated" do, in fact, state that they believe in God or some higher power. Those three or four percentage points are significant, the researchers say, **because one's belief in and perception of God has a direct impact on political leaning.** Part two of the report introduces a concept barely, if ever, studied before. Participants were asked to characterize how involved God is in "worldly and personal affairs" **and to what extent God is "angered by human sins" and demonstrates "punishing, severe and wrathful characteristics."** Based on respondents' answers, America's "Four Gods" were classified as **benevolent and involved (23 percent), authoritative and involved (31 percent), distant and disengaged (24 percent) and critical and disengaged (16 percent).** **Five percent identified as Atheist.** The findings, when applied to political trends, reveal fascinating details about theology's influence on American politics."

The report revealed that **most** of these people would likely support legislation or a constitutional amendment which reflected their views about God's personality. http://blog.au.org/2006/09/god_and_politic.html

According to the preceding article, the churches do not unite on doctrine - but on *their perceptions of God's character*. Doctrines are not formed until AFTER the churches unite in their judgments of God's character. The motivating factor that causes the churches to unify, is NOT the Sunday law; it is the perception or belief that God requires the saints to enforce worship on those who do not to worship in the way dictated by the majority. It is this incorrect perception of God's character, that causes the image of the beast to be formed – a religious power that employs a political power to legislate and enforce compliance with its religious laws.

Revelation 14 and Ellen White's prophecy (in Great Controversy and the last chapter of Christ's Object Lessons¹³), predict that the final contest will contrast the loving character of the Father in the 144,000 and the evil character of Satan manifested in his followers.

The demonstration before the universe will cause all to differentiate between the spirit of God and the spirit of Satan. Freedom of choice will contrast with violent domination. Such opposing character traits spring from the spirit dwelling within the person. The 144,000 will be filled with the unselfish love of God, evidenced in the law of liberty which reigns in their bodies through Jesus Christ. (His name (character/spirit) is in their foreheads Rev 14:1). In stark contrast, the wicked will demonstrate with acts of violent domination that the selfish spirit dwelling within them is satanic. When the image to the beast is fully formed, this satanic spirit will be manifest toward 'heretics' who have been empowered by the grace of God, to 'love their enemies' (Matt 5:44).

"The 144,000 will 'know their God' i.e. they will know His character (Daniel 11:32). Through Christ's spirit in their minds, they will reproduce His character (Rev 12:17; Rev 14:1) and demonstrate to the universe that unselfish love is the only sane principle of government and more than sufficient for every situation.

In fact, the experiment with sin will not be concluded until God's character is revealed, in the person of Christ's saints.

Ellen White, 1 Testimonies for the Church, p 59

"The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were the words God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us, who could wash one another's feet, and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet."

While the wicked demonstrate the violent and selfish principles of Satan's government, the 144,000 demonstrate their Father's spirit. Just as Jesus refused to defend Himself and 'reviled not again,' (1 Pet 2:23), but trusted in the Father's love, so the saints, full of Christ's loving spirit, demonstrate the same gentleness in their characters. They also, will refuse to retaliate or to defend 'self,' but will trust in their heavenly Father's love.

When the wicked rush to harm the saints, it is the saint's non-violent, loving response that convinces the wicked of their sin. The wicked realise that the saints are trusting God with their lives and they confess that love is stronger than violent domination and selfishness. God's love is demonstrated to be the perfect law for universal government.

13 Christ's Object Lessons: To Meet the Bridegroom (Wise/Foolish Virgins) see appendix 38

"It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth."

*When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own..... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, **is a revelation of His character of love.**"*

Forming the Image to the Beast

The following extract is taken from MaranathaMedia website:

*"Many Christian & Jewish Leaders Call for Return to Commandments. A large group of Christian and Jewish leaders are calling for a return to the 10 Commandments. On May 7 2006, many churches will celebrate the eternal law of God. see Ten Commandment Day Web site This is an interesting observation for Seventh-day Adventists. We appreciate that many Christian churches want to keep the 10 Commandments but it seems strange after many have preached for so long that the law was nailed to the cross. How can the law of God be eternal and nailed to the cross at the same time? It will be interesting to see if this group, **The Ten Commandment Commission**, will seek to pressure government to recognise the ten commandments in line with the (Ellen White's) prediction of Great Controversy page 445. 'When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result.'"*

http://www.maranathamedia.com.au/start/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=2

For those familiar with the typical movements which introduce theocratic or dictatorial rule, the following information from the USA might be of some interest.

The following information is available from the link <http://www.theocracywatch.org/audio-video.htm> (first video selection at top of page).

On 29 April, 2005, Joan Bokaer, representing an organisation called **Theocracy Watch**, spoke on the subject of Dominionism. The programme was sponsored by New York Open Centre and CUNY Graduate Centre. Joan Bokaer's presentation focuses on "the theocratic wing of the Christian right and how their beliefs are impacting our lives." Highlights of the lecture and website appear below:

There are powerful political movements in USA today, which are endeavouring to 'reconstruct America' into a theocratic society.

- Congressman Christopher Shays (Republican of Connecticut) 'the party of Lincoln has become the party of theocracy' (New York Times, 24 March 2005)."
- **Pat Robertson stated: "With the apathy that exists today, a well organized minority can influence the selection of candidates to an astonishing degree (The Millennium, 1990).... "We want to see a majority of the Republican party in the hands of pro-family Christians"... (Denver Post, 26 October, 1992).**
- Rousas Rushdoony, the 'father' of the Christian Reconstructionist Movement (1916-2001) in **The Institutes of Biblical Law** (1973) called on Christ's elect people to subdue all things and all nations to Christ and His law-word."

- Rousas Rushdooney's son-in-law, Gary North – a prolific Christian Reconstruction writer; founder of the Institute for Christian Economics. He wrote in *Christianity and Civilization*, (Spring, 1982) regarding religious liberty. ***“So let us be blunt about it: we must use the doctrine of religious liberty to gain independence for Christian schools until we train up a generation of people who know that there is no religious neutrality, no neutral law, no neutral education, and no neutral civil government. Then they will get busy in constructing a Bible-based social, political and religious order which finally denies the religious liberty of the enemies of God”*** http://www.theocracywatch.org/biblical_law2.htm#Biblical
- Sara Diamond, sociologist, in Z Magazine, Feb 1995 states that, “Dominion Theology is the belief that Christians alone are Biblically mandated to occupy all secular Institutions until Christ returns...”
- Dominionist author, Gorge Grant (1985) *“The army of God is to conquer the earth, to subdue it, to rule over it, to exercise dominion....(Bringing in the Sheaves, p 98); “Christians have an obligation, a mandate, a commission, a holy responsibility to reclaim the land for Jesus Christ -- to have dominion in civil structures, just as in every other aspect of life and godliness. But it is dominion we are after. Not just a voice. It is dominion we are after. Not just influence. It is dominion we are after. Not just equal time. It is dominion we are after. World conquest. That's what Christ has commissioned us to accomplish. We must win the world with the power of the Gospel. And we must never settle for anything less... Thus, Christian politics has as its primary intent the conquest of the land -- of men, families, institutions, bureaucracies, courts, and governments for the Kingdom of Christ (pp. 50-51) **The Changing of the Guard, Biblical Principles for Political Action** ” cited in Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse? by Thomas Ice, published in 1988 by H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice. pp. 412)*
- Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart, in *The Reduction of Christianity* (1990:335) states: *“The reign of Christ ... is meant to subdue every enemy of righteousness.”*
- George W Bush as quoted in a fund-raising letter, Traditional Values Coalition, March 2005, ***“We need common sense judges who understand that our rights are derived from God. Those are the kind of judges I intend to put on the bench.”***
- U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia published an article in ***First Things***, a journal of religion and public life, in May, 2002. Scalia states: *“....Government...derives its moral authority from God. It is the minister of God with powers to “avenge” to “execute wrath” including even wrath by the sword (which is unmistakably [sic] a reference to the death penalty)....**“Indeed, it seems to me that the more Christian a country is, the less likely it is to regard the death penalty as immoral.”**”*
- Joan Bokaer responds to Judge Scalia's statement with: ***“Once we have a government that believes it derives its authority from God, then we become a theocracy. Well, once you see government as the minister of god, you have to ask the obvious question. Whose god? Is it Scalia's god? ...or the Dalai Lama?... And what about people who don't believe in God? What happens to them...?”***

- From a **Unitarian Universalist** Minister in Austin, Texas, written for the [Unitarian Universalist World](http://www.theocracywatch.org/universalist_world.htm), January/February, 2004:

"In Texas, where I live, the state has refused to grant the Ethical Society in Austin a church tax exemption because its members don't believe in God. The state maintains that defining God as a concept won't do, that to qualify as a church the society's members must believe in God as a being. The case has been through two appeals, and the state's attorneys have now taken it to the Texas Supreme Court. If the state wins, the ruling will affect every Unitarian Universalist church in the state-not to mention Buddhists, Taoists, and Hindus. Austin has the largest Hindu temple in North America, and Hindus are quite clear that Brahman is in no sense a being, and that all his personified images-as Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, or the Divine Mother Durga and her manifestations-are all imaginative creations, not beings." http://www.theocracywatch.org/relig_inst.htm

Thomas Ice was a Christian Reconstructionist for 12 years, but then resigned, unable to agree with the theology. After his resignation, Ice wrote a book called "Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?" (1988) which discusses the principles of Christian reconstruction. Ice states, *"Christian Reconstructionists propose to institute a theocratic government in America"* (p 74)...***Non-Christians cannot rule themselves and must be excluded from a government under God's law*** (p 71)."

- Enforcing Biblical Law - Journalist Frederick Clarkson reports on the views of Rev. Joseph Morecraft, pastor of the Reconstructionist Chaldean Presbyterian Church in Marietta, Georgia: "In his book, and especially when speaking at the 1993 Biblical World View and Christian Education Conference, Morecraft discussed with relish **the police power of the state. His belief in the persecution of nonbelievers and those who are insufficiently orthodox is crystal clear.** Morecraft described democracy as "mob rule," and stated that **the purpose of "civil government" is to "terrorize evil doers. . . to be an avenger!"** he shouted, **"To bring down the wrath of God to bear on all those who practice evil!"** "And how do you terrorize an evil doer?" he asked. **"You enforce Biblical law!"** The purpose of government, he said, is "to protect the church of Jesus Christ," and, "Nobody has the right to worship on this planet any other God than Jehovah. And therefore the state does not have the responsibility to defend anybody's pseudo-right to worship an idol!" "There ain't no such thing" as religious pluralism, he declared. Further, "There has never been such a condition in the history of mankind. There is no such place now. There never will be." http://www.theocracywatch.org/biblical_law2.htm
- Co-authors Mark Beliles and Stephen McDowell, in *America's Providential History* (1989:27), declare: ***"A government controlled and funded welfare system is unbiblical (p 27). Scripture makes it clear that God is the provider, not the state" (p 187).***
- Thomas Ice (1988: 73): *"What would a reconstructed America look like? The only legitimate functions of the state are: restraining civil evil; punishing evil; protecting the law abiding; defending the nation.*
- ***The Republican Party of Texas confirms that the United States is a Christian nation (Preamble 2004).***

- ***The Texas Republican platform supports the abolition of: the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; position of Surgeon-General; Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy; Housing and Urban Development; Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Commerce and Labour. They also call for the de-funding or abolition of the National Endowment of the Arts and Public Broadcasting System (p19)***
- ***Texas Republican platform p 8 states: " Our party pledges to exert its influence to .. dispel the 'myth' of the separation of church and state....***

What happens to funding for social programmes, social education, protection of the environment? What happens to social funding and education?"

- Thomas Ice in *"Dominion Theology, Blessing or Curse? answers:*
"Tax rates would be much less... due to a shift in welfare burden away from government to... the church" (p 74).
- Joan Bokaer asks the question and answers it herself:
"Where do churches get their money? A member's tithe. They give 10 percent of their income to the church."
- Thomas Ice explains,
"The tithe, not taxes, would finance most social welfare (p 77).
- **President George Bush stated, in his Faith-Based Initiative speech,**
"I believe the United States is beginning to fit the model of a reconstructed America....We want to fund programs that save Americans one soul at a time."
President George W. Bush, January, 2004, in a speech in New Orleans.
http://www.theocracywatch.org/faith_base.htm
- **Paul Weyrich, established the Free Congress Foundation in 1977. Meetings are still held every Wednesday are so influential, that a high ranking member of the White House is in attendance at every meeting. In its 2001 manifesto, the Foundation proclaimed:**
"We will not try to reform the existing institutions. We only intend to weaken them, and eventually destroy them."
- **A particular concern for Christians might be seen in Thomas Ice explanation of the centrality of Biblical law:**
"Only through ... Old Testament civil law can America and the whole world - be saved from destruction" (p 15).

Joan Bokaer clarifies Ice's statement:

"Old Testament civil law means Biblical law which includes using the death penalty for people who sin against the 10 commandments."¹⁴

Senator Tom Coburn, a Republican: the Associated Press in July 2003:

"I favor the death penalty for abortionists."

14 *Ellen White: 5 Testimonies for the Church, p 137 "The test will surely come. Thirty-six years ago I was shown that what is now transpiring would take place, that the observance of an institution of the papacy would be enforced upon the people by a Sunday law, while the sanctified rest day of Jehovah would be trampled underfoot." See also Great Controversy, p 448.*

- Joan Bokaer *"People who identify with - they call themselves 'the culture of life' - are the strongest proponents of the death penalty and guns."*

"Kevin Martin is a very aggressive crusader against indecency and some people associate that word with pornography, but it's really much broader - it is about imposing Biblical law on the rest of society and he was recently appointed chair of the Federal Communications Commission. The 5 people on that commission were given enormous power on February 16th when the House of Representatives passed the Broadcast Indecency Act. It authorizes the FCC to fine broadcasts up to \$500,000 for indecency violations. And so great is the chill cast by this act that 66 affiliates of CBS pulled 'Saving Private Ryan' off the air - an academy award winning film. Why? Because they used the Lord's name in vain."

"It's about Biblical law...."

"Indecency police are a major part of theocratic states... Taliban is proclaimed as the Ministry for the Protection of Virtue and Prevention of Vice."

- The Treaty of Tripoli signed in 1797, Article 11 (which was ratified by Congress) states: "...the government of the United States of America **is not** in any sense founded on the Christian religion..."
- The Republican Party of Texas boldly proclaims its mission: "The Republican Party of Texas confirms that the United States **is** a Christian nation (Preamble 2004)."
- Since the Republican Party has majorities in both houses of Congress, they set the agendas, chair the committees, and decide which bills will and won't come up for a vote. <http://www.theocracywatch.org/>
- The Reconstructionists consider the Puritans society as a pattern for the new Reconstructed America.

Mark Beliles and Stephen McDowell, entitled America's Providential History, (1989:p 84), states, "The primary strength of the Puritans was their 'spirit of dominion.' They recognized the scriptural mandate requiring Godly rule, and zealously set out to establish that in all aspects of society."

In Australia, recent events are a reminder that it is not only in the USA that violence is being legislated.

1. (1996) Terrorist Martin Byrant was said to have gone on a shooting spree in Port Arthur leaving 35 people dead. The event ushered in "Gun control legislation" Australia wide - which de-armed the country's citizens - making them incapable of any real resistance;
2. (2002) Accepting the authority of an international criminal court. Australia ratified the Rome Statute for the ICC, becoming the 75th State Party. Previously, the Federal Cabinet decided Australia should ratify the International Criminal Court, with a condition giving special protection to Australians. The declaration provides that Australians cannot be tried by the Court without a warrant from the Australian government. On 11 June 2002, (former) Prime Minister Howard announced Cabinet's decision to approve the bill on ICC ratification, and this was followed by two weeks of heated debate within Parliament. <http://www.iccnw.org/publications/update/iccupdate29.pdf> It appears that an Australian could be charged with a crime under international law, be taken to the World Court in Rome, and tried before a closed court. His own country might not assist him other than to refuse to give a warrant to the ICC. If a warrant is granted, what might be the probable outcome of an atheist being tried in a court where the jury are strict Catholics or Muslims? Could an impartial jury be found in such a case? (Consider Australia's response to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. USA, Britain, Spain, France, Germany, Argentina demand their citizens be sent home from the UN prison, but Australia leaves its citizen there);
3. (2003) Death penalty legislation promoted. The death penalty in Australia ceased for all states for murder in 1973 and for treason in 1985. In 2003, Mr Howard suggested that the states might find it prudent to commence debate on the benefits of re-introducing the death penalty for treason (A person who committed a terrorist act against their own country would be guilty of treason). <http://www.nswcccl.org.au/unswcccl/issues/dp090803.php> (Sydney Morning Herald 9/8/03);
4. (2005) Anti-terrorist legislation to control citizens' movements and activities - when no offence has been committed - eg. stop and search laws;
5. (2005) Preventative Detention Legislation to detain citizens on suspicion only - with no offence having been committed - for up to 2 weeks without a court order and without a charge;
6. (2005) Social conditioning - anti-terrorist "dob in" advertising campaigns – likely of causing the public to be fearful and suffer apprehension; <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jan2003/adve-j15.shtml>
7. (2006) Increased military powers have been granted in recent legislation. (Soldiers given more reasons to shoot to kill on home soil, 9 January, 2006 <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/troops-shoottokill-powers-extended/2006/01/08/1136655089477.html>
8. (2006) The Smart Card - Federal cabinet is considering the issue of a smart card. The Australia Card was rejected 2 decades ago, but Treasurer Costello claims the war on terrorism has changed Australians' attitudes (Sydney Morning Herald, 29 March 2006 "Smart-card-would-trump-Australia-Card). Democrats Senator Natasha Stott Despoja stated, "It might not be called an Australia Card, or a national identity card, but it is even more dangerous than the proposal we debated in the 1980s." She was concerned the proposed smart card "will become a national identity card by stealth." <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/parliament-rubberstamps-howards-eavesdropping-laws/2006/03/30/1143441281193.html>

It seems clear that the death penalty will soon be considered “necessary” in Australia to cope with the terrorist-threat.

The death penalty might likely be legislated on the grounds that "it's not wrong – it is not a sin - to murder heretics or terrorists.

It is prophesied by Ellen White that “heretics” will be eventually be considered treasonous (or terrorists) to their country. This charge will be based upon the belief or doctrine that 7th day Sabbath-keepers are causing the wrath of God to come on the earth. The wicked believe that God's wrath causes natural disasters and that God in His vicious wrath will decimate the countries of the world, unless Sunday is accepted as holy by all the world's inhabitants (Ellen White, Great Controversy)

Ellen White, Letter 1 Feb, 1890

“It has been shown to me that Satan is stealing a march upon us. **The law of God through the agency of Satan is to be made void in our land of boasted freedom;** religious liberty will come to an end. The contest will be decided over the Sabbath question, which will agitate the whole world.”

Ellen White, Review and Herald 18 March, 1884 p8

“In churches and in large gatherings in the open air, ministers will urge upon the people the necessity of keeping the first day of the week. There are calamities on sea and land: and these calamities will increase, one disaster following close upon another; and the little band of conscientious Sabbath-keepers will be pointed out as the ones who are bringing the wrath of God upon the world by their disregard of Sunday.”

The world will be unified against the One True, non-violent God and those who uphold His holy law of love.

The law that claims that it's not a sin to murder heretics – will be the law that is passed to destroy God's 7th day Sabbath-keeping people. If you are a Sabbath-keeper, who believes that God's commandments are binding, then it might well be that this legislation is designed to murder you!!

The 10 commandments were written on two tables of stone. The first four commandments explained how humanity are to reveal love and praise to their Creator. The last six commandments clarified how individuals are to related to each other in love.

In the looming crisis of the last days, God's people will be tested on a specific commandment from the first table of stone – the Sabbath commandment. The Sabbath demonstrates our allegiance and acceptance of a specific God's authority.

Perhaps God's people will also be especially tested on commandments which were written on the second table of stone. Certainly their characters will demonstrate that they keep ALL the commandments of God. However, the 6th commandment which states, “Thou shalt not kill” might also especially identify the followers of God for they, like Christ will be abused, persecuted and perhaps murdered, but there will be “no violence in them” for they have their Father's spirit in their minds (Revelation 14:1, 5).

It was demonstrated to the universe (by the Son's life) there was no violence in the Father's mind – for there was no violence in the Son's mind and consequently, no violence in His character (Isaiah 53:9; John 1:47).

Christ's mind, thoughts and character represented the Father's mind, thoughts and character perfectly (John 14:9). Christ's end time disciples will reflect the loving, unselfish character of Jesus perfectly also (John 13:35; 15:13; 1 John 3:11, 12; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:7, 12).

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69

“Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

At the root of this issue (of whether God originates and commands destructive acts), is the question of God's character.

We are asked to evaluate God's character and if we find Him worthy, to worship Him and to give Him our allegiance.

“Come let us reason together, saith the Lord.”

A Reason to Hate God

There is one reason commonly given by atheists and agnostics as to why they do not believe in God anymore or why they dislike God. Many former Christians also '*throw out the baby with the bath water*,' because of one particular, but false doctrinal belief.

The doctrine that God destroys people, destroys people.

The doctrine that suggest that the Ultimate Source of Love commands babies to be killed for the heretical sins of their parents is heinous. A god who commands such barbarism cannot be loving, regardless of the attempts to explain away the horrendous crime as if it were somehow justified.

This doctrine portrays God as a being who refuses to abide by the principles of His own law, but expects His subjects to do so. But even this expectation is not consistent, for the doctrine proposes that God in His wisdom, finds justification to command His 'chosen' people to break His law without incurring the usual death penalty, but in fact, endorses their law-breaking by bestowing rewards upon them for their violent and merciless acts.

The savage doctrine also results in the belief that God's moral law can be set aside. Cunningly concealed is the fact that the principles embedded in the law of God are simply a statement of how life works. Just as the law of gravity cannot be set aside, because it produces certain negative consequences, so too does the law of God, when set aside, result in certain negative consequences without any interference on God's part.

Jesus said that if He was going to be lifted up, that He would draw all men unto Him. Satan naturally had to orchestrate the opposite scenario to combat human beings from seeing and being drawn to give their allegiance to God. Satan needed to obstruct people from seeing the beauty of God's character through His Son. His blasphemous invention, the doctrine that suggests that God murders or commands murder of babies, achieves this result incredibly successfully.

Despite the claims in the New Testament that God is Ultimate Love, the lethal 'God destroys' doctrine causes many 'would-be' Christians to believe that God is in fact, incredibly unloving, and less merciful than the average human being. God is thought to be bordering on tyrannical insanity as He commands the murder of disobedient subjects, and even their children's deaths. His character appears to be selfish and His supposed love, conditional as it is quickly withdrawn unless His subjects render instant and unquestioning obedience to His contradictory commands. It is a religion based on fear of a wrathful, insanely violent god – not on the real love of God.

That God commanded His favourite (chosen) people to murder other people, including the command to murder of their innocent babies for the crime of heretical worship ie. worshipping different god/s. The Old Testament 'thou shalt kill passages' (Exodus 21-23; Numbers 31; Deut 21;1 Sam 15 etc) are often cited as a major reason as to why these former Christians have developed a revulsion toward God.

To demonstrate this principle, consider the lyrics of the following song which appears on the album called ***Stimulation Festival***, performed by the experimental noise rock band, ***Pain Teens***. http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/p/pain_teens/god_told_me.html

God Told Me

*God told me to do it, in fact he said I must.
I wouldn't think to doubt him, the only one I trust.
He said to kill a million
Of them every day,
And then I will be holy,
When I kneel down to pray.*

Old Testament

Deut 20:16-18

“But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee [for] an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them; [namely], the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.”

Numbers 31:17, 18

“Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.”

1 Samuel 15:2, 3

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember [that] which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [wait] for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”

Examination of Lyrics - *God Told Me* [by Pain Teens] – (continued)

The songwriter, assuming that God does require the murder and abuse of children, arrives at a false and dangerous conclusion – that it is okay to prey on children, but her own conscience chipping in, revolted with the thought, declares the only conclusion possible, that there is no God.

*The world is full of weakness, and weakness can't prevail.
The stronger ones must crush the weak,
Strength and self-esteem can't fail.
So God told me to do it,
All the little girls and boys
Are mine alone to prey upon.*

*But I'm the prey,
I can't go on.
There is no God!
What have I done?*

It is possible, that after committing their violent genocides against pagans (heretical men, women, children and babies and animals), that the ancient Israelites might have experienced similar despondent sentiments as those express in the lyrics of “God Told Me?”

Instead of repelling the world, Jesus instructed that, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me” John 12:32).

Misunderstanding God’s loving, unchanging character, converts Christians into atheists and nurtures ‘God-haters.’

Understanding that God did not command murder, but love towards one’s enemies, is the most basic and powerful truth which enables the conversion of atheists and God haters to Christianity.

Love draws.

Force repels.



Look to Jesus.

Theological foundations for the Inquisition

(Robert C Jones, Copyright 1998).

<http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm#Theological%20foundations%20for%20the%20Inquisition>

*"The proponents of the Inquisition (and, amazingly, apologists since the Inquisition ended in 1834), **point to both Biblical and theological sources for its justification. The biblical passages most often quoted by the early Inquisitors were from Mosaic Law, in the Old Testament.** This is, of course, somewhat questionable theology, as Mosaic Law regarding, say, dietary restrictions were completely ignored by the Church from the 1st century on, yet suddenly (in the 13th century), **Mosaic Law seemed to be a perfectly reasonable justification for burning thousands of people at the stake!** Key passages are quoted below (edited for brevity):*

*(From Deuteronomy 13 NIV) "If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you...and he says, "Let us follow other gods"...**That prophet or dreamer must be put to death...You must purge the evil from among you.***

*If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods"...do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him...**You must certainly put him to death.** Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. **Stone him to death...**Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.*

*If you hear it said about one of the towns the LORD your God is giving you to live in that wicked men have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray...**then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly.** And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, **you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock.***

Gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt."

*(From Exodus 22:18 NIV) "**Do not allow a sorceress to live.**"*

***Many of the elements found in the aforementioned extracts from Mosaic Law would later be closely emulated by the Inquisition"** (End quote Robert C Jones).*

According to the Biblical record, the Jewish nation was required to follow instruction for the treatment of heretics, as given in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible - authored by Moses). The Torah commanded that heretics should be executed - stoned to death. The King James Version of these commands follow:

Deuteronomy 13:6-11

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; (7) Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one

end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; (8) Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: (9) But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. (10) And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. (11) And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you."

The Jewish nation of the first century appears to have acted in accordance with the Torah by exterminating heretics who taught what they considered was "another god."

At His trial before Caiaphas, Jesus proclaimed clearly that He was the "Messiah - the Son of God." Christ's testimony, (that He was the Son of God) was used as evidence to condemn Him. It was Christ's claim to be of divine origin, which contradicted the Jewish conception of God.

The Jews insisted that Christ was NOT the "true" Messiah - the Son of God. Instead of holding to the Old Testament prophecies which predicted the origin, location and ministry of their Messiah, the Jewish nation appeared to treasure many traditional beliefs which surrounded His appearance. i.e. He was expected to be a military leader and to signal His arrival by miraculously descending/floating down from the temple roof. According to their erroneous understanding of God, the Jewish nation believed that Christ had endeavoured to introduce "another god." Thus the Torah commanded that Christ should die.

Modern Sanction of the “Killing” Principles of the Torah

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1136361024759&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

Yaakov Katz, THE JERUSALEM POST 6 January, 2006

Extremists boast they cursed Sharon

*“Far-right activists took credit Thursday for the severe deterioration in Ariel Sharon's health, claiming that a pulsa denura - Aramaic for “lashes of fire” - death curse they instigated against the prime minister in July was the real catalyst behind his current state of health. ‘I take full responsibility for what happened,’ far-right activist Baruch Ben-Yosef, one of the participants at the July pulsa denura, told The Jerusalem Post. ‘Our pulsa denura kicked in. Nothing could kill Sharon and he said his ancestors lived until they over 100 years old but we got him with the pulsa denura.’ the group broke out in song and dance and celebrated the prime minister's fall throughout the night...it was not a coincidence that Sharon fell gravely ill the same day as Kahane's murder. ‘**There is a judge in this world,**’ Ben-Gvir said. “[Prime minister] Yitzhak Rabin was killed on the fifth anniversary of Meir Kahane's murder and Sharon fell ill on the anniversary of Binyamin Kahane's murder.” ...Head of the National Jewish Front Baruch Marzel called on the public to stop crying for the prime minister. **I have no intention to pray for him.**....Josef Dayan said that while he could not say for certain that the death curse caused the stroke, he was sure that Sharon's crime in evacuating the Gaza Strip settlements contributed to the deterioration in his health. ‘This is a great day for Israel since that evil man is gone.’ Dayan said. ‘I am convinced that God heard the prayers of the children in Gush Katif. When those kids were thrown from their homes they prayed and God heard their prayers.’”*

Matthew 5:44 (Jesus said)

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Catechism of the council of Trent on the Fifth (sic) Commandment,

***“thou shall not kill”:* “[T]o the civil authorities... is entrusted power of life **and death**, by the legal and judicious exercise of which they **punish the guilty** and protect the innocent. The just use of this power, **far from involving the crime of murder, is an act of paramount obedience to this Commandment which prohibits murder**. The end of the Commandment- is the preservation and security of human life. Now the punishments inflicted by the civil authority, which is the legitimate avenger of crime, naturally tend to this end, since they give security to life by repressing outrage and violence. **Hence these words of David: In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land, that I might cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the Lord.**”**

Killing In A Just War “In like manner, the soldier is guiltless who, actuated not by motives of ambition or cruelty, but by a pure desire of serving the interests of his country, **takes away the life of an enemy in a just war.**” [This catechism was prepared in response to a decree of the council in 1563]. For more on the Council of Trent (1545-1563) see [the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913.](#) ¹⁵

15 *The late Desmond Doss, recipient of the USA's highest military award, the “Medal of Honour,” didn't think that God's 6th commandment could be broken whether in war or whether in peace. God miraculously and repeatedly protected Mr Doss in World War 2.* www.desmondoss.com

3. Catechism of Pope St. Pius the Tenth:

Q: "Are there cases in which it is lawful to kill?"

A: It is lawful to kill when fighting in a just war; when carrying out by order of the Supreme Authority a sentence of death in punishment of a crime; and, finally, in cases of necessary and lawful defense of one's own life against an unjust aggressor." [Published in 1905. [See the catholic encyclopedia on Pope Pius X.](#)]

Statements by Pope John Paul II on the Sept. 11 attacks

Question: "Is there anything in scripture that indicates the authority of government includes punishing the guilty or protecting the innocent?"

Pope John Paul II's Answer:

"Rom. 13:3-4 "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. " NRSV, see [NAB](#) http://landru.i-link-2.net/shnyves/wlegitimate_defense.htm

Old and New Testament verses are used by the Pope to justify murdering "heretics."

Such verses allege that **God** commanded the Israelites to "murder the idolatrous Canaanites" - to murder men, women, children and infants.

On the 24 August 1572, a full scale mass murder was organised for the sleepy Protestants in the St. Bartholomew's massacre - at midnight. In 1478 a massacre also targeted Protestants in the Spanish Inquisition. Last century, Jews and others were murdered by the Nazi regime. A massacre is prophesied in the "time of trouble" when the Sunday law is legislated. Satan instigated all these past massacres and HE will be the instigator of the coming massacre. **The end time massacre is predicted to be more intense than the massacres inflicted on the "heretics" all through history (Daniel 12:1).**

In contrast with all these evil massacres – where demon-possessed people murdered others not of their faith (heretics) – isn't it almost beyond comprehension to believe that God is said to have instigated the massacre of the "Canaanite heretics" at the hands of the holy Israelites?

- Did the Catholic religion - the anti-christ system - invent a righteous doctrine - that it is lawful to murder those who are not of their faith? Remember, the church bases their doctrine (that it is NOT a sin to kill heretics) on the belief that God commanded the Israelites to kill the Canaanite heretics.
- Was the Catholic system correct to claim that God authorised His people then and still authorises His people now, to do horrendous acts of murder and to break His law?
- Has the Catholic system been blessed with special inspiration about God's character?

Or, is something wrong here?

- Is it possible that the One True God is as equally as horrific as the demonic god?
- Is murdering babies – a loving character trait? A fruit of the spirit of God?

Of what crimes are Christians accusing God?

These are serious charges:

- to call God a commandment breaker; and
- to accuse God - that His character is as evil as Satan's.

These accusations would fall easily from the lips of Satan. Why should professed Christians repeat such blasphemy about their God?

Many religions through their 'holy books' and 'sacred writings' justify barbaric acts by saying that "God" told them to carry out genocides and massacres. For example, the Islamic book, the Koran, also justifies barbaric acts with the same theology. Mohammed commanded his followers to destroy heretics – (defined by Islam as those who don't agree with the Islamic religion).

The Old Testament Israelite religion justified their murder of "heretics" by saying that their "God" commanded them to do it. This is the same justification that the Catholic Church and the Islamic religion professes to possess today!

Consider: If Satanic agencies told the Catholic system to murder heretics during the Dark Ages, is it logical to believe that God ordered the Israelites to murder heretics in the Old Testament?

Are the characters of God and Satan so similar that they perform the same works – or have human being simply confused their characters?

It appears there is Biblical evidence to suggest that human beings are simply confused, and that for centuries humanity has confused the characters of the One True God and Satan.

Walther Zimmerli (1907–1984) was Professor of Old Testament at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and considered by many as one of the most important biblical scholars of the twentieth century. Among his many publications in English are *Ezekiel*, 2 vols. (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 1979/1983), *I Am Yahweh* (1982), *The Old Testament and the World* (1976), and *The Law and the Prophets* (1965). In *The Law and the Prophets*, Zimmerli writes:

"In this connection Hosea attacks with particular passion the priests who should have been the true guardians of the knowledge of God, and who have especially failed in this duty (Hosea iv. 4 ff.). They have allowed to pass unnoticed the very real exchange of Yahweh, the God of Israel, for the baals of Canaan. This was no longer the same threat which had occurred in Elijah's time, it was something much more dangerous." (continued)

(Quote continued)

*“While the worship of Yahweh remained outwardly correct, in reality he had come to be regarded as a nature deity like the Canaanite Baal. From him men sought the fertility of the soil and of marriage; he was worshipped with the forms of nature religion and with sacral prostitution, as men worshipped the Baals. **Yahweh became Baal.** The name of one of David's warriors, which is recorded in I Chronicles 12:5 as Bealiah (Yahweh is Baal) demonstrates exactly this programmatic assertion.* Thus without knowing it, *Israel had begun to misunderstand the very nature of its God,* because the professional guardians of a true knowledge of him were asleep.” (Walther Zimmerli, The Law and the Prophets, Basil Blackwell 1965 p.70)

Wikipedia Encyclopedia states:

“1 Chronicles 12:5 gives us the name Bealiah (more accurately be‘alyâ) meaning 'Yahweh is Ba‘al'.”

If human beings misunderstand God and adjust their faith and beliefs accordingly, who is at fault? One theologian puts it this way:

EJ Waggoner, SDA General Conference Daily Bulletin, 1897 p 23

*“As we stand at the beginning of this chapter (of the book of Hebrews), we stand face to face with God, who speaks to us through his Son. It is no new thing for God to speak, for he spake in times past to the fathers and prophets, and **he now speaks unto us by Christ.** If we do not hear, what conditions prevent our hearing? Sometimes a person may not speak loud enough or distinctly enough. Is it possible for those conditions to obtain when God is speaking? - No. Does not God speak distinctly enough to be heard, and clearly enough to be understood, and loud enough to be heard? - Most certainly. Then if the fault is not with him, and we do not hear, what is the trouble? - **We do not listen.**”*

The Politics of Satan's Character

The following information can be found at <http://www.theocracywatch.org/satan2.htm>

"If the Religious Right gains dominion over society, we will all have to deal with Satan because he plays such a dominant role in their belief system. Anyone who is not born-again is vulnerable to Satan, for they are lacking the protective shield of Christ. The world is clearly divided into "good" and "evil", "Christ" and "Satan."

R.J. Rushdoony, the man who is considered the father of Reconstructionism called on his followers to "administer justice upon all disobedience in every area of life where we encounter it. To deny the cultural mandate is to deny Christ and to surrender the world to the devil" (The Institutes of Biblical Law, 1973).

Dr. Elaine Pagels, professor of History of Religion at Princeton University wrote a book titled The Origins of Satan. She explains in an interview with Ellen Kushner on WGBH, Boston Public Radio, what can happen when a society has a 'good vs. evil' world view:

"Every group and tribe has had ways of feeling superior to every other. I mean, every anthropologist knows that, but what's really different here is that you have a moral view - 'we are good, and you are evil.'"

And what happens then," Pagels continues, "as was put into the mouth of Jesus in the Gospel of John: whoever kills you will think he's doing service to God. So that if a conflict between us and them turns into a moral conflict, so we're God's people, they are Satan's people, we can do anything we like with them. I think of that when I hear the term "ethnic cleansing." It's like there's dirt there. You know, it's a good thing to get rid of dirt."

Falwell sees "a day when God will unleash his wrath and judgment upon unbelievers. He will crush them beneath his thumb." (Nuclear War and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, 1983.) While Falwell himself does not seem like a violent man, at what point will violence toward "unbelievers" be seen as "doing service to God" by his followers?

In New York magazine, August, 1986, Robertson made the following statement: "The people who have come into institutions [today - 1986] are primarily termites. They are destroying institutions that have been built by Christians, whether it is universities, governments, our own traditions that we have. The termites are in charge now, and that is not the way it ought to be, and the time has come for a godly fumigation."

Supreme Court Justice Scalia writes: [Government] "is the minister of God with powers to 'revenge', execute wrath ..." Scalia hints in his article in First Things, May, 2002, that the death penalty should be expanded. Scalia's comments are particularly disturbing in the context of the Religious Right gaining dominion over society.

The Reverend Timothy LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, authors of the best selling Left Behind series, describe in Glorious Appearing, the latest book of their series, the violence that Jesus will show non-believers upon His return:

"Men and women soldiers and horses seemed to explode where they stood," Dr. LaHaye and Mr. Jenkins write. "It was as if the very words of the Lord had superheated their blood, causing it to burst through their veins and skin." The authors add, "Even as they struggled, their own flesh dissolved, their eyes melted and their tongues disintegrated."

At what point do Reconstructionists, who advocate the death penalty for unrepentant homosexuals, abortionists, and blasphemers convince others that it is time to eliminate those characterized as Satan? The goal of Reconstructionism is to do away with sin. How can you do away with sin without eliminating Satan?

Fred Clarkson notes:

"the potential for bloodthirsty episodes on the order of the Salem witchcraft trials or the Spanish Inquisition is inadvertently revealed by Reconstructionist theologian Rev. Ray Sutton, who claims that the Reconstructed Biblical theocracies would be 'happy' places, to which people would flock because 'capital punishment is one of the best evangelistic tools of a society.'" (What is Christian Reconstructionism?: The Public Eye)

From Nicholas Kristoff of the New York Times, July 17, 2004:

No, I don't think the readers of "Glorious Appearing" will ram planes into buildings. But we did imprison thousands of Muslims here and abroad after 9/11, and ordinary Americans joined in the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib in part because of a lack of empathy for the prisoners. It's harder to feel empathy for such people if we regard them as infidels and expect Jesus to dissolve their tongues and eyes any day now. While this scenario seems extreme and impossible in our pluralistic, democratic society, if the Religious Right succeeds in dominating all of our major institutions including the Presidency, Congress, Courts and media, this country will become a very different kind of place. Historically, such forces tend to rise up and look for scapegoats when the economy is in trouble. In this century our democracy survived a major economic depression intact, but we didn't have such a large, politically organized culture focused on Satan at that time." Capital crimes in a theocracy, Theocracy Alert, July 27, 2005 <http://www.theocracywatch.org/satan2.htm> (end website quotes)

When is a Sin not a Sin?

Popular Answer: When God commands you to sin!

Question: Why is breaking the commandments of God (when God commands you to sin), not classed as a sin?

Popular Answer: Because God gives an indulgence which “neutralises” the sin.

It appears in certain religions, that when God commands someone (a saint) to do a sinful act, then the action is no longer classified as a sin. If God commands a certain person to break His law, He ensures this action is not recorded as a sin because He issues a pardoning indulgence to cover the sinful act.

This doctrine is centuries old. In 1376, it was woven into the Directorium Inquisitorum, (Handbook for the Spanish Inquisition); confirmed at the Council of Trent (1545-1563); and not renounced at the Vatican 2 Council (1962-1965). Plenary indulgences are given to inquisitors – those who kill heretics.

The Biblical Answer: “...but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” (Romans 5:13) “for by the law is the knowledge of sin”.... ” (Romans 3:20) ... “sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4)“...the law shall not pass away...” (Matt 5:18).

Isaiah states, “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to THIS word, it is because there is no light in them.”

The only time that sin can not be imputed to a person, is if there is no law or no knowledge of the law. _God takes into consideration of those who sin in ignorance as compared with those who chose to sin in outright rebellion. However, there IS a law (thou shalt not kill/murder) and sin IS ALWAYS imputed to intentional, informed lawbreakers.

Romans 6:1,2

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

6 Redemption p 663 (Ellen White)

“Christ gave no ecclesiastical right to forgive sin, nor to sell indulgences, that men may sin without incurring the displeasure of God.”

Are Christians expected to believe that:

- *Breaking God's law is **not really** breaking God's law if **God** commands it?*
- ***God** authorises “chosen” special people to break His law (i.e. gives them an **indulgence**), which frees them from the death penalty attached to law-breaking?*
- *Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death” does not apply to the “chosen” people?*

This logic is similar to the theology which says:

“We don't have to keep the law now. The law was done away with at the cross. We are no longer under law but under grace.”

*This theology also begs the question, “Why would God **command some** “chosen” people to break His law without penalty, and yet order the destruction of others (heretics) who also break the same law?” -*

Please consider these thoughts regarding the Biblical account where God directs the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites.

Foundational Theology

The belief that an organisation **has the divine right** to force their religious beliefs upon unwilling others, is an attack on the basic human right of freedom to worship. It also forms the theological foundation of the doctrine that **killing heretics is not a sin.**

The evidence suggests that the principles underlying the “Doctrine of Just Persecution” and “Just Wars” are common to many world religions and alarmingly, it appears that world politicians are following in the persecutory footsteps of Rome also.

In the film Fahrenheit 911 by Michael Moore, actual footage is seen of USA President George W Bush making the following comment regarding American soldiers killed in the “Free the Iraqis War.” His remarks brought a loud ovation from the American audience. He said:

*“They died in a **just** war for defending freedom and they will not have died in vain.”*

Dick Cheney's remark, from the same film was even more revealing. Was he advocating a **just** war when regarding the 'enemy,' he stated,

“The struggle will only end with their complete and permanent destruction” ?

According to the laws of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, killing heretics, is never just (justified).

In his commentary from the film Fahrenheit 9-11, Michael Moore quotes satirical author George Orwell who clearly portrays the desired outcome of murdering 'heretics' is **survival of the heirarchical structure**. Orwell states:

"It's not a matter of whether the war is not real or if it is. Victory is not possible. The war is not meant to be won. It is meant to be continuous. A heriarchical society is only possible on the basis of poverty and ignorance. This new version is the past and no different past can ever have existed. In principle the war effort is always planned to keep society on the brink of starvation. The war is waged by the ruling group against its own subjects and its object is not the victory over either Eur-Asia or East Asia but to keep the very structure of society intact."

Judging from recent media reports, the prophesies in the books of Daniel and Revelation as further expanded by Ellen White in the Great Controversy, appear to be presently occurring. The image is rapidly being made to the beast.

Ellen White, Great Controversy, 1911 p 580

"The Roman Catholic Church, with all its ramifications throughout the world, forms one vast organization under the control, and designed to serve the interests, of the papal see."

While the Roman Catholic Church organisation is not named or identified in the following presentations, they certainly appear to support the concept of a vast organisation being controlled by a mysterious, central power:

- Michael Moore's film - "Fahrenheit 9/11";
- Alex Jones' videos - "911 The Road to Tyranny"; "Police State 1 & 2," (2002); "Masters of Terror";
- Mike Ruppert's video – "The Truth and Lies of 9-11";
- Linda Thompson – "Waco – the Big Lie"; "America Under Seige"; Military Takeover of America;
- The USS Liberty;
- "Katanga – the Untold Story"

Ellen White, Great Controversy, 1911 p 580

*"Its millions of communicants, in every country on the globe, are instructed to hold themselves as **bound in allegiance to the pope**. Whatever their nationality or their government, they are to regard the authority of the church as above all other. Though they may take the oath pledging their loyalty to the state, yet back of this lies the vow of obedience to Rome, absolving them from every pledge inimical to her interests."*

The Catholic World, August 1871, vol. xiii, pp. 58089 (published in USA at the time of the First Vatican Council)

"Each individual must receive the faith and law from the Church with unquestioning submission and obedience of the intellect and the will..... We have no right to ask reasons of the Church, any more than of Almighty God.... We are to take with unquestioning docility whatever instruction the Church gives us."

The Protestant principle maintains that individuals be free to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences before God.

Acts 5:29

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

Roman Catholicism requires that individuals relinquish private moral responsibility in matters of faith. The principle of transferring responsibility for private faith (answering to one's own conscience) to a human mediator, is also found in cults.¹⁶

The Code of Canon Law, which originated from Vatican II Council (1962-1965) reasserts the same principle:

"The Christian faithful, conscious of their own responsibility, are bound by Christian obedience to follow what the sacred pastors, as representatives of Christ, declare as teachers of the faith or determine as leaders of the Church" (James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Donald E. Heintschel, eds., The Code of Canon Law, Paulist Press, 1985, Canon 212, Section 1).

What is the ultimate purpose of being required to 'trust and obey' the '**sacred pastors**'?

Ian Johnston, The Scotsman, 6 May, 2006

"BELIEVING that God created the universe in six days is a form of superstitious paganism, the Vatican astronomer Guy Consolmagno claimed yesterday....Brother Consolmagno, who was due to give a speech at the Glasgow Science Centre last night, entitled 'Why the Pope has an Astronomer', said the idea of papal infallibility had been a "PR disaster". What it actually meant was that, on matters of faith, followers should accept somebody has got to be the boss, the final authority. It's not like he has a magic power, that God whispers the truth in his ear,' he said."

<http://news.scotsman.com/international.cfm?id=674042006>

Great Controversy, 1911 p 581

*"Let the principle once be established in the United States that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured. God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. **Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men.**"*

¹⁶ For a concise and very interesting overview of cult-members mentality, readers might wish to read, "Imperfect Company, Power And Control In An Australian Christian **Cult** by David Millikan, published by William Heinemann Australia (1991)

Common Faith – One God

Recently, it appears that the major world religions are also in agreement as over one important, common principle – they all agree that they worship “one god.”

Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wrote an 18 page letter to USA president George W Bush which emphasised the “one god” principle as being the possible commonality on which to establish discussions for world peace. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that Ahmadinejad said:

'My basic question is this: Is there no better way to interact with the rest of the world? Today there are hundreds of millions of Christians, hundreds of millions of Muslims, and millions of people who follow the teachings of Moses. All divine religions share and respect one word, and that is monotheism, or belief in a single God and no other in the world.' While it offered no specific proposal, the letter did seek to identify a common ground for starting discussions based on the principles of monotheism. 'It would be a big mistake if the United States dismissed it or if they only consider it as a philosophical, religious, historical letter,' Nasser Hadian, a political science professor at Tehran University, said. "It would be a good idea if President Bush responds to it. It can open up some space."

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/ahmadinejad-gives-bush-lecture-on-christian-values/2006/05/10/1146940617555.html>

Roman Catholic and the new Protestantism theology also are grounded on monotheism – the 'one god' theology – the trinity. It appears that all 'one god' religions are recognised as valid forms of worship *of the same god* according to the former Pope John Paul 2nd.

Texe Marrs states:

“After many centuries of historic Catholic tradition, with the popes and the Vatican proclaiming ‘There is no salvation outside the Catholic Church,’ dramatic changes are now taking place. Pope John Paul 2nd has taken the mark of the Hindu god Shiva, in his forehead. He has allowed the Dalai Lama of Tibet to place a statue of Buddha on the altar of a Catholic basilica. The Pope has also accepted Allah, the false god of the Muslims, as one and the same with the Christian God and embraced the Jews as ‘Elder Brothers.’ Bewildered and confused, many traditional Catholics are now asking, ‘Is the Pope Catholic?’” (Texe Marrs, video, “Is the Pope Catholic?”-from Better Life Productions, PO Box W322, West Kempsey NSW 2440; phone [02] 65678118).

On the video, Pope, John Paul 2nd, was seen to publicly bless the religions of Hindu, Shinto, Muslim, Judaism and even Voodooism. All these religions deny that Christ, the Messiah, is the Son of (their) god.

1 John 2:22, 23

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.”

The pope's expressed world-religion unifying but 'uncatholic' sentiments in his book, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, p 77:

“All religions on the face of the earth are all seeds of the word of God.”

Statement by Texe Marrs:

“Do Moslems, Christians, and others worship the same God? American Christian leaders either hedged or else expressed mild dismay recently when President George W. Bush, visiting England, told reporters at a televised news conference that Moslems and Christians worship the same God. “I believe we worship the same God,” the London-Telegraph newspaper, (Nov. 24, 2003) quoted Bush as saying.” http://www.texemarrs.com/012004/same_god.htm)

Formerly, the Christian world generally labelled religions that don't honour the God of the Bible as “pagan” religions, and considered that these religions honoured false gods - however, the vast majority of the world's Christian religions today appear to be adopting the worship of the same false god through their belief in one of the “valid” forms of the trinity doctrine. The trinity also denies the literal Father/Son relationship prior to the son's incarnation in Bethlehem.

Can the world expect, in the light of Bible prophecy, that all religious organisations (whether Christian or pagan) which are now united in worship of 'the one god,' join together in “fellowship of the eucharist?”

- The Roman Catholic Catechism declares that the RC Church is founded on the doctrine of the trinity;
- The conglomerate organisation of the World Council of Churches confesses to worship the god of the trinity - the god of the eucharist;
- Pope John Paul 2nd asserts that the world's religions are all seeds of the word of god (the trinity god), including pagan religions.

Can you see the shadowy plan to introduce a compulsory Sunday law? According to prophecy, eventually the international legislation will endeavour to force all to accept submission to the authority of the anti-christ system. The legislation will be based on (supposedly) BIBLICAL LAW – i.e. OLD TESTAMENT LAW and will no doubt be accompanied by violent Old Testament punishments and penalties (death).

Ellen White, Great Controversy, 1911 p 580

“Who understands better than the papal leaders how to deal with those who are disobedient to the church?”

Who is Thinking to Change the Law – Thou Shalt Not Kill?

Daniel 7:25

"And he (antichrist power) 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.

John 16:2

"Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi (Retired Professor of Theology, Andrew's University) states:

"By teaching that those who die fighting for the cause of Allah will have their sins forgiven and are admitted into the pleasure of Paradise, the Koran has inspired Muslims throughout the centuries to fight unto death for the cause of Allah." www.keithhunt.com/Islam.html

Directorium Inquisitorium (Handbook of the Spanish Inquisition, written 1376, reprinted 1584) dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII, (translated by J. P. Callender, 1838):

"He is a heretic who does not believe what the Roman Hierarchy teaches.... A heretic merits the pains of fire.... By the Gospel, the canons, civil law, and custom, heretics must be burned... Inquisitors enjoy the benefits of a plenary indulgence [a full papal forgiveness of sin] at all times in life, and in death."
<http://www.rulersofevil.com/chap8.html>

Statement made by a nun at a Catholic girls' school near Los Angeles, 1965:

"Anybody who is **not** a Catholic is a heretic! And God doesn't want heretics on the earth because they try to destroy the Holy Mother Church! **It is not a sin to kill heretics, because it is God's way of removing them from the earth.**" (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, in *Four Horsemen* p 4; 5 published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985).¹⁷

Alberto Rivera comments on the foregoing (nun's) statement:

"The young Catholic adults of today who were exposed to programming technique back in the 1960's have had these seeds planted in their minds in preparation for the 'final purification'" (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, in *Four Horsemen* p 4; published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985).



17 (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, in *The Four Horsemen* p 4; 5; published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985). Vatican 2 council – "Pedro Arrupe, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus stated, "It is time for the new and final purification of the Church in preparation for the New Age kingdom." Rivera notes that Arrupe used 'purification' as a key word to describe purging (or extermination) of all those who are unfaithful to the pope.

Also, according to Alberto Rivera, the evidence that the Roman Catholic church considers it lawful to kill heretics is found in the letters printed upon the crucifix used in worship services.

*"The Bible tells us the words put on the cross of Christ at the crucifixion said: 'Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews' (John 19:19), but on the Roman Catholic crucifix, it reads: I.N.R.I. Webster's Dictionary says I.N.R.I. Means: **Jesus Naarenus, Rex Iudaedrum.** But in the Extreme Oath of the Jesuits, it has special meaning. In classical Latin, I.N.R.I means: '**lustom, Nekar, Reges, Impios.**'..... Translated into English ... I.N.R.I....means, '**It is just to exterminate or annihilate impious or heretical kings, governments or rulers.**'"* Alberto Rivera cites the source, "The engineer Corps of Hell," by Edwin A. Sherman, p 118 © 1883 (Under Ceremony of Induction and Extreme Oath of the Jesuits), Library of Congress catalog card # 66-43354. Double Cross, p 7, published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1981).

Alberto Rivera claims that Jesuits take an oath to exterminate "heretics" (i.e those who reject the Catholic faith).

Ellen White, Great Controversy, 1911 p 580

"Who understands better than the papal leaders how to deal with those who are disobedient to the church?"

The Catholic Encyclopedia

"The severity of the anathema in the Old Testament is explained by the necessity there was of preserving the Jewish people and protecting them against the idolatry professed by the neighbouring pagans."
www.newadvent.org/cathen/01455e.htm

The Catholic church appears to officially agree that the idolatrous Canaanites were of necessity destroyed (genocided) to protect the purity of the true religion of the Israelites. The church will likely use the same logic to recommend that 'heretics' who won't accept legislated Sunday laws, should like-wise be destroyed.

The Catholic Church organisation claims that the 6th commandment (called the 5th commandment) is not broken by killing people who are "workers of iniquity" i.e. heretics.

If you agree with the doctrine of 'just persecution,' you might be agreeing to your own death sentence.

History repeatedly testifies that when dominant religious organisations have held theology that condones law-breaking, and socio-political power was available to them, then aggressive measures have been employed against non-believers (heretics).

Aggression has been applied to effect a change in religious beliefs and practice - to bring non-conformers (heretics) "into line" with the existing orthodox beliefs – or to kill the objectors.

Consider the following lyric extracts from a song **Simple Man**, by Charlie Daniels.
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wb41-jqiyE&feature=related>)

*“Well, if I had my way with people sellin' dope
I'd take a big tall tree and a short piece of rope
I'd hang 'em up high and let 'em swing till the sun goes down.”*

Mosaic Law

(Deut 21:22, 23)

“And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged [is] accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance.”

*“Well you know what's wrong with the world today
People done gone and put their Bibles away
They're living by law of the jungle not the law of the land.”*



Mosaic Law

(Lev 18:2-5)

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I [am] the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I [am] the LORD. ”

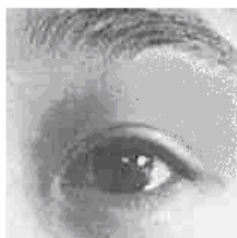


*“Well the good book says it, so I know it's the truth
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth....”*

Mosaic Law

(Exodus 21:23—25)

“... then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”



Simple Man, by Charlie Daniels (continued)

*"Now, I'm the kind of man that wouldn't harm a mouse
But if I catch somebody breakin' in my house
I've got a twelve gauge shotgun waitin' on the other side."*



Mosaic Law

(Exodus 22:2)

"If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, [there shall] no blood [be shed] for him."

*"So don't go pushin' me against my will
I don't want to have to fight you but I durn sure will
So if you don't want trouble then you'd better just pass me on by."*

Mosaic Law

(Exodus 21:14)

"But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die."

*"As far as I'm concerned there ain't no excuse
For the raping and the killing and the child abuse
And I've got a way to put an end to all that mess.
You just take those rascals out in the swamp
Put them on their knees and tie 'em to a stump
And let the rattlers and the bugs and the alligators do the rest."*



Mosaic Law

(Deut 22:25, 26)

"But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; [there is] in the damsel no sin [worthy] of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so [is] this matter."

What Would Jesus Say to Charlie Daniels?

John 16:2

(Jesus said) "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

Matthew 7:12

(Jesus said) "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

Matthew 5:43-48

(Jesus said) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 13

(Jesus said) "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another....This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The 10 commandment Law of God demonstrates how humanity should love their fellow human beings.

The spirit of God enables and empowers humanity to love their fellow human beings – including their enemies – as Jesus demonstrated in His life.



Murder is Murder!

Alan Reynolds (senior fellow with the Cato Institute)

"Dictators and aspiring dictators are angry with the United States for limiting their lust for power and land. They may try to cloak their ambitions and their brutality in religious garb, but they are lying. Religion cannot justify atrocities against the United States any more than it justifies thuggery in Northern Ireland. Murder is murder. There is nothing religious about it." <http://www.cato.org/dailys/09-18-01.html>

God is not a murderer! Is murder holy?

Jesus said that Satan was "a murderer from the beginning"! (John 8:44)

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," (John 18:36).

Those who follow Christ's faithful example will also be strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Hebrews 11:13) and will not fight!

John Robinson, the Puritan pastor, gave timely advice to the first Pilgrims who were preparing to embark for "the New World" (America) in search of religious liberty. Ellen White repeated Pastor Robinson's impressive words in the Great Controversy.

Great Controversy, p.291, 292

"Brethren, we are now erelong to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether I shall live ever to see your faces more. But whether the Lord hath appointed it or not, I charge you before God and His blessed angels to follow me no farther than I have followed Christ. If God should reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth of my ministry; for I am very confident the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word."--Martyn, vol 5 p 70."

Look to Jesus - the Author and Finisher of our Faith. See how His character reveals the Father's character perfectly. If we are not sure that God is not a murderer, then we are not prepared to stand in defence of His character in the testing times about to break upon us.

Is Knowing God's Character a Salvation Issue?

Is God really loving? Under all circumstances? Does He keep His own 10 commandment law - in every circumstance? Or are there times when God commands His chosen people to break the moral code – for example – the 6th commandment.? Does God ever command people to kill others?

Jesus said, "This is life eternal that you might KNOW HIM the only true God and Jesus Christ, Whom He has sent." John 17:3.

We can't **guess** about this vital subject. We must **know** the **CHARACTER** of the Father – the One True God – as a pre-requisite to inheriting eternal life. By beholding the lovely character of the Father through Jesus, our own characters may become changed (2 Cor 3:18) fitting us to become law-abiding citizens of heaven. It is the development of a Christ-like character – a commandment keeping character - that fits humanity to inherit eternal life (Rev 12:17; Rev 14:1).

The 144 000 will have "the Father's name in their foreheads" (Rev 14:1). That means that the Father's character of love will be evident in the lives of His people. e.g. Demonstrated by their love – love for their enemies particularly.

How do we know the character of the Father when no one has seen God at any time?

John 1:17, 18

"For the law was given by Moses, but GRACE and TRUTH came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Jesus declared He came to show us the Father (John 14: 8, 9) in all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9). Did Jesus do a poor job of reflecting His Father's character? Did He keep a few evil character traits hidden from view while He was on earth? Was Jesus lying about the Father's character - causing us to **think** the Father is nicer than He **is** in reality?

Satan, masquerading as a beautiful winged serpent, deceived Eve into thinking that it would be desirable to KNOW good AND evil (Gen 3:5). The essence of paganism honours a god who is both good and evil. I don't believe that Jesus Christ reflects the character of a "blended" God at all. He is not a mixture of good and evil, black and white, violence and gentleness. He is altogether loving - under all circumstances. In Him there is no shadow of turning (James 1:17). His character is the same, yesterday, to day and forever (Heb 13:8). God's character does not change (Mal 3:6). He never commands human beings to destroy others in violation of his own commandments – ***despite the horrors that well-intentioned men (in their honest, but stinted attempts to understand God), have attributed to His holy and sanctified character.***

If humanity has a skewed and imperfect perception of God's character, then humanity will not understand the depth of His love, nor the process of His "wrath." Preconceived ideas are powerful influences and these also apply to our perceptions of God's love and wrath.

The Biblical record reveals that the Israelites were surrounded by pagan nations. God forbade the Israelites to form close associations with pagan nations, with the intention of preventing contamination of the worship of the One True God with perceptions of pagan gods.

By giving this direction for separation from the Canaanites, God endeavoured to set a protective boundary around His people. This safeguard was to prevent the Hebrews from misunderstanding the law-abiding character of the One True God and confusing it with the evil and violent character of pagan deities. This direction was ignored by the ancient Hebrew people. Through associations with pagan nations, the Israelites understanding of God's character became contaminated with characteristics of pagan gods. So there was the perception that God's character contained both **good and evil** traits – a blended character. In His mercy, God did not reject the Hebrew people for this error in their understanding – but God's long-suffering did not make their gross misunderstanding of His character a correct representation of it.

The tragic situation is that this faulty representation of God's character is recorded in many places of the Bible. While God **has** preserved **the truth** about His character in the Bible, this truth needs to be searched for (Jer 29:11-14) and weighed against the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17) who is the True Witness (Rev 3:14), whose life perfectly fulfilled the 10 commandments (Isaiah 8:20). The 10 commandment law is the Royal law (James 2:8) also called the law of liberty (James 1:25) - the great standard against which all lives are to be judged (James 2:12).

This study does not attempt to “destroy faith in the Bible.” On the contrary, the author believes that the Bible **does** contain the precious words of truth, but it also contains elements of human reasoning which also cast negative aspersions on God's character. These negative traits are founded on human misconceptions of God's character and have their origins in pagan beliefs.

How can the genuine representations be determined from the misconceptions? By aligning each character trait portrayed in the Bible, with the great standard of judgment; which is - the Father's character as seen in the life of Jesus Christ (John 14:5-10) and which was written for humanity by the finger of God in the stone tablets of the 10 commandments; and which is also written in the hearts of the believer (Ezekiel 36:26,27) and will appear in the foreheads (minds) of the 144 000 (Rev 14:1)

Some might raise the objection that all Scripture is inspired and that none of its expressions should be scrutinised for pagan influence. They might quote:

2 Timothy 3:16

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”

2 Peter 1:19-21

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Revelation 19:13

“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”

Jesus Christ is the True Word of God, free of all pagan influence. (Please refer to the section of this study titled “**Objections**” where these valid concerns are investigated in more detail).

The true Christian's faith must not be bound to outward items such as icons, crosses, rosary beads, idols of worship. The Christian's faith must be placed only in the pure, righteous character of Jesus Christ. But how does one put faith in Jesus Christ if they are unsure of His character? Can they trust a mysterious, vacillating character, who tells His people (in a powerful demonstration of fire and smoke) to keep His 10 commandment law of love, yet when in a fit of anger, breaks His own laws and commands others to do likewise? (Psalm 106:23; Isaiah 13:9; Ezekiel 21:31; Rev 14:10).

If this is an accurate portrayal of God (which is found in the Bible), then He is a very unstable character indeed. But the One True God is not unstable, nor does His pure character ever change to absorb evil (Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8; James 1:17).

Humanity is challenged to understand the intense purity of the love of God. The Bible reveals this difficulty in the many instances where God is portrayed as having evil character traits, but the fault lies with **the inability of the human understanding, expression and portrayal of God** – not with God Himself. God is love (1 John 4:8,16; 1 Cor 13:4-7) and in Him there is no evil at all.

1 John 1:5

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, **that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.**"

Deuteronomy 32:3, 4

"Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: **a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**"

1 John 3:4, 5

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Ellen White, Education, p 108 (1903) *The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come.*

Ellen White, 4 Testimonies for the Church, p 138

"Christ came into the world to bring all resistance and authority into subjection to Himself, but He did not claim obedience through the strength of argument or the voice of command; He went about doing good and teaching His followers the things which belonged to their peace. He stirred up no strife, He resented no personal injuries, but met with meek submission the insults, the false accusations, and the cruel scourging of those who hated Him and condemned Him to death. Christ is our example. His life is a practical illustration of His divine teachings. His character is a living exhibition of the way to do good and overcome evil."

Jesus showed us the Father's character in its fullness. It is a principle that "by beholding we become changed." Our characters do change in response to beholding the God we worship and this is simply an extension of the law in Genesis as humanity was made 'in the image' of God. Our characters are transformed to resemble the God whom we worship. If our characters are to become like God's character, then we certainly hope that He is not a murderer or thief, or lawless Person.

Could the Law-Giver be a law-breaker? Could God transgress the law of love and still be the God of Love? Of course not!

"The righteousness of God is something besides a name. It is something far different from a form of words, or even the mere statement of a law. **It is nothing less than the life and character of God.** As there can not be sweetness apart from something that is sweet, so there is no such thing as abstract righteousness. Righteousness must necessarily be connected with some living being. But God alone is righteous (See Mark 10:18). Therefore wherever righteousness is, there God must be active. **Righteousness is the essential characteristic of God...God's righteousness is active. It is his own life.** Just as the air will rush into any place where there is an opening, so the righteous life of God will fill every heart that is open to receive it. **When men try to handle the law of God, they invariably pervert it, and fit it to their own ideas;** the only way to have its perfection appear is to submit to it, allowing it to rule. Then it will work itself out in the life. It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good-pleasure" (Philippians 2:13)...**The law of God is the righteousness of God See Isaiah 51:6,7). But this righteousness is the real life of God himself and the words of the law are only the shadow of it. That life is found only in Christ, for he alone declares the righteousness of God (Romans 3:24, 25)....His life is the law of God, since God was in him. That which the Jews had only in form, is found in fact only in Christ.** In him the end of the law is found....Only a study of the life of Christ will reveal the righteousness which the law of God requires...**The perfect righteousness of the law is found only in him. It is in him in absolute perfection....The thoughtful Jew in the days of Moses could clearly understand that only in the life of God could the righteousness of the law be found. Moses said....'that thou mayest love the Lord thy God and that thou mayest obey his voice and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life and the length of thy days' (Deut 30:19,20)....In nothing is the love of Christ more fully shown than in his dwelling with sinful men, and enduring all their hatefulness, in order that by his patience he may win them from their evil ways....Indeed the whole book of Romans gives a death-blow to that wicked idea that God is partial, and that he favors some people more than others. The idea that God has special blessings for one nation of earth that he has not for others, no matter whether that one nation be called Jews, Israelites, Anglo-Saxons, Englishmen, or anything else is a direct denial of the gospel of the grace of God....The gospel is the revelation of God to men."**

The Reason Why Satan Attacks God's Law

Jesus explained why knowledge concerning the importance of the 10 commandments were vital to salvation.

Matthew 22:36-40

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**”

Matthew 19:16-22

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? (17) And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, (19) Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (20) The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? (21) Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. (22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”

If the rich man had in fact, kept ALL the commandments from his youth, why wasn't that sufficient to ensure his salvation?

Jesus emphasised that the 10 commandments could be summed up in two commandments – love to God and love to humanity. The underlying principle of love is unselfishness, and the rich man's lack of love for God and his fellowman was demonstrated by his disappointing and selfish response to Christ's invitation.

Christ demonstrated that it was not the keeping of the letter of the law that achieved entrance to heaven, but the possession of the spirit of God – the new mind – the new character of unselfish love. The rich man possessed a legalistic religion – which was based on righteousness by works, not righteousness by faith which works through love (Galatians 5:6).

Christ's conversation with the rich man reveals that any work or action that is not motivated by unselfish love:

- **does not have its origin in love;**
- **cannot be in harmony with the spirit of Jesus;**
- **cannot produce the fruit of the spirit of love ;and**
- **is not in accordance with God's character, law or government**

Ellen White, The Upward Look, p 27

“Nothing less than heart service will be acceptable with God. God requires the sanctification of the entire man, body, soul and spirit. The Holy Spirit implants a new nature, and molds through the grace of Christ the human character until the image of Christ is perfected. This is true holiness.”

Is Violence a Fruit of the Spirit of Christ?

Matthew 5:44-48

"But I (Jesus) say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47) And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? (48) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Galatians 5:22, 23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, longsuffering, **gentleness**, goodness, faith, (23) meekness, temperance: **against such there is no law.**"

Paul infers that there IS a law against the opposites to the fruit of the spirit. The opposite of peace is war, bitterness. The opposite to gentleness is violence. These evil fruits are against the law of God's unselfish love.

Isaiah 53:9 (Prophecy concerning Jesus, the Messiah)

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

2 Thessalonians 3:16

"Now **the Lord of peace** himself give you peace always by all means...."

John W. Ritenbaugh, in *the Sixth Commandment* (part 1) comments on 1 Peter 2:21-23:

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

"This shows shows Christ's example, even when He had the love, wisdom, and discernment to judge righteous judgment and correctly put His enemies in their place. So strong was Jesus' commitment to these principles that, even when His life was on the line, and His enemies reviled Him intensely, He did not respond in kind. He set us an example to do likewise. Perhaps the key statement is He 'committed Himself to Him who judges rightly.' His response was an act of faith in God's awareness of His situation and God's perfect ability not merely to act but to act in exactly the right way for the good of all. The reality of God's sovereignty over His creation led to Jesus' minute-by-minute faithful submission. If vengeance belongs to God, then men, especially those who have pledged their lives to be subject to His government, have no right to take it to themselves. Very frequently, it takes real strength of character, bolstered by faith, to help and serve someone who has directly tried to harm us. God's instructions to us are clear: 'Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' (Romans 12:20-21). 'Enemy' does not mean one we hate, but one who is bitter toward us. If we hate others, we are right back in the spirit of murder. Paul is stating a critical universal principle: Over time, kindness removes enmity, but seeking revenge increases it. Booker T. Washington said, 'The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend.'"

<http://bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/30421/eVerseID/30423>)

Upon their conversion, the disciples and the apostles realised the importance of keeping the spirit of the law, by being filled with the loving, unselfish mind/spirit of Christ.

1 John 4:6-5:3

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (7) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. (8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. (12) No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. (13) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (14) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. (15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. (16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (19) We love him, because he first loved us. (20) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. (5:1) Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (2) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. (3) **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.**”

God empowers His followers with divine, unselfish love. Being unselfish (keeping the commandments), is therefore not difficult (grievous).

1 John 2:3-11

“And hereby **we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.** (4) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.¹⁸ (5) But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. (6) **He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.** (7) Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. (8) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, **which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.** (9) **He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.** (10) **He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.** (11) **But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.**”

18 *Jesus testified that Satan is a commandment-breaker. In John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because **there is no truth in him.** When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

Galatians 5:25- 6:2

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (6:1) Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.(6:2) **Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**"

2 Thesalonians 3:14-15

"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.(15) **Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**"

1 Peter 3:4, 8-11

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.... Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: (9) **Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing;** knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (10) For he that will love life, and see good days, **let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: (11) Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.**"

Paul also focused on the theme that God's character is pure, unselfish love. The principle of love was manifested by His Son whom He sanctified (John 10:36). How did the Father sanctify His Son? Christ was enabled to keep the 10 commandments perfectly by abiding in His Father's love (John 14:10, 11).

Paul wrote to Timothy giving his personal testimony as evidence of God's love and its application in his life.

1 Timothy 1:5-15

"**Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart,** and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: (6) From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; (7) Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. (8)

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; (9) Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (10) For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be **any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;** (11) According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. (12) And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; (13) Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (14) And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. (15) This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

After listing his worst crimes, which he committed 'ignorantly and in unbelief,' Paul states that he is the chief of sinners.

Paul admitted that he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and that his actions were injurious. In fact, his actions might also include being an accomplice to those who performed the crimes which he expressed earlier – manslaughter and menstealers.

Paul states that these evil acts are 'contrary to sound doctrines.' Sound doctrines are based on unselfish love – demonstrated by the keeping the 10 commandments. And Paul lists the sound doctrines which he identifies as the 10 commandments – for he refers to stealing, adultery, honouring parents, murder,

Paul's previous sinful actions had been performed in ignorance, yet, because they contradicted the law of love spelled out in the 10 commandments, he still identified those actions as sin.

Paul caused many of God's people to be imprisoned and killed, however Paul believed that his horrific actions were in fact, honourable. He believed that he was 'doing God service,' yet, his enthusiastic persecution of the early Christians, was an amazing fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy.

John 16:2

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

When Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, the proud pharisee's zealous actions were exposed to him as unlawful and hence sinful. Paul was shocked and horrified to find that he, a man of great education and learning, could have been so utterly wrong about a particular religious doctrine. He who taught the law, was himself a lawbreaker.

Paul's interview with Jesus provoked a radical change in his thinking processes. He began to realise the futility of legalism and forcefulness in matters of religion. He perceived that the law of God is founded on the principle of love. Love alone offers freedom of choice. This vital principle of love - "upon which hang all the law and the prophets," was constantly displayed in Christ's character (Matt 22:40). Christ never compelled anyone to worship Him or to accept Him as the Messiah or Saviour.

As Paul freely consented to 'have the mind of Jesus' (Philippians 2:5) his behaviour became non-violent. The 'fruit' of his character began to resemble the fruit of Jesus' character.

Paul listed Christ's character traits to the Galatians, calling them 'the fruit of the spirit' (of Christ) – love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal 5:22, 23).

Is it possible, that the ancient Israelites, like Paul, were also wrong in their legalistic perception of righteousness? Did they also ignorantly, believe incorrectly concerning God's character and law?

In his epistle to the Corinthian church members, Paul made a comparison between legalism and faith – between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law of love - as it exists and was seen in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:7,8). Then he exposed the origin of their sad error.

2 Corinthians 3:14

“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. (15) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. (16) Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.”

Paul revealed what the Jewish leaders failed to recognise - the principle of love, upon which God's law is based. The Jewish leaders' perception of God was hindered by an inability to perceive the loving spirit of the law. The law defines true, unselfish love.

As did Paul, could it be possible that the ancient Israelites also firmly believed that they were 'doing God service' by exterminating (murdering) Canaanite pagans and 'heretics'? It seems to be a logical conclusion in light of Paul's statement about 'a veil being on their hearts' which can only be taken away by Christ.

In many of his writings, Paul continued to repeat his theme that the law of God, which Jesus the Messiah demonstrated, defines His character. It is the character, the spirit, the mind of Christ which holds the key to humanity's salvation – not law-keeping (works) which is motivated by selfishness.

Romans 13:8-10

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. (9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: **therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**”

1 Timothy 1:5

“Now **the end of the commandment is charity** out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:”

Colossians 3:14

“And **above all these things put on charity**, which is the bond of perfectness.”

1 Corinthians 13:13

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but **the greatest of these is charity.**”

Thoughts to Ponder

God's character – His identity – is expressed in unselfishness love in every sphere, every situation, every circumstance. Satan claimed that the principle of unselfish love could not succeed in a sinful world. The attack against the law of God is an attack against God Himself. Jesus proved that the devil's accusations against His Father were false and vindicated His Father's character, His law and His government.

Question

Since Christ proved Satan's accusations to be false, why should Christians set aside Christ's great victory and echo the same satanic accusation against God's character by suggesting that there are some occasions where unselfish love fails; that there are circumstances which require a violent response and even necessitate murder? Why do they claim that God's law can be set aside, 'if God commands it?'

If God put aside His own law – in only one emergency – He would be admitting that Satan's accusations against His divine character, law and government were valid.

Romans 8:35-39

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The Commandments are Binding on All Beings

The apostles and disciples gave clear instructions that God's character is not a blend of "good and evil." They conclude that evil is the breaking of God's 10 commandment law of love. Sin is breaking the law of unselfish love. God does not EVER break His own 10 commandment law, neither does He ever instruct others to break His law and to behave in selfish ways (James 1:3; Matt 6:13; 1 Tim 5:22; 2 John 1:11). If God did endeavour to make others participate in sin, God Himself would be incriminated in their sins (Matt 5:19).

Matthew 5:19 (Jesus said:)

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

For God to lead others into temptation, would be to act in direct opposition to how Jesus spoke, when He asked according to the Father's will, in the Lord's prayer - "lead us not into temptation" (Matt 6:13).

Jesus demonstrated the Father's character before the universe (John 14:9, 10) so we may **KNOW** the Father's character. It is not a mystery that God is perfectly good and a perfect law-keeper of His own law. It is the transcript of His character. The law represents God's identity. We can never accept the suggestion that "God can break His own law" for Jesus never proclaimed such blasphemy.

There is a religious system in existence today which proclaims that God's laws are binding, **except in special circumstances**. This system claims that there are times when God's laws can be broken without incurring a penalty. In this system, a person can purchase special "divine" permission to sin – to sin legally i.e. without having to pay a penalty. Sin stops being sin – for that special instance. This "divine" permission is called an indulgence. The system declares that no condemnation can be given to a person who has purchased an indulgence and who then, voluntarily commits sin – adultery, murder, stealing – and breaks God's holy law.

The theology which states that the 10 commandments can be "legally" broken and that sin can be committed without penalty, is not restricted to one particular religious system.

Many Christian systems maintain that the theology which sanctions "the transgression of the law" is woefully incorrect, but they do not recognise this disguised doctrine ***within their own religious organisation*** and ***in their own thinking***. The doctrine is well disguised. Consider the following:

From the beginning of the universe, God's 10 commandments were binding on all created beings. All through history, the righteous have obeyed the commandments of God. Though they were murdered for holding their strong position on keeping God's commandments, the martyrs "loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev 12:11). In the soon-coming confrontation with the anti-christ power, the righteous will obey God's commandments in the face of the death penalty (Rev 13:15). If we love Jesus, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15) as He kept His Father's commandments.

Yes, even the Son of the Most High God obeyed His Father's commandments – unto the point of death.

John 15:10

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

Did Christ only keep His Father's commandments when He was a human being? Or did He keep His Father's commandments when He was the Son of God leading and directing the Hebrew people in the Promised Land? Did Christ break His Father's commandments then and command the Hebrew people to do likewise? (Numbers 31; Deut 21:10-14)

1 Peter 2:21-23

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 **Who did no sin**, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

Is it possible then, to logically suppose that there was **any** being in the universe who could be exempt from keeping God's commandments – when the Father and Son did not sanction commandment-breaking Themselves and did not demonstrate commandment-breaking Themselves, even under the most horrendous pressure placed upon them during Christ's torture and death?

Is it logical to accept the supposition that **God** instructed His prophets to write (into the Bible) that there were some people who were:

- **permitted** to intentionally break God's commandments? (Numbers 31:17; Jud 21:11)
- **encouraged** by God Himself to break His commandments?
- **commanded** by God Himself to break God's 10 commandments – without suffering the penalty of sin which is death (Romans 6:23)?

Consider:

- Did God create a privileged people who were exempt from keeping His commandments?
- Did God Himself command the "chosen" people to become **commandment-breakers** – after He told them **not** to break his law under pain of death at Mt Sinai? (Exo 20)
- Did God **temporarily** alter the definition of sin in His dealings with the "chosen" people, so that sin was NOT the transgression of the law? (1 John 3:4)
- Did God create His "chosen" people especially to cooperate with Satan in his work of commandment-breaking (John 8:44)?
- Did God offer special exemptions to the "chosen" people which granted them freedom to break God's law without incurring the penalty of sin – which is death (Rom 6:23)?

Of course God did not legalise sin for any being in all the universe. To accept this accusation against God is blasphemous. It attacks the very seat of the government of God! The belief that God permits, encourages and commands His creatures to break His commandments and to do so without incurring the penalty of death – is to support a doctrine invented by anti-christ.

Such a belief is the doctrine of indulgences, disguised in Christian clothes. This is the doctrine of "cheap grace." It is the doctrine that promotes the concept of "sin until Jesus comes and still be saved."

It is a doctrine that calls God a liar!

The serpent whispers, “thou shalt NOT surely die’ if you break God's commandments” (Gen 3:4; Rom 6:23). It is a doctrine that declares that the wages of committing knowingly intentional, unrepented sin are not death in every instance - and that the 10 commandments are not binding in all dispensations. It is a doctrine straight from the insane and evil mind of anti-christ. It is a doctrine of death.

Matthew 5:17-19

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Christ's words in Matthew 5:17-19 are self-condemnatory – if Christ commanded the Israelites to murder the wicked nations in Canaan. Christ Himself would be implicated in the commandment-breaking sins that He commanded (taught) the Israelites to perform.

If a Christian believes that Christ ordered the Israelites to commit genocide, infanticide and to plunder the wicked Canaanites' possessions, one must ask the question: Could not Christ have reacted to the situation in a different manner – a manner that permitted Him and the Israelites to keep His Father's commandments? Or was breaking the commandments – to murder and steal – the only possible solution to the “Canaanite problem?” If Christians teach and believe this fallacy- that Christ commanded murder - it is necessary also to accept that Satan must have been right in His claims against God's government – for it would prove that even God Himself couldn't keep His own law.

Commandment-breaking is not sanctioned by the Father, nor was it sanctioned by the Son's words as recorded in the gospels. If any writing, speech or doctrine appears to state otherwise, it can be exposed as being tainted by the spirit of Satan who was a commandment breaker from the beginning.

When a person purchases an indulgence (a permit to commit sin), they are blessed (by spiritual leaders) as they intentionally and with pre-meditation, break the 10 commandments. Compare this situation with that of the ancient Hebrew's culture when it was professed that the nation was under the direct rule of God – in a theocratic society.¹⁹ The Israelites were “blessed” with gold, silver, cattle and slaves when they willingly and intentionally broke God's 10 commandments and plundered their neighbours' land. Does the One True God bless those who willingly and knowingly break His commandments?

In “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:2) we can establish our faith in the character of the Father. We are instructed to look to Christ - not to Moses, the prophets, Joshua, Solomon, or David, but to turn our eyes upon Jesus. The Old Testament prophets and those men who were inspired to write the Bible demonstrated only a partial knowledge of the Father's character, but God, knowing the honest intention of their hearts, “counted it to them for righteousness” (Rom 4:5).

¹⁹ The Moabites and Egyptians were also “blessed” with slaves and wealth under a theocracy.

We don't need perfect knowledge of spiritual things before God will accept the imperfect gifts of our hearts. It is the heart that God values and God honoured the Bible writers because of the submission of their hearts to Him. Jesus described a similar situation to His disciples, concerning partial knowledge of the truth, when He lovingly stated in:

John 16:12

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Humanity is only saved by faith in Jesus' testimony (Eph 2:8). Christ's ability to "show us the Father" - to show us His loving character, is the key to our conversion experience. By beholding and accepting the perfect love of Jesus, we are saved by faith and changed into the likeness of His perfect character .

Nothing else draws believers but the love of the Father and the Son.

1 John 4:9

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

1 John 3:1

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

A question introduced this section of the book:

Question:

Is knowing the character of God a salvation issue?

Answer:

Yes. Knowing and trusting in the consistent, unchanging, loving character of God **is** a salvation issue. It is, in fact, the most important issue upon which our salvation is based.

The just shall live by faith – faith in God's loving character and His law abiding government as demonstrated by His loving, commandment keeping Son, Jesus Christ.

(Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38; Revelation 14:12).

As this study progresses, some foundational truths must be kept in mind:

- the commandments are binding upon ALL beings at ALL times
- the true, perfect description of the Father's character is ONLY demonstrated in the life of the Son of God;
- the character of God is often imperfectly represented by well-meaning human beings, but they are not condemned by God for advocating errors based on insufficient knowledge.

John 1:18

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Hebrews 1:1, 2

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

Ellen White, Bible Echo, 6 June, 1894

“Every one who will follow Christ will keep the commandments of God. The question will arise, Is this convenient for me? But if you flatter yourself that God does not require you to keep His commandments because it interferes with your convenience, you make a sad mistake. Another leader is commanding you, instead of the Captain of your salvation. Jesus suffered and withstood the severest temptations, and finally yielded His life on Calvary's cross, to demonstrate to every member of the human family that the law of God is immutable, and that not one jot or tittle can be put aside. The cross is a monument of its immutability; and thus it is demonstrated before all worlds, and before the angels, and before all men, that the law cannot cease to exert eternal jurisdiction. It sustains the throne of God, and is the rule of His government. If God could have changed one iota of His law, Jesus need not have come to our world to suffer and die; but He who was equal with the Father came and suffered even the death of the cross, to give man another probation.”

The Law of Reaping and Sowing

Galatians 6:7,8

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Isaiah 59:1-3, 6-8

“Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (3) For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. (6)... their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. (7) Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. (8) The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment (margin: right) in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.”

These texts state that:

- It is not God who initiates His separation from His people;
- It is not God who originates acts of violence, lies, murder, shedding innocent blood and destruction;
- Unrepentant sinners choose to separate from God;
- Unrepentant sinners perform acts of violence and destruction and shed innocent blood;
- Violence, lies, murder, shedding innocent blood and destruction are works of iniquity;
- Unrepentant sinners do not experience peace

Murder is the breaking of the 6th commandment. Murder is a fruit of the satanic and carnal mind - not a fruit of the spirit of God. It does not originate from the of the pure divine mind. It originates from Satan.

John 8:44

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

What humanity sows, they will reap as a consequence of their own actions and choices (Gal 6:7, 8).

Romans 12:19-21

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Isaiah 55:9

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Thou Shalt Not Kill – or is it Thou Shalt Not Murder?

Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17

“Thou shalt not kill.”

Webster's Dictionary

“Kill: *To kill does not necessarily mean any more than to deprive of life. A man may kill another by accident or in self-defense, without the imputation of guilt. To murder is to kill with malicious forethought and intention. To assassinate is to murder suddenly and by stealth. The sheriff may kill without murdering; the duelist murders, but does not assassinate his antagonist; the assassin kills and murders.”*

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible

Exodus 20:13: -THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

“Against murder and cruelty. [Thou shalt not kill.] This commandment, which is general, prohibits murder of every kind. 1. All actions by which the lives of our fellow creatures may be abridged. 2. All wars for extending empire, commerce, sanguinary laws, by the operation of which the lives of men may be taken away for offences of comparatively trifling demerit. 4. All bad dispositions which lead men to wish evil to, or meditate mischief against, one another; for, says the Scripture, He that hateth his brother in his heart is a murderer. 5. All want of charity to the helpless and distressed; for he who has it in his power to save the life of another by a timely application of succour, food, raiment, the person either falls or is abridged on this account, is in the sight of God a murderer. He who neglects to save life is, according to an incontrovertible maxim in law, the SAME as he who takes it away. 6. All riot and excess, all drunkenness and gluttony, all inactivity and slothfulness, and all superstitious mortifications and self-denials, by which life may be destroyed or shortened; all these are point-blank sins against the sixth commandment.”

Some theologians maintain that the command “Thou shalt not kill,” would more accurately have been translated “thou shalt not murder.”

The most common words in the Old Testament which are used to describe the taking of life are *harag* and *ratsach*. Killing is definitely forbidden in the 6th commandment, but under the Mosaic laws, the penalty of death was not applied in cases when the killing was accidental.

The Jewish civil laws certainly appear to condone the killing of criminals who committed certain crimes and such punishment is written into the Mosaic law. No punishments are given however in the moral law of God - the 10 commandments - which were spoken by God Himself.

God's commandment forbids killing, not only murder. If God's law doesn't include accidental killing, then it must condone it as a holy act, which of course, it is not. Accidental killing is a result of living in a sinful world, not a perfect world. God's commandment recognises that we are not living in a perfect world, however it still outlines right from wrong actions. In doing so, the sixth commandment forbids the taking of life for any reason - and the Hebrew words includes accidental killing and intentional murder.

The 'no taking of life under any circumstances' principle, demonstrates to a selfish world, just what love is. God is love and God is life. The 'no killing' principle expectedly harmonises with the words of Jesus. Jesus said that 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:12,13). 'Friends' includes our enemies, just as Jesus demonstrated on the cross when He gave His life for His enemies (Matthew 5:44).

If the greatest love is demonstrated by giving up our own lives in order to preserve the life of our enemies, then what is the opposite? What is the greatest sin? What is the greatest selfishness? To protect our own lives, at the expense of the lives of others. (ie. The enemy must die so that we can preserve our own life. Such action is considered 'legal' and it is called 'self defence.' It is certainly defending SELF - at the cost of another's life).

Paul Phillip Levertoff is best known to the modern world as the Jewish believer in Jesus (JBJ) who helped translate the Zohar into English for Soncino Press, a leading publisher of Judaica. Less well known about Levertoff, as we will see, is the fact that he was a major pioneer in the Hebrew Christian movement of his time. Paul Levertoff was raised in a Hebrew school and by his teenage years, he was attending the Volozhin Yeshiva. At this Lithuanian Jewish seminary, Levertoff received an exemplary rabbinic education. Later, he became a believer in Jesus and has done much translation from Hebrew into English, German and Russian. His position on the 6th commandment is as follows:

*"hom'-i-sid (rotseach): Hebrew has no word for killing or murder; rotseach (ratsach) is the word for manslayer. The Greek for murder is phonos. Homicide was every conscious violent action against a human being with the immediate result of death. It was always to be punished by death, being considered a crime against the image of God. **Killing is definitely forbidden in the sixth commandment (Ge 9:5 f; Ex 20:13; 21:12; Le 24:17,21; Nu 35:16-21; De 19:11-13). The penalty of death was not inflicted when the killing was unintentional or unpremeditated (Ex 21:13; Nu 35:22-25; Jos 20:3-5; compare Mishna, Makkoth, xi. 5). Cities of Refuge were founded to which the manslayer could escape from the "avenger of blood." There he had to abide till after the death of the officiating high priest. If he left the city before that event, the avenger who should kill him was free from punishment (Ex 21:13; Nu 35:10-15,25-28,32; De 19:1-13; Jos 20:2). See CITIES OF REFUGE. Killing a thief who broke in during the night was not accounted murder (Ex 22:2). Unintentional killing of the pregnant woman in a fray was punished according to the lexicon talionis, i.e. the husband of the woman killed could kill the wife of the man who committed the offense without being punished (Ex 21:22 f). This was not usually carried out, but it gave the judge a standard by which to fine the offender. If a man failed to build a battlement to his house, and anyone fell over and was killed, blood-guiltiness came upon that man's house (Dr 22:8). He who killed a thief in the daytime was guilty in the same way (Ex 22:3; compare the King James Version). Where a body was found, but the murderer was unknown, the elders of the city nearest to the place where it was found were ordered by a prescribed ceremony to declare that they were not guilty of neglecting their duties, and were therefore innocent of the man's blood (Dr 21:1-9). Two witnesses were necessary for a conviction of murder (Nu 35:30). If a slave died under chastisement, the master was to be punished according to the principle that "he that smiteth a man, so that he dieth, shall surely be put to death" (Ex 21:20; compare Ex 21:12). According to the rabbis the master was to be killed by the sword. Since in this passage the phrase "he shall die" is not used, some have supposed that punishment by death is not indicated. If the slave punished by the master died after one or two days, the master was not liable to punishment (Ex 21:21). Because of the words, "for he is his money," the rabbis held that non-Israelite slaves were meant. In ancient times the avenger of blood was himself to be the executioner of the murderer (Nu 35:19,21). According to Sanhedhrin 9:1 the murderer was to be beheaded. Nothing is said in the law about suicide."*** <http://www.messianicart.com/davar/articles/levertoff.pdf>

Jesus Himself explained that the commandment against killing includes being angry or even withholding help from another (Matt 5:21,22). If this is the case, then the problem remains: - how could the Israelites, supposedly under God's express direction, kill (execute) their fellow human beings? **Jesus** specified that "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" John 15:13. If that is the definition of the greatest love, surely murder – taking life in any of its forms – is the opposite of love. Jesus also emphasised that His followers would be empowered to keep all the commandments which were summarised in two commandments, one of which is "the second great commandment, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"* (Luke 10:27). Jesus also gave humanity a fail-safe principle which assisted them to be able to discern good from evil. He said, *"Therefore all things whatever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets"* (Matthew 7:12).

A converted, loving and selfless Christian would rather lay down his life for the person on "death row" as did the Lord Jesus Himself, rather than take life. (Consider the stand taken by Seventh-day Adventist Christian, Private Desmond Doss. He refused to carry a weapon or to take life at any time, while tending to the wounded repeatedly under heavy fire, despite being stationed in "the hell-hole of the Pacific" during the Second World War. Private Doss repeatedly demonstrated his willingness to lay down his life for his friends and for "the enemy" also (see www.desmonddoss.com)

Michael Tonn, was given an honourable discharge from the US Navy based on his application as a conscientious objector. Mr Tonn, a Roman Catholic mentions that although the Catholic church states there is a thing called a 'just' war, he does not agree with that theology. He notes the reasons for his stance as a conscientious objector:

1. the fifth (sic) commandment states 'thou shalt not kill';
2. Jesus stated love thy neighbour as thyself; and
3. "my own moral and ethical stance".

Of particular note is Mr Tonn's statement,

"...my own moral and ethical stance, because the Catholic Church does allow for a just war, but I don't. I don't agree with that statement. I don't believe in the Catechism that far. I still think it's wrong to kill people in any case.... Look at the facts. There's more than one side to this whole thing... On one hand we've got, 'Well, we're liberating the people.' I guess the peacemakers would say, 'Oh, they're just did it for the oil.' Either way, whatever motivation you have behind it, it's still war. It's still killing people. It's still invading a country. It's still causing massive suffering for some cause. It's still the action of it that I disagree with.... I've heard him (President George Bush) a few times, say 'Freedom and democracy,' but, freedom and democracy is not implemented by, through gunpoint, through killing people, through bombing other countries...That doesn't make anyone free. We're only going to be more victims – victims of more terrorism by the very acts that our government and our military does today, maybe not in five years, but it maybe in ten or fifteen years..., the next generation our children are the ones who are going to feel it. I'm sure that's why we're the victims of it in the first place because of things done 10 or 15 years ago. You just kind of ask him to stop the cycle I guess." The video of this interview with Mr Tonn is available at:

http://docuary.offtheworld.tv/details.php?media_id=221&search_term=

Christ's Object Lessons p 314

“He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the judgment. There are many who claim that by the death of Christ the law was abrogated; but in this they contradict Christ's own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. . . . Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matt. 5:17, 18. It was to atone for man's transgression of the law that Christ laid down His life. Could the law have been changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died. By His life on earth He honored the law of God. By His death He established it. He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the law might be shown to be immutable, that it might stand fast forever. Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts.”

The Law – Upheld and Obeyed by Jesus Christ

Matthew 5:21-22

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: (22) But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

Matthew 5:17-19

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. (18) For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (19) Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus said that anyone who teaches men to break God's commandments will be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven.

But in the Old Testament, the accusation is made that **God Himself** ordered the Israelites to break His law by killing heretics and pagans! Jesus said desire, to destroy a person's enemies, was evidence of the wrong spirit (Luke 9:55) and the breaking of the 6th commandment! Would Christians unknowingly accuse the Father, God Himself of having the 'wrong spirit' and of breaking His own holy law (Matthew 5:22)?

What was Jesus example of dealing with those who hated Him and who declared themselves to be His enemies? Whose example did Jesus say Christians would follow when they followed His advice?

Matthew 5:44-45

“But I say unto you, **Love your enemies**, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; **That ye may be the children of your Father** which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. **Love your enemies.**”

Matthew 19:17-19

“And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, (19) Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

And the Law Upheld by Paul (the Apostle to the Gentiles)

Romans 13:9, 10

“For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, **Thou shalt not kill**, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (10) Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

Who thinks they can change God's law?

Daniel 7:25

"And he (antichrist power/king) 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.

John 16:2

"Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

The Vital Protestant Principle

Great Controversy, p.291

"When first constrained to separate from the English Church, the Puritans had joined themselves together by a solemn covenant, as the Lord's free people, "to walk together in all His ways made known or to be made known to them." --J. Brown, The Pilgrim Fathers, page 74. Here was the true spirit of reform, the vital principle of Protestantism."

The true spirit of reform, the vital principle of Protestantism, is the determination to worship God and follow His teachings as He leads. This principle is the foundation of religious freedom whereby an individual exercises freedom to worship according to the dictates of private conscience.

Freedom to Worship

God's government is based on love and freedom of choice. God forces no-one to worship Him, for true fellowship is based on love and willing service. The gospel and the plan of salvation is based on the premise that God honours an individual's choice to choose whom they will worship. We can be certain that these statements are true by examining the life of Jesus Christ, for Christ came to "show us the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus said:

- "Whosoever **will** come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and **follow me**" (Mark 8:34);
- "**If ye love** me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15);
- "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and **they follow me....** And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10:27);
- "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **thou that killest** the prophets, **and stonest them** which are sent unto thee, how often **would I have gathered** thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, **and ye would not!** (Matt.23.37)
- "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, **neither let it be afraid**" (John.14.27)
- "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For **my yoke is easy, and my burden is light**" (Matthew 11:28-30)

Concerning interactions with others, Christ emphasised love and respect for the individual– not the application of force and coercion to achieve obedience and worship.

- "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" (Matthew 5:44)
- "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. **Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.** Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:27-38)
- "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the **very hairs of your head are all numbered.** Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).
- Paul added, "And be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God, for Christ's sake has forgiven you**" (Ephesians 4:32).
- "For **God hath not given us the spirit of fear;** but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7)

Political Freedom to Kill

While God's government offers individuals freedom of choice, some political regimes rise to power using opposing principles. Such regimes restrict basic individual freedoms, use coercion and assume the "right to kill" any individuals who disagree with their philosophy e.g. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's Bolshevik's Revolution.

TimeWatch – Lenin's Secret Files; British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, video, 1998)

*"After the attempt on his (Lenin's) life, the Communist government officially declared the 'Red Terror.' Industrialists, landed gentry, priests, lawyers, even their relatives were all rounded up. Years later communist propaganda was still maintaining they were all agents of foreign powers. Some were tried by revolutionary tribunals, but several hundred others were taken to cells of the secret police and shot dead. It was then that the regime of the one party state becomes really decisively also a terror dictatorship and Lenin himself approves of this while he is recuperating. During this bloodbath, Lenin was recuperating at Gorki. He thought the Red Terror hadn't gone far enough. (Lenin said) 'Our regime is incredibly mild - more like milk pudding than iron.' **Lenin believed that in circumstances such as war or revolution which is a form of armed struggle, the use of terror was justified.** That was why Lenin had studied the history of the French Revolution and defended the Jacobean terror. In December 1917, Lenin wrote an article 'How to Organise a Socialist Competition' in which he made the case for imprisoning and shooting the enemies of socialism. **He believed that as a political means, terror, executions, hostage-taking etc were justified and without any limitations. These were part of the Bolshevik' party's doctrine**" (end quote BBC: 1998).*

Apparently, taken from Lenin's same article, he pens the following:

*"The rich and the rogues are two sides of the same coin, they are the two principal categories of parasites which capitalism fostered; they are the principal enemies of socialism. These enemies must be placed under the special surveillance of the entire people; **they must be ruthlessly punished for the slightest violation of the laws and regulations** of socialist society. **Any display of weakness, hesitation or sentimentality in this respect would be an immense crime against socialism....**Variety is a guarantee of effectiveness here, a pledge of success in achieving the single common aim—to clean the land of Russia of all vermin, of fleas—the rogues, of bugs—the rich, and so on and so forth. In one place half a score of rich, a dozen rogues, half a dozen workers who shirk their work ... will be **put in prison**. In another place they will be put to **cleaning latrines**. In a third place they will be provided with **"yellow tickets"** after they have served their time, so that everyone shall keep an eye on them, as harmful persons, **until they reform**. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be **shot on the spot**. In a fifth place **mixed methods** may be adopted, and by probational release, for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and rowdies who are corrigible will be given an **opportunity to reform quickly**. The more variety there will be, the better and richer will be our general experience, the more certain and rapid will be the success of socialism, and the easier will it be for practice to devise—for only practice can devise—the best methods and means of struggle" (Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 24-27 December, 1917) <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/dec/25.htm>*

The SBS video series, "The Celts," in episode 5 entitled "Legend and Reality," the narrator makes the following statements:

"Oliver Cromwell was even more determined to bring the entire population of Ireland to the Protestant faith. He had under his command the finest army in Europe. It marched on the town of Drogheda and fired in one day, 200 cannon balls on the town's defences. All male, Irish combatants were put to the sword and Cromwell justified his actions by claiming this was a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches. The walls of Drogheda offered no protection."

From their website, the BBC Company -UK (The British Broadcasting Company UK) states that:

*"Oliver Cromwell rose from the middle ranks of English society to be Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland, the only non-royal ever to hold that position. He played a leading role in bringing Charles I to trial and to execution; he undertook the most complete and the most brutal military conquest ever undertaken by the English over their neighbours; he championed a degree of religious freedom otherwise unknown in England before the last one hundred years; but the experiment he led collapsed within two years of his death, and his corpse dangled from a gibbet at Tyburn. He was - and remains - one of the most contentious figures in world history...For Cromwell **had been converted to a strong puritan faith**, and he found living within a church still full of 'popish' ceremonies unbearable. He yearned to be where the gospel was proclaimed and preached unadorned. He stayed and **became more radical in his religion** - he regularly preached at an illegal religious assembly and he referred in a letter to the Bishop as 'the enemies of God His Truth'. When the chance came, he stood for Parliament, and **was returned on the interest of a Puritan caucus**, for the town of Cambridge."*

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/state/monarchs_leaders/cromwell_01.shtml

Oliver Cromwell zealously accepted the Puritan faith and through the support of the Puritan caucus became a politician and a daring soldier with command of the strongest army in Europe. Cromwell's history reveals that under his direction, the three vital aspects of religion, political power and military means were combined. This powerful position enabled the "Protestant" Cromwell to wage several brutal, supposedly 'just wars' on Roman Catholic 'heretics.'

Cromwell's battle plans and His logic for invading Ireland and Scotland, seem comparable to those of Joshua's upon entering the Promised Land.

- Cromwell ordered that all male 'combatant' residents of conquered towns were to be killed, justifying this murderous action by claiming the inhabitants were 'barbarous wretches.' Joshua claimed the Canaanites 'cup of iniquity was full' also and this fact justified their extermination;
- Cromwell's '*benevolent despotism was acceptable to a weary nation and went uncontested.*' Joshua also reigned as military and spiritual leader (despot) over Israel;
- Cromwell 'muzzled the press' in a manner very much as is done today, to ensure only 'positive' PR was conveyed to the masses. Perhaps the Biblical reports of Joshua's exploits might also have been prepared to produce 'positive PR.'

Protestants might benefit by asking themselves the question: Was Cromwell's persecution

of Catholic 'heretics' justified? Can the brutal deaths of the 'heretics' be justified in the name of Jesus, the One who told His followers to love their enemies?

More information about Cromwell's historical achievements can be found at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/cromwell_oliver.shtml

A Return to Political Legislation of the Dark Ages?

The following article presents an interesting comparison between Catholic Common Law and the English Common Law is made by Dr (of divinity) Bob Trefz during an interview with an unnamed pastor.

While reading the interview, it might be interesting to consider the commonalities between the USA Patriot Act, the recently legislated Australian Anti-Terrorism Act and Catholic Common Law.

The interview script appears below.

"Bob Trefz: In the Spanish Inquisitions, the most pious and the most holy celebration of the Papacy was the Ado De Fe, the burning of heretics at the stake. And here I have Henry Charles Lee's History of the Inquisition of Spain. Now Henry Charles Lee is the definitive work on this subject. He went into the very archives of Spain. It was called the Celebrado in the Spanish Inquisition, the service of burning people at the stake. They would have choirs singing Te Deums. They would have a thousand notables marching. The king would be present. And here's a chapter called, "The Celebration" right here. The Celebration. The Celebration of the Ado de fe. And if people found that they were losing their nerve as they watched people burning at the stake and wanted reconciliation with the church, they could request that and the Inquisitors would speak with them. And if they decided to grant them reconciliation, then Canon Law said that they had to spend the rest of their days in prison.

So you were faced, in the Inquisition, if you were even suspect of being a heretic, and Leonard Levy, in his Origins of the Fifth Amendment, a Pulitzer Prize winning book in 1969, says that anyone that got in the coils of the Inquisition, of all of those individuals, there is not one record of anyone escaping unscathed. So once you were suspected, that was it. And it was the stake, if you were faithful, and imprisonment if you recanted.

Pastor: So you had to be so totally against the heretics to escape even being caught. It kind of like reminds me of the French Revolution, to where anybody that was even suspect of being a sympathizer was taken to the guillotine.

Bob Trefz: Henry Charles Lee also has a definitive work on the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. And he tells in this book... He tells of how the Inquisitors would come into an area. They would call all the population out. Everyone was to tell everything they knew about any heretic. There was only one area that escaped from this, and that was because the people covenanted not to tell on each other, and the Inquisitors couldn't do anything. It was still in the early stages of the Inquisition. They had ways of dealing with that later on. But, betrayal of others was the proof of conversion you see. And what happened was the Inquisition was designed to instill TERROR in the population. (interview continued over page)

(Dr Trefz interview continued)

Utter fear so that the people would subject themselves, tell everything they knew, they [the Inquisitors] had records of everything across Europe, and any heretic their genealogy was examined and they kept records for generations.

The difference between Roman Catholic Canon Law and English Common Law and American constitutionalism is that our whole system of law that we have in America rests upon English Common Law, which battled against Canon Law in providing safeguards and guarantees for the people of England and then ultimately in America."

"For instance: under Canon Law you can be arrested in the middle of the night under suspicion because of rumor. The judge can make the decision to have you arrested himself. You can be arrested in the middle of the night. Your family don't know where you've gone. You're in prison. You can be judged by the Judge in secret, and put to death in secret. No one ever knows what happened to you... there in the Dark Ages....

Now, under English Common Law, first of all, if someone comes and takes you away in the middle of the night, your wife can get a Writ of Habeus Corpus to demand the jailer to show what cause why you are in prison. Here's the body. You bring the body up out of the jail. Here's the reason he's in. And then the accusations have to be made in public by an accuser. The judge is impartial. There is a jury that decides of your peers that decides whether you are guilty or innocent. And then the impartial judge would mete out the sentence. And in our whole Bill of Rights there is the defense against Roman Catholic Canon Law.

Now that's why, with the new supreme court which has been brought into position through the use of the abortion issue... the new Judiciary and the new Executive and Legislative aspects of our government are all slanted now in the direction in which we are rolling back the clock and we're moving back to Canon Law.

Even in decisions like Arizona vs. Fulmonatti, the dissenting justices said, 'We have now in this case turned away from our accusatorial legal system and accepted the inquisitorial system,' because now forced-confessions could be accepted in court."

<http://www.seventh-dayadventism.com/AC/AppealChapIntro4.htm>

Ellen White, Review and Herald, 1 January, 1889

"Many will plead that there is no prospect that popery will ever be revived. If it shall regain its lost ascendancy, it will be by Protestantism's giving it the right hand of fellowship. If it shall be legislated into power by the concessions of time-serving men, the fires of persecution will be rekindled against those who will not sacrifice conscience and the truth for the errors of the papacy. Once let the minds of the Christian world be turned away from God; let his law be dishonored and his holy day trampled upon, and they will be ready to take any step where Satan may lead the way."

Ellen White, 5 Testimonies for the Church, p 712

“The National Reform movement, exercising the power of religious legislation, will, when fully developed, manifest the same intolerance and oppression that have prevailed in past ages. Human councils then assumed the prerogatives of Deity, crushing under their despotic power liberty of conscience; and imprisonment, exile, and death followed for those who opposed their dictates. If popery or its principles shall again be legislated into power, the fires of persecution will be rekindled against those who will not sacrifice conscience and the truth in deference to popular errors. This evil is on the point of realization.”

Ellen White, General Conference Daily Bulletins, 13 April, 1891

“Here the great crisis is coming upon the world. The Scriptures teach that popery is to regain its lost supremacy, and that the fires of persecution will be rekindled through the time serving concessions of the so-called Protestant world.”

Ellen White, Review and Herald, 9 February, 1911

“The same spirit that in the Dark Ages consigned men and women to prison, to exile, and to the stake, that conceived the exquisite tortures of the Inquisition, produced the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and kindled the fires of Smithfield, is still at work with malignant energy in unregenerate hearts.”

Religious Freedom to Kill?

Just as some political regimes **assume** the “right” and the “freedom to kill” those who disapprove of their political philosophy, so some religious organisations believe they too, have a “God-given right” to impact an individual's worship choices - to the point of killing individuals who might prove resistant to that organisation's doctrines.

Such professedly Christian organisations do not accept the crucial truth that ***individuals*** possess the ***divinely-given right*** to choose which deity they will worship. When this basic truth is denied, coercion and varying degrees of force are considered **the right of religious organisations** to use against objectors.

Whether the “right to kill” philosophy occurs in the political or the religious arena is irrelevant – the underlying principle (of assuming a right to “control and kill”) is alarmingly common to both types of systems. A global situation which threatens humanity's personal religious freedom, is predicted to take place very close to the end of time.

Revelation 13:15-17

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast **should be killed**. (16) And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: (17) And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

Jesus prophesied that some religious people, **in the spirit of the beast power, would kill true Christians**.

John 16:2

“Yea, the time cometh, that **whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service**.”

Matthew 10:16,17; 24:8

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.(17) But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.... (24:8) All these are the beginning of sorrows. (9) Then shall **they** deliver you up to be afflicted, **and shall kill you**: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.”

Webster's Dictionary

Heretic: One who holds to a heresy; one who believes some doctrine contrary to the established faith or prevailing religion.

The belief that an organisation **has the divine right** to force their religious beliefs upon unwilling others, is an attack on the basic human right of freedom to worship. It also forms the theological foundation of the doctrine that **killing heretics is not a sin**.

History repeatedly testifies that when dominant religious organisations have held such theology, and socio-political power was available to them, then aggressive measures have been employed against the non-believer (heretic). Aggression has been applied to effect a change in religious beliefs and practice - to bring non-conformers (heretics) “into line” with the existing orthodox beliefs – or to kill the objectors.

Robert C. Jones writes about the theological foundations which were used to justify killing

of heretics during the Inquisition.

(<http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm#Theological%20foundations%20for%20the%20Inquisition>)

The Roots of "Just War" Doctrine

The following article **The Roots of Just War Doctrine** is found at Catholic Answers (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2001) and reveals the logic behind justifying war based on the Old Testament writings. The entire article, which is a primer only, can be found at where this extract originates: http://www.catholic.com/library/Just_war_Doctrine_1.asp

*"In the Beatitudes, Jesus tells us "blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9). Elsewhere in the Sermon on the Mount he tells us "if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). From such verses some have concluded that Christianity is a pacifist religion and that violence is never permitted. But the same Jesus elsewhere acknowledges the legitimate use of force, telling the apostles, "let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one" (Luke 22:36). How are these passages to be reconciled? In broad terms, Christians must not love violence. They must promote peace whenever possible and be slow to resort to the use of arms. But they must not be afraid to do so when it is called for. Evil must not be allowed to remain unchecked. Added weight is given to this realization when one recognizes that Scripture -- all of Scripture -- is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16). This means that the Old Testament is just as inspired as the New Testament and thus an expression of the will of Christ. The Old Testament acknowledges frankly that there is "a time to kill" (Eccles. 3:3). At various times in the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to defend their nation by force of arms. Yet it was always with the recognition that peace is the goal to be worked for. Thus the psalmist exclaims, "how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Ps. 133:1). Peace is the goal, but when it cannot be achieved without force, force must be used. In the same way, the New Testament sets forth the goal of peace but acknowledges the legitimate use of force. It does so by John the Baptist's acknowledgment that Roman soldiers, whose job it was to enforce the Pax Romana, or "Peace of Rome," could keep their jobs (Luke 3:14) and by Paul's observation that the state "does not bear the sword in vain" but is "God's servant for your good" (Rom. 13:4). As long as Christianity remained a minority religion in the Roman Empire, it was not forced to put these insights together into a formal theory of when warfare could be used. But as Christianity grew predominant, more attention had to be devoted to this subject. By the time of Augustine (A.D. 354-430) the need for a theory of when warfare was just was keen, and Augustine provided one, crystallizing biblical principles into what is now known as just war doctrine. In the intervening centuries the theory has been refined, but its framework remains as he gave it" (Catholic Answers, **Just War Doctrine**, San Diego: Catholic Answers, 1979-2005).*

The Catholic Answers article above appears to suggest that Christians ought to dislike using violence, but that in order to keep peace, they should employ violence. There does not appear to be any other option offered as a solution to the problem, other than to respond with violence. What about faith in God to protect His people? Wouldn't that be an alternative to violence?

Theological Foundations for the Inquisition

"The proponents of the Inquisition (and, amazingly, apologists since the Inquisition ended in 1834), point to both Biblical and theological sources for its justification. The biblical passages most often quoted by the early Inquisitors were from Mosaic Law, in the Old Testament. This is, of course, somewhat questionable theology, as Mosaic Law regarding, say, dietary restrictions were completely ignored by the Church from the 1st century on, yet suddenly (in the 13th century), Mosaic Law seemed to be a perfectly reasonable justification for burning thousands of people at the stake! Key passages are quoted below (edited for brevity):

*(From Deuteronomy 13 NIV) "If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you...and he says, "Let us follow other gods"...**That prophet or dreamer must be put to death...You must purge the evil from among you.***

*If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods"...do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him...**You must certainly put him to death.** Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. **Stone him to death...**Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.*

*If you hear it said about one of the towns the LORD your God is giving you to live in that wicked men have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray...**then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly.** And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, **you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock.***

Gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt."

*(From Exodus 22:18 NIV) "**Do not allow a sorceress to live.**"*

(Robert C Jones continued)

"Many of the elements found in the aforementioned extracts from Mosaic Law would later be closely emulated by the Inquisition, including:

- *"Purging" of "prophets and dreamers" (the charge that lead to the death of Joan of Arc)*
- *Family members in the Inquisition were encouraged to testify against each other*
- *Putting to death heretics as an example to others*
- *The guidance to "inquire, probe and investigate" towns that have gone astray could be a job description for later Inquisitors!*
- *Destruction of whole towns, to wipe out heresy*

It was much more difficult for the proponents of the Inquisition to find New Testament justification for their acts. The most often quoted New Testament verse is from John 15:

(John 15:6 NIV) "If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."

(Robert C Jones continued)

"The methods of the Inquisition were also given blessing from the most renowned Catholic theologians of the time, as the following startling passages from Saint Thomas Aquinas' (1225? – 1274 A.D.) massive theological work Summa Theologica show. Aquinas, a Dominican monk, is generally considered to be the greatest Catholic theologian since Augustine in the 4/5th centuries – and Aquinas talks of the extermination of heretics:

"P(2b)-Q(11)-A(3) ...Wherefore if forgers of money and other evil-doers are forthwith condemned to death by the secular authority, much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death.

*On the part of the Church, however, there is mercy which looks to the conversion of the wanderer, wherefore she condemns not at once, but "after the first and second admonition," as the Apostle directs: after that, if he is yet stubborn, the Church no longer hoping for his conversion, looks to the salvation of others, by excommunicating him and separating him from the Church, and furthermore **delivers him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated thereby from the world by death**...Arius was but one spark in Alexandria, but as that spark was not at once put out, the whole earth was laid waste by its flame." ("Summa Theologica - Vol. 3 - The Second Part Of The Second Part (Part I)" by Thomas Aquinas, p. 150).*

end quote Robert C Jones, Copyright 1998.

<http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/inq/inqcont.htm#Theological%20foundations%20for%20the%20Inquisition>

The Catholic Encyclopedia.

"To understand the word anathema", says Vigouroux, "we should first go back to the real meaning of *herem* of which it is the equivalent. *Herem* comes from the word *haram*, to cut off, to separate, to curse, and indicates that which is cursed and condemned to be cut off or exterminated, whether a person or a thing, and in consequence, that which man is forbidden to make use of." This is the sense of anathema in the following passage from Deut., vii, 26: "Neither shalt thou bring anything of the idol into thy house, lest thou become an anathema like it. Thou shalt detest it as dung, and shalt utterly abhor it as uncleanness and filth, because it is an anathema." Nations, individuals, animals, and inanimate objects may become anathema, i.e. cursed and devoted to destruction. It was thus that the people inhabiting the Promised Land were anathematized as Moses says ([Deuteronomy 7:1, 2](#)): "When . . . the [Lord thy God](#) shall have delivered them to thee, thou shalt utterly destroy them." When a people was anathematized by the Lord, they were to be entirely exterminated. Saul was rejected by [God](#) for having spared Agag, King of the Amalecites, amid the greater part of the booty (I K. xv, 9-23). Anyone who spared anything belonging to a man who had been declared anathema, became himself anathema. There is the story of Achan who had charge of the spoils of Jericho: "The anathema is in the midst of thee, O [Israel](#): thou canst not stand before thy enemies till he be destroyed out of thee that is defiled with this wickedness." Achan, with his family amid herds, was stoned to death. Sometimes it is cities that are anathematized. When the anathema is rigorous all the inhabitants are to be exterminated, the city burned, and permission denied ever to rebuild it, and its riches offered to Jehovah. This was the fate of Jericho ([Joshua 6:17](#)). If it is less strict, all the inhabitants are to be put to death, but the herds may be divided among the victors ([Joshua 8:27](#)). The obligation of killing all inhabitants occasionally admits of exceptions in the case of young girls who remain captives in the hands of the conquerors ([Numbers 31:18](#)). ***The severity of the anathema in the Old Testament is explained by the necessity there was of preserving the Jewish people and protecting them against the idolatry professed by the neighbouring pagans.*** (end quote)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01455e.htm>

Some quotations from the Islamic holy book reveal similar sentiments toward heretics.

The Koran (Qur'an)

Sura (chapter) 2:216

"Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But God knoweth, and ye know not ."

Sura 9:5

"But when the forbidden months are past, then **fight and slay the pagans** wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them: for God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful."

Sura 2:190.

"Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loveth not transgressors. And **slay them wherever ye catch them**, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter."

Sura 8:12,13

"Remember thy Lord inspired the angels (with the message): 'I am with you: give firmness to the believers. I will instil terror into the hearts of the unbelievers. **Smite ye above their necks and smite all their fingertips off them**. This because they contended against God and His Apostle. If any contend against God and his Apostle, **God is strict in punishment**... O ye who believe! When ye meet the unbelievers in hostile array, never turn your backs to them. **If any do turn his back to them on such a day-unless it be in a stratagem of war**, or to retreat to a troop (of his own) - **he draws on himself the wrath of God**, and his abode is hell, - an evil refuge (indeed)! **It is not ye who slew them; it was God.**"

Sura 61:4,11-13

"**Truly God loves those who fight in His cause in battle array**, as if they were a solid cemented structure ... that ye believe in God and His Apostle, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of God, with your property and your persons. That will be best for you, if ye but knew! **He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to gardens [Paradise]** beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity. That is indeed the supreme achievement. And another (favor will He bestow), which ye do love-help from God and a speedy victory. So give the glad tidings to the believers."

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that outspoken Melbourne Muslim cleric Abu Bakr was arrested on 8 November 2005 for belonging to a terrorist group.

"Bakr defended Muslims fighting against coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan and said anyone who fought in the name of Allah would be forgiven their sins.... He also said Muslims faced a problem in Australia as to whether to obey Australian or Islamic laws....."There are two laws, there is Australian law, there is Islamic law," Bakr said....On other religions, he said: 'I am not only against the Jew. I am against anyone who try to harm my religion.'" <http://smh.com.au/news/national/muslim-cleric-arrested-in-raids/2005/11/08/1131212033239.html>

12 July, 2001:

A state-run Ugandan newspaper reported that people in northeastern Congo have killed more than 800 suspected witches, during June and July. Diseases are common in the area; some of the the public accused "witches" of spreading disease. [The term "witch" in Africa normally means a person accused of evil sorcery. The same word in North America normally means a Wiccan or other Neopagan. The two terms are unrelated.]

http://www.religioustolerance.org/news_01jul.htm

The Roman Catholic Religion

Directorium Inquisitorium was written in 1376 by the church's Inquisitor General, Nicolas Eymeric. **The Directorium Inquisitorium became the handbook of procedure for the Spanish Inquisition for over a century.** It saw numerous printings, including a run at Barcelona in [1503](#) and one in Rome in [1578](#).

"The Directorium Inquisitorium defined [witchcraft](#), and described means for discovering witches. In compiling the book, Eymeric used many of the magic texts he had previously confiscated from accused sorcerors....In addition to describing common magical practices, Eymeric also described means of extracting a confession which included primitive [psychological manipulation](#) as well as outright [torture](#)."
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas Eymeric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolas_Eymeric)

Here follows a summary of the Directorium Inquisitorium (translated by J. P. Callender, 1838):

*"He is a heretic who does not believe what the Roman Hierarchy teaches... **A heretic merits the pains of fire.... By the Gospel, the canons, civil law, and custom, heretics must be burned....** For the suspicion alone of heresy, purgation is demanded.... Magistrates who refuse to take the oath for defense of the faith shall be suspected of heresy.... **Wars may be commenced by the authority of the Church.... Indulgences for the remission of all sin belong to those who signed with the cross for the persecution of heretics.... Every individual may kill a heretic.** Persons who betray heretics shall be rewarded.... Heretics may be forced to profess the Roman faith.... A heretic, as he sins in all places, may everywhere be judged.... **Heretics must be sought after, and be corrected or exterminated....** Heretics enjoy no privileges in law or equity.... The goods of heretics are to be considered as confiscated from the perpetration of the crime... The pope can enact new articles of faith.... Definitions of popes and councils are to be received as infallible... **Inquisitors may torture witnesses to obtain the truth.... It is laudable to torture those of every class who are guilty of heresy.... The Pope has power over infidels.... The Church may make war with infidels.... Those who are strongly suspected are to be reputed as heretics....** He who does not inform against heretics shall be deemed as suspected.... Inquisitors may allow heretics to witness against heretics, but not for them.... Inquisitors must not publish the names of informers, witnesses, and accusers.... Penitent heretics may be condemned to perpetual imprisonment.... Inquisitors may provide for their own expenditures, and the salaries of their officers, from the property of heretics.... **Inquisitors enjoy the benefits of a plenary indulgence [a full papal forgiveness of sin] at all times in life, and in death.**" (F.Tupper Saussy, *Rulers of Evil*,)
<http://www.rulersofevil.com/chap8.html>*

The Catholic Church has never renounced its past practice of killing people that it considers to be heretics. On the contrary, the Office of the Inquisition still exists. It is part of the Roman Curia (the group of men who govern the Catholic Church). In 1965, its name was changed to "The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith." It is headed by Cardinal Ratzinger. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/index.htm then select "Profile." (Note: Cardinal Ratzinger is currently the present Pope -2005).

Catechism of the council of Trent on the Fifth (sic) Commandment, "thou shall not kill": "[T]o the civil authorities... is entrusted power of life and death, by the legal and judicious exercise of which they punish the guilty and protect the innocent. **The just use of this power, far from involving the crime of murder, is an act of paramount obedience to this Commandment which prohibits murder. The end of the Commandment- is the preservation and security of human life.** Now the punishments inflicted by the civil authority, which is the legitimate avenger of crime, naturally tend to this end, since they give security to life by repressing outrage and violence. **Hence these words of David: In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land, that I might cut off all the workers of iniquity from the city of the Lord.**"

Killing In A Just War

"In like manner, the soldier is guiltless who, actuated not by motives of ambition or cruelty, but by a pure desire of serving the interests of his country, takes away the life of an enemy in a just war." [This catechism was prepared in response to a decree of the council in 1563. For more on the Council of Trent (1545-1563) see [the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913.](#)]

Catholic Answers, "Just War Doctrine" (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 1979-2005) *"Even with the smartest of smart munitions, it is not possible to ensure that no non-combatants will be harmed in wartime. As tragic as it is, collateral damage to innocents is an inescapable consequence of war. Catholic theology recognizes this. It applies to such situations a well-established principle known as the law of double-effect. According to this law it is permissible to undertake an action which has two effects, one good and one evil, provided that certain conditions are met."*

http://www.catholic.com/library/Just_war_Doctrine_1.asp

3. Catechism of Pope St. Pius the Tenth:

Q: "Are there cases in which it is lawful to kill?"

A: ***It is lawful to kill when fighting in a just war; when carrying out by order of the Supreme Authority a sentence of death in punishment of a crime; and, finally, in cases of necessary and lawful defense of one's own life against an unjust aggressor.*** [Published in 1905. [See the catholic encyclopedia on Pope Pius X.](#)]

The Bible

Exodus 15:3

"Yahweh is a man of war."

If God is a man of war, it is most certainly **NOT** a "man of war" to which humanity is accustomed.²⁰

Leviticus 20:13

"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."

Did the One True God order Moses to instruct non-homosexual sinful human beings to murder their homosexual relatives? Did Jesus, the only Man to ever demonstrate the Father's character perfectly, ever require such a penalty for sexual sin?

The following article highlights the problems which "killer-god" mentality and its accompanying doctrines cause. The article appears on Adventist4Truth website:

http://www.adventist4truth.com/index2.php?NewsPages=court_says_bible_hate_lit

LifeSite Daily News

Monday February 10, 2003

Court Agrees with Human Rights Tribunal That Bible = Hate Literature

Christian Leader Warns Ruling Shows Danger of Proposed Changes to Hate Laws

REGINA, February 10, 2003 (LifeSiteNews.com) - In a ruling given virtually no media coverage, the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatchewan, ruled that a man who placed references to Bible verses on homosexuality into a newspaper ad was guilty of inciting hatred. The December 11, 2002 decision was in response to an appeal of a 2001 Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (HRC) ruling which ordered both the Saskatoon StarPhoenix newspaper and Hugh Owens of Regina to pay \$1,500 to three homosexual activists for publishing an ad in the Saskatoon newspaper quoting Bible verses regarding homosexuality.

The purpose of the ad was to indicate that the Bible says no to homosexual behaviour. The advertisement displayed references to four Bible passages:

Romans 1, Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, on the left side. An equal sign (=) was situated in the middle, with a symbol on the right side. The symbol was comprised of two males holding hands with the universal symbol of a red circle with a diagonal bar superimposed over top.

Justice J. Barclay rejected the appeal ruling: "In my view, the Board was correct in concluding that the advertisement can objectively be seen as exposing homosexuals to hatred or ridicule. When the use of the circle and slash is combined with the passages of the Bible, it exposes homosexuals to detestation, vilification and disgrace. In other words, the Biblical passage (sic) which suggest that if a man lies with a man they must be put to death exposes homosexuals to hatred."

²⁰ E.g. The Israelites, under the leadership of Moses, desired a warrior god who would deliver them from Egyptian bondage. Again, when Jesus was with them in bodily form, the Israelites desired a warrior Messiah to deliver them from Roman bondage. Jesus resisted the concept of a warrior god. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world, else my servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:6). The principle of God's kingdom is unselfish love, not war.

Janet Epp Buckingham, Legal Counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada told LifeSite that "The ruling that a verse from the Bible can be considered to expose homosexuals to hatred shows the danger for Scripture if Bill C-250 passes." Bill, C-250, proposed by homosexual activist MP Svend Robinson would see "sexual orientation" added to hate crime law as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

See the ruling online at: <http://www.canlii.org/sk/cas/skqb/2002/2002skqb506.html>

Homosexual Rights Trump Religious Rights Provincial Rights Court Rules
<http://www.lsn.ca/ldn/2001/june/010619.html>

For more information on Bill C-250 see:
<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2002/oct/02102801.html>

In direct contrast to the Mosaic law (which supposedly required the stoning of homosexuals and sexual sinners), Jesus revealed a compassionate response; a loving acceptance - conspicuously devoid of any condemnation. Christ did not condone sexual sin – or any sin, but He loved sinners and His love prompted repentance and restoration.

Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:.... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:5, 10).

Rules and Rewards of “Holy” Wars

Holy Warriors Curse Heretics (those who disagree with their theology)

From the Koran

Sura 9:29-31

"Fight those who believe not in God nor the last day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the people of the Book [Christians and Jews], until they pay the jizya [tribute] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. The Jews call Uzair [Ezra] a son of God, and the Christians call Christ the Son of God ... **God's curse be on them.**"

The Roman Catholic Religion

Pope John Paul II issued a new edition of Roman Catholic Canon Law in 1983. According to Canon 1311, The Catholic Church has the right to coerce members of "the Christian faithful" who fail to comply with Canon Law. According to Roman Catholic declaration, heresy is disagreement with Catholic doctrine. This is considered a crime. The Council of Trent (1545-1563), and other Catholic Church councils, declare that anyone who disagrees with any of the church's doctrinal statements is **anathematised**.

When a heretic is anathematised (cursed) by the Pope, he is classified and sentenced as a guilty criminal. The "Catholic Encyclopedia" claims that **the ritual of declaring an anathema is intended to terrify the offender and cause him to repent** (recant his opposing beliefs and to accept the doctrine of the Catholic church). For more information concerning heretics and their treatment at the hands of the Roman Catholic church, read ex-nun Mary Ann Collins' article called "Hunting Heretics" on <http://www.catholicconcerns.com/Heretics.html>

Old Testament - The Bible

Deuteronomy 11:27, 2; 30:19

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: (28) And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known....I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

Genesis 12:3

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Numbers 5:20-22

"But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband: (21) Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, **The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; (22) And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot:** And the woman shall say, Amen, amen."

As admitted in the Catholic Encyclopedia, fear is used to "terrify the criminal," so too fear was employed to terrify the Israelites into abiding by the principles of their national religion. The application of fear is a constant factor in all coercive religions.

Holy Warriors Punish Heretics Now - (God punishes them later)

The Koran

Sura 5:36-38

"The punishment of those who wage war against God and His Apostle, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is **execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land**. That is their disgrace in this world, and **a heavy punishment is theirs in the hereafter**, except for those who repent **before** they fall into your power. In that case, know that God is oft-forgiving, most merciful. O ye who believe! **Do your duty to God**. Seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive with might and main in His cause, **that ye may prosper**."

The Roman Catholic Religion

The anathemas (curses) regarding "heretics" declared at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) have never been revoked. In fact, the declarations of the Council of Trent were confirmed by both the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the official "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (1992) authorised by Pope John Paul 2nd. Refer to Mary Ann Collins (former nun), articles at <http://www.catholicconcerns.com/Trent.html>

The Catholic Church has never renounced its "right" to punish "heretics." The Office of the Inquisition still exists as "The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith." The office underwent a name change in 1965. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is part of the Roman Curia (a group of men who govern the Catholic Church). It was previously headed by Cardinal Ratzinger, who is now (2005) Pope Benedict XVI.

On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII issued a papal bull defining the dogma of the Assumption of Mary. He concluded that it is forbidden for any person to oppose his declaration and that **any person who attempted to oppose the dogma would incur the wrath of God** and the wrath of the Apostles Peter and Paul. (Read encyclical at <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12MUNIF.HTM>) For more information concerning heretics and their treatment at the hands of the Roman Catholic church, read ex-nun Mary Ann Collins' article called "Hunting Heretics" on <http://www.catholicconcerns.com/Heretics.html>

The Catholic Encyclopedia

*"A Council of Tours desires that after three warnings there be recited in chorus Psalm cviii against the usurper of the goods of the Church, that he may fall into the curse of Judas, and "that he may be not only excommunicated, but anathematized, and **that he may be stricken by the sword of Heaven.**"*

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01455e.htm>

Statements by Pope John Paul II on the Sept. 11 attacks

http://landru.i-link-2.net/shnyves/wlegitimate_defense.htm

*"Is there anything in **scripture** that indicates the authority of government includes punishing the guilty or protecting the innocent?"*

"Rom. 13:3-4 "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. " NRSV, see NAB

Old Testament - The Bible

Deuteronomy 20:13.

"And when Yahweh thy **God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword.**"

Deuteronomy 13:6-13

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and **serve other gods**, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; (7) Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; (8) Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: (9) But **thou shalt surely kill him**; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. (10) And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God..."

Psalms 137:9

"Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

Judges 2:13-15

"And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (14) **And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them**, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. (15) Whithersoever they went out, the hand of **the LORD was against them for evil**, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed."

Revelation 9:20; 14:9,10

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, **that they should not worship devils, and idols** of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: (14:9) And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, (10) **The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

"Fire and brimstone" sermons were often employed to utilise the fear of "burning forever in hell" to terrify congregations into obeying religious traditions, but:

Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:.... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:5,
10).

Holy Warriors Do Not Sin when Killing Heretics

The Koran (Sura 9:5)

"When the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war). But if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity become Moslem], then open the way for them."

Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi (Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University)

*"Rather, the issue is the teachings of the Koran which call for the suppression and extermination of those who practice a different religion..."By teaching that **those who die fighting for the cause of Allah will have their sins forgiven and are admitted into the pleasure of Paradise**, the Koran has inspired Muslims throughout the centuries to fight unto death for the cause of Allah."*
www.keithhunt.com/Islam.html

The Roman Catholic Religion

Statement made by a nun at a Catholic girls' school near Los Angeles, 1965:

"Anybody who is ***not*** a Catholic is a heretic! And God doesn't want heretics on the earth because they try to destroy the Holy Mother Church! ***It is not a sin to kill heretics, because it is God's way of removing them from the earth.***" The young Catholic adults of today who were exposed to programming technique back in the 1960's have had these seeds planted in their minds in preparation for the "final purification" (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, in *Four Horsemen* p 4; published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985).

Directorium Inquisitorum (written 1376, reprinted 1584) dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII, (translated by J. P. Callender, 1838 - <http://www.rulersofevil.com/chap8.html>):

"He is a heretic who does not believe what the Roman Hierarchy teaches.... A heretic merits the pains of fire.... By the Gospel, the canons, civil law, and custom, heretics must be burned...Inquisitors enjoy the benefits of a plenary indulgence [a full papal forgiveness of sin] at all times in life, and in death."

Old Testament - The Bible

Deuteronomy 12:2, 3

"Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: (3) And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place."

Joshua 24:19-21

"And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; **he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.** (20) **If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you,** after that he hath done you good. (21) And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD."

Following this declaration, the Israelites began to destroy many Canaanites.

Killing idolaters was clearly not considered to be a sinful act; in fact, the opposite view was taken.

It was considered a sin – NOT to destroy idolaters.

The surrounding nations were slaughtered mercilessly (Deut 13:8; Isa 13:18) men, women, little children, infants, animals.

Some kings went further "and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up" (2 Kings 15:16; Hosea 13:16).

These violent practices were also engaged in by the heathen nations (Amos 1:3).

Did the heathen nations "murder in sin," while the Israelites "murdered in righteousness?"

Holy Warriors Organise a Holy Army

The Koran

"A most compelling proof that Muhammad taught his followers to advance the cause of Allah by the use of the sword, is provided by the example of his immediate successors, known as Califs. They followed his intense fanaticism in waging relentless wars of conquests against Christians, Jews, and pagans. In a relatively short time they carved an enormous empire for themselves. At the height of their power, the Muslims' territories stretched from northern Africa and southern Europe in the West to the borders of modern India and China in the East. Their battle cry was: 'Before you is paradise, and behind you are death and hell.'" <http://www.keithhunt.com/Islam.html>

The Roman Catholic Church

The Jesuit Extreme Oath is taken by key Jesuits. Following the Vatican 2 Council (1962-1965), the Jesuit Generals and the members of the Congregation of the Holy Office (the office of the Inquisition) pledged to wage war secretly or openly, on all "heretics" (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, quoted in the Four Horsemen p 5,6; published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985).

Foxe's Book of Martyrs, p 333-337 (concerning the Irish Massacre in 1641)

"The great design was that ... all the protestants without exception should be murdered. The day fixed for this horrid massacre was the 23rd of October, 1641.... The conspirators were in arms all over the kingdom early in the morning of the day appointed, and every protestant that fell into their way was murdered ... no age, no sex, no condition were spared.... The whole country was one common scene of butchery, and many thousands perished, in a short time, by sword, famine, fire, water, and every species of cruel death that rage and malice could invent When an estimate was afterward made of the number who were sacrificed ... it amounted to 150,000."

Old Testament - The Bible

Numbers 26:1-2

"And it came to pass after the plague, that Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their father's house, all that are able to go to war in Israel."

Jesus said,

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Holy Warriors Demand Holy Tribute

The Koran

Sura 9:29-31

"Fight those who believe not in God ... nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the people of the Book [Christians and Jews], until they pay the jizya [tribute] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued..."

The Roman Catholic Religion

Pope John Paul II issued a new edition of Roman Catholic Canon Law in 1983. Canon #1312 says that offences can be punished by depriving people of spiritual goods (such as the sacraments) and temporal goods (such as property, freedom, and other things relating to life in this world). "Code of Canon Law," page 409, Canons 1311 and 1312., beginning of Book VI. <http://www.rulersofevil.com/chap8.html>

Old Testament - The Bible

Deuteronomy 20:10-13.

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace, and open its gates unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that are found therein shall be **tributaries** unto thee, and they shall serve thee."

Joshua 9:20,21

"This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them. (21) And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them."

Judges 1:30

"Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became **tributaries**."

2 Corinthians 9:7

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Holy Warriors Gain Expanded Territory/Holy Land

The Koran

<http://www.keithhunt.com/Islam.html>

"A most compelling proof that Muhammad taught his followers to advance the cause of Allah by the use of the sword, is provided by the example of his immediate successors, known as Califs. They followed his intense fanaticism in waging relentless wars of conquests against Christians, Jews, and pagans. In a relatively short time they carved an enormous empire for themselves. At the height of their power, the Muslims' territories stretched from northern Africa and southern Europe in the West to the borders of modern India and China in the East. Their battle cry was: 'Before you is paradise, and behind you are death and hell.'"

The Roman Catholic Religion

In 337 AD, Pope Stephen 2 was given the city of Rome and a limited amount of the surrounding land by King Pepin, whom they had deceived into thinking that St. Peter himself wrote a letter (brought down from heaven) especially for him. The letter instructed King Pepin to fight for the Pope against the barbarians. After King Pepin died the Pope claimed that Pepin had given the Vatican all of Italy. Under Pope Hadrian 1, the Catholic leaders forged another document called The "Donations of Constantine," which claimed that Constantine had made the popes heir to the entire Roman Empire. Pepin's successor, King Charlemagne believed the lie and other kings and emperors also accepted that the church was the rightful successor to the empire, both spiritually and politically. (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, quoted in the Four Horsemen p 12,13 published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985).

Old Testament - The Bible

Deuteronomy 18:9; 19:1,2;25:19

"When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations .(19:1) When the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; (20) Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it. (25:19) Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it."

Holy Warriors Win the Women (Concubines)

From the Koran

Sura 33:50

"O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowers, and those whom **thy right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom God has assigned to thee** ... For the believers (at large), We know that We have appointed for them as to their wives and the captives whom their right hands possess..."

Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi (Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University) comments on this text from the Koran - Sura 33:50:

*"One of the benefits of fighting for the cause of Islam is the permission to take captured women as concubines, in addition to several legitimate wives.... **The notion that God would assign captured women as concubines to Muslim believers who for His cause, hardly reflect high moral standards of the Islam faith. Polygamy and servile concubinage have destroyed the dignity of women and the beauty of the home. In this areas the infinite superiority of Christianity is clearly evident.**"*

(<http://www.keithhunt.com/Islam.htm>)

Note: The Old Testament Israelites must not have **practised** "Christian principles" as Dr Bacchiocchi outlines above, because the Israelite warriors were authorised supposedly by God to take many thousands of concubines as captives after being victorious against the pagan nations in war. These women were not necessarily kept permanently, but could be "divorced" or sent away (Deut 21:10-14; Judges 21:12; Numbers 31:18; Ezra 9, 10).

The Roman Catholic Religion

To investigate the ritualised abuse of women in the Catholic church, refer to "the Nun's Story" by ex-nun, Sister Charlotte. Audio file available from www.adventist4truth.com

Old Testament - The Bible

Judges 21:10-12

"And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. (11) And this is the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man. (12) And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan."

Numbers 31:17, 18, 32, 35, 40, 41

"Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. (18) But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.....(32) And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep...(35) And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him. (40) And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was thirty and two persons. (41) And Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD'S heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses."

Deuteronomy 21:10-14

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, (11) And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; (12) Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; (13) And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. (14) And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.”

Jesus

In stark contrast to the treatment of women by organised religions, Jesus treated women – even those who were “sinners” (outcasts of society e.g. prostitutes) - with respect and offered them freedom.

Mark 2:16

“And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?”

John 8:3-11

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, (4) They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6) This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (7) So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10) When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (11) She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

Mark 14:3-9

“And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. (4) And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? (5) For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. (6) And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. (7) For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. (8) She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. (9) Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

Why Do Religious Organisations Kill Heretics?

History testifies the world-wide phenomenon, practiced both in the past and in the present, to kill those who do not agree with the policies or doctrines of those in power.

In his commentary from the film *Fahrenheit 9-11*, Michael Moore quotes satirical author George Orwell who clearly portrays the object of murdering 'heretics' is ***survival of the heirarchical structure***. Orwell states:

"It's not a matter of whether the war is not real or if it is. Victory is not possible. The war is not meant to be won. It is meant to be continuous. A heriarchical society is only possible on the basis of poverty and ignorance. This new version is the past and no different past can ever have existed. In principle the war effort is always planned to keep society on the brink of starvation. The war is waged by the ruling group against its own subjects and its object is not the victory over either Eur-Asia or East Asia but to keep the very structure of society intact."

According to the laws of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, killing heretics, is not just (justified).

Founder of the Church of Satan, Anton LaVey outlined in ***The Satanic Bible***:

"Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek" (Barrett, 2001:343).

Dissenters (heretics) interfere with the ability of organisations to achieve certain goals. Therefore dissenters are "removed."

The Koran

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D., Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University.

*Muhammad said, "I have been ordered to fight with the people till they say, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' and whoever says, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' his life and property will be saved by me except for Islamic law, and his accounts will be with Allah (either to punish him or to forgive him.)" (4:196). The order is clear. **Muslims had to fight people until they became Muslims.***
<http://www.keithhunt.com/Islam.html>

The Roman Catholic Religion

Mary Ann Collins, ex-nun states:

*"Augustine lived from 354 to 430 A.D. **He had a vision of an ideal society, with the Roman Catholic Church at its center, governing all aspects of human life. His ideal society required conformity in belief and practice. Augustine taught that it was right and necessary for the Catholic Church to make this happen, even if it meant coercing people to comply. This laid the theological foundation for persecuting "heretics" and for the Inquisition.** [Note 1 Paul Johnson, "A History of Christianity" (New York: Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 1995), pages 112-119. Paul Johnson is a Catholic and a prominent historian. Bruce L. Shelley, "Church History in Plain Language," Updated 2nd Edition (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), page 128.])*

"For over a thousand years, the Roman Catholic Church hunted down "heretics" and killed them. Some of these "heretics" were people with strange beliefs. But, as we shall see later, many of them were Bible-believing Christians."
<http://www.catholicconcerns.com/Heretics.html>

Old Testament - The Bible

Deuteronomy 12:1-4; 13:6-10

"These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. (2) Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: (3) And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place. (4) Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God." (13:6) If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, **Let us go and serve other gods**, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; (7) Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; (8) Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: (9) **But thou shalt surely kill him**; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. (10) And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

The ten commandments state, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The Mosaic "rules" stated that no worship, other than of Yahweh, was permitted on pain of death (Deut 13:6-10). Violent threats of suffering the death penalty – not freedom of choice – dictated the worship services in the Israelite nation when they settled in the Promised Land, just as despotic governments likewise enforce today. While this law is in effect, there is no freedom to worship as one chooses on an individual basis. In the ancient Jewish system, the death penalty – not the appealing love of Yahweh - encouraged worshippers to abide by the state religion.

The Israelites' misconception of the gospel is clearly revealed - they thought God would be pleased with coerced worship, which is a form of legalism (works). The Israelites knew that to worship a pagan god meant execution by stoning. Is it possible that Yahweh's worshippers had **any** concept of the loving character of God? Is it possible that they could offer Him worship based on their loving response to Him, whose character they thought was violent and full of wrath?

In the first century Jewish nation, the Roman government consented to the church leaders' demands and processed the execution of Jesus. Jesus was crucified as a heretic because He would not accept the traditionally held doctrines of the Jewish religion as being sacred. The Jewish leaders declared, "Crucify Him.... We have no king but Caesar" (Matthew 15:13,14; John 19:15). They declared, that in the interests of national security, it would not be considered sinful to murder Jesus. The high priest declared, "Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50).

Present Day Examples

In the film Fahrenheit 9/11, USA President George W Bush commented on the death of American soldiers in the Iraqi War. A loud ovation followed his remark. *"They died in a just war for defending freedom and they will not have died in vain."*

Dick Cheney's remark, from the same film was even more revealing. Was he advocating a just war when regarding the 'enemy,' he stated, *"The struggle will only end with their complete and permanent destruction" ?*

Character Assassination in Heaven

The Father is the Sovereign of universe. The Son of God has always existed in the Father (Heb 7:9), but at some point in eternity, He was begotten or brought forth from the Father (Pro 8:22-30; 30:4; John 1:3; Heb 1:1-8) and although He was as equally as divine as His Father (Heb 1:8; Ps 2:7), by faith Christ voluntarily accepted His position and freely chose to remain 2nd in authority to His Father (1 Cor 15:27, 28; John 14:28). Christ never wanted to grasp equality with His Father (Phil 2:6), despite also being omnipotent (i.e. as equally as powerful as the Father) (Matt 20:28; John 5:26,27).

However, a created being, an angel named Lucifer, did want to grasp equality with the Father and Son. He rebelled (Rev 12:7; Isa 14:14) and set about to undermine the divine government by distorting the truth about God's character and His holy law. In short, he invited the sinister strategy of character assassination and set about to discredit the pure and holy name of God.

Lucifer told the angels convincing lies about the character of the Father. So convincing were these lies, that eventually one third of God's angels sided with Lucifer and lost their place in heaven (Rev 12:14). His strategy of character assassination had been only partially-successful with the angels. God's law of love and freedom demanded a second trial or chance so that no doubt about the truth of God's character would be left in the universe. Satan set about improving the strategy which today appears to have become a raging success.

Character Assassination on Earth

Signs of the Times 18 September, 1893 p1

"Satan is continually seeking to influence human minds by his subtle arts. His is a master mind, given of God, but prostituted with all its noble capabilities to oppose and to make of no effect the counsels of the Most High. He had an advanced experience in his connection with the God of heaven, and he wields his knowledge of the attributes of God in such a way as to misinterpret the divine character. Satan was an apostate, and all who follow in the way of apostasy will work in the same lines of evil. There was a time when Satan was in harmony with God, and it was his joy to execute the divine commands. His heart was filled with love and joy in serving his Creator, until he began to think that his wisdom was not derived from God, but was inherent in himself, and that he was as worthy as was God to receive honor and power. When he found that he could not be as God, he was filled with rebellion, and would not submit his will to the will of God."

Banished from heaven, Lucifer then set about tempting beings on unfallen worlds (Job 1:6,7; Heb 11:3; 1:2) Eventually Lucifer focused the same deceptive strategy on humanity with greater success than he experienced in heaven with the angels. The question of doubt was placed into Eve's heart, when at the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the serpent said, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Gen 3:5) The insinuation was made, that IF God was so loving, He wouldn't ban them from eating from the very tree that would give them wisdom equal to God's wisdom.

Genesis 3:6

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Deceived into a faulty understanding of God's loving character, Eve reasoned that God must want to keep her and her husband in ignorant subjection. Eve first wondered, then doubted if God was completely loving. She then believed God was not as loving as she had originally thought. That misinformation caused her tragic downfall.

So Lucifer's strategy of assassination of God's character, worked perfectly on one third of the unfallen angels and then on sinless humanity. Satan had successfully used the character assassination strategy to cause two different creations to commit mutiny against God.

Is it likely that such a successful strategy would be discarded by Lucifer or might we be reasonably sure that Lucifer has "honed it to perfection" over six thousand years? Isn't it logical to think that character assassination would be the main strategy that Satan would use in his war to dethrone God?

According to two prominent Seventh-day Adventist evangelists, AT Jones and EJ Waggoner, Satan indeed used character misrepresentation to war against God.

AT Jones, 14 The Spirit of Christ as Manifested in His Work for the Salvation of Man, page 14 para 17

"The deception of man led him to put self in the place of God, and the mind and word of Satan in the place of the mind and word of God. This led to the perversion of man's ideas concerning God, and the receiving of Satan's ideas and suggestions as the true ideas concerning God. It led to the setting of God in a totally false light in the estimation of man. It led mankind to look upon God as a hard master, a despotic governor, and a stern, impassive, unmerciful judge. Over and over, the Lord set forth His Word to the contrary. To Moses He declared Himself to be "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." In His law He set forth His character as "LOVE." Yet, for all this, mankind still followed perverted ideas of God.....He (the Son) emptied Himself that the Father might appear in Him. And when He emptied Himself, the Father did appear in Him. He was 'God manifest in the flesh,' 'God with us.' But He did all this that men might know the Father as He really is."

EJ Waggoner, ch 24 The Unconquerable Life, p24 para 3

"Satan, the ruler of the darkness of this world, had done his utmost to deceive men as to the true character of God. He had made the world believe that God was like men--cruel, vindictive, and passionate. Even the Jews, the people whom God had chosen to be the bearers of His light to the world, had departed from God, and while professedly separate from the heathen, were enveloped in heathen darkness. Then Christ came, and "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, to them did light spring up." Matt. 4:16. His name was Emanuel, God with us. "God was in Christ." God refuted the falsehoods of Satan, not by loud arguments, but simply by living His life among men, so that all might see it. He demonstrated the power of the life of God, and the possibility of its being manifested in men."

Character Comparisons

In this study, we will examine the characters of three beings: God the Father; Jesus Christ and Satan. Then we will examine how the character assassination strategy has been hidden in traditional Christian beliefs.

Jesus said it is vitally important to know the Father's character for it is the basis of His government and all citizens must agree to abide within the boundaries of His law of love under every situation; however if people choose to abide by the rules of a selfish government, this choice will separate them from all the protection with which God desires to shelter them.

John 17:3

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

So what is the Father's character like? It is not a mystery. Jesus said we **need** to know what God is like. But how do we know God?

Philip asked the same question.

John 14:6-11

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (7) If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. (8) Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, **Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me,** Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? (10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else **believe me for the very works' sake.**”

In other words, Jesus appears to be saying, *“if you can't see that I'm the divine Son of God by my character, then at least believe it because of the good works you see me doing. Those works reflect the Father's character.”*

The works of Jesus demonstrated exactly the Father's character or spirit. But did you notice that Jesus tells Philip that he doesn't even know Christ's character? And then Christ shares with Philip the very basic strategy for detecting someone's character. Christ instructs Philip to study His (Christ's) works – His character of unstoppable love, in action.

Examine the Fruit of the Character

Matthew 7:18-20

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

While we are told that we will know a person's character by their actions, we are not to exceed that determination and mete out or execute our judgement on that person.

Matthew 7:1

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

"God commands us to judge—to consider a matter in the light of His definition of right and wrong—but it is not our place to decide a sentence or to carry it out.

To do so presumes authority not granted to us." (David C. Grabbe, Does

Scripture Allow for Self-Defense? Read-on-line at:

<http://bibletools.org/index.cfm/fa/Library.showResource/CT/RA/k/776>)

For our own protection, and the protection of others who follow Christ, we are told to examine the fruit of a person's character, however, we are not commanded to be judge, jury and executioner of that person.

The basic strategy to determine character is to compare someone's fruit – the works of their character, but with what should the works of their character – or fruit – be compared?

Would it be safe to compare someone's fruit with what the head elder is doing? With what the town prostitute is doing?

What do we compare someone's works to, if we want to determine their character? We can compare the character, "their long-term fruit," with the principles of the 10 commandments.

Signs of Times, 27 March, 1884, p 12

"The character is revealed by the works, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts."

Paul outlines the fruits of wickedness first in Romans 1:28-2:1

Romans 1:28-2:1

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

2 Timothy 3:1-7

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Paul contrast the two types of character 'fruit' in Galatians 5:19- 23

Galatians 5:19 -23

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Where do we see perfect fruit? Where do we see the principles of the 10 commandments lived out perfectly?

Christ's strategy can be applied to examine the characters of some men in the Bible.

Consider the works of the flesh/fruits of the spirit in the lives of Moses. David. Samson. There were some serious and deliberate sins that needed to be repented of in all these men's lives.

Consider the works of the flesh/fruits of the spirit in the lives of Abraham, Samuel, Elijah, Jacob. These men showed areas of weakness when under pressure.

What about Daniel, Joseph, Stephen, and Enoch? The Bible records no sins against these men. They displayed Christlike characters even under persecution or death threats, nevertheless, they still had sin in their characters at some stage, for Paul tells us in Romans 3:23 that: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory (character) of God."

All these men in the Bible, were NOT reflecting the true character of the Father fully, at least they weren't prior to their complete conversion. The more clearly they discerned the love of God, the more Christ-like their characters became. Their works became the works of Christ, Who dwelt in them by faith. It was Christ "in them" who did the works – which gives no human being opportunity to boast that their own works might save them.

Ephesians 2:8-10

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

All good works are produced by having "Christ in us" the hope of glory (Col 1:27). Therefore in order to see clearly the Father's character, we must look to the ONLY ONE who demonstrated the Father's character perfectly - Christ – for He did no sin.

Christ's Character

What is Christ's character like?

Exodus 34:6-7

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

1 Peter 2:21-23

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Matthew 5:43-44

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Isaiah 53:9

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; **because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.**"

2 Peter 1:4-8

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, **they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

Ellen White, Review and Herald, 22 September 1859 #14 p 141 para 18

"Sir, here is the principle, the point at issue. Christ and Satan are as opposite in character as light and darkness. They have never made any treaty of peace. Satan wages perpetual war with Christ, and when Christ's followers unite with Satan's disciples, it shows that there is treachery somewhere. If the children of Beelzebub patronize Christian institutions, and sustain them, it is to seduce them; for it is certain that Christ has not changed, neither has Satan improved, except in slyness and cunning."

Ellen White, Desire of Ages, p 758

"Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion."

Ellen White, Testimonies Containing Letters to Physicians and Ministers, 1904

"All deceptive dealings, all untruthfulness regarding the Father and the Son, by which their characters are presented in a false light, are to be recognized as grievous sins. There are those who have become apt scholars in this deceptive work."

Satan's Character

Ellen White, Signs of the Times, 21 December, 1891

"Satan has tried to prevent men from receiving a correct view of God. Our ideas of God have become perverted. The true ideas have been lost, and the mind has been thrown into confusion in regard to him. Passion has taken the place of reason. To see God as he is, is to love and reverence him as supreme. To know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, is eternal life. Satan knows that if the attention of men is turned to Christ, they will believe on him."

Ezekiel 28:13-16

"Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. (14) Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. (15) Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. (16) **By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence**, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

Isaiah 14:12-16

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, **which didst weaken the nations**! (13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: (14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High**. (15) Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (16) They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that **made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms**."

From the two, well-known preceding Bible passages, it can be seen that Satan's character is powerful, but self-centred, violent and abusive to others.

According to David V Barrett in *"The New Believers – Sects, 'Cults' and Alternative Religions"* (2001:343), Satan's character is described in *"The Satanic Bible"* by its author Anton LaVey. LaVey founded the Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966. Barrett (2001:343) reveals that LaVey's aim was to make carnal desires a proper object of celebration and in support of this statement, Barrett quotes from Burton H. Wolfe's introduction to LaVey's book: "Satanism is a blatantly selfish, brutal religion." As cited in Barrett's book (ibid, 2001:343), LaVey lists nine Satanic statements, including:

- *Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence!*
- *Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates!*
- ***Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek!***
- *Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification! (exclamation marks in original).*

The founder of the Church of Satan also pagan religious rituals with immorality, typical of the practices demonstrated in many blended religions which promote the worship a god who has both good and evil character traits. Barrett writes, "LaVey was often photographed performing rituals over a 'living altar' - a naked woman."

Through reflection on the characters of Christ and Satan, it might logically be assumed that all selfish and violent, brutal acts are inspired Satan; and in stark contrast, all unselfish and kind, gentle acts are motivated by the spirit of God.

Searching Out the Character of God

God is a single divine Being. He has a physical body and a mind (spirit). It is generally admitted, even by Seventh-day Adventist theologians, that there is no definite Biblical evidence to support the doctrine that the One True God is a trinity.

The One True God (John 17:3) is a title that describes a Being different from angels, humanity and animals. **God**, translated from the Hebrew word “*elohiym*” and the Greek word “*theos*” means *deity* or *divine Being*. There are two divine Beings in existence revealed in the Bible. The Father is the source of all life. The Son of God's life arose from the Father – as His only begotten Son in the ages of eternity past. Both Father and Son have the same loving, selfless character. Biblically, this “same thinking” of the divine beings is called the “holy spirit of God” and it is ministered to human minds through holy angels. For an indepth study on the doctrine of the trinity and the Bible truth, download the book ***Identifying the Unknown God*** at www.themeofthebible.com

Some Christians believe that the Father and Son (and Holy Spirit- 3rd Person of the godhead/trinity) are wrathful, “divine killers.” But the life of Jesus Christ reveals that the divine character is one of ultimate, perfect love – unselfishness and of life-giving.

God's character is a perfect combination of justice and mercy. Some suppose, however that God's justice is His angry retaliation on sinners – His vengeance, wrath and punishment for the breaking of His law.

A study on the Biblical concept of God's justice reveals that this is not a correct understanding.

Justice and Mercy

Justice /*Jus' tice*/ (?), *n.* [F., fr. L. *justitia*, fr. *justus*=just. See *Just*, *a.*]

1. The quality of being just; conformity to the principles of righteousness and rectitude (straightness) in all things; *strict performance of moral obligations; practical conformity to human or divine law; integrity in the dealings of men with each other; rectitude; equity; uprightness.*

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. Ps. cxxxix. 11.

2. Conformity to truth and reality in expressing opinions and in conduct; *fair representation of facts respecting merit or demerit; honesty; fidelity; impartiality; as, the justice of a description or of a judgment; historical justice.*

3. The rendering to every one his due or right; just treatment; *requit of desert; merited reward or punishment; that which is due to one's conduct or motives.*

4. Agreeableness to right; *equity; justness; as, the justice of a claim.*

5. A person duly commissioned to hold courts, *or to try and decide controversies and administer justice.*

Justice /*Jus' tice*/ (?), *v. t.* **To administer justice to.** [Obs.] *Bacon.*

Conforming or conformable to rectitude or justice; not doing wrong to any; violating no right or obligation; upright; righteous; honest; true; -- said both of persons and things. There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. Ecc.

Vii. 20. Just balances, just weights, . . . shall ye have. Lev. xix. 36.

How should man be just with God? Job ix. 2.

2. **Not transgressing the requirement of truth and propriety**; *conformed to the truth of things, to reason, or to a proper standard; exact; normal; reasonable; regular; due; as, a just statement; a just inference.*

Thayer's Greek Lexicon - grace

#05485:

5485 χάρις charis *khar'-ece*

from <5463>; ; n f

AV-grace 130, favour 6, thanks 4, thank 4, thank + <2192> 3, pleasure 2, misc 7; 156

1) grace

1a) that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech

2) good will, loving-kindness, favour

2a) **of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues**

3) what is due to grace

3a) the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace

3b) the token or proof of grace, benefit

3b1) a gift of grace

3b2) benefit, bounty

4) thanks, (for benefits, services, favours), recompense, reward

01344:- justified

1344 δικαιώω dikaiōō *dik-ah-yo'-o*

from <1342>; ; v

AV-justify 37, be freed 1, be righteous 1, justifier 1; 40

1) to render righteous or such he ought to be

2) **to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered**

3) to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, **or such as he ought to be**

In keeping with the dictionary definitions just stated, justice and mercy might be defined in theological terms as:

Justice = God's character; His loving and righteous way of treating others selflessly – which is the keeping of the law (justification – **to be considered such as he ought to be**)

Mercy = God's protection from sinning and evil – power to keep the law – 'Christ in you.' (sanctification - **the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues**)

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God is faithful to forgive and just to cleanse. In this verse are demonstrated the concepts of justification and sanctification. God is just and merciful in that He fulfils His promise to forgive (justification) and to save (sanctification) those who give Him their allegiance.

Jeremiah 9:24

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

God delights in judgment, but He has no delight in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). Therefore, judgment in this verse, is not referring to the destruction of the wicked.

Psalms 89:14

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.”

In the Hebrew use of parallels, this verse aligns justice and mercy with judgment and truth. The plan of salvation both fulfils the law (provides power and grace to live a sanctified life) and extends mercy (forgiveness of sins).

Micah 6:8

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but **to do justly, and **to love mercy**, and to walk humbly with thy God?”**

To do justly - to keep the 10 commandments which are the basis of loving behaviour; the fulfilment of the character of God in Christ's humanity; a pure life in Christ.

To love mercy - to empower others to live a sanctified life by pointing them to Jesus instead of condemning their law-breaking.

Jesus set a perfect example of doing justly and loving mercy in His dealings with the woman taken in adultery.

The Woman Taken in Adultery

John 8:3-11

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, (4) They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6) This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (7) So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10) When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (11) She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

The lady taken in adultery had clearly broken the 7th commandment. She had been “caught” in remarkable circumstances – “set up” or “framed” as it might be termed today. The Pharisees arranged the adulterous liason with the purpose of trapping Jesus into disallowing/breaking the law of Moses which was held in high esteem by the Jewish people, or into breaking the Roman law – for which He would be condemned also for

taking matters into His own hands i.e. ordering a death penalty without the permission of the Roman governmental authority.

In the case of adultery, the Mosaic law required that death penalty (by stoning) be applied.

Deuteronomy 22:21

"Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you."

Leviticus 20:10

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

The law of Moses also required that there be at least two witnesses to testify against the accused before the person/s could be convicted and condemned to death. "At the mouth of two witnesses," the death sentence could be legally executed.

Deuteronomy 17:6

"At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death."

The Mosaic law also stated that the witnesses had to be the first to "throw the stones" which would inflict death on the guilty person.

Deuteronomy 17:7

"The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you."

In three separate articles, Ellen White comments on the experience of the woman taken in adultery and Jesus' reaction. She reveals the "scenes behind the scenes."

1. Review and Herald, 6 September, 1906

"On one occasion those who were guilty of many secret sins, brought to Christ a woman who had been taken in sin. They thought that he would pronounce judgment against her, and then they could accuse him of taking judgment into his own hands. While they were presenting the case, Christ was busy writing on the sand. He said nothing, and when they pressed him for a decision, he was in no hurry to pronounce judgment. One after another came near to him to see what he was writing, and there in the sand they saw the record of their own sins. Then Christ said to them, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.' But not a stone was cast, and they went away, leaving the woman with him. He said to her, 'Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?' She said, 'No man, Lord.' Christ answered, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.' The Lord Jesus beheld the whole plot and the arrogance of the ones who had arranged it, who were worthy of condemnation and punishment, and when they saw that he knew their lives, they left and went out, having failed in their desire to bring about the condemnation of Christ."

2. Signs of the Times, 21 April, 1898

"While among men, Christ pronounced sentence upon rabbis, rulers, Pharisees, and Sadducees, because of their hypocrisy, their rejection of light. Looking at them searchingly, He said, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.' But He addressed the woman who was guilty of sin in words of

tenderest compassion. **He knew all about the character of the sin committed**; but He traced upon the ground the sins of her accusers, who had laid their net for the woman, that thus they might find occasion for condemning Christ. Their curiosity led them near to Christ, to see what He had written in the sand; but they did not care to look more than once, and one by one they hastily left His presence. **Those who had acted a part in bringing this poor woman before Him were far more guilty than she, and Christ knew it. The guilty persons expected that before they could take themselves away, Christ would single them out, and expose them and their deep-laid plot before the gathered throng.** These professors were spiritually blind. Maxims and traditions were cherished by them, and obedience to God's requirements was regarded as a thing of naught. Christ was grieved with them. He looked upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their heart. He could detect every phase of their hypocrisy, and their great sin brought from His divine lips a scathing rebuke."

3. Ministry of Healing p 88

"Their pretended reverence veiled a deep-laid plot for His ruin. Should Jesus acquit the woman, He might be charged with despising the law of Moses. Should He declare her worthy of death, He could be accused to the Romans as one who assumed authority belonging only to them. Jesus looked upon the scene--the trembling victim in her shame, the hard-faced dignitaries, devoid of even human pity. His spirit of stainless purity shrank from the spectacle. Giving no sign that He had heard the question, He stooped and, fixing His eyes upon the ground, began to write in the dust. Impatient at His delay and apparent indifference the accusers drew nearer, urging the matter upon His attention. But as their eyes, following those of Jesus, fell upon the pavement at His feet, their voices were silenced. There, traced before them, were the guilty secrets of their own lives. Rising, and fixing His eyes upon the plotting elders, Jesus said, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' Verse 7. And, stooping down, He continued writing. He had not set aside the Mosaic law nor infringed upon the authority of Rome. The accusers were defeated. Now, their robes of pretended holiness torn from them, **they stood, guilty and condemned, in the presence of infinite purity.** Trembling lest the hidden iniquity of their lives should be laid open to the multitude, with bowed heads and downcast eyes they stole away, leaving their victim with the pitying Saviour. Jesus arose and, looking upon the woman, said, "Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**" Verses 10, 11. (page 89) The woman had stood before Jesus, cowering with fear. His words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone," had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the Saviour's face, but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw her accusers depart speechless and confounded; then those words of hope fell upon her ear, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.' (continued over page).

(Ellen White continued in Ministry of Healing p 88) **Her heart was melted, and, casting herself at the feet of Jesus, she sobbed out her grateful love and with bitter tears confessed her sins. This was to her the beginning of a new life, a life of purity and peace, devoted to God. In the uplifting of this fallen soul, Jesus performed a greater miracle than in healing the most grievous physical disease; He cured the spiritual malady which is unto death everlasting. This penitent woman became one of His most steadfast followers. With self-sacrificing love**

and devotion she showed her gratitude for His forgiving mercy. For this erring woman **the world had only contempt and scorn**, but the Sinless One pitied her weakness and reached to her a helping hand. **While the hypocritical Pharisees denounced, Jesus bade her, 'Go, and sin no more.'** Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. The greater the sinner's guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. **With His own blood He has signed the emancipation papers of the race.** (page 90)

Jesus does not desire those who have been purchased at such a cost to become the sport of the enemy's temptations. He does not desire us to be overcome and perish. He who curbed the lions in their den, and walked with His faithful witnesses amid the fiery flames, is just as ready to work in our behalf to subdue every evil in our nature. **Today He is standing at the altar of mercy, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage.** Whosoever will, may take hold of God's strength, and make peace with Him, and He will make peace. The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand besides the great Sin Bearer in the light proceeding from the throne of God. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses 'from all sin.' 1 John 1:7. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Romans 8:33, 34."

Ellen White described some necessary details in the instance of the woman being caught in the very act of adultery:

- Christ knew the woman **was** guilty of committing adultery **as charged**;
- Christ knew the despair in the woman's heart and her guilty hopelessness;
- Christ knew the penalty under the Mosaic law for committing adultery was "stoning to death;"
- Christ knew the Mosaic law specified that at least two witnesses were required to condemn the woman to death;
- Christ knew that more than two witnesses **were** present to legally condemn the woman;
- Christ knew that, under Mosaic law, the witnesses who had brought the charge against the woman, had to be the first to throw the stones at her;
- Christ also knew the "hidden" testimonies of the lives of the witnesses – how they had schemed to engineer the adulterous crime and to murderously use the woman in their plan to trap Him;

Christ realised that the entire situation was a "set up;" planned by those who wanted to kill Him. More than wanting to have the woman stoned, her "witnesses" wanted Christ to utter something that they could use to condemn Him.

Christ informed the witnesses to "cast the first stone" at the woman – if they were sinless. If the witnesses had cast a stone, resulting in the death of the guilty woman, they would have been breaking Roman law and answerable to the government for that infringement – which was definitely not in their best interests. No doubt the witnesses had fully considered this outcome earlier and weighed the consequences.

If the witnesses refused to cast stones at the woman, they could still assert to the Romans that Christ had set Himself up as a revolutionist and that He had authorised them to break

the Roman law and stone the guilty woman. Such a statement alone, would have placed Christ's life in extreme danger and His immediate arrest would have been certain.

Despite the threat to His own life, Christ refused to condemn the woman **whom He knew to be guilty**. Why didn't Christ **condemn her** for her sinfulness? Why did He make a merciful judgment? Why didn't He cast the first stone at the adulteress in conformity to the Mosaic law and trust the consequences with the Roman government to His Father's protection?

Some suppose that Christ would have condemned the woman according to the law of Moses, except that He **could not** condemn her because the guilty man was not present to testify against her. This certainly was not the case. There were many witnesses who were ready to condemn the woman whom they announced was "caught in the very act" of adultery (John 8:4). One can only wonder how the male adulterer escaped being captured by the many witnesses who apprehended the guilty woman.

The Mosaic law specified that only two witnesses were necessary to condemn lawbreakers to death; the adulterer, the male involved in the immoral act, **did not need to be "caught" in order for the woman to be condemned**.

Deuteronomy 22:20, 21

"But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: (21) Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you."

When a woman committed adultery in secret and it was not witnessed, she might escape detection and death, **unless she became pregnant**. (e.g. David and Bathsheba, recorded in 2 Samuel 11). Because men do not become pregnant, there is often no evidence to convict the other party of his adulterous crime, however, pregnancy announced to everyone that the woman had committed adultery and unwed pregnancy was considered sufficient evidence to convict the woman. Enforcing the death decree for adultery was already standard practice in Abrahamic times, prior to the introduction of the Mosaic law. (e.g. Tamar became pregnant after she committed adultery [prostitution] with her father-in-law Judah - Gen 38).

To secure a conviction against an adulteress, the adulterous male partner does not have to be apprehended or convicted in order for the woman to be condemned to die. The practice of stoning adulteresses still occurs in fundamentalist Islamic countries today e.g. Nigeria, Bauchi, Afghanistan, Sudan

www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf440012004;
http://www.religioustolerance.org/isl_adul1.htm

Christ – the only pure and sinless witness, could have testified against the guilty woman.

He could have joined the other witnesses whose testimony was intended to secure the woman's death sentence.

But Jesus did **not** refuse to pass judgment in the woman's case. He judged her, but He did not condemn her; He justified her. He gave her justice – He forgave her. He took her place and suffered for her sin. Jesus gave the woman mercy. His mercy – His grace - empowered her to "go and sin no more." He gave her power to live a sanctified life. There was "no condemnation" in the woman because at that instant – as soon as she was forgiven, she was, by the mercy of God, "in Christ Jesus" and empowered to "sin no more."

She was empowered to live a sanctified life by Christ's grace - His mercy.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Through His treatment of the woman taken in adultery, Jesus revealed that contrary to the law of Moses, adulterers and adulteresses are to be the recipients of the converted Christian's mercy - not their condemnation.

Did the apostles follow the example of Jesus?

Paul's advice to the Corinthians imitates the example of Jesus, rather than the Mosaic law. Consider Paul's response to the treatment of a male member of the church, who had sexual relations with his mother or step-mother. The Mosaic law insisted on the death penalty, while Paul instructed the Christians to disfellowship the offender and to separate from the guilty party.

Leviticus 20:11

"And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."

1 Corinthians 5:1, 2, 9,11

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. (2) And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. (9) I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: (11) But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator...."

Where is the Merciful Justice?

Recent events demonstrate that similar principles and punishments for immoral behaviour are advocated by both the Islamic Law (Sharia) and Mosaic Law. Some examples of punitive actions common to both religions are:

- cutting off hands
- stoning to death
- damaging an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth
- beating with the rod

Mosaic Law

Deuteronomy 25:11,12

"When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets: (12) Then thou shalt **cut off her hand**, thine eye shall not pity her."

Leviticus 24:19, 20

"And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; (20) Breach for breach, **eye for eye, tooth for tooth**: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.

Deuteronomy 22:23, 24

"If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; (24) Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall **stone them with stones that they die**; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you."

Taliban Regime

1996-NOV: Afghanistan: Under the previous Taliban regime, a woman, Nurbibi, 40, and a man Turylai, 38, were **stoned to death** in a public assembly using palm-sized stones. They were found **guilty of non-marital sex**. Turylai was dead within ten minutes, but Nurbibi had to be finished off by dropping a large rock on her head. Mr. Wali, head of the Office for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prohibition of Vice expressed satisfaction with the execution: "...I am very happy, because it means that the rule of Islam is being implemented." **These executions (as well as hand amputations for convicted thieves) are regarded as religious occasions** and are not normally viewed by non-Muslims. "Afghanistan Execution for Adultery," *New York Times News Service*, 1996-NOV-06;

- 2002-MAR: Nigeria: Safiya Hussaini, 33, was convicted of adultery. She was sentenced to be **buried up to her neck in sand and to be stoned to death**. However, her sentence was deferred until her 13-month-old daughter has finished nursing. She appealed her conviction. Her cousin, a Mr. Abubakar allegedly confessed to police that he had sex with her three times. However, the judge dismissed the testimony of the three policemen who witnessed Abubakar's confession, because a minimum of four witnesses are required under Sharia law. Hussaini's lawyers claimed that she also could not be convicted because of the four witness rule. The prosecution argued that witnesses were not required in her case; adultery had obviously taken place because she had become pregnant. Her defense team finally argued that, under Islamic law, the interval between conception and birth can be up to seven years! Only two years previous to the birth of her

daughter, she was still married to her husband. The lawyers argued that her husband could possibly have been the father. Commenting on the conviction, Aliyu Abubakar Sanyinna, the attorney general of Sokoto State, said: **"Society is injured by her act. The danger is that it will teach other women to do the same thing."** 9 Mansur Ibrahim Said, Dean of the Law Faculty at Dakar University in Sokoto said that **adultery is "an abomination abhorred by God and society because of the example it gives and because it creates bastards to be rejected by society."** "Law professor backs Nigerian stoning," AfricaWoman, at: <http://www.africawoman.net/politics/sharialaw.html>

- 2002-MAR: Nigeria: A woman, Amina Lawal Kurami, from the small village of Kurami in Katsina in norther Nigeria was **sentenced to death for adultery**. The sentence was delayed for eight months (one source said 2 years) until she has finished breast feeding her infant. Nigerian Justice Minister, Kanu Agabi, declared this and other Sharia punishments discriminatory and therefore unconstitutional. This is the first time that the national government has made its position clear. (Dan Isaacs, "Nigeria in crisis over Sharia law," BBC News, 2002-MAR-26, at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/>). She appealed the conviction, on the basis that the offence occurred before Sharia law came into effect. Her lawyers also claimed that she had no legal representation in her original court trial before a village court. The appeal was rejected by the Islamic High Court in Funtua in Katsina state. **Dozens of spectators cheered and shouted "God is great". Her execution will be delayed until at least 2004-JAN until her daughter has finished breastfeeding.** The federal government is planning to help Kurami appeal her sentence to the Nigerian Supreme Court. This case may ignite a major legal battle between the state and federal governments. 12 (Her case was eventually dismissed. Jim Fisher-Thompson, "U.S. Women Protest Stoning Verdict by Nigerian Court. Activists decry 'barbaric' aspect of Sharia law." U.S. Department of State, International Information Programs at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/af/a2082903.htm>).

Saudi Arabia - Man to Get 4,750 Lashes

The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia --

"A Saudi court has sentenced a man to six years in prison and 4,750 lashes for having sex with his wife's sister, a newspaper reported Sunday. The woman involved in the case was sentenced to six months in jail and 65 lashes, the paper Al-Eqtisadiah reported, though the court found she had not consented to the relationship. She had also reported the affair to the police. Having a relationship with one's in-law is considered a serious offense under the strict Islamic judicial code that Saudi Arabia follows. The court, in the port city of Jiddah, ordered that the lashes be administered to the man at a rate of 95 at a time. Lashes are often handed out by Saudi courts, although rarely in such large numbers. The court also ruled he was not eligible for a pardon 'because of the ugliness and seriousness of his crime.'"

<http://www.corpun.com/saj00202.htm#8645>

James Arlandson comments regarding a chapter from the Qur'an (Holy Book of Islam): The law of retaliation (lex talionis) is carried over to Islam.

Sura 5:45 And We ordained therein for them: Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth and wounds equal for equal. But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it shall be for him an expiation. And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers . . .).http://www.americanthinker.com/articles_print.php?article_id=4671

A Qisas [law of retaliation] punishment means causing injury to the offender similar to the injury caused to the victim. For example, in August 2000, the Saudi Arabian media reported that Abdel Moti Abdel Rahman Mohammad, a 37-year-old-Egyptian national was subjected to forcible surgical removal of his left eye at King Fahd Hospital in Medina. The operation was carried out as a judicial punishment of Qisas after he was found guilty of disfiguring Shahata Ajami Mahmoud, a 53-year-old Egyptian, by throwing acid at his face and damaging his left eye.

In 2003, in Saudi Arabia a man had two teeth [extracted](#) under the law of retaliation.

In 2005, an Iranian court orders a man's eye to be removed for throwing acid on another man and blinding him in both eyes. Etemaad says the accused, identified only as Vahid, was 16 when he threw a bottle of acid at another man during a fight in a vegetable market in 1993. The top opened – Vahid insists accidentally – and blinded his victim in both eyes. A court said the crime should be judged as qisas, a category for which the Koran stipulates specific punishments, in this case an eye for an eye. The paper said the sentence was to pour acid on Vahid's eyes, but an appeals court ruled it should be done surgically so as not to harm other parts of his face. ***Eye and teeth removal come directly from the Quran, [the eternal word of Allah](#), which must be imposed on humankind for its own good. Therefore, [how can traditional and Quran-believing Muslims reform unless they leave behind their sacred book?](#)***

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles_print.php?article_id=4671

(The American Thinker, James M. Arlandson, 24 July 2005)

Translations of Sura 5:38

AS Abdel Haleem (The Qur'an, Oxford UP, 2004) translates Sura 5:38 as follows:

"Sura 5:38 [Cut off the hands of thieves](#), whether they are male or female, as punishment for what they have done—a deterrent from God: God is almighty and wise. 39 But if anyone repents after his wrongdoing and makes amends, God will accept his repentance: God is most forgiving and merciful. (Haleem)"

The standard verb "to cut" (q-T-c) is used, and the object of the cutting is "their hands." For this crime, early Islam punishes both male and female thieves. Evidently, the purpose is to purify the Islamic community and to deter future thieves. Verse 39 is included because it seems that Muhammad is providing a way of repentance before the penalty is

exacted. But traditional Islam says the opposite. The bloody penalty is carried out, which helps the thief to purify his or her heart, and then he or she is in better state to repent (James Arlandson)

http://answeringislam.org/Authors/Arlandson/hands_off.htm

Report published 5 May 2006 by Jerome Taylor

Iraqi police 'killed 14-year-old boy for being homosexual.' “Human rights groups have condemned the 'barbaric' murder of a 14-year-old boy, who, according to witnesses, was shot on his doorstep by Iraqi police for the apparent crime of being gay. Ahmed Khalil was shot at point-blank range after being accosted by men in police uniforms, according to his neighbours in the al-Dura area of Baghdad.” http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article362151.ece

Holier Punishment?

Was the Jewish punishment for adultery more 'holy' – more loving – than that punishment dispensed by the Islamic police? Is death by stoning somehow more 'holy' than death by gunshot? What would Jesus have done to the 14 year old boy who was accused of sexual sin? Remember the woman taken in the act of adultery? Jesus Himself refused to condemn her – but freely forgave her – and she responded to His love with repentance. Would Jesus have been any less compassionate to the Islamic 'gay' youth, than He was to that adulterous woman?

It is generally accept that the Jewish/Mosaic God is the same God that Christians worship. Generally it is rejected by Christians, that they worship the same god as worshipped by Islam. However, the divine laws (Mosaic and Quran) – both called the infallible, unchangeable Word of God - demonstrate the characters of both deities are very similar. Both gods are retributinal and extremely violent.

Is it possible that the law of Moses adequately and clearly represented the character of the One True God? If so, which god's character does the Islamic law demonstrate? Why was the demonstration of the Father's character which Jesus perfectly displayed, of such a very different nature to both the Mosaic and Quran laws?

The One True God is Mercifully Just

The Father is merciful and just.

Exodus 20:6

“And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”

God supplies the power (the mercy, the grace) to enable those who have a desire to live righteous lives, to do so - in Christ.

Isaiah 30:18

“And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: **for the LORD is a God of judgment:** blessed are all they that wait for him.”

The Lord is a God of right principles. His perfectly loving and pure character is revealed in the 10 commandments. He lives a sanctified life and because His is loving, He extends His mercy to empower all who seek to imitate His character and live sanctified lives.

God's mercy (compassionate treatment) empowers the sinner to overcome sin. To be justified “by” Christ means there is “no condemnation” for past sins. To be sanctified through Christ's life, is to be empowered to cease from sinning by having “Christ in us.”

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Titus 3:7

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

On the Day of Atonement, if the priest entered the Most Holy Place in order to seek mercy (power to be free of sin) on behalf of the Israelites, he also faced justice (forgiveness of sins). The outcome was called judgment. If the high priest who entered into the presence of God had not confessed and put away his sins (i.e if he did not want to separate from his sins), he would be slain by the same Presence that offered him mercy (power over his sins). What would then, have caused the death of the High Priest?

God had not changed. God was ready to extend justice (forgiveness for sin 1 John 1:9) and mercy (power to overcome sin 1 John 1:9). It was the spiritual condition of the high priest that determined the outcome of His encounter as He entered into God's presence. To those who permit God to purify their minds from sin today, will be safely able to meet Him on Judgment Day, “face to face” - their characters already having been purified by God's indwelling presence. However, God's presence will be to unrepentant sinners, as a “consuming fire.”

AT Jones, Review and Herald Jan, 24 & 31, 1899.

“Yet, what every one must understand is this: the only way that God does, or can, separate anybody from sin is by that very consuming fire of his presence. The only way, therefore, in which you and I can ever be so separated from sin as to meet God as he is, in the flaming fire that he is, in that great day, is to meet him TODAY as he is, in the consuming fire that he is. The only way that we can be prepared to meet him at his coming in that great day is to meet him in his coming today.”

(AT Jones continued) “For there is a coming to men now, as really as to

the world in that great day. 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will COME TO YOU.' John 14:18. But do not forget that whether he comes to you or to me now, or whether he comes to other people in that great day, he comes only as a consuming fire."

"Listen: 'If any man hear my voice, and open the door,'-- what does he say?--'I will come in to him.' Good. Thank the Lord! And 'he is a consuming fire;' and when he comes in to you, that coming will consume all the sin in you, so that when he comes in the clouds of heaven in flaming fire, you can meet him in joy in the consuming fire that he is.

Then do you hear his voice? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM." Do you hear his voice? Then swing open wide the door, and keep it everlastingly open. Bid him welcome, in the consuming fire that he is: and that flaming fire of his presence will consume sin in all your being, and so will thoroughly cleanse and prepare you to meet him in flaming fire in that great day.

When I meet him today 'in a flaming fire,' when I welcome him today 'a consuming fire' in me, shall I be afraid to meet him in flaming fire in that day-- No; I shall be accustomed to it; and knowing what a blessed thing it is to become familiar with meeting him as 'a consuming fire,' knowing what a blessing that has brought to me today, I shall be delighted to meet him on that other day, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire. 'Our God is a consuming fire.' Bless the Lord!

'Who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's FIRE.' Good. Then when I meet him now, in the consuming fire that he is, I meet him in a fire that is refining, that purifies. 'And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' That is separation from sin; that is purification from sin. And that sets us where we offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness: we become the servants of righteousness unto holiness, that we may meet the Lord. So, then, bless the Lord that he is a consuming fire,-- that he is as a refiner's fire."

The Gospel Message for Today, Sermon by W. W. Prescott, Sunday, 29 March, 1903
General Conference Conference Daily Bulletin Vol 3, No. 4 p 54

"A word further concerning that blotting out of sin: It is the revelation of the glory of God that blots out sin. The time for the blotting out of sin has come when our High Priest takes all the sins of the people upon Himself, and goes into the most holy place, and stands in the immediate presence of the glory which blots out sin. The sins blotted out are the sins confessed, confessed upon the Priest, not that by arbitrary act of ours we can lay our sins upon Him; God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Our confession is that we personally confess that our sins are on Him. We agree to that, and, having confessed that, and agreed to that, we let go of them; we say our sins are on Him. Our very agreement with Him, in the confession that our sins have been laid upon Him, is God's means of removing them from us, and letting them be upon Him in our behalf."

Psalms 85:10

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

The Father's character has always been, and will remain, unchangeably holy just and good. He is always just and merciful.

Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18

“Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible- Exodus 34:7:

Verse 7. That will by no means clear the guilty: This last clause is rather difficult; literally translated it signifies, in clearing he will not clear. But the Samaritan, reading lo, to him, instead of the negative lo, not, renders the clause thus: With whom the innocent shall be innocent; i.e., an innocent or holy person shall never be treated as if he were a transgressor, by this just and holy God. The Arabic version has it, He justifies and is not justified; and the Septuagint is nearly as our English text, καιουκαθαριειτονενοχον, and he doth not purify the guilty. The Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint, edited by Dr. Grabe, has καιτονενοχονκαθαρισμωου καθαριει, and the guilty he will not cleanse with a purification-offering. The Coptic is to the same purpose. The Vulgate is a paraphrase: nullusque apud te per se innocens est, "and no person is innocent by or of himself before thee." This gives a sound theologic sense, stating a great truth, That no man can make an atonement for his own sins, or purify his own heart; and that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Certainly, when the wicked reject the justice (forgiveness) and the mercy of Christ (His indwelling power to live a sanctified life), they will be without divine protection when Christ appears the second and third times on the earth. There is no human vengeance in God - it is the condition of the person which determines their level of safety in His Presence.

2 Corinthians 1:3

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.”

God's spirit (his unselfish way of thinking – His principles of righteousness) was the original spirit given to humanity, but which was rejected and replaced when Adam sinned. When Adam sinned, he lost the ability to be righteous and just. He lost the mind of righteousness – the spirit of God –and was powerless to live a just and righteous (sanctified) life. He received condemnation and his power of choice was negated. He became compelled to do Satan's bidding for he was then filled with Satans selfish spirit. But, Christ, in justice and mercy, restored the freedom of choice to the human race.

Genesis 3:15

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

As a result of Adam's sin, death was imminent and would have occurred immediately, except that the Father and Son intervened (in justice – to forgive; and in mercy – to empower) which prevented the extinction of the human race (Zech 6:13).

As a result of Adam's sinful choice, ALL human children, would UNJUSTLY inherit a defective body – sinful flesh- as their birthright. In merciful response to that unjust situation, God put enmity between Satan and humanity.

God's action offered the human race another opportunity to choose whom they would serve (Genesis 3:15). The divine solution was a combination of God's justice and mercy.

Though the race was permitted to continue, a faulty, sinful flesh that was naturally responsive to selfish thinking, would be inherited by each child of Adam as a consequence of his (Adam's sin). By the virtues of the Second Adam, two spiritual natures would "war" for dominance within in the person.

The choice over which "spirit" would be dominant would be left to the individual, however whichever power the human being individually chose to serve, that being would be their master. The principle of Romans 6:16 would take effect.

Romans 6:16

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Due to their inheritance, the whole race, through Adam, came under the condemnation of the law (Romans 5:12-21). It could not be otherwise, for because of Adam's sin, humanity was effectively programmed or "spiritually wired" to sin. However, the Father's character is one of justice. The Father knew that it is not a righteous principle – it was not just or righteous for children pay the penalty for the iniquity of the parents' sin (Ezek 18).

Because the Father was just (righteous), He extended mercy (empowerment) to the human race. The Father's just and merciful character was ultimately demonstrated through the gift of His Son. Humanity was given the opportunity to receive "a new heart," "a new spirit," (Ezekiel 36:26, 27), "the spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9). The spirit of God, (His pure unselfish way of thinking) effects the re-creation of humanity.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are **in Christ Jesus**, who **walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**"

Justice (forgiveness) + Mercy (power) = Sanctified life (Holy Christian character)

Stated in the negative, it is also true that there IS condemnation for those which are NOT in Christ Jesus, who DO walk after the flesh, but NOT after the spirit of God.

John 3:19

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Those who refuse to accept the principles of the law of God, also refuse the life of Christ. They remain condemned because of their evil deeds (John 3:18).

This is frustrated justice. God made full provision for their forgiveness, but they refused it. There is no change in God's behaviour. Such a sad result is the choice of the persons who refuse such great salvation.

John 3:17-21 (Jesus speaking to Nicodemus)

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on him is not condemned: **but he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Those who refuse to accept Christ's life, refuse the justice and mercy of God. They refuse divine forgiveness and empowerment to live a sinless life. Jesus revealed that God's justice is always combined with His mercy. The "merciless" god is Satan.²¹

Whose works do we study to determine the Father's character? **Christ's works and His alone**, perfectly reveal the Father's character. The 144000 will have this type of character also, for Christ will abide in them and live His life in them. The Father's name (character) is in their foreheads. Christ is "in them" (Rev 14:1-5; Jn 14:10, 11; Col 1:27).

Consider again Paul's contrast of the two types of character 'fruit' in Galatians 5:19- 23.

Galatians 5:19 -23

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**"

The Bible avers that there are no evil, carnal fruits or character traits in the Father nor in His Son. The Father is pure and holy. How then could the Father's character exhibit wrath and hatred with commands to destroy? These character traits come from the fruit from the carnal, human evil nature, not the pure, loving divine nature of God.

21 Regarding Revelation 14:10 "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." When the plagues are "poured out without mixture" it refers to being poured out "without mercy." Divine mercy provides protection from sin. It is the empowerment to not be hurt by sin. God is not the One doing the hurting. The wicked people have already rejected God's protective mercy and during the plagues, they have no protection, except of their own devisings. The plagues are to be poured out without God's protection, but God does not cause the plagues. Sadly the wicked have not given their allegiance to God and so He is not authorised to "interfere" in their lives any longer. The wicked have rejected Christ as their Lord and Master and have chosen Satan instead - they are given "into his hand" and are found without protection from Satan's wrath and from the purifying presence of God.

NOTE: The author of this book has not the intention to “throw out the Bible” or to cause others to discard the perfect principles of Christ's life as found in the Bible. To the contrary, the author exhorts the reader to dig deeply into the Bible, to search out the hidden things of God (1 Cor 2:7). If the searcher perceives that there exists disharmony in the Bible, the author suggests that the fault lies with human misunderstanding. **Our limited understanding results in a stunted portrayal of God's character.**

Men who were moved by the spirit of Christ to describe spiritual things - to the best of their human ability - still failed to understand or describe the true extent and depth of the loving character of God as seen in Jesus Christ. In their best attempts to write material to portray the character of God, humanity could not but fail when they inadvertently put their own concepts of God into their writings. In contrast, the record of the life of Jesus Christ did not fail to reveal perfect love –Jesus showed to the world, the Father's character.

The record of Christ's life and words clarify many confusing statements recorded in the Bible. The life of Christ is aligned with the standard upon which ALL spirits and writings must be tested – the 10 commandments – which are the very essence of the Father's character.

Patriarchs and Prophets p 52

“The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom.”

Sorting the Confusion

This table might help to distinguish the character traits of the Father, Christ and Satan.

<u>Character of God</u> Seen in Jesus' Character	<u>Blended Character</u> Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions	<u>Character of Satan</u> Seen in Pagan Gods
<u>Total Selflessness - Love</u>	Self (at times with the appearance of selfless) – the end justifies the means	<u>Total Selfishness -Lust</u>
Righteousness 1 Cor 1:30 (Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness)	God does not tempt man (James 1:13); God provides a way out of temptation (1 Cor 10:13) / God tempted Abraham (Gen 22:1); God tempted David to number Israel (2 Sam 24:1)	Wickedness 2 Thess 2:8
Truth John 14:6 (I am the way, the truth and the life)	God of truth -no iniquity- (Duet 32:4); Some Bible writers state "the Lord" did a certain act while other Bible writers claim Satan or his agent did it	Deception Gen 3:1, 13 John 8:44
Peaceful, Non-Violent Isaiah 53:9 (because He hath done no violence) Matt 26:52 (all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword)	God of Peace (Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20; Isa 53:9) (Gen 6:11-13) God of War (Exo 15:3; Num 1:3; Duet 7:16; 1 Samuel 15:3)	Warring/Violent Ezek 28:16 John 8:44
Inviting Matt 11:28	Inviting "Why will ye die? Turn and live" (Ezekiel 18:31,32) Kill non-compliants (Lev 20:2; 24:23; Numbers 15:33-36; Duet 13:10; 21:21- son)	Forceful Rev 13:16 Luke 9:42

<u>Character of God</u> Seen in Jesus' Character	<u>Blended Character</u> Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions	<u>Character of Satan</u> Seen in Pagan Gods
Honesty Isa 53:9 (no guile in His mouth)	God can't lie (Titus 1:2) impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18) God sends lying spirit to deceive (1 Kings 22:22,23; 2 Chron 18:21,22)	Lies John 8:44
Life-Giver John 1:4 (In Him was life)	Life-giving Creator God (Gen 1) Killer God of destruction - (flood – Gen 6:17); Sodom (Gen 19:24) consume all the people (Duet 7:16; 1 Samuel 15:3)	Murderer John 8:44
Kindness Eph 4:32-5:1	God of great kindness(Nehemiah 9:17); God is kind (Luke 6:35-36); God delights in loving- kindness (Jer 9:24) Orders the killing of entire races, men married women, male babies (Ezekiel 9:5,6; Num 31:17; 1 Samuel 15:3)	Unkind, Nasty John 8:44
Protecting Matt 23:37 (as a hen gathers her chickens) Psa 103:4 (Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;)	Saves Daniel from lions (Dan 6:22) God permits babies to be killed in Bethlehem and elsewhere (Jer 31:15; Matt 2:18; Jer 9:25; 1 Chron 21:12-15; 1 Samuel 15:3) Wicked cause their own wounding (Deut 32:39) God causes wounding (Psalm 64:7) If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you... (Joshua 24:20)	Destroying Apollyon= destroyer Rev 9:11

<u>Character of God</u> Seen in Jesus' Character	<u>Blended Character</u> Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions	<u>Character of Satan</u> Seen in Pagan Gods
Gentleness 2 Cor 10:1 (the meekness and gentleness of Christ)	God crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies (Psa 103:4) God pours out plagues without mercy; covenant of peace with a double-murderer (Rev 14:10, Phinehas -Numbers 25:12); Lord will punish with the sword & famine (Jer 11:22)	Harshness Luke 9:42 2 Chron 33:6
Law Keeping John 15:10 (kept Father's law) Christ says don't even get angry (Mat 5:22)	Thou shalt not kill (Exo 20:13). Respect foreigners, widows, orphans; be non-violent (Exo 22:21-24) God commands law-breakers be stoned, pagans be killed, rape permitted, robbery and genocide (Duet 13:10; 21:10-14; Josh 11:19, 20; Numbers 31; 1 Sam 15:3)	Law Breaking Ezekiel 28:15 John 8:44 (father of lies)
Patient / Long-suffering 2 Peter 1:6 Matt 18:22 (forgive seventy times seven)	The God of patience (Romans 15:5; 1 Cor 13:4); God is long-suffering (Exo 34:6) Wrathful God (Rev 14:10, 11; Ps 78:31; Exo 22:24) God is set to destroy the Israelites for worshipping the Golden Calf after only 40 days (Exo 32:10)	Impatient / Short-tempered Rev 12:12 (great wrath, short time)
Freedom of choice John 6:37; Rev 22:17 (Whosoever will may come)	God says, "Choose life" (Duet 30:19) God says "Comply or die" pick up sticks on Sabbath be killed (Num 15:32-36)	Compelling Rev 13:16-17
Self-Control Luke 4:2-4 (40 days without food)	Fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Gal 5:22) God gets wrathful, angry, furious and acts without mercy (Exo 32:10; Rev 14:10,11)	Self-Indulgence Luke 4:5-7

<u>Character of God</u> Seen in Jesus' Character	<u>Blended Character</u> Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions	<u>Character of Satan</u> Seen in Pagan Gods
Delights in Doing Good (Acts 10:38; 1 Cor 13:6)	God doesn't delight in the death of the wicked (Eze 18:23) God delights in destroying the wicked (Deut 28:63)	Delights in Causing Pain (Jer 32:35; Proverbs 2:12-14)
Forgiving Sin But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (Matt 9:6) Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more (John 8:11)	Who forgiveth all thine iniquities Psalm 103:3 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (Joshua 24:19)	Tempting to Sin Being forty days tempted of the devil (Luke 4:2)
Righteous Anger Isa 53:9; 1 Peter 2:22 (Christ did no violence; had no guile in His mouth; reviled not again)	God is slow to anger (Nehemiah 9:17) God's fury rested on the Israelites and His sword was after them (Eze 5:12-14)	Unrighteous Anger 1 Peter 5:8 (roaring lion)
Goodness Acts 10:38 1 Tim 6:13	God delights in loving-kindness and no iniquity is in Him (Exo 34:6; Jer 2:5) God orders the killing of entire races, men, married women, male babies (Ezekiel 9:5,6; Num 31:17; 1 Sam 15:2,3; Exo 32:27) just as Pharaoh (Exo 1:22) and Herod (Matt 2:16) did.	Evil Eze 28:15
Faithful Rev 1:5 (Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness)	God is faithful (1 Cor 1:9) God makes a covenant with Israel (Exo 24:7) /God wants to break covenant and make a covenant with Moses instead (Exo 32:10)	Disloyal Isa 14:13-14 Rev 12:3 (rebellion in heaven)

<u>Character of God</u> Seen in Jesus' Character	<u>Blended Character</u> Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions	<u>Character of Satan</u> Seen in Pagan Gods
Temperance 2 Peter 1:4-8	David was a man after God's heart (1 Sam 13:14) David broke God's law (Deut 17:17) and took multiple wives (2 Sam 5:13); David orders his wife's 5 innocent sons to die for political reasons (2 Sam 21:8,9)	Indulgence to Excess Matt 4:8; Gal 5:21; Isa 14:14, 15 (aimed to usurp God but brought to hell)
Helps Pagans Matt 15:25 - 28	Help pagans-2 Kings 6:18-23 Kill pagans -1 Sam 15:18,19	Kills Pagans John 8:44
Joy Over Redeemed Sinners Heb 12:2	Christ's joy over sinners' repentance - (Heb 12:2) no pleasure in wicked's death (Ezek 33:11) Pleasure over death of two wicked people (Numbers 25:6-13)	Malignity (wanting to hurt others) Isa 14:14 Rom 1:29
Consistent James 1:17	God wasn't angry when Moses, Solomon and Nehemiah numbered Israel (Num 1:1-4; 3:40; 26 2 Chron 2:17; Neh 7:7). God was angry when David numbered Israel (2 Sam 24).	Rebellious, Inconsistent Dan 7:25 (change times and laws)
Merciful Matt 5:7	"the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy," "love mercy" (James 5:11; Micah 6:8) "Lord sends a curse on you (Mal 2:2) "O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Exo 15:6).	Heartless Romans 1:31
Purity 1 Peter 2:22	God gave a moral law - 10 Commandments (Exo 20:1-17) death penalty for breaking one law God tells Israelites to rape, steal, and murder pagans (Deut 21:10-14; Num 31)	Immorality Romans 1:29

<u>Character of God</u> <i>Seen in Jesus' Character</i>	<u>Blended Character</u> <i>Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions</i>	<u>Character of Satan</u> <i>Seen in Pagan Gods</i>
Meekness 2 Cor 10:1	Still small voice (1 Kings 19:12) Thunderings from Mt Sinai; (Exo 20:18) God questions Job	Pride Isa 14:13, 14
Sinless Jesus willingly interacted (mixed) with sinners but did not participate in their sinful acts Matt 9:11; Heb 4:15. He was in the world, not of the world (John 3:17). Heals Mark 6:56; Matt 4:24; Matt 8:16 (healed all that were sick, cast out demons); Matt 14:14; Mark 1:34; Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40	"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity:" Habakkuk 1:13 "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Pro 15:3 Sun of Righteousness – healing in His wings (Mal 4:2); I am the Lord thy God that healeth thee (Exo 15:26) healeth all thy diseases (Psa 103:3) The Lord made David's child sick (2 Sam 12:15) "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Cor 3:17).	Sinful Satan is the god of this world and the originator of all sin. 2 Cor 4:4; John 8:44 Causes disease Job 2:4-7
Just and Fair "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev 22:12)	The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; do justice (Psa 89:14; Ezekiel 18:19, 20; 45:10; Micah 6:8) The Lord will punish children for their parents' sins (Ex 20:5; Ex 34:7; Num 14:18; Deut 5:9; Jer 32:18)	Just and Unfair Isa 59:4, 14 "God" told David that He sent a 3 year drought because Saul broke a promise to the Gibeonites. To atone for this broken promise, David required Saul's 7 sons to be executed and their bodies "hung up before" the Lord, before "God" sent rain (2 Sam 21:1-9)

<u>Character of God</u> Seen in Jesus' Character	<u>Blended Character</u> Good/Evil Seen in Many Religions	<u>Character of Satan</u> Seen in Pagan Gods
Protects and values children Matthew 18:6; 19:14 "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.... Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not."	It never came into the heart of God to ask for burnt sacrificing of children on high places. It is an abomination, to cause Judah to sin. Jer 7:31; Jer 32:35 "And he (God) said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac...and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Genesis 22:2 Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. Psalms 137:9	Child sacrifices part of worship ceremonies Matt 17:15; 2 Chr 33:6; Eze 16:20, 21 " And he caused his children to pass through the fire ... also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."
The Light of the World John 8:12	What fellowship has light with darkness? Christ with Belial?	The Power of Darkness Colossians 1:13

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, .

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

The Character of Sin

James describes the natural progression of sin, which leads to death.

James 1:15

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

1 John 3:4

"Sin is the transgression of the law."

Sin originates from lust – selfishness. The cherished thoughts of lust (or selfishness) then produce sinful actions – the transgression of the law of unselfishness – the 10 commandments.

Does sin ever stop being sin? Can an action that is declared sinful, ever be legitimised or legalised? Can sin (which is breaking of God's 10 commandment law) ever become righteous (in harmony with God's law)? i.e. Can sin become righteousness if it is performed in a specific time period?

Some suppose that the Exodus Hebrew people were given special permission to break God's laws. eg. They were instructed by "the Lord" to kill their pagan enemies and their goods (Duet 24; Numbers 41). However, the Hebrews were given the 10 commandments by God to form the basis of a righteous government and civil system. This would have created a theocracy, where the One True God directed the affairs of true believers in every aspect of their lives – government, religion, civil, health, interactions with other nations – all based on His divine, unselfish loving principles.

Did the Hebrew people live under a true theocracy? Were the 10 commandment rules respected in their community? Were the words of Jesus, which demonstrated with perfect accuracy the character of the Father – complete love – the basis of the Hebrew's government and civil system?

In the Old Testament, Christ was endeavouring to win the hearts of the ancient Hebrew people by encouraging them to observe the 10 commandments - but repeatedly the people turned away from following Christ's principles and chose instead to worship false, pagan gods, according to pagan principles.

Even a casual glance at the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes (Matt 5) and Jesus' sermons reveal that the principles of the Hebrew government were not built on the same principles as those Jesus expounded.

Jesus Corrected Traditional Mosaic Law

Deuteronomy 18:18, 19

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (19) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

In reality, as all true prophets did, Moses pointed the people to Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God, and to His words which are "spirit and life" (John 6:63). However, it became apparent during Jesus' life on earth, that the Scriptures, while still containing the words of God, had also gained some 'traditional extras.'

Jesus declared that He had not come to do away with the law and the prophets but to fulfil their predictions of Him as the Messiah (Matt 5:17). He upheld the divinely inspired prophecies and laws of the Old Testament. He taught His disciples to anchor their faith in Him, by comparing the circumstances of His life and death, with the Old Testament messianic prophecies (Luke 24:13-31). Christ emphasised the prophecies repeatedly (Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; 24:44) and set the correct pattern of Bible study with His disciples on the road to Emmaus. He rebuked them for not believing all that the prophets had spoken concerning the Messiah (Luke 24:25-27) and they continued His example in their ministry (Acts 24:14; 28:23; Rom 3:21).

However, several times Jesus corrected traditional beliefs, some which were presented in the Old Testament, but which became confused as the Pharisees added to the laws, their own interpretations. For instance, on the subject of:

- **swearing oaths:** In the Old Testament, taking oaths (swearing by God's name) was commanded (Deut 6:13); but Jesus forbade making oaths. He instructed that His followers should say "yes" or "no." (Lev 5:4,5; Num 5:21; 30:2; Matt 5:33-37);
- **divorce and remarriage:** Jesus reminded the Pharisees that divorce was not the divine plan for humanity prior to the entrance of sin, but that Moses had permitted it because of the rebellious, selfish characters of their Jewish ancestors (Deut.24.1-3; Matt 5:31-32);
- **stoning adulterers:** Jesus prevented this Old Testament statute from being performed on at least one occasion. He refused to condemn the adulteress, but instead delivered her from her accusers and pardoned her sin (Lev 20:10; Duet 22:21-24; John 8:4-11);
- **taking revenge for damage:** "An eye for an eye." Moses was said to have introduced this law in an endeavour to prevent the Israelites making an "over-payment of revenge" for damage sustained to their persons or property. However, Jesus maintained that even this law, was far removed from the divine law of loving kindness and forgiveness. Christ taught His followers to reflect the divine character and to love their enemies and do good to those who were abusive to them (Exo 21:23-25; Matt 5:38, 39);
- **being taken to court:** Jesus counselled the people not to resist the legal action, but to peaceably comply with the demands (Matt 5:40);
- **love your neighbours but hate your enemies:** Jesus encouraged people to love their enemies; pray for their abusers and to turn the other cheek (Matt 5:38, 39);
- **gift-giving to the temple** – Jesus condemned this 'holy' tradition which prevented the true honouring (supporting) of a Jew's father and mother (Matt 8:4; 15:3-9).

It is not suggested that all of the Mosaic law was condemned by Jesus. Christ endorsed the 10 commandment laws; supporting the ministry with tithes and offerings; and certain health laws; etc., but many laws were also corrupted as people used traditions as a means of breaking the 10 commandments (e.g. Matt 8:4; 15:5). These traditions, which concealed the breaking of the law of love, Christ exposed.

If Christ did not condone this law, then it is safe to conclude that the laws were not inspired by God.

It is clear that Jesus did not claim authorship of the Mosaic law which stated 'an eye for an eye' (Exodus 21:24), but denounced it strongly in Matthew 5. How then did these laws find their way into the 'inspired' text? Did someone else authorise them and pass them off as being God's laws - "teaching for commandments the doctrines of men" - or perhaps the original command was misconstrued and now meant something quite different? It is possible that this change in meaning indeed did occur and textual evidence of this is given at http://www.aishdas.org/toratemet/en_mishpatim.

There was a genuine need for Christ to bring clarity to the people concerning the books of Moses (the Torah) and the traditions that surrounded them (the Talmud).²² The 10 commandments, which reveal the character of the Father, were confused with volumes of oral traditions and rituals.

The Babylonian Talmud

"The Talmud is the "oral tradition", written down by the Palestinian rabbis after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AC, with their commentaries (The "Mishnah"). In the 4th century the rabbis from Babylon added their commentaries to the Mishnah ("Gemara"). Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara make up the "Babylonian Talmud", with the 613 commandments. At the same time, another Gemara was created in Palestine that became the Palestinian Talmud, shorter than the Babylonian one." <http://www.religion-cults.com/Judaism/escript.htm>

*"The Talmud (Hebrew: תַּלְמוּד) is a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history. It is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism, second only to the Hebrew Bible in importance. The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 AD), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and the Gemara (c. 500 AD), a discussion of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Tanakh. The terms Talmud and Gemara are often used interchangeably. The Gemara is the basis for all codes of rabbinic law and is much quoted in other rabbinic literature. The whole Talmud is also traditionally referred to as Shas (ש"ס), a Hebrew abbreviation of shisha sedarim, the "six orders" of the Mishnah.... **Pilpul practitioners posited that the Talmud could contain no redundancy or contradiction whatsoever.** New categories and distinctions (hillukim) were therefore created, resolving seeming contradictions within the Talmud by novel logical means."* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

²² The Talmud has two components: the [Mishnah](#) (c. 200 AD), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and the [Gemara](#) (c. 500 AD) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

Recently, the Babylonian Talmud - the **second** most sacred holy book of the Jewish religion, was translated and became available in English. Some of the 'laws' in the Talmud are indeed remarkable. As Exodus 21:24 states the principle of an 'eye for an eye', so does the Talmud in Ketuvot 32b and Bava Kamma 83b. The Babylonian Talmud also states other interesting things, such as these quotes:

- “It is permitted to have sexual intercourse with a girl, three years old and one day” (Sanhedrin 55b, p 376);
- “A proselyte under the age of three years and a day, is permitted to marry a priest (Vabamoth para 60b)
- “When a grown up man has intercourse with a little girl it is nothing, for when the girl is less than this it is as if one puts the finger into the eye. As tears come to the eye again and again, so does virginity come back to the little girl under three years” (Kethuboth, para 11b, footnote #7, p58);
- “The intercourse of a small boy is not regarded as a sexual act” (Kethuboth, para 11b, p58);
- “If a man commits sodomy with a boy less than nine years old, it is not sodomy” (Sanhedrin para 54b & 55a, p 371);
- “Intercourse with a dead woman is permissible” (Jebbamoth para 55b, p 371);
- “The penalty for adultery does not include sex with a minor, the wife of a minor, or the wife of a heathen (Sanhedrin 52b);
- “...with the designated bondmaid²³ one is guilty only in the case of natural connection but not in the case of perverse connection” (Kerithoth 11a);
- “The commands of the rabbis are more important than the commands of the Bible” (Erubin, para 21b p 149, 150)
- “God, when He intervenes in a rabbinical dispute is always defeated by a rabbi” (Baba Bathra para 59b p 353);
- “The rabbis are greater than the prophets” (Baba Bathra p 59);
- “He who recites Psalm 145 three times a day will have eternal life” (Pesachim para 13a p 582);

²³ Designated bondmaids are unmarried adolescent girls

- “Jesus was a bastard born of adultery” (Jebbaamoth para 49b p 324);
- “Mary was a whore. Jesus was an evil man” (Sanhedrin para 106 a&b, p 725);
- “Jesus was a magician and a fool. Mary was an adulteress” (Schabbath 104b, p 504);
- “Christians are allied with hell and Christianity is worse than incest” (Abhodah Zarah para 17a, p 85);
- “When Messiah comes, he will destroy the Christians” (Sanhedrin para 99a, p 668);
- “Those who read the gospels of the Christians are doomed to hell” (Sanhedrin para 90a, 100b p 601, 602);
- “If one bound his neighbour and he died of starvation he is not liable to execution” (Sanhedrin para 77a).

It is more than probable that the copyists/editors of the Old Testament, while having some knowledge of the One True God, were also strongly influenced by their exposure to pagan religions. This knowledge was acquired from their culture which included 270 years in polytheistic Egypt; intermarrying with heathen nations and assuming their worship practices; their tribal – possibly racist - mentality and behaviour. It appears that this incorrect knowledge was at times, wrongly applied to the character of the Hebrew God also. Recall that the Jewish religion considered certain oral traditions to be sacred, but Jesus refused to give honour to those traditions. One of those traditions eventually became known and written down as the Talmud.

Athiesm, Paganism and the Hebrew Religion

The following information is stated, not to promote atheism, but to demonstrate through archaeological findings, some commonly held (traditional) beliefs shared by Christianity and paganism.

Paul Tobin a self-confessed atheist presents evidence which suggests that pagan religions influenced the Israelites' perceptions of their God Yahweh. Taken from his website at <http://www.geocities.com/paulintobin/moses.html#1>, we find the following startling information which is sourced from **Barthel, What the Bible Really Says**: p119 Riedel et.al., **The Book of the Bible**: p34 :

"Everyone is familiar with Moses receiving the ten commandments in two stone tablets from God in Mount Sinai. However, this story is originally Babylonian. One of the most well known ancient code of law was the Code of Hammurabi, so named after the Amorite king Hammurabi who lived around 1700 BC. On the great Babylonian stone monument, known as the stele of Hammurabi, a drawing inscribed on it shows the great Amorite King receiving the tablets of the law from the sun god, Shamash.

The similarity does not end here. On the stele too is inscribed the laws that made up the Code of Hammurabi. The general similarity between the code and The "Book of the Covenant" (Exodus chapters 21 to 23) and the legal codes of the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy cannot be denied. The Mosaic laws were obviously written under the influence of the Babylonian code. [3] In some cases even the wordings are uncannily close to one another. For example take this one from the code on the principle of an-eye-for-an-eye:

'If a citizen shall put out the eye of another, then let his own eye be put out....If a citizen shall knock out the teeth of another who is higher in rank, then let his own teeth be knocked out.'

This closely parallel's one of the Lord's commands in Exodus:

Exodus 21:23-24

'And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,'

Here is another example; the code gives the following principle:

'If a citizen steals the son of another citizen, he shall be put to death.'

The principle and wording is closely followed in the verse below from Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 24:7

'If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel...then that thief shall die.'

The similarities are too obvious to ignore, even to an atheist. Surely Christians are able to see the pagan contamination which Satan has endeavoured to place on God's people. Satan could have guessed that God would give humanity His law, and staged a fake event earlier to the real event occurring on Mt Sinai, so that counterfeit is not so remarkable.

However, the Babylonian death sentences and vengeance laws, in keeping with large sections of the Mosaic law, are very pagan and these laws contradict:

- the words and actions of Jesus Christ Himself;
- the 10 commandments (thou shalt not kill);
- the great commandments and the second which is like unto it"; and
- the instructions of the disciples and apostles.

Which religious laws reflect the character of God as seen in the 10 commandments and the life testimony of Jesus Christ? The answer to this question must be, 'Only the religion of Jesus.' His religion was based on "loving His enemies," not on the opposite premise which justifies a pay-back system to return violence for violence (Matthew 5:44).

Consider Paul's comments in 2 Corinthians 3:12 - 2 Corinthians 4:6

2 Corinthians 3:12

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: **for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.** 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16 **Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.** 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. .4.1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2 But have **renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully;** but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 **But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:** 4 **In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.** 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, **to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

Paul tells us that the Old Testament writers saw spiritual things through a veil, but that Jesus revealed the truth fully, so that now they could see the light of the knowledge of the glory (character) of God through the testimony of His Son. ***This is not to say that God put a veil on the Old Testament writers eyes. God did not cause the veil to be placed on Old Testament eyes.***

It was the pagan influences of the evil and satanic religions surrounding them which reduced the Old Testament writers' ability to appreciate the pureness of the love of God. The Israelites displayed a collective mindset of an angry god who had to be appeased.

Their beliefs and misconceptions regarding the quality of God's character, caused the veiling of truth to their own eyes. Paul states that '**when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.**' This concept harmonises with Jeremiah 29:11-14 – 'ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.'

Paul emphasises that the knowledge which comes from understanding the spirit of Christ (i.e. His glory or character, mind, thoughts) provides liberty -freedom of choice – for humanity - not force or coercion. (2 Corinthians 3:17) The spirit of coercion does not originate from God, for **He** does not give us a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7). The spirit of fear and coercion therefore, must originate with Satan.

Walther Zimmerli (1907–1984) was Professor of Old Testament at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and and considered by many as one of the most important biblical scholars of the twentieth century. Among his many publications in English are *Ezekiel*, 2 vols. (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 1979/1983), *I Am Yahweh* (1982), *The Old Testament and the World* (1976), and *The Law and the Prophets* (1965). In *The Law and the Prophets*, Zimmerli writes:

*“In this connection Hosea attacks with particular passion the priests who should have been the true guardians of the knowledge of God, and who have especially failed in this duty (Hosea iv. 4 ff.). **They have allowed to pass unnoticed the very real exchange of Yahweh, the God of Israel, for the baals of Canaan.** This was no longer the same threat which had occurred in Elijah's time, it was something much more dangerous. **While the worship of Yahweh remained outwardly correct, in reality he had come to be regarded as a nature deity like the Canaanite Baal.** From him men sought the fertility of the soil and of marriage; he was worshipped with the forms of nature religion and with sacral prostitution, as men worshipped the Baals. **Yahweh became Baal. The name of one of David's warriors, which is recorded in I Chronicles 12:5 as Bealiah (Yahweh is Baal) demonstrates exactly this programmatic assertion.** Thus without knowing it, **Israel had begun to misunderstand the very nature of its God,** because the professional guardians of a true knowledge of him were asleep” (Walther Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets*, Basil Blackwell 1965 p 70).*

Columbia University Press Encyclopedia at Answers.com presents the following information concerning Baal, a pagan god who is acknowledged at an idol which represented Satan as he attempts to imitate the Creator – the One True God.

*“Baal (bā'el) , plural Baalim (bā'elīm) [Semitic,=master, lord], name used throughout the Bible for the chief deity or for deities of Canaan. The term was originally an epithet applied to the storm god Hadad. Technically, **Baal was subordinate to El.** Baal is attested in the Ebla texts (first half of 2d millennium B.C.). By the time of the Ugarit tablets (14th cent. B.C.), Baal had become the ruler of the universe. The Ugarit tablets make him chief of the Canaanite pantheon. He is the **source of life and fertility,** the mightiest hero, the **lord of war,** and the defeater of the god Yam. **There were many temples of Baal in Canaan, and the name Baal was often added to that of a locality,** e.g. Baal-peor, Baal-hazor, Baal-hermon. The Baal cult penetrated Israel and at times led to syncretism. **In the Psalms, Yahweh is depicted as Baal and his dwelling is on Mt. Zaphon (Zion), the locale of Baal in Canaanite mythology.** The practice of sacred prostitution seems to have been associated with the worship of Baal in Palestine and the cult was vehemently denounced by the prophets, especially Hosea and Jeremiah. **The abhorrence in which the cult was held probably explains the substitution of Ish-bosheth for Esh-baal, of Jerubbesheth for Jerubbaal (a name of Gideon), and of Mephibosheth for Merib-baal.** The substituted term probably means “shame.” The same abhorrence is evident the use of*

the pejorative name Baal-zebul (see also Satan). The Baal of 1 Chronicles is probably the same as Ramah 2. As cognates of Baal in other Semitic languages there are Bel (in Babylonian religion) and the last elements in the Tyrian names Jezebel, Hasdrubal, and Hannibal."

http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery.jsessionid=29l33c32f48kr?tname=baal&curtab=2222_1&hl=bealiah&sbid=lc05b

Wikipedia Encyclopedia, Baal:

*"After Gideon's death, according to Judges 8.33, the Israelites went astray and started to worship the Ba'alim (the Ba'als) especially Ba'al Berith 'Lord of the Covenant'. A few verses later (Judge 9.4) the story turns to all the citizens of Shechem – actually kol-ba'alê šakem another case of normal use of ba'al not applied to a deity. These citizens of Shechem support Abimelech's attempt to become king by giving him 70 shekels from the House of Ba'al Berith. It is hard to disassociate this Lord of the Covenant who is worshipped in Shechem from the covenant at Shechem described earlier in Joshua 24.25 in which the people agree to worship Yahweh. It is especially hard to do so when Judges 9.46 relates that all "the holders of the tower of Shechem" (kol-ba'alê midgal-šakem) enter bêt 'ēl berit 'the House of El Berith', that is, 'the House of God of the Covenant'. Was Ba'al then here just a title for El? Or did the covenant of Shechem perhaps originally not involve El at all but some other god who bore the title Ba'al? Or were there different viewpoints about Yahweh, some seeing him as an aspect of Hadad, some as an aspect of El, some with other theories? Again there is no clear answer. We also find Eshbaal (one of Saul's sons) and Beeliada (a son of David). The last name also appears as Eliada. This might show that at some period Ba'al and El were used interchangeably even in the same name applied to the same person. More likely a later hand has cleaned up the text. Editors did play around with some names, sometimes substituting the form bosheth 'abomination' for ba'al in names, whence the forms Ishbosheth instead of Eshbaal and Mephibosheth which is rendered Meribaal in 1 Chronicles 9.40. **1 Chronicles 12:5 gives us the name Bealiah (more accurately bə'alyâ) meaning 'Yahweh is Ba'al'."***

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, presents information concerning Baal, from the research of AH Sayce.

"Temples of Baal at Samaria and Jerusalem are mentioned in 1Ki 1:18; where they had been erected at the time when the Ahab dynasty endeavored to fuse Israelites and Jews and Phoenicians into a single people under the same national Phoenician god. Altars on which incense was burned to Baal were set up in all the streets of Jerusalem according to Jeremiah (11:13), apparently on the flat roofs of the houses (Jer 32:29); and the temple of Baal contained an image of the god in the shape of a pillar or Bethel (2Ki 10:26,27). In the reign of Ahab, Baal was served in Israel by 450 priests (1Ki 18:19), as well as by prophets (2Ki 10:19), and his worshippers wore special vestments when his ritual was performed (2Ki 10:22). The ordinary offering made to the god consisted of incense (Jer 7:9) and burnt sacrifices; on extraordinary occasions the victim was human (Jer 19:5). At times the priests worked themselves into a state of ecstasy, and dancing round the altar slashed themselves with knives (1Kings 18:26,28), like certain dervish orders in modern Islam."

AH Sayce demonstrates the two-tone, blended character of the pagan deity, Baal:

"As the Sun-god, Baal was worshipped under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. On the one hand he gave light and warmth to his worshippers; on the other hand the fierce heats of summer destroyed the vegetation he had himself brought into being. Hence, human victims were sacrificed to him in order to appease his anger in time of plague or other trouble, the victim being usually the first-born of the sacrificer and being burnt alive. In the Old Testament this is euphemistically termed "passing" the victim "through the fire" (2Ki 16:3; 21:6). The forms under which Baal was worshipped were necessarily as numerous as the communities which worshipped him. Each locality had its own Baal or divine "Lord" who frequently took his name from the city or place to which he belonged. Hence, there was a Baal-Zur, "Baal of Tyre"; Baal-hermon, "Baal of Hermon" (Jud 3:3); Baal-Lebanon, "Baal of Lebanon"; Baal-Tarz, "Baal of Tarsus." At other times the title was attached to the name of an individual god; thus we have Bel-Merodach, "the Lord Merodach" (or "Bel is Merodach") at Babylon, Baal-Melkarth at Tyre, Baal-gad (Jos 11:17) in the north of Palestine. Occasionally the second element was noun as in Baal-Shemaim, "lord of heaven," Baalzebub (2Ki 1:2), "Lord of flies," Baal-Hamman, usually interpreted "Lord of heat," but more probably "Lord of the sunpillar," the tutelary deity of Carthage. All these various forms of the Sun-god were collectively known as the Baalim or "Baals" who took their place by the side of the female Ashtaroth and Ashtrim. At Carthage the female consort of Baal was termed Pene-Baal, "the face" or "reflection of Baal."
http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery.jsessionid=29I33c32f48kr?tname=baal&curtab=2222_1&hl=bealiah&sbid=lc05b

It is obvious that, prior to the time that the Old Testament writings were written down by scribes in the time the Babylonian captivity (Ezra and Nehemiah), the Israelites were very knowledgeable about the religion of pagan worship, having participating in worship rituals and ceremonies to Baal.

In that pagan context, is it surprising that the 'blended' character traits of 'the baals' was transferred unto the character of the One True God? Is it any wonder that Jesus taught His disciples 'new' principles which appeared to be in stark contrast with the principles of the Mosaic laws? Such differences are even recognised by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Encyclopedia on CD-ROM, concerning the death penalty for heresy, relating to the Mosaic law, states:

"The Christian teachers of the first three centuries insisted, as was natural for them, on complete religious liberty; furthermore, they not only urged the principle that religion could not be forced on others -- a principle always adhered to by the Church in her dealings with the unbaptised -- but, when comparing the Mosaic Law and the Christian religion, they taught that the latter was content with a, spiritual punishment of heretics (i.e. with excommunication), while Judaism necessarily proceeded against its dissidents with torture and death. (2) However, the imperial successors of Constantine soon began to see in themselves Divinely appointed "bishops of the exterior", i.e. masters of the temporal and material conditions of the Church. At the same time they retained the traditional authority of "Pontifex Maximus", and in this way the civil authority inclined, frequently in league with prelates of Arian tendencies, to persecute the orthodox bishops by imprisonment and exile. But the latter, particularly St. Hilary of Poitiers (Liber contra Auxentium, c. iv), protested vigorously against any use of force in the province of religion, whether for the spread of Christianity or for preservation of the Faith. They repeatedly urged that in this respect the severe decrees of the Old Testament were abrogated by the mild and gentle laws of Christ."
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08026a.htm>

In an attempt to find 'harmony' between the Mosaic instructions to repay 'an eye for an eye' and the words of Christ to "love your enemies," some Christians are forced to conclude **that neither Moses' nor Christ's commands can be applied to every situation.**

Jeffrey Stueber appears to take this position in his book review of Ruth Hurmence Green's publication called 'The Born Again Skeptic's Guide to the Bible.'
<http://www.tektonics.org/guest/greenruth01.html>

*Green does have a large chapter on Biblical contradictions, but here her lack of ability to consider alternatives to her own analysis displays ignorance and scholarly near-sightedness. She cites Exodus 21:24 which states you should return "an eye for eye, tooth for tooth" among others. She then claims this is a contradiction to Matthew 5:38,39 where Jesus says to turn the other cheek. **There is nothing in Matthew here to claim that for every evil one is to turn the other cheek.** What Jesus seems to be saying is that in some instances you should turn the other cheek because by giving a person what he or she wants, even letting him slap you aside the face, you might win him over. My NIV Bible claims that Jesus was correcting a Jewish misunderstanding in proper retaliation for wrongdoing and was setting the record straight - punishment should be limited to fit the crime. **Perhaps if someone slaps you, there is no need for punishment and you should turn the other cheek.** (Emphasis supplied).*

By refusing to accept Christ's instruction and example as applicable to **all** circumstances, the decision of whether to retaliate with violence or gentleness, **in any situation**, is left to the best judgment of the victim. Such a position however, negates Peter's advice in 1 Peter 2:21-23, which is – **without exception** - to follow the non-retalitory example of Jesus Christ. Isn't denying His example, akin to denying the Son of God (1John 2:22,23)?

QUIZ

The following quiz demonstrates the severity that misunderstanding the character of God caused the Jewish nation. It would be a simple matter to become confused about the true character of God from the Old Testament writings contained the Mosaic law.

1. **Who passed over the houses of Egypt and killed the firstborn just prior to the Exodus?**
Answer (Lord- Exo 12: 29); (the destroyer - Exo 12: 23) Rev 9:11 Apollyon = destroyer
2. **Who moved King David to number Israel?**
Answer: (God - 2 Sam 24:1); (Satan - 1 Chron 21:1)
3. **Did David sin when he numbered Israel?**
Answer: (No -1 Kings 15:5); (Yes – 2 Sam 24:10)
4. **Who hardened Pharaoh's heart?**
Answer: (God - Exod 7:3; 12: 23) -; (Pharaoh - Exodus 8:32)
5. **Who tore the kingdom from King Saul?**
Answer:(Lord -1Sam 15:28);(Saul-1Chron 10:4,wicked snare themselves Psa 9:15,16)
6. **Who sends deception to humanity?**
Answer: (God sends strong delusion – 2 Thes 2:11); (Satan father of lies -John 8 :44) (Titus 1:2 God cannot lie; Heb 6:18 impossible for God to lie)
7. **Who destroyed the Israelites when they murmured against God, wanting to eat flesh?**
Answer: (the Lord - Num 11:33); (the destroyer - 1 Cor 10:10); Rev 9:11 Apollyon
8. **Who sent fire down from heaven and destroyed Job's sheep?**
Answer: (Lord - Job 1:16); (Job's sheep were in Satan's hand Job 1:12).
9. **Who sent an angel as a lying spirit and to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets?**
Answer: (God sends lying spirit 1 Kings 22:19-23); (God is not man that He should lie Numbers 23:19); (God cannot lie - Titus 1:2); (impossible for God to lie - Heb 6:18).
10. **Who is the God of war?**
Answer: (God - Exod 15:3); -; (David can't build temple – man of war 1 Chron 28:3); , but David was a man after God's own heart? 1 Sam 13:14) (dragon makes war in heaven and earth Rev 12:7; 17); (wars and fighting come from lust -James 4:1,2)
11. **Who repented of the evil that he thought to do against His people?**
Answer: (God Exo 32:14); (Love thinks no evil 1 Cor 13:5, God is love 1 John 4:8,16)
12. **What is the wrath of God?**
Answer: (Ezek 22:31; Rev 14:10 - fiery destruction); (Ps 78:49 - God sending evil angels); Ez 18:32; Ps 51:11, 80:3,6,19 - turning His face away from sinners).
13. **Who directed men to kill, plunder, kidnap virgin women, shave their heads, “marry” and then discard /divorce them if they weren't pleasing to them?**
Answer: (God - Duet 21:10-14; Num 31); (God divorced Israel Jer 3:8); (Not to marry pagans Ezra 9:12); (not to take captives Joshua 10:40); (Isa 14:12 could take captives) (no divorce, except for fornication Matt 5:32)
14. **Who thinks evil? Who creates evil (calamity)?**
Answer: (God - 2 Kings 10:30 had murder of Ahab in his heart; Commends Jehu for destroying his family). (God creates evil - Isa 45:7); (Antediluvians thought evil continually Gen 6:5); (as a man thinks in heart so is he -Pro 23:7) (good tree, good fruit Matt 7:16-20); (evil thoughts defile Matt 15:19-20); (my thoughts are not your thoughts Isa 55:8); (God's thoughts of peace, not evil Jer 29:11); - (God is love 1 John 4:16;4:8, Love thinks no evil 1 Cor 13:5).
15. **Which God commanded children be offered as burnt offerings on high places?**
Answer: (God Gen 22:2); (Satan – masquerading as the pagan gods Molech & Chemosh **Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:10**).
16. **Does God forgive sins?**
Answer: (Yes. “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities” - Psalm 103:3). (No. “Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins -Joshua 24:19)
17. **Who commanded and delights in receiving blood sacrifices?**
Answer: (God - Exo 5:3; Exo 20:24; Deut 15:15); (Not God - Jer 7:21-23); (Molech, Chemosh – 1 Kings 11:6-8)
18. **Who delights in the punishment and death of the wicked?**
Answer: (God - Deut 28:63; not God - Ezekiel 18:23)

Wrathful God or Gentle Jesus?

There appears to be a conflict of character portrayal in the Bible, between “gentle Jesus” shown in the New Testament and with the wrathful, angry and violent God of the Old Testament. But as believers in the One True God, we know that the spirit of God was the same in both the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. There was not a different god in the Old Testament than there was in the New Testament. Yet there appears to be sharp disharmony between the divine character of the Old Testament and the divine character of the New Testament. Can these contradictions be reconciled?

Some Protestant denominations hold to the belief that only the New Testament (and not the Old Testament) applies to today's Christians. It is reasoned that the Old Testament Israelites had to achieve salvation through their obedience to God's various laws and statutes - or suffer God's wrath, but today's Christians are lucky – they can live under grace. This trinitarian theology also rationalises the contradiction that there appears to be a wrathful God of the Old Testament who is incompatible with the non-violent and gentle Jesus of the New Testament.

However, Seventh-day Adventists, along with some other Protestant denominations, claim to accept the entire Bible as “profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction” (*see footnote) etc, but these denominations have difficulty explaining the character of the God as portrayed in the Old Testament. Many believers choose to label the **apparently** wrathful and violent God of the Old Testament as another “mystery” aspect of their trinitarian god. Some prefer not to discuss these worrying parts of God's character since they can't explain the contradictions. Others suggest that the New Testament, (through the life of Jesus) exemplifies God's character of mercy, while the Old Testament God demonstrates His character of justice. This argument appears illogical as in all areas of divine-human interaction, God affirms that His character is unchangeable (Malachi 3:6). His love is merciful and just and never failing in either capacity (1 Cor 13). The omission of even one trait of love (the fruit of the spirit Gal 5:22, 23), results in a character that is not one of perfect love.

God's wrath is the devastation that occurs, both physically and spiritually when God accepts the sinner's rejection of His love and protection. Reluctantly, God - **the Source and Stability of All Life** - turns His face away from sinners. Just as the absence of light results in darkness, so the absence of Life and Stability must result in chaos and death.

Show us the Father

John 1:17, 18

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God...”

Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judaea who consented to Christ's execution, asked the famous question, “What is truth?” (John 128:38).

Jesus had already given the answer. He stated that He – alone - was the truth.

John 14:6

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

The truth, in its fullness, did not come to humanity through Moses, but through Jesus. The Son of God was the first and only person who revealed the Father to the world. This

168

revelation was through His loving, pure and holy character. Through Christ's character, the Father became "understandable" to humanity. Humanity could finally "see" the character of God, through the character of Jesus Christ, His Son.

The Old Testament prophets had only a limited knowledge of the character of God. Paul stated that it was a veiled knowledge, but that if they accepted Christ's testimony of the Father's character, the veil would be removed from their eyes.

2 Corinthians 3:13-16

"And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: (14) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. (15) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. (16) Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

John refers to the same principle of knowing the Father's character, when he states that truth came by Jesus Christ.

John 1:17

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (18) No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

John states states that "no man hath seen God at anytime."

Certainly no sinful human being has seen the physical form of the invisible, holy God. Sinful humanity cannot see God in His unveiled glory and live. But there is another meaning to this text. John's statement relates 'seeing' to 'knowing.' i.e. no man had "known" God's character in previous Old Testament times, but Jesus Christ revealed, or made Him known to humanity.

The meaning of 'to see' and its figurative interpretation 'to know' or 'understand' is demonstrated in the English language when the statement is made, "Oh, I see what you mean."

There is evidence that in the Hebrew language, "to see" also carries the figurative connotation of "to know" or "to understand."

Strong's Hebrew Concordance

#7200 *ra'ah* raw-aw' a primitive root; to see, **literally or figuratively** (in numerous applications, direct and implied, transitive, intransitive and causative):--advise self, appear, approve, behold, X certainly, consider, **discern**, (**make to**) enjoy, have experience, gaze, take heed, X indeed, X joyfully, lo, look (on, one another, one on another, one upon another; out, up, upon), mark, meet, X be near; **perceive**, present, provide, regard, (have) respect, (fore-, cause to, let) see(-r, -m, one another), shew (self), X sight of others, (e-)spy, stare, X surely, X **think**, view, visions.

The Greek expression "to see," which is used in John 1:18, has a similar meaning.

3708 *horao* hor-ah'-o properly, to stare at (compare 3700), i.e. (by implication) **to discern clearly (physically or mentally)**; by extension, to attend to; by Hebraism, to experience; passively, to appear:--behold, perceive, see, take heed. see GREEK for 3700

The importance of this figurative usage of “see” as it pertains to 'knowing' is demonstrated in the New Testament.

John 14:7-9

“If ye had **known** me, ye should have **known** my Father also: and from henceforth ye **know** him, and have **seen** him. (8) Philip saith unto him, Lord, **show** us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not **known** me, Philip? he that hath **seen** me hath **seen** the Father; and how sayest thou then, **Show** us the Father?”

Christ was not proclaiming that those people who had seen His outward, bodily form as Jesus of Nazareth, had also literally 'seen' the Father's bodily form. Instead, He was asserting that those who 'saw' or 'understood' the Son's character, would 'see' or 'know' the Father's character. Those who could not recognise the essential and complete purity of the Son's character, would still be blind regarding the Father's pure, loving character.

Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on the Bible, gives other examples by John.

*“John 1:18. [No man hath seen God at any time] Moses and others heard his voice, and saw the cloud and the fire, which were the symbols of his presence; but such a manifestation of God as had now taken place, in the person of Jesus Christ, had never before been exhibited to the world. It is likely that the word **seen**, here, is put for **known**, as in John 3:32; 1 John 3:2, 6, and 3 John 1:11; and this sense the latter clause of the verse seems to require:- No man, how highly soever favoured, hath fully known God, at any time, in any nation or age; the only begotten Son, (See Clarke on John 1:14) who is in the bosom of the Father, who was intimately acquainted with all the counsels of the Most High, he hath declared him.”*

Moses requested that he be permitted to see the glory of God. God's response to his request again emphasises that it was the character of God that was revealed to Moses, not the physical, visible form of the Father.

Exodus 33:18-23

“And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. (19) And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. (20) And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. (21) And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: (22) And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: (23) And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”

The context of these verses clarifies the fact that the “face” of God referred to the “glory” of God, because Moses had requested to see God's glory. The obvious conclusion is that sinful humanity are not able to observe the visible, unveiled glorious presence of God, but they are equipped to comprehend His loving character.

Signs of the Times, 27 October, 1881, p 16

“In the character of God, are wisdom, purity, truth, goodness, and mercy combined, immutable and complete. All human holiness is mingled with imperfection. All idols of the nations are vain and worthless. God is our only refuge and support; and those who trust in him will never be confounded.”

Ephesians 3:17-19

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) May be able to **comprehend** with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (19) And to know the love of Christ, **which passeth knowledge**, that ye might be filled with **all the fulness of God**.”

'All the fulness of God'

This term refers to the spirit (mind) of Christ, which develops in humanity, the loving character of God.

All the Fullness of God

Colossians 2:9

“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

If Christ came to reveal the whole character of the Father perfectly – in every detail, then where are the examples of anger, wrath and violence found in the Old Testament God? If Christ did not reveal the complete character of the Father, then the accusation is made that Christ must have lied to Philip. In John 14:8 -11, Philip requested, 'Show us the Father.' Christ gently reassured Philip that His own life revealed the Father's character so clearly that if anyone had seen Christ, they had seen the character of the Father perfectly.

However, it can be seen from the following New Testament verse that the Father's character doesn't change. Furthermore, the God of the Old Testament doesn't change either. And Paul tells the Jews that the character of Jesus Christ does not change.

James 1:17

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Malachi 3:6:

“For I am the LORD, I change not...”

Hebrews 13:8

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”

From the quiz questions, it is obvious that there are seeming contradictions in many Bible texts. In one Bible text it is declared that “God” performed a certain act, but in another place, it is reported that another person or being performed that action. In one text, a certain action is declared to be lawful. In another text the same action is strongly condemned. Which texts are trustworthy to reveal sin? How do we determine which reports are inspired by God and will be safe for us to adopt?

Isaiah 8:20

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Consider the following questions:

- Who was accused of breaking the Mosaic law? (Matt 15:2)
- Who fulfilled the law? (Matt 5:17)
- Who kept His Father's law perfectly? (John 15:10)
- Who said the law would remain until heaven and earth passed away? (Matt 5:18)
- Who is the Logos, "the Word of God made audible?" (John 1:1-3)
- Who is the True Witness? (Rev 3:14)
- Who is the Light of the world? (John 8:12)
- Who is the Spirit of Truth? (John 14:17;15:26;16:13);
- Who is the "Way, the Truth and the Life?"(John 14:6)
- Who is the "Author and Finisher" of the Christian's faith? (Hebrews 12:2)
- Who has the testimony (character) of Jesus in them? (Rev 12:17)
- Who has their Father's name (character) in their foreheads? (Rev;14:1-5)
- Who has Christ in them, the hope of glory? (Col 1:27)
- Whose glory do we behold to become changed? (2 Cor 3:18)
- Who do we have to come to the Father through? (John 14:16)

Do we accept our interpretation of the law and the testimony in preference to Jesus' life, or do we accept the law and the testimony AS IT IS IN JESUS' life?

Ellen White declares that Christians certainly should accept the law as it is in Jesus' life and words – His testimony.

Special Testimonies on Education, (1897) p 206, (Ellen White)

"The religion of Jesus Christ never degrades the receiver, it never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hard-hearted. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and purifies and ennobles the thoughts, by bringing them into captivity to Jesus Christ. **God's ideal for his children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in his holy law a transcript of his character. The greatest teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ. And what is the standard he has given for all who believe in him to reach? - "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." As God is perfect in his high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness.** There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character. (See 2 Tim. 3: 14-17; Rom. 15:4; Col. 2:8-10.)"

Do we try to add parts of other men's testimonies onto the witness of Jesus' life, or do we reject anything that clearly was not part of Jesus' character? In order to have the faith of Jesus, we need to line up everything – including Scripture - with the character of Christ Jesus, the Son of God.

Ellen White makes special comments on this theme.

Pamphlet: Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity, 16 January, 1907, p 22

"While respecting authority and laboring in accordance with wisely-laid plans, every worker is amenable to **the Great Teacher** for the proper exercise of his God-given judgment and of his right to look to the God of heaven for wisdom and guidance. God is Commander and Ruler over all. **We have a personal Saviour, and we are not to exchange His Word for the word of any man. In the Scriptures the Lord has given instruction for every worker. The words of the Master-Worker should be diligently studied; for they are spirit and life.** Laborers who are striving to work in harmony with this instruction, are

under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and need not always, before they make any advance move, first ask permission of some one else. No precise lines are to be laid down. **Let the Holy Spirit direct the workers**. As they keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, the gifts of grace will increase by wise use.”

Spalding Megan Collection, p 109

“Self-cultured, self-controlled, under discipline in the school of Christ, having a living connection with the great Teacher, they will have an intelligent knowledge of practical religion, and keeping their own souls in the love of God, they will know how to exercise the grace of patience and Christlike forbearance. The patience, love, long forbearance, and tender sympathies are called into activity. They will discern that they have a most important field in the Lord's vineyard to cultivate. They must lift up their hearts unto God in sincere prayer. **Be thou my pattern, and then by beholding Jesus they will do the works of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. So with the sons and daughters of God: they steadfastly and teachably look to Jesus, doing nothing in their own way, and after their own will and pleasure; but that which they have in the lessons of Christ seen him, their pattern, do-they do also.** Thus they represent to the students under their instruction at all times and upon all occasions **the character of Jesus Christ**.

What About the God Portrayed in the Old Testament?

The God of the Old Testament is portrayed as a wrathful, angry and warlike God (Exo 15:3) who is credited with:

- commanding (legalising) the Israelites to commit genocide on the nations of Canaan through warfare (Deut 3:18; 10:39, 40);
- commanding (legalising) the violent murder of infants (Deut 21:10-14; 2:31-34; 3:6);
- commanding (legalising) the violent murder of “all that breathed” (Joshua 10:40; 11:11, 14, 15)
- commanding (legalising) the murder of Israelite Sabbath-breakers (Num 15:35, 36);
- commanding (legalising) the murder of secretive pagan worshippers, including the Israelite’s own wife & children (Deut 13:6-10)
- commanding (legalising) the kidnapping of virgins for sexual use (Deut 21:10-14; Numbers 31);
- commanding (legalising) the divorce of kidnapped virgins after their desirability and “usefulness” had expired (Deut 21:10-14);
- commanding (legalising) the pillage of pagan cities (Joshua 8:27; 28:7; Deut 2:35; 3:7);
- being pleased to have children offered as burnt offerings (Judges 11:32-40; Gen 22:2);
- enjoying bloodshed of animals as a sweet savour (Exo 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:2, 9, 12; 3:5, 16; 4:31; 6:15, 21; 8:21, 28; 17:6; Number 29:13, 36);
- commanding (endorsing) the maiming of animals (Joshua 11:9)
- condoning (legalising) polygamy (polygany) (Exo 21:10, 11)
- consenting to the practice of torture (Joshua 10:24, 25).

Do these character traits inspire worship of such a being? Do they draw worshippers by love? Against what standard are these Old Testament writings to be tested?

Isaiah 8:20

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Unto the law and to the testimony.

Question:

Unto **WHICH** law (legislation) and unto **WHOSE** testimony should prophets words be compared?

Answer:

Unto the 10 commandment **law**, by which all flesh shall be judged (James 2:8; 12; 1:25)

Unto the **testimony** of Jesus Christ – the True Witness (Rev 3:14; 12:17). The testimony of Jesus IS the spirit of prophecy today (Rev 19:10), just as it was revealed to the prophets in the Old Testament.

However, Paul maintains that the (pre-Jesus Christ) Old Testament prophets saw (the truth about God's character), through a “veil.” And in the New Testament “love” chapter, Paul maintains that in the post-Christian era, dedicated Christians **still** only see God's character “through a glass darkly.”

1 Corinthians 13:12

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

The New Testament writers had the benefit of seeing Christ's character of love in action, but Paul states that they still found it hard to **understand** or to **know** DIVINE love.

Paul maintained that at some future time, he would know God's character more clearly. Then, he would see Him "face to face." Paul confessed that he didn't understand the depth of the love of the character of God, despite having the gift of prophecy and penning at least 14 books of the New Testament. ***Would we expect the Old Testament writers to have a more thorough knowledge of God than did Paul?***

Just as Paul anticipated that he would eventually learn more of the depth of the love of God, similarly, the 144000, in the time just prior to the return of Christ, will also know more of God's character and even display God's character to the demon-possessed world. The Father's character (name) will be in their foreheads (Rev 14:1). Their minds will think the same thoughts of love as does their Father in heaven. Those who "endure unto the end" will be people who know their God (Daniel 11:32) and are thus empowered to keep His loving commandments (Rev 12:17) because they are filled with the spirit of Christ. His love motivates them to live as Christ lived (Col 1:27; Phil 2:5; 1 Cor 2:16), demonstrating unselfish love for God and for all humanity (1 John 5:2,3).

Christ said that He came to reveal the character of the Father (John 14:8,9) and that God is love (1 John 4:8,16). Jesus said that if He was lifted up, He would DRAW all men unto Him (John 12:32) – not force, coerce or terrify them into following Him.

Jesus prophesied that those who believed they knew God (but really didn't know Him) would persecute and murder others, thinking that they were doing God's service.

John 16:2,3

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, ***because they have not known the Father, nor me.***"

Jesus words reflect the history of the Old Testament record. The zealous Israelites thought they did God a service by killing the 'sinful' races in the land of Canaan. Yes, the residents of the land of Canaan were wicked, but were the Israelites actually commanded by God to murder them?

As stated previously in this article, it appears that the main Old Testament writers were influenced by their contact with pagan religions (215-270 years in Egypt; intermarrying with heathen and assuming their worship practices and their tribal - possibly racist - mentality and behaviour) and that this incorrect religious knowledge was wrongly applied to the Hebrew God also- much as it still is today. Consider Paul's comments.

2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:6

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: **for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.** 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheless **when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.** 17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 4.1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2 But have

renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, **to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."**

In New Testament times, Jesus came to "show us the Father" (John 14:8-10). This was necessary for He proclaimed that the world didn't know His Father's character.

John 17:25

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: **that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,** and I in them."

Jesus also reminded the Jewish leaders that *they* didn't know His Father either. He pursued this further, making the connection that, by not knowing the Father's character, they could not be His children. Christ spoke very strongly, informing the Jewish leaders, that they neither knew His Father and neither was God ***their*** father, but that the devil was their father (John 8:19, 42).

The Jews had severely misrepresented the Father's character. Christ said they represented the devil's character. The fact is incontrovertible that the Jews did NOT have a proper or correct understanding of God's character. Jesus worked within the realm of the Jewish understanding as can be evidenced in several of his addresses and parables.

Jesus said there were some truths He could not even tell His disciples, "for they could not bear them yet" (John 16:12).

Consider the pagan environment to which the Old Testament writers were exposed.

Moses wrote Genesis-Deuteronomy & Job; Joshua and another unknown author in the Judgeship of Othniel wrote Joshua; the author of Judges is unknown; Ruth's authorship is unknown, but supposedly it was written after David's reign; the books of 1&2 Samuel - were partly written by Samuel, but the majority was penned by Abiathar; 1&2 Kings were authored by Nathan the prophet, Ahijah the Shilonite, Shemaiah the prophet, Iddo the prophet, Isaiah the prophet, and Jehu. The Chronicles, were penned by unknown author/s, but thought to be Ezra. **What was common to these writers is that they wrote from an environment where intermixing of religions continued - from Moses through the reign of David, Solomon, and the minor prophets** eg Ezra organised a "mass annulment" for the Hebrews, where their foreign wives and children were sent back to their pagan countries.

It is often stated in this period that "**Every man did what was right in his own eyes**" (Judges 17:6; 21:25) and *they tended to put those characteristics (of what **they** thought was right) onto the One True God.*

These passages were written before Christ came to reveal the Father's character, and Jesus told the Jews that they didn't know His Father, yet they knew the Old Testament scriptures and could quote them better than we could today. Memorisation of the Torah

was part of their education. How could they NOT know the character of the Father if His true character was revealed in those writings?

But Jesus said that they didn't know the Father, in fact, He states that the whole world didn't know His Father (John 17:25).

Jesus corrected the Israelites' understanding of the Mosaic law. Many times, especially in Matt 5, Jesus states, "Moses (or the elders) say....., but I say unto you" and then He added very different concepts to those traditionally expressed by the elders and Christ expanded on the principle underlying the laws given by Moses.

Was there very much chance that the Old Testament people would understand the character of God any better than the Jewish leaders whom Christ revealed had no knowledge of His Father's character? It would be very unlikely indeed. And Paul claims that their understanding was very limited indeed (2 Cor 3:12-4:6).

Among the most obvious misconceptions that the Israelite nation in Old Testament times believed, was the notion that "the Lord God commanded" that THEY would be the active agents in destroying the inhabitants of the Promised Land, through their own military force, (but with some divine assistance).

After his childhood upbringing in Egypt, Moses, thinking to do right, also erred in this way.

Patriarchs and Prophets, p 245, 247

"The elders of Israel were taught by angels that the time for their deliverance was near, and that Moses was the man whom God would employ to accomplish this work. Angels instructed Moses also that Jehovah had chosen him to break the bondage of His people. He, supposing that they were to obtain their freedom by force of arms, expected to lead the Hebrew host against the armies of Egypt, and having this in view, he guarded his affections, lest in his attachment to his foster mother or to Pharaoh he would not be free to do the will of God. In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. It was not God's will to deliver His people by warfare²⁴, as Moses thought, but by His own mighty power, that the glory might be ascribed to Him alone. Yet even this rash act was overruled by God to accomplish His purposes. Moses was not prepared for his great work. He had yet to learn the same lesson of faith that Abraham and Jacob had been taught--not to rely upon human strength or wisdom, but upon the power of God for the fulfillment of His promises."

The Hebrews of the Exodus might have reasoned, as did the Egyptians in their pagan religion, that if they performed the necessary blood sacrifices, then God would bless them in battle. It was a religion of salvation by works. However, this was not God's religion, but the religion of the true God mixed with pagan theology. It was not a divine strategy, but a faulty human strategy to think that humanity was authorised to offer human sacrifices (Judges 11:30), murder infants, pillage, and enslave other human beings (Deut 21:10-14).

It seems inconsistent and strange that the Israelites "took matters into their own violent hands" because Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 3:22, "Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD

24 *Did God change His modus operandi when the Israelites entered the Promised Land? Was it then God's intention that the Israelites commit genocide on the land's inhabitants – or might it possibly be that the Israelites wanted to achieve the blessing of God by performing their own contribution – their own works – through warfare?*

your God he shall fight for you.”

How would God fight for the Israelites?

Exodus 23:27

I will send <07971>(8762) my fear <terror - 0367> before<06440> thee, and will destroy <to move noisily, confuse, make a noise - 02000>(8804) all the people<05971> to whom thou shalt come<0935>(8799), and I will make<05414>(8804) all thine enemies<0341>(8802) turn their backs<06203> unto thee. (backs: Heb. neck)

God said he would cause a loud noise which would confuse the idolaters who would flee, deserting their land, leaving it to the Israelites to possess.

Exodus 23:28

“And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.”

Isaiah 59:19

“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. **When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.**

Jamieson Fausset Brown Bible Commentary on Isaiah 59:19-21

like a flood— (Jer 46:7,8,Re 12:15).

lift up a standard—rather, from a different *Hebrew* root, “**shall put him to flight,**” “**drive him away**” [MAURER]. LOWTH, giving a different sense to the *Hebrew* for “enemy” from that in Isa 59:18, and a forced meaning to the *Hebrew* for “Spirit of the Lord,” translates, “**When He shall come as a river straitened in its course, which a mighty wind drives along.**”

George B. Eager

A Distinction with a Difference:

The word *nec*, here translated “standard,” seems to have meant at first a pole set up on an eminence as **a signal for mustering troops** (compare “mast” Isa 30:17 the English Revised Version, margin). But it occurs frequently in the prophets both in this literal and original sense, and in the figurative or derived sense **of a rallying point for God's people** (see Isa 5:26; 11:10; Jer 4:21 and elsewhere).

Isaiah 11:10

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”

Once again, the Old Testament prophecies declare that Christ – the Messiah – was the standard, the rallying point, the ensign, the central focus around which His people would gather. Specifically, Isaiah points out that Christ would be the Christian’s rallying point in times of grave danger. “When the enemy comes in like a flood” i.e. “*a high spring-tide, or a land-flood, which threaten to bear down all before them without control*” (Matthew Henry’s Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible).

Despite the traditional views, God insisted that it was **faith** that was necessary for victory - not bloodshed. The Jews were not required to take human life to possess the Promised Land. To the contrary, **the Israelites were given opportunity to witness to the pagan nations of the love and unselfish, righteousness of God as contained in the 10 commandments.**

Isaiah 60:2,3

*"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and **his glory shall be seen upon thee.** 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."*

*Old Testament Scripture prophesied that the coming Messiah would demonstrate the Father's loving character (**glory**) to the world. If Israel chose, they could reflect that Light of love to the Gentiles. However instead of witnessing to the love and mercy of God, the Israelites instead chose to imitate the violence of their pagan neighbours and became a warlike, pillaging people. By so doing, they dreadfully misrepresented the character of the One True God whom they professed to serve and obey.*

The misrepresentation of God's character became so serious that God caused the sanctuary services to cease even before Christ laid down His life on Calvary.

Ellen White, PH048.042.003;(Living by Principle, 1898)

*"Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given. The Israelites were in captivity, the temple had been destroyed, their temple services suspended. Their religion had centered in the ceremonies of the sacrificial system. They had made the outward forms all-important, while they had lost the spirit of true worship. **Their services were corrupted with the traditions and practises of heathenism;** and in the performance of the sacrificial rites they did not look beyond the shadow to the substance. They did not discern Christ, the true offering for the sins of men. **The Lord wrought to bring the people into captivity, and to suspend the services in the temple, in order that the outward ceremonies might not become the sum total of their religion. Their principles and practise must be purged from heathenism. The ritual service ceased, in order that the heart might be revived.** The outward glory was removed, that the spiritual might be revealed" (Unpublished Testimony).*

Jeremiah 36:26,27

"A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, saith the LORD."

Ezekiel 18:31

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

Summary:

1. The Old Testament writers, though inspired, did not know the depth of the loving character of God, but could only see “as through a veil” (2 Cor 3:15);
2. The Jewish leaders, despite memorising the Torah (the Old Testament writings) also did not know the depth of the loving character of God (John 8:19,44)
3. The disciples of Jesus could not understand the depth of the loving character of God; (Luke 9:55) and for this reason, Jesus couldn't tell them many things at that stage of their spiritual development (John 16:12);
4. Paul, who under divine inspiration wrote 14 books of the New Testament, admits that even **he** didn't know the depths of the loving character of God, but could only “see through a glass darkly” (1 Cor 13:12).

If Jesus couldn't tell the disciples “many things which they could not bear” because their spiritual condition was not mature enough, this situation was also likely the case with the Old Testament writers who did not have the benefit of the daily physical presence of Jesus to demonstrate His love to them.

It is not “destroying faith in the Bible” to understand that human beings wrote what **they** perceived to be the truth about God's character. It is not casting doubt on God's ability to transmit truth through erring human beings, or on the motivation or devotion of the writers of the Old Testament. These people wrote to the best of their ability and understanding, but God reveals only as much truth as the human being can assimilate at any given time .

ALL writings, whether inside or outside the Bible, need to be tested by the life and words of Jesus Christ.

- Christ's life was a living example of His Father's character in action - the perfect keeping of the 10 commandments;
- Christ's life was the supreme demonstration of the Father's love in action - in all the fullness of the Godhead (divinity) bodily;
- Jesus displayed the character of His Father without hiding any 'evil' aspects;
- Jesus' character is pure love, and in Him there is no shadow of turning (James 1:17). He is not a good/evil god. God is goodness. God is mercy. God is love. (1 John 4:8,16).

Will we believe the law of the Father, lived out in Jesus' life? Will we believe the testimony of Jesus – the Son of God?

God has promised that His people can and will know His character, but they must put self and tradition completely aside and search for truth **AS IT IS IN JESUS.**

Jeremiah 29:13, 14

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (14) And I will be found of you, saith the LORD and I will turn away your captivity.”

How Did the Israelites Perceive the God they Worshipped?

The Israelites **thought** they were keeping the law of the One True God. They believed they were worshipping the One True God. Were they?

It is announced in ***The Origins and Emergence of Semetic Alphabet Script***, that James Harris & Dann Hone (in subsection ***Expanding the Old Negev Corpus***), discovered a script which is called Old Negev, that they demonstrate to be script used by the Israelites from 1200 BC – 600 BC. This time frame begins at the conventionally accepted time of Moses and extends to the period of Babylonian captivity. The script was also used by the Kenites and the Midianites. Harris and Hone state:

“With a collection of over one hundred and thirty inscriptions this study has opened a small window to the early (pre-Exile) history of Canaanite peoples of the Negev. And since twenty-five percent of the inscriptions contain names of the God of Israel (Yah, El/Yah, Yahu, and Yahh) it seems fair to say that these Canaanite speakers had a covenant relationship with Yahweh.”

<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~imaging/negev/Origins.html>

Notice that it was not just the Israelites who had a covenant relationship with Yahweh; but “these Canaanite speakers” which includes the Midianites and the Kenites.

The Hebrews worshipped a deity whom they called “Yahweh” or even “Yah” (Jehovah, is an incorrect transliteration - Psalm 68:4). Previously their forefathers knew this deity as “El” or “El Shaddai” - which is translated as the Almighty. (Exodus 6:3) Notice the symbolism of the ancient Negev for El – (God) which appear to depict a rod with a crook and a bull or cow's head, with horns. These are interesting representations, for the sacred hooked rod was carried by the Pharaoh and represented the phallus of the Apis bull. The Pharaoh also wore the uraeus - crown – which featured a serpent poised and projecting from the centre of the head-piece. The symbol of the sun god was also represented in the ureaus, forming the combination of the fire-serpent god of fertility. As demonstrated in the Negev script for “El” the staff is featured and also perhaps the horns of the Apis Bull. <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~imaging/negev/Names.html>

Returning to the article, ***The Origins and Emergence of Semetic Alphabet Script***, it is reported that in a study of 100 “Yahweh” ancient inscriptions, 13 inscriptions were translated for publication in an article entitled ***The Names of God***. Some of the translations and the researchers' comments follow:

“A search of Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions by I. Beit-Arieh, and B. Sass, has uncovered several inscriptions of the pan Canaanite name of God (El) in the Sinai dating between the 17th century BCE to the 15th century BCE. Mine L, inscriptions, Sinai No. 377 and 378, also #'s 350, and 363, have been identified to have the name El in reasonable clarity.... El was the widely recognized God of all the Canaanite people and his name is coupled with Yah in some Proto-Canaanite inscriptions. But the name of Yah has not yet been found in the Sinai, or has it just gone unrecognized?”<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~imaging/negev/Names.html>

One reason that there was no trace that “Yahweh” was worshipped in the Sinai desert – when they were said to have been wandering there for 40 years, might be because the Israelites were in Arabia – the Biblical site of Mt Sinai (Gal 4:25)– and evidence strongly suggests that the worship of that deity, perhaps in the form of the Egyptian Apis bull, was worshipped there http://www.arkdiscovery.com/mt_sinai_found_part_2.htm

There is another interesting “Yahweh” inscription and analysis made in ***The Origins and Emergence of Semetic Alphabet Script.***

“Lexical Analysis: b-m-h, = Bamah (a high place dedicated to religious worship) b-z, spoil (booty); b-h-'l-h, () [hiphil imperative verb with prefix -notice position above the line]= bring up by;; d-k, ()= the door; b-t, () = the house [of]; y-h.= () Yah (Yahweh). Translation: "Bamah (place of worship), spoil bring up by the door of the house of Yah." Or, "Bring thou up spoil by the door of the house of Yah." <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~imaging/negev/Names.html>

From the language used in the preceding inscription, it might be assumed that the call is being made to bring up the spoils of war to the high place so that the captives can be sacrificed to the God worshipped there – Yah.

1 Kings 3:2; 20:23

“Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days (23) And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, **Their gods are gods of the hills**; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.”

The Syrians considered that the Israelites worshipped the 'gods of the hills' because they were knowledgeable of their practice of making sacrifices 'in the high places.'

Comparisons are made with the inscription on the Mesha stele where King Mesha of the Moabites records the events leading to the vanquishing of his enemies. Mesha describes how he takes **all** the prisoners and cattle from a battle and sacrifices them to his god Chemosh as a thank offering. Similarities are seen also in Saul's reply to Samuel (in 1 Samuel 15:14) where Saul attempted to justify why he had did not kill all the cattle and the pagan king, after his victory over the Amalekites. Saul protested that he was planning on making sacrifices to the Lord with the spoils of the war. This was certainly done at other times too, by the Israelites (Judges 11:30, 31; 1 Chronicles 26:27; Leviticus 27:29; Numbers 31).

In a section on the same webpage, entitled, [How The Peoples of the Negev Perceived Yahweh](#), subsection “An Ancient Script and Language of the Negev:” a startling description and interpretation of a “Yah” inscription follows:



“The persona of Yah is associated with radiance, as from the sun and the head of the radiant Serpent. The glory of the radiant serpent was to be extended to his people so that their countenances would shine as they become a holy nation (a sanctified people). It is possible that the serpent (as an icon of Yahweh) would have survived in greater numbers had it not been for the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. The serpent symbolizes Yah as the healer, and God of the storms, rain, sun, and Prince of Life. Yah was the disciplinarian, judge, protector, deliverer, teacher, purifier, and Father of his covenant people”

<http://www.lib.byu.edu/~imaging/negev/Names.html>.

According to the research just presented, it appears that many of the people of the Negev perceived their god Yahweh to be the same god as was worshipped in ancient Egypt – the fire-serpent god!

Is it possible that the ancient Hebrews believed that Yahweh's character was two-tone - the same as pagan gods – having a character that was both good and evil?

This disturbing theory, that the Hebrews **unknowingly** worshipped a type of “Baal” who delighted in blood sacrifices, is actually given further support by the findings of Alexander Hyslop in ***The Two Babylons***.

Hyslop traces the history of Baal worship from Egypt, to the Israelites.

*“Cannibalism was practised **by the priests** in ritualised child sacrifices in Egypt as the worship of the pagan **“father of the gods” the fire-serpent god - Bol-Khan**. “He devoured his sons as soon as they were born.” It was “through fire worship,” that the worshippers sought “cleansing and regenerating (of) the souls of men.” The same system of worship in Rome, termed the same god, “Vulcan. There is reason to believe that the same practice obtained in our own land in the times of the Druids. We know that they offered human sacrifices to their bloody gods. We have evidence that they made **“their children pass through the fire to Moloch,”** and that makes it highly probable that they also offered them in sacrifice; for, from Jeremiah 32:35, compared with Jeremiah 19:5 we find that these two things were parts of one and the same system.” **The Two Babylons**, Alexander Hyslop, Chapter 7, Section 1, “The Great Red Dragon.”*

<http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/twobaby/twobaby.html>

Walther Zimmerli (1907–1984) was Professor of Old Testament at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and one of the most important biblical scholars of the twentieth century. Among his many publications in English are *Ezekiel*, 2 vols. (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 1979/1983), *I Am Yahweh* (1982), *The Old Testament and the World* (1976), and *The Law and the Prophets* (1965). In *The Law and the Prophets*, Zimmerli writes:

"In this connection Hosea attacks with particular passion the priests who should have been the true guardians of the knowledge of God, and who have especially failed in this duty (Hosea iv. 4 ff.). They have allowed to pass unnoticed the very real exchange of Yahweh, the God of Israel, for the baals of Canaan. This was no longer the same threat which had occurred in Elijah's time, it was something much more dangerous. While the worship of Yahweh remained outwardly correct, in reality he had come to be regarded as a nature deity like the Canaanite Baal. From him men sought the fertility of the soil and of marriage; he was worshipped with the forms of nature religion and with sacral prostitution, as men worshipped the Baals. Yahweh became Baal. The name of one of David's warriors, which is recorded in I Chronicles 12:5 as Bealiah (Yahweh is Baal) demonstrates exactly this programmatic assertion. Thus without knowing it, Israel had begun to misunderstand the very nature of its God, because the professional guardians of a true knowledge of him were asleep" (1965:70).

Wikipedia Encyclopedia states:

"We also find Eshbaal (one of Saul's sons) and Beeliada (a son of David). The last name also appears as Eliada. This might show that at some period Ba'al and El were used interchangeably even in the same name applied to the same person. More likely a later hand has cleaned up the text. Editors did play around with some names, sometimes substituting the form bosheth 'abomination' for ba'al in names, whence the forms Ishbosheth instead of Eshbaal and Mephibosheth which is rendered Meribaal in 1 Chronicles 9.40. 1 Chronicles 12:5 gives us the name Bealiah (more accurately bē'alyā) meaning 'Yahweh is Ba'al'."

http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery.jsessionid=29133c32f48kr?tname=baal&curtab=2222_1&hl=bealiah&sbid=lc05b

To study this subject further – the name of Yahweh and His mistaken identity – the following sources might prove helpful or at least interesting:

[Yah \(Lah\), the Other Egyptian Moon God](#)

Yah was sometimes depicted as a new moon, whose angles seemed to appear as The Secondly; the references on **Yah** as an Egyptian moon god are slim.

www.touregypt.net/featurestories/yah.htm

*"Two painted inscriptions "Yahweh of Samaria/the guardian and his Asherah" on fragments of the type of large terracotta pot that archaeologists call a pithos were found in the site of a caravanserai of the 8th century BC at Kuntillet □Ajrud (in Hebrew Horvat Teman) in the Negev. They have raised great speculation. Other gods appear in the Kuntillet Ajrud graffiti— along with the title Baal. There are accompanying drawings (not a Hebrew custom) and an oasis is a center of the religious cross-fertilization called syncretism. However, from a site west of Hebron, identified as Biblical Makkedah, a furtively excavated inscription reads "Blessed be Uriyahu by Yahweh and by his asherah; from his enemies he saved him!" (Berlinerblau) Although forbidden by Hebrews, the cult of goddesses lasted during the Roman occupation in Israel in the hidden form of temple prostitution, until emperor Constantine closed those houses after converting to Christianity http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asherah#Asherah_and_other_gods <http://www.geocities.com/levelwater/mathlies15.html>; [184](http://jesus-</i></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)*

It is beginning to appear that the original religion might have been handed down to Moses on Mt Sinai, but became corrupted with pagan beliefs and practices and a “convenient” or artificial record of many history events were placed in the Hebrew scrolls, perhaps for political purposes. Then again, there might be some other explanation.

However, the earliest time that the Mosaic law was found “written down” was when it was found by the priest Hilkiah, in the days of King Josiah as recorded in 2 Kings 22 and 23. The newly found law gave great power to the priests at a time when the king was young and impressionable.

In **At Test of Time – The Bible – From Myth to History**, David Rohl (1995:7) asks, *“What lies behind this jaundiced opinion of the Bible as history? Peeling away all the layers of scholarly debate which have tended to obscure the issue over the years, we are left with one fundamental problem for those who would advocate using the Bible as a source for history; archaeological excavations in Egypt and THE LEVANT, ongoing for the best part of the last two centuries, have produced no tangible evidence to demonstrate the historical veracity of the early biblical narratives. Direct material support for the traditional history of the Israelite nation, as handed down in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, is virtually non-existent. It is as if the Israelites had somehow failed to leave their archaeological footprints in the ancient lands of the Bible. Moses and the Israelites simply picked up their belongings, left Egypt in the reign of Ramesses 2 (thirteenth century BC) and walked into Sinai to miraculously disappear from history for around four hundred years before resurfacing in the campaign inscriptions of the ninth century kings of Assyria. Where did they go? According to the Bible, they went to settle in Palestine where they were eventually to forge nationhood under the charismatic kings of the United Monarchy period – Saul, David and Solomon. But virtually nothing resembling this epic adventure is to be found in the archaeological record of Palestine. For that matter, their centuries-long Sojourn in the land of the pharaohs has also left absolutely no trace in the Nile valley or its delta. Small wonder then that specialists in biblical criticism and their colleagues, the Levantine archaeologists prefer to see the stories of the Old Testament as 'traditions' rather than genuine 'history.'”*

David Rohl considers that the chief difficulty with the lack of Israelite evidence, is faulty Egyptian chronology. Rohl claims that, when the chronology is calculated correctly and events reconfigured, the Israelites history begins to appear in various unexpected places. Independent evidence seems to be mounting in support of Rohl's claim.

Regardless of whether the Bible is found to be historically accurate or not, the principles of unselfishness which Jesus taught, and the prophecies which accurately predicted His messiahship,²⁵ can still give Christians confidence that God is still continuing to direct His people personally – in their minds – through the law of love, the 10 commandments from the Old Testament which Jesus quoted and through prophecy.

²⁵ *Many Messianic prophecies were made by Daniel and Isaiah and the minor prophets, during the period of Babylonian captivity. It is generally accepted that such writings were not subject to the intense editing of the Torah and the finding of the book of Isaiah with the Dead Sea scrolls confirm that little change has occurred since the books were originally written. Still, these writings themselves do not date back to the times of Moses.*

The Unstable House of Paganism

Just as a builder forms a solid foundation for a house, so Truth is vital in the formation of faith.

There is a foundational truth that will establish faith in the One True God. John proclaims this truth (1 John 4:8, 16).

“God is love.”

Similarly, there is a false foundational belief - that God is both love **AND evil**.

Through long revered but pagan doctrines, Satan has deceived many Christians into accepting the lie that the One True God is really a two-tone god - but the “good and evil” god is NOT the One True God.

Theories built on the false foundational concept that God's character is two-tone, (demonstrating both good and evil traits), though appearing to be of minor consequence, are extremely dangerous. False doctrines, if accepted, are capable of sending one down a tangent path that leads to the worship of very “strange gods” indeed.

Pagan religions of the past, largely assumed that God became “very wrath” when people did not obey Him and that He would mercilessly punish them for their failures. It was also believed that worshippers could DO something to avoid His destructive punishment, so frightened worshippers invented cruel traditions and rituals as a means of appeasing their terrifying deity. Many religions promote similar pagan beliefs today through their doctrines.

It is a pagan concept that god is pleased if the disobedient suffer pain and death as their deserved punishment – even if the sinners willingly inflict their own punishment to cause intentional suffering. Jesus certainly never taught His disciples to injure themselves, although He warned that others would afflict evil on them. So where did this unChrist-like concept of causing suffering to appease an angry god originate?

The attack on God's character came once again, from Satan. He distorted the truth about God and His holy character - the True Source of all life.

Sub-Section – Pagan Rituals

In the next thirteen sections, rituals and practices which accompany pagan worship will be examined. Following each section, examples will be given of how pagan practices were practised by pagans, often by the Israelites and some which are still practised by modern religions.

pain

torture

eating flesh

cannibalism

drinking blood

blood letting

circumcision

animal sacrifice

child sacrifice

human sacrifice

“the life is in the blood”

The Good and Evil God

The Pagan Pyramid of Pain

Satan deceived many people into believing that “the life is in the blood” and that by “the shedding of blood,” - shedding an innocent victim's blood - atonement can be made for sin. This concept is the basis of many Satanic doctrines and practices that distort the character of the One True God and the truth about the atonement which Jesus Christ purchased for humanity – with His LIFE (His character).

The Life is in the Blood

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

Hebrews 9:22

“And **almost all things** are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

It is interesting to note that under Mosiac law, a person's sins could be forgiven and atonement made WITHOUT the shedding of blood, **if a person was too poor to afford an animal sacrifice.**

Leviticus 5:11-13

“But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering. (12) Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it is a sin offering. (13) And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.” (**Meat** as used here, means food, not flesh).

Is the forgiveness of God dependent upon a person's financial status - on whether they can afford to pay for a religious ceremony eg. an animal sacrifice or perhaps a Catholic mass?

Surely it is Christ's spotless character (His holy spirit), that redeems humanity - not a religious ritual!

Where did the confusion arise?

According to The Open Bible (King James Version), “It is Written Heritage Edition,” the Biblical Cyclopedic Index defines **blood** as “life force” (p 67, 68). The Cyclopedic Index lists the Biblical usage of the word 'blood' and includes the following references:

- the individual soul – Exekiel 33:8;
- the essence of life – Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14;
- the sacredness of life – Genesis 9:5,6

It is interesting to note that Genesis 2:7 states that when God breathed into Adam's nostrils “the breath of life” (lives) that “man became a living soul.” When God created Adam, He gave him the 'essence of life' through His breath. It was through the righteous spirit/breath (not the blood) that God transferred His life-giving spirit – or the essence of His righteous life – to Adam.

In confirmation of this principle, the New Testament gospel assures Christians that their new life "is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:2, 10) by the renewing of their mind" by the renewing of their spirit.

Romans 8:9

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Romans 12:2

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The gospel assures Christians that "their life is in Christ." Their life-force is dependent upon Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:3, 4

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (4) When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Sinners are save by Christ's victorious ***life – His character***. Christ lived a pure life until He took His last breath. There were no "magical powers" in the death of Christ or in His blood. The power to overcome sin, was in Christ's perfectly loving life.

When Christ became a human being, 'made in the likeness of sinful flesh,' He took mortality (death) into His own body. Christ conquered sin and death, because He was faithful unto death. His character was entirely sinless, despite the hindrance of His sinful, human body.

Romans 8:2-4

"For the law of ***the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death***. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, ***condemned sin in the flesh***: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Sin brings death. Christ's life - a demonstration of the Father's character, brings life.

Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:18-19

"Therefore as ***by the offence of one judgment came upon all*** men to condemnation; ***even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men*** unto justification of life. (19) For as by ***one man's disobedience*** many were made sinners, ***so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous***."

The power over sin was in His life – the sinless character He developed in accordance with His Father's law.

Satan wants to claim Christ's death as his own satanic victory, but the victory that Christ gained was the development of a perfectly loving and obedient character. Christ continued to live His mortal, human life according to God's loving law, despite Satan's murderous efforts to prevent it.

Because humanity failed to perceive the true victory Christ gained (or would gain) for humanity, their deception deepened. It began to be considered that blood was sacred because of the magical and purifying powers of life which it possessed. As a result "precious and sacred" blood began to be used as an offering to appease 'wrathful' gods.

The ritualistic 'shedding of blood' is practiced in the religion of Satan.

In Aleister Crowley's fourth book, "**Magick: Theory and Practice**," chapter 12, pages 93-96 the following declarations appear in regard to 'bloody sacrifice':

CHAPTER XII

OF THE BLOODY SACRIFICE: AND MATTERS COGNATE.

It is necessary for us to consider carefully the problems connected with the bloody sacrifice, for this question is indeed traditionally important in Magick. Nigh all ancient Magick revolves around this matter. In particular all the Osirian religions --- the rites of the Dying God --- refer to this. The slaying of Osiris and Adonis; the mutilation of Attis; the cults of Mexico and Peru; the story of Hercules or Melcarth; the legends of Dionysus and of Mithra, are all connected with this one idea. In the Hebrew religion we find the same thing inculcated. The first ethical lesson in the Bible is that the only sacrifice pleasing to the Lord is the sacrifice of blood; Abel, who made this, finding favour with the Lord, while Cain, who offered cabbages, was rather naturally considered a cheap sport. The idea recurs again and again. We have the sacrifice of the Passover, following on the story of Abraham's being commanded to sacrifice his firstborn son, with the idea of the substitution of animal for human life. The annual ceremony of the two goats carries out this in perpetuity. And we see again the domination of this idea in the romance of Esther, where Haman and Mordecai are the two goats or gods; and ultimately in the presentation of the rite of Purim in Palestine, where Jesus and Barabbas happened to be the Goats in that particular year of which we hear so much, without agreement on the date....

As St. Paul says, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission"; and who are we to argue with St. Paul?

However, there is a mystery concealed in this theory of the bloody sacrifice which is of great importance to the student

The blood is the life. This simple statement is explained by the Hindus by saying that the blood is the principal vehicle of vital Prana. There is some ground for the belief that there is a definite substance, not isolated as yet, whose presence makes all {93} the difference between live and dead matter

It would be unwise to condemn as irrational the practice of those savages who tear the heart and liver from an adversary, and devour them while yet warm. In any case it was the theory of {94} the ancient Magicians, that any living being is a storehouse of energy varying in quantity according to the size and health of the animal, and in quality according to its mental and moral character. At the death of the animal this energy is liberated suddenly.

The animal should therefore be killed within the Circle, or the Triangle, as the case may be, so that its energy cannot escape. An animal should be selected whose nature accords with that of the ceremony --- thus, by sacrificing a female lamb one would not obtain any appreciate quantity of the fierce energy useful to a Magician who was invoking Mars. In such a

case a ram would be more suitable. And this ram should be virgin --- the whole potential of its original total energy should not have been diminished in any way. For the highest spiritual working one must accordingly choose that victim which contains the greatest and purest force. A male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence is the most satisfactory and suitable victim. {95}

For evocations it would be more convenient to place the blood of the victim in the Triangle --- the idea being that the spirit might obtain from the blood this subtle but physical substance which was the quintessence of its life in such a manner as to enable it to take on a visible and tangible shape.

Those magicians who abject to the use of blood have endeavored to replace it with incense....

But the bloody sacrifice, though more dangerous, is more efficacious; and for nearly all purposes human sacrifice is the best. The truly great Magician will be able to use his own blood, or possibly that of a disciple, and that without sacrificing the physical life irrevocably. An example of this sacrifice is given in Chapter 44 of Liber 333. This Mass may be recommended generally for daily practice....

There is a Magical operation of maximum importance: the Initiation of a New Aeon. When it becomes necessary to utter a Word, the whole Planet must be bathed in blood. Before man is ready to accept the Law of Thelema, the Great War must be fought. This Bloody Sacrifice is the critical point of the World-{96} Ceremony of the Proclamation of Horus, the Crowned and conquering Child, as Lord of the Aeon.

This whole matter is prophesied in the Book of the Law itself; let the student take note, and enter the ranks of the Host of the Sun.

II

There is another sacrifice with regard to which the Adepts have always maintained the most profound secrecy. It is the supreme mystery of practical Magick. Its name is the Formula of the Rosy Cross. In this case the victim is always --- in a certain sense --- the Magician himself, and the sacrifice must coincide with the utterance of the most sublime and secret name of the God whom he wishes to invoke.

Properly performed, it never fails of its effect. But it is difficult for the beginner to do it satisfactorily, because it is a great effort for the mind to remain concentrated upon the purpose of the ceremony. The overcoming of this difficulty lends most powerful aid to the Magician.

It is unwise for him to attempt it until he has received regular initiation in the true Order of the Rosy Cross, {97} and he must have taken the vows with the fullest comprehension and experience of their meaning. It is also extremely desirable that he should have attained an absolute degree of moral emancipation, and that purity of spirit which results from a perfect understanding both of the differences and harmonies of the planes upon the Tree of Life.

For this reason FRATER PERDURABO has never dared to use this formula in a fully ceremonial manner, save once only, on an occasion of tremendous

The method of killing is practically uniform. The animal should be stabbed to the heart, or its throat severed, in either case by the knife. All other methods of killing are less efficacious; even in the case of Crucifixion death is given by stabbing....

One word of warning is perhaps necessary for the beginner. The victim must be in perfect health --- or its energy may be as it were poisoned. It must

also not be too large: the amount of energy disengaged is almost unimaginably great, and out of all anticipated proportion to the strength of the animal. Consequently, the Magician may easily be overwhelmed and obsessed by the force which he has let loose; it will then probably manifest itself in its lowest and most objectionable form. The most intense spirituality of purpose is absolutely essential to safety²⁶....(see copyright notice)

From the above passages, notice the supposed similarities between the doctrines of Pseudo-Christianity and Satanism/Paganism.

Symbol	Pseudo-Christianity	Satanism/Paganism
Life in the blood	Leviticus 17:11 <i>"The life is in the blood."</i>	Magick:Theory and Practice p 93 <i>"The blood is the life."</i>
No remission without shedding blood	Hebrews 9:22 <i>"Without shedding of blood there is no remission."</i>	Magick:Theory and Practice p 95 <i>"But the bloody sacrifice, though more dangerous, is more efficacious";</i>
Human sacrifice	Hebrews 9:26, 28 <i>"He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;"</i> 1 Peter 2:24 <i>"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..."</i>	Magick:Theory and Practice p 95 <i>"and for nearly all purposes human sacrifice is the best." "The truly great Magician will be able to use his own blood, or possibly that of a disciple, and that without sacrificing the physical life irrevocably.</i>
Morally and physically perfect sacrifice	Romans 12:1 <i>"that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God..."</i>	Magick:Theory and Practice p 95 <i>It is also extremely desirable that he should have attained an absolute degree of moral emancipation, and that purity of spirit</i>

²⁶ Magick in Theory and Practice by Aleister Crowley
1989 Copyright (c) O.T.O.
O.T.O.
P.O.Box 430
Fairfax, CA 94930
USA
(415) 454-5176 ---- Messages only.

LIMITED LICENSE

Except for notations added to the history of modification, the text on this diskette down to the next row of asterisks must accompany all copies made of this file. In particular, this paragraph and the copyright notice are not to be deleted or changed on any copies or print-outs of this file. With these provisos, anyone may copy this file for personal use or research. Copies may be made for others at reasonable cost of copying and mailing only, no additional charges may be added.

Blood Letting

Dr Terry Watkins (from Dial-a-Truth Ministries) in his article "Tattoo- the Mark of Blood" demonstrates not only the satanic origin of tattoos, but also of the importance of blood-letting in pagan religious rituals (<http://www.av1611.org/tattoos/blood.html>).

Extracts from Dr Watkins' article appear below:

TATTOO: THE BLOODY TRUTH

"One of the oldest and most common satanic practices is cutting of the flesh or blood-letting. The term "blood-letting" originates from the word "let" – "to allow to pass, go or come"; hence "blood-letting" literally means to allow the blood to come, or pass.

Throughout history the cutting of the flesh and blood-letting are rituals performed to unleash demonic and supernatural powers. Because the "life of the flesh is in the blood" [Leviticus 17:11], the blood is highly valued in the occult as the "power source". And by releasing or letting the blood or the "power source" – supernatural power is unleashed.

The Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult, writes of the power of the blood and it's connection to Satanism and the occult."

"BLOOD (occult; Satanism). *The vitalizing or life-giving agent used in the sacrament of the BLACK MASS. Blood is believed to provide power and life and therefore plays a central part in ritualistic sacrifices."*

(George A. Mather and Larry A. Nichols, Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult, p.40)

The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft, says of the blood-letting ritual, "Blood that is let is believed to unleash power". By the way, some modern tattoo artists perform rituals during their tattoo procedure in order to unleash supernatural power. Some even lick the flowing blood bubbling from the tattoo.

"blood: *Called the "river of life", blood is identified with the soul and is the vehicle that carries the vital energy of the universe through the body. In magic, blood is revered and feared for the miraculous power it possesses and confers. Blood that is let is believed to unleash power."* (Guiley, Rosemary Ellen, The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft, second edition, p. 26)

The Word of God in 1 Kings 18 gives a detailed and perverse example of blood-letting by Satanists (aka prophets of Baal) attempting to unleash supernatural power and ignite the fire for the sacrifice.

Dr Watkins continues to examine the Scriptures which link demon-possession with the "tell-tale" sign of blood-letting. (Matt 5:5; Luke 8:27)

"Under the definition of "Satanism", the highly-acclaimed, Encyclopedia of American Religions, lists among the activities performed by Satanists is "blood letting":

*"In this branch of Satanism,. . . one can expect to find those individuals engaged in grave robbery, sexual assaults and **the ritual blood letting.**" (Melton, Gordon, Encyclopedia of American Religions, 3rd Edition, Gale Research Ltd., 1989, p. 145)*

In article in The Independent newspaper, acknowledges the pathway from blood-letting to satanism found on web sites aimed toward children.

*"The Association of Teachers and Lecturers said the popularity of children's programmes and books featuring witchcraft could encourage children to search for sinister material on the internet. Researchers for the union found websites promoting satanism, **blood-letting** and wicca (witch). . . One website found by the union describes in detail **how to carry out blood-letting and blood drinking**. (Buffy 'prompting pupils to access the occult', Ben Russell, Education Correspondent, The Independent, April 22, 2000, www.cesnur.org/testi/buffy_001.htm)*

Dr Watkins quotes from Dr WD Hambly to reveal the true origins of blood-letting rites.

*By far, the most extensive work ever published on tattoos was Dr. W.D. Hambly's, The History of Tattooing And It's Significance. Author Steve Gilbert, in his popular Tattoo History: A Source Book, writes, "Hambly concluded that historically **tattooing had originated in connection with ancient rites of scarification and bloodletting**. . ."*

"Hambly concluded that historically tattooing had originated in connection with ancient rites of scarification and bloodletting which were associated with religious practices intended to put the human soul in harmony with supernatural forces and ensure continuity between this life and the next." (Gilbert, Steve, Tattoo History: A Source Book, p. 158)

Sacred Texts, CD ROM chapter 3, Rival Pantheons and Representative Deities

"Inspiration was derived by drinking blood as well as by drinking intoxicating liquors--the mead of the gods. Indian magicians who drink the blood of the goat sacrificed to the goddess Kali, are believed to be temporarily possessed by her spirit, and thus enabled to prophesy. Malayan exorcists still expel demons while they suck the blood from a decapitated fowl. Similar customs were prevalent in Ancient Greece. A woman who drank the blood of a sacrificed lamb or bull uttered prophetic sayings."

B.A. Robinson, in **Parallels between Christianity and Ancient Pagan Religions** writes:

"In Attis, a bull was slaughtered while on a perforated platform. The animal's blood flowed down over an initiate who stood in a pit under the platform. The believer was then considered to have been 'born again.' Poor people could only afford a sheep, and so were literally washed in the blood of the lamb. This practice was interpreted symbolically by Christians."

Scottish classicist and anthropologist, Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941), in **The Golden Bough** (1922), records how pagans performed ritualistic 'blood baptism.'

"In the baptism the devotee, crowned with gold and wreathed with fillets, descended into a pit, the mouth of which was covered with a wooden grating. A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead glittering with gold leaf, was then driven on to the grating and there stabbed to death with a consecrated spear. Its hot reeking blood poured in torrents through the apertures, and was received with devout eagerness by the worshipper on every part of his person and garments, till he emerged from the pit, drenched, dripping, and scarlet from head to foot, to receive the homage, nay the adoration, of his fellows as one who had been born again to eternal life and had washed away his sins in the blood of the bull. For some time afterwards

the fiction of a new birth was kept up by dieting him on milk like a new-born babe. The regeneration of the worshipper took place at the same time as the regeneration of his god, namely at the vernal equinox."

Sir Frazer reveals that the shedding of blood, for the purpose of the forgiveness of sins, also took place at Rome, on Vatican Hill.

*"At Rome the new birth and the remission of sins by the shedding of bull's blood appear to have been carried out above all at the sanctuary of the Phrygian goddess on the Vatican Hill, at or near the spot where the great basilica of St. Peter's now stands; for many inscriptions relating to the rites were found when the church was being enlarged in 1608 or 1609. **From the Vatican as a centre this barbarous system of superstition** seems to have spread to other parts of the Roman empire. Inscriptions found in Gaul and Germany prove that provincial sanctuaries modelled their ritual on that of the Vatican. From the same source we learn that the testicles as well as the blood of the bull played an important part in the ceremonies. Probably they were regarded as a powerful charm to promote fertility and hasten the new birth."* <http://www.bartleby.com/196/81.html>

During the fertility celebrations which took place on the Day of Blood, Sir Frazer writes that the priests used swords to slash their bodies and to cause blood to flow. He says:

"Wrought up to the highest pitch of religious excitement they dashed the severed portions of themselves against the image of the cruel goddess. These broken instruments of fertility were afterwards reverently wrapt up and buried in the earth or in subterranean chambers sacred to Cybele, where, like the offering of blood, they may have been deemed instrumental in recalling Attis to life and hastening the general resurrection of nature, which was then bursting into leaf and blossom in the vernal sunshine."

Sir Frazer gives a staggering revelation that, prior to their 'baptism' in the blood of the Attis bull, devotees would perform a violent act to honour their god. Candidates went beyond the rite of circumcision and would amputate his own testicles. Frazer writes:

*"For man after man, his veins throbbing with the music, his eyes fascinated by the sight of the streaming blood, flung his garments from him, leaped forth with a shout, and seizing one of the swords which stood ready for the purpose, **castrated himself on the spot**. Then he ran through the city, holding the bloody pieces in his hand, till he threw them into one of the houses which he passed in his mad career. The household thus honoured had to furnish him with a suit of female attire and female ornaments, which he wore for the rest of his life. When the tumult of emotion had subsided, and the man had come to himself again, the **irrevocable sacrifice** must often have been followed by passionate sorrow and lifelong regret."*

Does Christ condone such blood-letting worship ceremonies to a pagan god? The majority of Christians would consider that to be preposterous suggestion. Then why do Christians consider that Christ would be honoured by blood-letting ceremonies as persented in the Bible?

Would it make a difference if the same violent sacrifices which were used to honour pagan fertility gods, were instead made to honour the Father?

The author of this book does not consider that God is honoured by any blood-letting

rituals. The One True God is honoured by the fruits of the spirit in the life and character of the believer. God sees Christ 'in' His people and their service to Him and to others is motivated by love, not from violence.

The Israelites and Blood

The Israelites practised blood-letting in periods of their worship of the Canaanite pagan deities.

1 Kings 18:28 (Priests of Baal on Mt Carmel)

“And they cried aloud, and **cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.**”

Demon-possessed Israelites “cut themselves” drawing blood, even in the New Testament.

Mark 5:6

“And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, **and cutting himself with stones.**”

How did pagan concepts become entrenched in Israelite worship?

Jewish philosopher Abarbanel offers his opinion, which appears on Jewish Veg website .

He (Abarbanel) cited a Midrash that indicated that the Jews had become accustomed to sacrifices in Egypt. To wean them from these idolatrous practices, God tolerated the sacrifices but commanded that they be offered in one central sanctuary: Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said "Let them at all times offer their sacrifices before Me in the Tabernacle, and they will be weaned from idolatry, and thus be saved." (Rabbi J. H. Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, p. 562) Rabbi J. H. Hertz, the late chief rabbi of England, stated that if Moses had not instituted sacrifices, which were admitted by all to have been the universal expression of religious homage, his mission would have failed and Judaism would have disappeared. With the destruction of the Temple, the rabbis state that prayer and good deeds took the place of sacrifice"
<http://www.jewishveg.com/faq03.html>

Whether Abarbanel's opinion is correct or incorrect, it is revealed in the Bible that Moses and Paul both placed considerable emphasis on the value of “the blood.”

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life (#5315) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (#5315).”

Strong's Hebrew Concordance (#5315)

5315 nephesh neh'-fesh from 5314; properly, a breathing creature, i.e. animal of (abstractly) vitality; used very widely in a literal, accommodated or figurative sense (bodily or mental):--any, appetite, **beast**, **body**, breath, **creature**, X dead(-ly), desire, X (dis-)contented, X fish, **ghost**, + greedy, he, **heart**(-y), (hath, X jeopardy of) life (X in jeopardy), **lust**, **man**, me, **mind**, mortally, one, own, **person**, pleasure, (her-, him-, my-, thy-)self, them (your)-selves, + slay, **soul**, + tablet, they, thing, (X she) will, X would have it. see HEBREW for 05314

American Standard Version

¹¹For the⁽¹⁾ life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the⁽¹⁾ life.⁽¹⁾ **Heb soul**

The Emphasised Bible by JB Rotherham

¹¹For as for the life of the flesh, in the blood, it is, therefore have, I, given it unto you upon the altar, to put a propitiatory-covering over your lives,—for the blood, it is, which, by virtue of the life, maketh propitiation.

The life of Adam was breathed into him by the Son of God. The Son of God did not pour blood into Adam's nostrils, but breath.

Genesis 2:7

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

If God breathed the **breath of life** (a righteous spirit) into humanity, why did **blood** become so important to the Israelites - seen as the symbol of life – instead of the symbol being the breath/spirit?

Quite possibly it appears that the Israelites also believed “the blood” contained the life principle – also referred to as “the soul” - as the surrounding pagan nations also believed.

The Hebrew word “**nephesh**” (#5315) which is translated “life” but it also means **soul, mind, self, character, breath, living being, desire, passion etc.** ...

Darby Translation Notes

Leviticus 17:11:

soul (e-3) Or 'life;' 'life' and 'soul' are the same word everywhere here. for (f-24) Lit. 'in souls.' see Note, ch. 6.30. soul. (g-37) Or 'that maketh atonement by the soul (or life).'

If the Hebrew word **nephesh** (#5315 Strong's Hebrew Concordance) were translated consistently where it applies in the sentence above, it might be paraphrased as:

“I will set my face against that life that eateth blood; for the LIFE (nephesh) of the flesh is in the BLOOD, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your LIVES (naphshotheychem) for it is the blood (because it is the LIFE, (nephesh) that maketh an atonement for the life (bannephesh, for the life).

Moses' statement appears to have implied that the blood contains the life principle or the very soul that makes a being alive as opposed to dead.

Pagan theology is compatible with the Mosaic concept just reviewed (Dr Terry Watkins, Dial-aTruth Ministries, **Tatoos** – **the Bloody Truth** <http://www.av1611.org/tattoos/blood.html>).

Paul also appears to note the value of sacrificial blood.

Hebrew 9:22

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

Why does Paul state that blood has to be shed for the remission of sin (**in almost all** cases?)

Because death is the consequence for sin. God originates life, but sin (separation from God) brings death.

Romans 6:23

"The wages of sin is death – but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

EJ Waggoner (commenting on) Romans, p 99, 100

*"Romans 8:6. 'The sting of death is sin.' 1Cor. 15:56. There could be no death if there were no sin. Sin carries death in its bosom. **So it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God that death came upon men because of sin.** It could not possibly be otherwise. Note the justice here. Death passed upon all men, 'for that all have sinned.' 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;' (Ezekiel 18:20). And this is also a necessary consequence of the fact that sin contains death in it, and that death can not come in any way than by sin. (100) Everything that came through Adam's fall is undone in Christ; or, better still, all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ."*

Roman Catholic Doctrine on the Blood

It appears that the Israelites might have reasoned that if the blood contains the vital principle of life, then death is the state of being devoid of blood - the principle of life. Similarly, Catholic/Christian religions teach the "precious blood of Jesus" saves humanity.

Catholic Encyclopedia on CD-ROM

*"Precious Blood: The blood of our Divine Saviour. Jesus, at the Last Supper, ascribes to it the same life-giving power that belongs to His flesh (see EUCHARIST). The Apostles, St. Peter (1 Peter 1:2, 19), St. John (1 John 1:7; Apocalypse 1:5 etc.), and above all St. Paul (Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:10) regard it as synonymous with Jesus's (sic) Passion and Death, the source of redemption. **The Precious Blood is therefore a part of the Sacred Humanity and hypostatically united to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity....** The blood shed during the triduum of the Passion therefore reunited to the body of Christ at the Resurrection, with the possible exception of a few particles which instantly lost their union to the Word and became holy relics to be venerated but not adored....Viewed as a part of the Sacred Humanity hypostatically united to the Word, **the Precious Blood deserves latreutical worship or adoration.** It may also like the Heart or the Wounds from which it flowed, be singled out for special honour, in a way that special honour was rendered it from the beginning by St. Paul and the Fathers who so eloquently praised its redeeming virtue and rested on it the Christian spirit of self-sacrifice."*

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12372c.htm>

The Blood and Death Verses

1 Peter 1:19

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

Revelation 1:5

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood..."

Isaiah 53:10, 11

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul (#5315 nephesh) an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days... (11) He shall see the travail of His soul [nephesh], and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. "

Romans 5:8

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

1 Corinthians 15:3

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;"

Matthew 20:28

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

John 10:17

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.
(18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.”

What Saved Humanity – the Death or the Life of Christ?

Jesus “shed His blood.” “Shed His blood” means that He died. Many people have “shed their blood” also and died, some in heroic circumstances, but their deaths did not effect the rest of humanity to any great degree, but Christ's death spanned the chasm that sin had caused between God and the human race. How did this occur?

Sin Caused a Spiritual Separation

Isaiah 59:2

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

In the Garden of Gethsemane and again at His death, Christ endured this separation. Ellen White terms it “His Father's frown.”

Signs of the Times, 14 August, 1879 p 3

“Could mortals view the amazement and sorrow of the angels as they watched in silent grief the Father separating His beams of light, love and glory, from his Son, they would better understand how offensive is sin in His sight. As the Son of God in the Garden of Gethsemane bowed in the attitude of prayer, the agony of his spirit forced from His pores sweat like great drops of blood. It was here that the horror of great darkness surrounded Him. The sins of the world were upon Him. He was suffering in man's stead, as a transgressor of His Father's law. Here was the scene of temptation. The divine light of God was receding from His vision, and He was passing into the hands of the powers of darkness. In the agony of His soul He lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing His Father's frown. The cup of suffering Christ had taken from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it Himself, and, in its place, give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man, was now falling upon Christ...204 The sins of a lost world were upon Him and overwhelming Him. It was a sense of His Father's frown, in consequence of sin, which rent His heart with such piercing agony and forced from His brow great drops of blood, which, rolling down His pale cheeks, fell to the ground, moistening the earth.”

Ellen White demonstrated the Father's wrath or His frown, was the act of turning away.

Why did the Father turn away from His sinless Son? Because the Father had pledged to accept Christ as the representative of the human race - the representative of all the vile and unrepentant human sinners that ever existed.

When the Father “turned His face away” from His Son, divine protection was removed from Christ, leaving Him exposed and vulnerable to the attacks of Satan and his agents. While Satan's abuse was foreseen, such violent treatment was not designed as part of the plan of salvation.

Both Father and Son agreed that Christ would die to redeem (justify) the human race and this would require a spiritual separation, but the torture that Satan originated was not an extra requirement of the plan of salvation.

Desire of Ages, p 753

“The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.”

2 Testimonies for the Church, p .206, 207

The sword of justice was now to awake against His (the Father's) dear Son. He was betrayed by a kiss into the hands of His enemies, and hurried to the judgment hall of an earthly court, there to be derided and condemned to death by sinful mortals. There the glorious Son of God was "wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." (207) Who can comprehend the love here displayed! The angelic host beheld with wonder and with grief Him who had been the Majesty of heaven, and who had worn the crown of glory, now wearing the crown of thorns, a bleeding victim to the rage of an infuriated mob, fired to insane madness by the wrath of Satan. Behold the patient Sufferer! Upon His head is the thorny crown. His lifeblood flows from every lacerated vein. All this in consequence of sin!"

Notice that Ellen White qualifies "the sword of justice" as the suffering inflicted on Christ by Satan and the demon-possessed mob. God was not directing Satan to attack His Son. From her description, it is abundantly obvious that torturous 'justice' does not proceed from the Father. The prophet's account also accurately depicts **justice** as the consequences of sin, which inevitably occur in the absence of divine protection.

Why is this suffering called justice? It is justice because the wicked have freely chosen to give their allegiance to Satan, and it is justice that they must thereafter serve their chosen god and endure his satanic wrath— unprotected and without hope of deliverance.

In this sense, Christ suffered the justice of God. God permitted His Son to be treated as sinners deserve, in order that we might be treated as His Son deserved.

Review and Herald 21 March, 1893 p 6

"The world's Redeemer was treated as we deserve to be treated, in order that we might be treated as he deserved to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins upon his own divine soul, that we might receive his imputed righteousness. He was condemned for our sins, in which he had no share, that we might be justified by his righteousness, in which we had no share. The world's Redeemer gave himself for us. Who was he?--The Majesty of heaven, **pouring out his blood upon the altar of justice for the sins of guilty man.**"

Ellen White stated in Desire of Ages, p 693, that when the Father's "turned away" from His Son in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ began to die. Blood began to ooze from His skin because of His spiritual despair.

When the wicked bear the consequences of their own sins in the judgment, they will suffer similar physical and spiritual atrocities also inflicted by demon-possessed mobs – but not to the extent to which Christ suffered for the wicked will be suffering the consequences of their own sins, while Christ suffered for all humanity.

When Jesus "shed His blood" (died) "for the remission of our sins," He gave humanity the benefit of His pure, holy Life – His unselfish character. Christ represented the human race in both His life and His death.

Without the perfect, sinless LIFE (character) of Christ, humanity could not be sanctified. Without His DEATH, humanity could not have been justified. The manner of Christ's death – as a human sacrifice/ritualistic murder – did not achieve salvation, but it did signal the end of the test - "it is finished" (John 19:30).

Christ was faithful to His Father's loving law – unto death. The "redeemed" will also pass

through the same test and will prove “faithful unto death” (James 1:12; Rev 2:10).

Christ's Blood Shed for the Remission of Sins

If there is really no remission of sins without the ritualistic shedding of blood (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22), why did Jesus state something similar?

Matthew 26:28

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

In making this statement, Jesus made a **covenant of agreement**. Christ employed the language and culture familiar to the Hebrews – and to the Gentiles/pagans also.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Matthew 26:28

*"It answers to the Hebrew berith, which often signifies, not only the covenant or agreement, but also the sacrifice which was slain on the occasion, by the blood of which the covenant was ratified; and the contracting parties professed to subject themselves to such a death as that of the victim, in case of violating their engagements. **An oath of this kind, on slaying the covenant sacrifice, was usual in ancient times: so in Homer, when a covenant was made between the Greeks and the Trojans, and the throats of lambs were cut, and their blood poured out, the following form of adjuration was used by the contracting parties.**"*

Barnes' New Testament Notes

"Anciently, covenants or contracts were ratified by slaying an animal; by the shedding of its blood; imprecating similar vengeance if either party failed in the compact. So Jesus says the covenant which God is about to form with men, the new covenant, or the gospel economy, is sealed or ratified with his blood."

Christ announced His **will and testament**. He made a promise that He would indeed be the human race's Saviour. Christ demonstrated that the grape juice (wine) symbolised His blood - the value of His entire human existence – His life/ character, not just the moment of His death.

In making the new covenant/testament, Christ gave His word that He would continue to remain true to His Father's commandments, so that when His life ended, the merits of His life - His perfect character - would redeem the human race. Christ guaranteed that He would indeed remain the New Representative of the sinful race regardless of the cost to Himself. This was His testament. He would not break His covenant – even in the face of torture and a slow agonising death. He would lay down His life as the Representative of the human race before He would consent to sin. He would refuse to sin, even in the face of torture and death, just as He admonishes His followers to do also.

Revelation 2:10

... "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Christ would not have achieved salvation for sinners, if He sinned prior to His death. It was the character of Jesus – His faithfulness unto death - that purchased our salvation.

Questions

- IF Christ was only required to be an appeasing blood-letting sacrifice, why did He come to earth and live as a human baby? Surely, He could have appeased His Father's wrath in heaven.
- Why didn't Christ organise a plan that permitted Him to be "born of a woman" (incarnated), then return to heaven, away from temptation and then at the prescribed time, return to earth as a human sacrifice?
- Why did Christ have to live His life as a human being and develop a righteous character on earth, if His death was the sole event which brought salvation?

Consider a Scenario

If a bleeding victim was required to appease a murderous, wrathful god, then Christ could have simply laid down on the altar and directed the temple priests to slaughter Him in the most blood-letting method possible. Perhaps He could recommend they scourge Him twice because scourging causes voluminous blood loss. Perhaps He could recommend a crown of thorns be pounded onto His head - that would certainly ensure that blood poured down His face. Perhaps nails driven through His hands and feet and a sword in His side – all these wounds would surely supply enough blood to satiate the blood-lust of any PAGAN god!

But was the Father's character identical with that of a pagan god – Satan?

Did the Father require appeasing? Did the Father delight in the murder, torture and blood-letting of His own Son?

Hardly! The plan of salvation was designed in the "counsel of peace" not the counsel of torture! (Zechariah 6:13)

Jesus said His Father did not require sacrifices, but that He, Christ came to do His Father's will.

Hebrews 10:5

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (6) In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. (7) Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God."

The Father's will did not include a desire to see His Son to be massacred by demon-possessed men and satanic agents. His will was for His Son to live a holy life – to develop a pure righteous character. The Father realised however, that since Christ became the representative of the sinful human race, He took upon Himself its mortality.

Bible Echo, 15 September, 1892 p 6

"As a member of the human family, He was mortal; but as God, He was the fountain of life to the world. He could, in his divine person, ever have withstood the advances of death..."

Sin causes separation from God and complete separation from God causes death (mortality). This is the death that Christ chose to experience so that humanity might live eternally.

As Paul stated, a human body was prepared for Christ so that He could die for the justification of the sinful race as its representative. Spiritual separation from His Father caused Christ's life to finally expire, but in the closing minutes of His mortal life, it was His faith in His Father's character which enabled Christ to accept for humanity, the ultimate

consequence of sin and separation - death; and even perhaps His own eternal death.

Christ suffered. He was tortured and murdered in a typically pagan, sacrificial ritual. Sacrificial deaths required the shedding of copious amounts of blood. Christ's blood flowed from His veins as Satan poured temptations upon Him to defend Himself and "come down from the cross." Despite all the Victim's intense agonies, suffering, blood-loss and death, - all these agonies did not – could not - redeem humanity or supply humanity with eternal life.

The Father never required His Son to be tortured to appease His "wrath" toward sin, but by becoming a mortal human being, Christ accepted a death sentence. He laid down His life and voluntarily come under the power of death as the result of becoming human. The human race all inherited a death sentence from Adam – and were made sinners.

Romans 5:19

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

All Adam's off-spring were born "under the law" and so was Christ (Gal 4:4). In this way, Christ was made to be "sin" for us (2 Cor 5:21). Christ took on Himself, the fatal consequences of being part of a sinful race. He set aside His divinity and became mortal. He became the second Adam, representing the human race. In this way, it was possible for Christ to pay the "penalty of sin," when He risked His eternal life to save humanity.

Christ's death was valuable sacrifice not because His blood flowed out of His veins as a pagan sacrifice, but because as the representative of the sinful, human race, He accepted the consequences of separation from His Father on our behalf..

What paid for the salvation of the entire human race?

Christ's entire existence paid the price. It was – the faithful, obedient life – of Christ – His obedience to the law of unselfish love, in the face of death. It was the persistent Love which was revealed stronger than death that declared, "greater love hath no man than this, that a Man lay down His life for His friends (John 15:13) and His enemies (Matt 5:44).

As with all holy and perfect truth, Satan has revealed his true **murderous** character. The doctrine that required an angry god to be appeased by seeing suffering, agony, torture and death against an innocent victim is demonic. Such a heinous doctrine has its origin in the counsels of darkness and it has assassinated the characters of both Father and Son for thousands of years.

Summary

Two basic facts are relevant when investigating this subject:

- Sin caused a spiritual separation from God; and
- Christ's life and death caused a reunion between God and humanity.

Christ's victory for the human race was won by His refusal to behave selfishly (i.e. break His Father's law) under ANY circumstances. Satan made the circumstances of Christ's experiences extremely difficult. Satan arranged that the Son of God was faced with the situation that to obey His Father's law would mean He would have to lay down His mortal life before the normal mortal life span demanded it of Him and in torturous conditions.

Satan's persecution hastened the time when the Son was to lay down His life. It was prophesied that Satan would do this, but if Satan hadn't done this, Christ would have been able to live His perfect life as a human being and then at the end of His mortal life, He would have died as a mortal human being of old age. Christ would still have endured the separation from His Father and suffered that agony, but torture from demonic agencies was not build into the holy plan of salvation.

Christ's life qualified Him to sanctify humanity. His death justified humanity. Both Christ's life and death – which are aspects of sinful humanity - were necessary to deliver a sinful race from the penalty and power of sin. When Christ took on the responsibility of representing the sinful human race, He took upon Himself mortality - human life and death.

Satan claimed Christ's premature death as his greatest victory, but of course it was his own death sentence. Good triumphed over evil - Christ over Satan.

Psalm 80:3 “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”

Questions

Is it possible that Satan has deceived the entire world into believing that God required blood-letting, torturous, agonising sacrifices to save humanity? Do God's professed followers and supporters consider that God's character is on the same level as Satan's? May God speedily help His poor people to cast off the “traditions of men” and to look to Jesus to see the Father's character as it really is.

Isaiah 5:20

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

Because some believe that “the life is in the blood,” they accepted therefore that blood possesses some “magical” powers – the powers of life. It is reasoned that the power of life that resides in blood, will infuse life and strength into a person who drinks it or wears it. The gift of life (by shedding a victim's blood) is so precious and valuable that, when given as a sacrificial offering, it is capable of appeasing angry gods.

By seeking to acquire the “magical powers” in blood, in order to appease the wrathful gods, humanity has committed hideous crimes against their fellow human beings - including the ultimate crime of murder, in order to secure human sacrifices.

Human Sacrifice

Child Sacrifice – an Ancient and Extensive Ritual

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_sacrifice

References to child sacrifices have been found since the beginning of human history in many cultures. (quoting from Wikipedia Encyclopedia)

- *In Greek mythology, King Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigeneia in order to gain favorable weather for an invasion.*
- *In the Bible, Abraham is told to sacrifice his son Isaac for the glory of God, though angelic intervention prevents it; the binding of Isaac is one of the most challenging, and perhaps ethically troublesome, parts of the Bible, and has its own entry.*
- *The Bible implies that the Ammonites offered child sacrifices to Moloch.*
- *Yoruba myths refer to "twin infanticide" as an ancient practice stopped by divine intervention of Shango.*

Archaeology has uncovered physical evidence of child sacrifice at several locations. Some examples include:

- *A young child was buried with its skull split by a weapon at Woodhenge. This was interpreted by the excavators as a child sacrifice.*
- *Sites within Carthage and other Phoenician centers revealed the remains of infants and children in large numbers; initially this was interpreted as evidence for frequent and prominent child sacrifice to the god Ba'al Hammon. However, many historians have disputed this interpretation, suggesting instead that these were resting places for children miscarried or who died in infancy.*
- *The Incan culture sacrificed children, an excellent pretext for the Spanish to annihilate their culture. The frozen corpses are still being discovered in the South American mountains. The first of these corpses, a female child who had died from a blow to the skull, was discovered in 1995 by Johan Reinhard.*
- *Other methods of sacrifice included wrapping living children in their burial clothes tightly enough to cause asphyxiation. These findings corroborated the documented stories by Spanish colonizers in the 16th century. The practice itself was called capacocha by the Incans. One theory of why the Incans sacrificed children was that the children were to be emissaries to their deities. Archaeologists corroborated this theory with their own, that the child to be sacrificed met the Emperor and was the guest of honor at a feast before being sacrificed;*
- *The Moche of northern Peru practiced mass sacrifices of men and boys.*
- *In Knossos and dating to Minoan Crete, the bones of at least four children (who had been in good health) were found which bore signs that they were butchered in the same way the Minoans slaughtered their sheep and goats, suggesting that they had been sacrificed and eaten.*
- *There is some evidence that such practices extend even to modern times.*
- *The bodies of some young children discovered in remote regions of South America, are alleged to have been killed by drug dealers in rituals intended to ward off revenge for their successful cocaine runs.*
- *In Africa there have been several allegations of children sacrificed in muti rituals:- attempts at witchcraft intended to bring prosperity to those performing the sacrifice. In modern times, child sacrifice is a term that has also been applied to the military use of children (end Wikipedia Encyclopedia entry).*

Many pagan religions consecrated (purified) their children -by passing them "through the fire." Children were not considered to be completely purified unless they were completely burned to death.

According to Alexander Hyslop, the Two Babylons ch 7 sec 1, burning a person with fire for purification purposes is directly linked with the fire-serpent religion practised in Egypt.²⁷ It was thought that the ritual of burning, purified the soul.²⁸ The Roman Catholic religion also teaches that burning a heretic might save his/her soul. The religion advocates that to "destroy the body, might save the soul."²⁹ The Indian custom of a widow burning on her husband's funeral pyre stems from this false and cruel doctrine also.³⁰

(Egyptian Mythology (Hamlyn:1965:58).

- "There (in Phoenicia), the queen Astarte, entrusted to her (the goddess Isis) the care of her newly born son. *Isis adopted the baby and would have conferred immortality upon it had its mother not broken the charm by her cries of terror upon seeing the goddess bathe the baby in purificatory (purifying) flames.*"

27 And this also, no doubt, reconciled the parents who actually sacrificed their children to Moloch, to the cruel sacrifice, the belief being cherished that the fire that consumed them also "perfected" them, and made them meet for eternal happiness. As both the passing through the fire, and the burning in the fire, were essential rites in the worship of Moloch or Nimrod, this is an argument that Nimrod was Tammuz. As the priest and representative of the perfecting or purifying fire, it was he that carried on the work of perfecting or purifying by fire, and so he was called by its name.

28 It is evident, however, from the Zoroastrian verse, elsewhere quoted, that fire itself was worshipped as Tammuz, for it is called the "Father that perfected all things." In one respect this represented fire as the Creative god; but in another, there can be no doubt that it had reference to the "perfecting" of men by 'purifying' them. And especially it perfected those whom it consumed.

29 (Alberto Rivera, ex-Jesuit priest, in *The Four Horsemen* p 4; 5; published by Chick Publications Inc; Ontario: 1985). Vatican 2 council – "Pedro Arrupe, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus stated, "It is time for the new and final purification of the Church in preparation for the New Age kingdom." Rivera notes that Arrupe used 'purification' as a key word to describe purging (or extermination) of all those who are unfaithful to the pope.

30 Many widows in India to immolate themselves on the funeral piles of their husbands, the woman who thus burned herself being counted blessed, because she became Sutte *--i.e., "Pure by fire."

Child Sacrifices in the Israelite Religion

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible

2 Kings 21:6:

"Made his son pass through the fire - Consecrated him to Moloch."

Who commanded and delighted in receiving blood sacrifices?

Answer:

- (God - Exo 5:3; Exo 20:24; Deut 15:15);
- (Not God - Jer 7:21-23);
- (Molech, Chemosh – 1 Kings 11:6-8)

In Exodus 34:10 – 16, Moses relates God's instructions to the Israelites just prior to their entrance into the Promised Land.

God states that He will "drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite." Then He instructs the Israelites to "destroy their altars, break their images and cut down their groves." so that the Israelites would not "go a whoring after their gods."

However, the Israelites were *already* highly educated in the practice of human sacrifice and in pagan worship rituals. They had *already* "gone a whoring" by "offering their sacrifices unto devils" and sadly, they continued their pagan practice of child sacrifice through the centuries.

Exodus 22:29

"Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me."

The firstborn Israelite sons were to be dedicated to God, not sacrificed to Him, but the firstborn Egyptians were apparently sacrificed to God.

Exodus 13:15 (Moses said)

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I (Moses) sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem."

Leviticus 17:7,

"And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring."

2 Kings 16:3:

Ahaz, king of Judah, murdered his son as a human sacrifice.

2 Kings 17:17:

"And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger." The tribe of Judah abandoned worship of Yahweh at the temple in Jerusalem, and burned their children as human sacrifices to Baal.

2 Kings 21:6:

“And he (Manasseh) made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.”(Manasseh burned his son as a human sacrifice to Baal).

Isaiah 57:5:

“Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?”

Isaiah was given a message of divine rebuke to the Israelites for sacrificing their children.

Ezekiel 20:31

“For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be inquired of by you.”

Where did the Israelites originally learn these demonic practices? From whom did they learn how to pacify wrathful, angry gods with human sacrifice?

In Egypt. (Lev 18:2) The Hebrews were exposed to demonic pagan rituals from their close contact with the Egyptians over the 270 year period of their enslavement.

Not long after God spoke the 10 commandments from Mt Sinai, the Israelites “danced naked” (i.e. performed sexual rituals) around a golden calf. They had reverted to the familiar pagan fertility rituals which they had learned in Egypt where Bol-Kahn, the fire-serpent god was worshipped in various forms. 1 Kings 11:33

“Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom (Moloch) the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.”

The trinity of gods mentioned in 1 Kings 11:33 are all the same “deity.” The god whom the Moabites called Chemosh, was also worshipped as Baal by the Zidonians and as Moloch/Milcom by the Ammonites. This religion required human and child sacrifices and was practised in Egypt as the fire-serpent religion (Hyslop, the Two Babylons, ch 7 sec 1).

*When considering the Israelites' history as given in the Bible, it is difficult not to see similarities and make comparisons with the history of the Moabites as recorded on the Mesha Stele – the Moabite Stone.*³¹

31 DESCRIPTION of the MESHA STELE (the Moabite Stone)

Language:	Moabite (a West Semitic Language)
Medium:	basalt stone stele
Size:	1.15 meters high, Width: 60-68 centimeters, Length: 35 lines of writing
Honoree:	Mesha, king of Moab (late 9th century BC)
Date:	830 BC (approx)
Place of Discovery:	Dhiban [in modern Jordan]
Date of Discovery:	1868
Current Location:	Louvre Museum, (Paris, France)

“In a description of a battle against Israel for the town of Nebo, the Mesha Stele presents the enemy as dedicated to total destruction as a sacred offering to the god Chemosh in a manner that is very familiar to us from the books of Joshua” (10, 11) “and 1 Samuel” (15).

A extract from the Mesha Stele (translation by K. C. Hanson, adapted from Albright 1969:320-21) reveals a similar “divine” battle plan was given to the pagan king by the god of the Moabites named Kemosh (or Chemosh – same worship as Molech or Baal), as was supposedly given to Joshua and Samuel by the One True God - Yahweh.

The translation reads:

“I am Mesha, son of Kemosh[-yatti], the king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father was king over Moab for thirty years, and I became king after my father. And I made this high-place for Kemosh in Qarcho . . . because he has delivered me from all kings, and because he has made me look down on all my enemies. Omri was the king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for many days, for Kemosh was angry with his land. And his son reigned in his place; and he also said, “I will oppress Moab!” In my days he said so. But I looked down on him and on his house, and Israel has been defeated; it has been defeated forever! And Omri took possession of the whole land of Medeba, and he lived there in his days and half the days of his son: forty years. But Kemosh restored it in my days. And I built Baal Meon, and I built a water reservoir in it. And I built Qiryaten. And the men of Gad lived in the land of Atarot from ancient times; and the king of Israel built Atarot for himself, and I fought against the city and captured it. And I killed all the people of the city as a sacrifice for Kemosh and for Moab. And I brought back the fire-hearth of his uncle from there; and I brought it before the face of Kemosh in Qerioit, and I made the men of Sharon live there, as well as the men of Maharit. And Kemosh said to me, “Go, take Nebo from Israel.” And I went in the night and fought against it from the daybreak until midday, and I took it and I killed the whole population: seven thousand male subjects and aliens, and female subjects, aliens, and servant girls. For I had put it to the ban for Ashtar Kemosh. And from there I took the vessels of Yahweh, and I presented them before the face of Kemosh. And the king of Israel had built Yahaz, and he stayed there throughout his campaign against me; and Kemosh drove him away before my face.” And I cut the moat for Qarcho by using Israelite prisoners. ... Kemosh said to me, “Go down, fight against Hauranen!” I went down . . . and Kemosh restored it in my days.”

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/westsem/mesha.html>

The Moabite practices and religious beliefs mirror those recorded in Joshua 10 & 11 or 1 Samuel 15. The table compares the Israelite and the Mesha Stele Moabite records:

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Moabite Mesha Stele</i>	<i>The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament Bible)</i>
God commanded them to attack certain towns and countries	Yes	Yes - Exo 32:37; 1 Sam 15:3
God commanded them to completely destroy all men, women, children and infants	Yes	Yes Joshua 10:8; 1 Sam 15:3
Human captives were sacrificed to their gods	Yes When describing the action of “vowing a sacrifice,” the Moabites used the expression “put it to the ban.”	Yes When describing the action of vowing a sacrifice, the Israelites used the expressions “consecrated to death,” “devoted to death” or “vowed to the Lord” (Lev 27:29 margin; Judges 11:31);
God is angry and must be appeased	Yes	Yes (1 Chronicles 21:12)
God punishes nations by sending enemies to destroy them	Yes	Yes (Lev 26:37; Jer 19:7)
God gives armies power to destroy enemies	Yes	Yes (Exo 23:27; Num 14:43)
God rewards by giving land	Yes	Yes (Exodus 3:8)
God punishes nations by taking away land	Yes	Yes Jer 20:4)
Made “high places” to worship their gods	Yes	Yes (Abraham was instructed to sacrifice kill his son to Yahweh on a high place – Gen 22:2)
God was worshipped with special “fire”	Yes	Yes (Lev 9:24;10:1)

Did the Israelite's God Require Human Sacrifices?

The Biblical evidence appears contradictory.

Leviticus 27:28, 29

“Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD. 29 None devoted (consecrated), which shall be devoted (consecrated) of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.”

Leviticus 27:28, 29

29None devoted<02764>, which shall be<03808> devoted<02763>(8714) of men<0120>, shall be redeemed<06299>(8735); but shall surely<04191>(8800) be put to death<04191>(8714).

Two instances of the word “devoted” are used by the King James Version as a translation of the Hebrew word *charam*. It means devoted to death, dedicated to death, or consecrated to death, but some commentators consider that it refers to a person being dedicated to the service of God until the person's death. In reading from the Strong's Hebrew concordance, the Hebrew definition does not tend to support the latter view.

Strong's Hebrew Concordance devoted: # 02763 חָרַם *charam khaw-ram'*

“to seclude; specifically (by a ban) to devote to religious uses (especially destruction); physical and reflexive, to be blunt as to the nose:--make accursed, consecrate, (utterly) destroy, devote, forfeit, have a flat nose, utterly (slay, make away).“

Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew Lexicon

02763 חָרַם *charam khaw-ram'* a primitive root; ; AV -destroy 34, utterly 10, devote 2, accursed 1, consecrate 1, forfeited 1, flat nose 1, utterly to make away 1, slay 1; 52.

The Hebrew meaning is:

- 1) to ban, devote, destroy utterly, completely destroy, dedicate for destruction, exterminate 1a) (Hiphil) 1a1) to prohibit (for common use), ban
- 1a2) to consecrate, devote, dedicate for destruction
- 1a3) to exterminate, completely destroy
- 1b) (Hophal)
- 1b1) to be put under the ban, be devoted to destruction
- 1b2) to be devoted, be forfeited
- 1b3) to be completely destroyed
- 2) to split, slit, mutilate (a part of the body) 2a) (Qal) to mutilate 2b) (Hiphil) to divide

The Moabite expression for “devoted to death” was “to put under the ban.” This expression is used by the King of the Moabites in approx 830 BC and it was recorded in the Mesha Stele found in 1868 AD. King Mesha put captives “under the ban” and sacrificed the entire town's inhabitants to his god, Chemosh.
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDPCS/westsem/mesha.html>

- Didn't "God" ask Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering on a high place – Mt Moriah? (Genesis 22:2)
- Didn't 'God' order the Israelites to murder of thousands and men, women and children? (Duet 21; Num 31; 1 Sam 15:18; Deut 2:33-35)
- Didn't 'God' consent for Jephthah to offer his daughter up as a burnt offering? If He hadn't wanted the daughter sacrificed, why would God actively assist Jephthah to win the battle against the Ammonites?³²

The answers to these two questions is 'apparently not,' because God states twice that asking for a human/child sacrifice is a thought that never came into **His** mind.

Jeremiah 7:30, 31 & Jeremiah 32:34, 35

"For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. (31) And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. (ch32/v34) But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. (35) And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

But while the thought of asking the Israelites to offer children as burnt offerings never came into the One True God's mind, it certainly was obvious that many Israelites *thought* that God would be pleased with these offerings. This assumption on the part of the Israelites confirms how deeply pagan worship concepts were implanted into their minds. Associations with Egyptian worship during their captivity and intermarriage with pagan nations led to apostasy and a reversion to the fire-serpent religion which dominated Egypt and Canaan.

The following columns compare the traits of the Father, Jesus and Satan – and the blend - in regard to the treatment of children. Clearly child sacrifice is not divinely inspired.

<u>The Father's character displayed in Jesus</u>	<u>Blended Character (good/evil)</u>	<u>Satan's character</u>
Protects and values children Matthew 18:6; 19:14 "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.... Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not."	It <u>never</u> came into the heart of God to ask for burnt sacrificing of children on high places (Jeremiah 7:31: 32:35) "And he (God) said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac...and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Genesis 22:2	Child sacrifices part of worship ceremonies Matt.17:15; 2 Chr 33:6; Eze 16:20, 21 "And he caused his children to pass through the fire ... also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."

³² God was NOT involved in the battle, but He was given credit for being involved by Jephthah.

Child Sacrifice in Tribal Cultures

“No Devil Strings” part 5

(as it appears in *Temkit for Children* by Mary Hunter Moore)

Kata Rangoso once told of habits of his people prior to the coming of the missionary: “The warriors would assemble; then the message would come from the spirits through the devil priest, ‘It is my desire that you go forth in your canoes to some island where you will find people living in their villages. When you find them, take their heads.’ “The warriors would get their spears, their shields, and their large clubs, and away they would go. They would go with murderous thoughts in their minds. On arrival at the shore of an island they would wait to be first guided by the spirits as to which village to attack. “Then the warriors would rush forward and kill all with whom they came in contact. As soon as they had slain their victims, they would cut off their heads and rush with them back to their canoes. Sometimes they would get thirty, forty, fifty-up to one hundred heads. They would have to wait for the message from their warrior-priests to know when to stop slaying. “They would find at times some little children, take them alive in their canoes, and away they would go. As the headhunting party neared their home villages they would blow a certain sound on the conch shell, and the people would know they had been victorious.” When the village people heard the message of the shell, they would come in thousands to the shore to welcome the warriors. Then they would pay special homage to the idols and spirit images which were on the prows of the canoes and which they believed had given them success. Part of this homage would be to offer a human sacrifice before the images. Describing this sacrifice, Rangoso said: “On the day when the warriors would kill these little captured children, they would put them into their stone ovens and after cooking divide the bodies among the men.”Some of the captured children would be kept and cared for and offered to the idols later. “The tribal priest would catch some of the blood, and sprinkle it on the idol and on the ground in front of it. The body would then be lifted up on a wooden cross and waved about in front of the idol, accompanied by weird chanting and incantations. “When this part of the ceremony was over, the child’s body would be wrapped in banana leaves and placed in the hot-stone oven for several hours. A cannibal feast then followed, the people taking a small piece of flesh and eating it in the belief that extra spiritual power would be transferred to them in this way.”

Consider the Similarities:

Demons ordered the Solomon Islanders to:

- kill particular tribes as “divinely” directed;
- kill whole tribes;
- kidnap children;
- sacrifice living children to the gods;
- consecrate some children as future sacrifices to the gods;
- perform burnt offerings rituals to the gods as thank offerings and appeasement offerings (also see “No Devil Strings - part 1);
- sprinkle the sacrificial blood over the sacred objects;
- eat the sacrificial flesh;
- eat human flesh so that they could receive extra spiritual power.
-

The preceding primitive religious practices were ordered by demons, but the Israelites god Yahweh was said to have given similar instructions.

“God” ordered the Israelites to:

- kill particular tribes as “divinely” directed; (Num 31:7; 1 Sam 15:18);
- kill whole tribes; (Num 31:17; 1 Sam 15:18);
- kill sinners; (Exo 32:27; Num 25:5; Deut 13:8; 21:18-22)
- kill children and infants (Num 31:17);
- kidnap children (Num 31:18; Deut 21:11, 12)
- offer a child as a burnt offering on a high place (Gen 22:2)
- kill all the animals (1 Sam 15:21);
- kill animals as sacrifices to God as sin offerings, trespass offerings, consecrations, meat offerings, burnt offerings, thank offerings, peace offerings and gifts (Lev 7:37);
- kill people to appease God when He was angry (Numbers 25:7-13);
- kill animals to appease God when He was angry (2 Samuel 24:25);
- sprinkle animals blood on the sacred objects (Exodus 29:16);
- eat the sacrificial flesh (Exodus 12:23; Numbers 9:11);
- believe that sin was transferred symbolically to the eater of animal flesh - the priest - (Lev 10:16-19);
- believe that sin was atoned by the slaying of animals (Exodus 30:10; Deut 21:1-9).

Are both demons and the One True God giving the same instructions to their followers? Are both demons and the One True God encouraging their followers to commit atrocities upon their fellow men, women and children and animals?

Consider the similarities between another pagan religion and the religion of the Israelites.

The Phoenicians

The Phoenicians were Canaanites. (They were called Canaanites in the Bronze Age, but were called Phoenicians in the Iron Age). They were contemporary dwellers in Canaan with the Israelites. Their country consisted of a string of city-states which was a narrow strip of coastline squeezed in between the Lebanon Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. The Phoenicians lived to the north of the Israelites. There exists a great deal of similarity in the worship of the Phoenicians and the Israelites.

Worshipping the Deities

The Phoenicians worshipped several deities: the goddesses Astarte and Asherah; the gods El and Baal, plus Eshmun the god of healing and some Egyptian gods.

The Israelites also became confused in their worship of Yahweh or El. Archaeologists have found a few inscriptions in the Sinai desert and Judah mentioning “YHWH and his Asherah.” Some scholars maintain that Yahweh was thought by the Israelites to have a wife or consort just as did the other Canaanite gods.

Appeasing the Gods

The Phoenician religion required that the gods were kept ‘happy.’ This doctrine was of major importance for if the gods were not worshipped correctly, they might cause devastation by plague, shipwreck, drought or defeat in battle. When these ‘plagues’ occurred, the priests would try to appease the gods by offering even more sacrifices and by performing more rituals.

When the Phoenicians’ gods ‘blessed’ them (with rain, fertility i.e. good harvest, children, cattle and crops), the Phoenicians demonstrated their gratitude by burning incense and offering delicacies such as milk, wine, honey, fruit, oil, bread, cakes and perfumes to these gods.

The Israelites also believed that their god would both bless their land and increase their fertility, but would also curse them and send plagues upon them. Their god would not forgive misbehaviours without a blood sacrifice.

Child Sacrifice – the Ultimate Sacrifice

Ancient writings confirm that the Greeks, Romans and Israelites accused the **Phoenicians** of sacrificing babies to their gods. Archaeologists have discovered burial grounds (tophets) which have been filled with the burnt bones of babies. Inscriptions found at these sites (tophets) reveal that the babies were offered to a goddess called *Tanit* or to the god *Baal Hammon*.

It was in Tophet, near Jerusalem that the **Israelites** also sacrificed their children to a god named Moloch, until King Josiah intervened to halt the practice.

Modern-Age Child Sacrifices

Even today, some religions consider child sacrifice necessary to appease the wrath of their gods and to atone for the sins of their families.

David Kupelian inWorldNetDaily.com © 2000

Friday, 10 November, 2000, TROUBLE IN THE HOLY LAND

*"Jerusalem cleric praises child 'sacrifices' 'The younger the martyr, the greater and the more I respect him.' The Mufti of Jerusalem, the city's highest Muslim religious authority, is calling for the complete "liberation" by Palestinians not only of Jerusalem, but of all of Israel, and stresses that "sacrifice" and "martyrdom" of Palestinian children prove that "the new generation will carry on the mission with determination." Speaking to the Egyptian weekly, Al-Ahram Al-Arabi, Sheik 'Ikrima Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine, addressed several issues regarding the Israeli-Arab conflict -- **including his admiration for the child "martyrs."** Over 40 Palestinian youths reportedly have died in the last six weeks of clashes between Palestinians and Israelis after the meltdown of the doomed Clinton-brokered "peace process." "We haven't sacrificed enough yet to be worthy of liberating Al-Aqsa," said Sabri. "To liberate Jerusalem, Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi made great sacrifices for a long time, **and we have to sacrifice until Allah's victory is completed ...**"*

'Child Sacrifices in London'

<http://www.thisislondon.com/news/articles/19328071?source=Evening%20Standard&ct=5>

By Richard Edwards Crime Reporter, Evening Standard , 16 June 2005

"Boys from Africa are being murdered as human sacrifices in London churches. They are brought into the capital to be offered up in rituals by fundamentalist Christian sects, according to a shocking report by Scotland Yard. Followers believe that powerful spells require the deaths of "unblemished" male children. Police believe such boys are trafficked from cities such as Kinshasa where they can be bought for a little as £10. The report, leaked ahead of its publication next month, also cites examples of African children being tortured and killed after being identified as "witches" by church pastors. Many such churches, supported mainly by people from West Africa, sanction aggressive forms of exorcism on those thought to be possessed. There are believed to be 300 such churches in the UK, mostly in London. The report was put together by an expert social worker and lawyer for the Met after talking to hundreds of people in African communities in a series of workshops. It uncovered allegations of witchcraft spells, child trafficking and HIV-positive people who believe that by having sex with a child they will be "cleansed". An extract reads: 'People who are desperate will seek out experts to cast spells for them. Members of the workshop stated that for a spell to be powerful it required a sacrifice involving a male child unblemished by circumcision. They allege that boy children are being trafficked into the UK for this purpose.' A number of pastors maintain that God speaks through them and lets them know when someone is possessed. It is therefore their duty to deliver the child or adult from the evil spirit....The true figure for missing boys and girls is feared to be several thousand a year. "

David S. Ayliffe, Executive Director, of International Needs Australia requests signatures for a petition to be presented by the Australian government to the United Nations to prevent the practice of a system of child sacrifice in Africa. He states:

"In West Africa today, thousands of women and girls are still kept in horrific slavery. The practice is variously called 'Trokosi' or 'Fiashidi' or 'Woryokwe.' The terms mean 'Bride of the Gods.' "

Practice of the Trokosi/Fiashidi/Woryokwe belief system (religion), requires that little girls (sometimes 7 or 8 years of age) are taken from their parents and given to traditional shrines to atone for sins of family members and prevent thus appease the anger of the gods. Some children die because of this treatment, but many repeatedly become pregnant to the priests. Ghana has enacted (but apparently has not enforced) a law which makes illegal the Trokosi/Fiashidi/ Woryokwe practice, but in other African countries such as Togo and Benin, child sex slavery – a sacrifice to appease the wrathful gods and to make an atonement for the family's sin - is still legal. <http://www.in-australia.org.au/stbpetition.htm>

The *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* - 2000, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, February 23, 2001 states:

"Trokosi, a traditional practice found among the Ewe ethnic group and in part of the Volta Region.... is a system in which a young girl, sometimes under the age of 10, is made a slave to a fetish shrine for offenses allegedly committed by a member of the girl's family. In rare instances, boys are offered. The belief is that, if someone in that family has committed a crime, such as stealing, members of the family may begin to die in large numbers unless a young girl is given to the local fetish shrine to atone for the offense. The girl becomes the property of the fetish priest, must work on the priest's farm, and perform other labors for him. Because they are the sexual property of the priests, most Trokosi slaves have children by the priests. Although the girls' families must provide for their needs such as food, most are unable to do so. There are at least 2,200 girls and women bound to various shrines in the Trokosi system, a figure that does not include the slaves' children. Even when freed by her fetish priest from the more onerous aspects of her bondage, whether voluntarily or as a result of intervention by activists, a Trokosi woman generally has few marketable skills and little hope of marriage and typically remains bound to the shrine for life by psychological and social pressure arising from a traditional belief that misfortune may befall a Trokosi woman's family or village if she abandons her obligations to the shrine. When a fetish slave dies, her family is expected to replace her with another young girl, thus perpetuating the bondage to the fetish shrine from generation to generation....A local group, calling itself the "Troxovi Institutional Council" (Troxovi is alternate spelling for Trokosi), declared that Trokosi, as defined by CHRAJ and other human rights groups to be a form of ritual servitude, does not exist in the country. The group claimed that the practice of 'Troxovi' does exist but neither enslaves nor exploits anyone. The Council also listed 23 'genuine Troxovi shrines' in Ghana, describing them as educational institutions and as part of the 'Afrikania religion...' " <http://www.state.gov/q/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/803.htm>

Does the One True God require a human sacrifice to appease His wrath? Does the destruction of a child's life through repeated rapes, justify the parents' sinful behaviour? Does a child's suffering produce sanctification? Does ANY suffering produce justification and sanctification? Do any of these crimes reflect the loving character of God as demonstrated by the life of the Son of God? Absolutely not!

Cannibalism

Alexander Hyslop in the Two Babylons reveals that Baal worship combined the worship of the fire-god and the serpent-god. An essential element of Baal worship involved the rite of burnt offerings as a form of purification. The religion necessitated that the priests slay the victim and eat the burnt offering. In Baal worship, the sacrifice which had to be eaten, was the flesh of children. Similar rituals occurred in Egypt well before the Hebrews arrived. (Refer to Appendix for more information)

Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt.by Caroline Seawright, October 11, 2003

http://www.thekeep.org/~kunoichi/kunoichi/themestream/egypt_humansacrifice.html

The Cannibal Hymn

"Not strictly an offering to the gods, the Cannibal Hymn of Unas and Teti talk of cannibalism to gain power from the gods in ancient Egypt. The Pyramid Texts have a section that seems to hint that in Predynastic times, the ruler could gain the magical powers of the gods through human sacrifice. Utterances 273 - 274 of the Pyramid Texts, known as the Cannibal Hymn, describe the pharaoh as a god who cannibalises the gods - 'A god who lives on his fathers and feeds on his mothers ... who lives on the being of every god, who eats their entrails ... Pharaoh is he who eats men and lives on gods.'"

(Egyptian Mythology (Paul Hamlyn:1965:58).

*"There (in Phoenicia), the queen Astarte, entrusted to her (the goddess Isis) the care of her newly born son. **Isis adopted the baby and would have conferred immortality upon it had its mother not broken the charm by her cries of terror upon seeing the goddess bathe the baby in purificatory (purifying) flames.**"*

Hyslop traces the history of Baal worship from Egypt, to the Israelites.

*"Cannibalism was practised **by the priests** in ritualised child sacrifices in Egypt as the worship of the pagan "father of the gods" the fire-serpent god - Bol-Khan. "He devoured his sons as soon as they were born.". It was "through fire worship," that the worshippers sought "cleansing and regenerating (of) the souls of men." The same system of worship in Rome, termed the same god, "Vulcan."*

*"There is reason to believe that the same practice obtained in our own land in the times of the Druids. We know that they offered human sacrifices to their bloody gods. We have evidence that they made **"their children pass through the fire to Moloch,"** and that makes it highly probable that they also offered them in sacrifice; for, from Jeremiah 32:35, compared with Jeremiah 19:5 we find that these two things were parts of one and the same system. The god whom the Druids worshipped was Baal, as the blazing Baal-fires show, and **the last-cited passage proves that children were offered in sacrifice to Baal. When "the fruit of the body" was thus offered, it was "for the sin of the soul."** And it was a principle of the Mosaic law, a principle no doubt derived from the patriarchal faith, that the priest must partake of whatever was offered as a sin-offering (Num 18:9,10). Hence, the priests of Nimrod or Baal were necessarily required to eat of the human sacrifices; **and thus it has come to pass that "Cahna-Bal,"³³ * the "Priest of Baal," is the established word in our own tongue for a devourer of human flesh."** (Alexander Hyslop continued over page)*

33 The word Cahna is the emphatic form of Cahn. Cahn is "a priest," Cahna is "the priest."

(Alexander Hyslop continued)

*"Then the mode in which the rites of Tammuz³⁴ or Adonis were celebrated in Syria was essentially the same as the rites of Osiris....From the historian Castor (in Armenian translation of EUSEBIUS) we learn that it was under Bel, or Belus, that is Baal, that the Cyclops lived; and the Scholiast on Aeschylus states that these Cyclops were the brethren of Kronos, who was also Bel or Bal, as we have elsewhere seen. The eye in their forehead shows that originally this name was a name of the great god; for that eye in India and Greece is found the characteristic of the supreme divinity. **The Cyclops, then, had been representatives of that God--in other words, priests, and priests of Bel or Bal. Now, we find that the Cyclops were well-known as cannibals,** Referre ritus Cyclopum, "to bring back the rites of the Cyclops," meaning to revive the practice of eating human flesh." (OVID, Metam.) The Two Babylons, Alexander Hyslop, Chapter 7, Section 1, "The Great Red Dragon."*

<http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/twobaby/twobaby.html>

Some Christians consider that just as God permitted polygamy and divorce, because of the hardness of the Israelites' hearts, He also tolerated the Israelites' sacrificial system in their worship rituals, in preference to sacrificing their children, "which abomination" He hated? (Jer 32:35; Jer 19:5).

This suggestion has been made, yet it tends to cast doubt on God's character also. Doesn't God care about the animals which were slaughtered in these repetitive ceremonies and the pain which they endured?

Eventually, the ritual of human (including child) sacrifice was largely, but not completely replaced by the blood-letting substitutionary rites of circumcision and animal sacrifices.

³⁴ **Tammuz** means 'to perfect by burning' - Tam (to perfect); muz (to burn)

Ellen White on Child Sacrifice

While recognising that Ellen White was given the gift of prophecy and accepting her position as God's messenger, it is obvious that in keeping with her statement that "God has not given any one person all the light", we must consider the following comments to have been made with a true heart, but without special revelation from God on this matter. Ellen White does not claim that she "was shown" the following in special vision, or as a special communication from God. Perhaps, it is simply her human opinion.

3 Spiritual Gifts, p 303

"God was a wise and compassionate lawgiver, judging all cases righteously, and without partiality. While the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage, they were surrounded with idolatry. The Egyptians had received traditions in regard to sacrificing. They did not acknowledge the existence of the God of Heaven. They sacrificed to their idol gods. With great pomp and ceremony they performed their idol worship. They erected altars to the honor of their gods, and they required even their own children to pass through the fire. After they had erected their altars they required their children to leap over the altars through the fire. If they could do this without their being burned, the idol priests and people received it as an evidence that their god accepted their offerings, and favored especially the person who passed through the fiery ordeal. He was loaded with benefits, and was ever afterward greatly esteemed by all the people. He was never allowed to be punished, however aggravating might be his crimes. If another person who leaped through the fire was so unfortunate as to be burned, then his fate was fixed; for they thought that their gods were angry, and would be appeased with nothing short of the unhappy victim's life, and he was offered up as a sacrifice upon their idol altars. Even some of the children of Israel had so far degraded themselves as to practice these abominations, and God caused the fire to kindle upon their children, whom they made to pass through the fire. They did not go to all the lengths of the heathen nations; but God deprived them of their children by causing the fire to consume them in the act of passing through it." 3 Spiritual Gifts p 303

Was Ellen White accurately portraying God's character in this instance?

Are we to understand from her statement that the pagan Egyptian gods were more merciful and **less bloodthirsty** than the God of the Israelites? At least the god of the Egyptians permits **some** children to escape the flames. However, it appears that Ellen White believed that the One True God CAUSED the Israelites' children – ALL the Israelite children who were "passed through the fire" – to burn to death.

If Ellen White's statement is correct, (that God ensured that the Israelite's children burn to death on the pagan altars), then it inadvertently makes a dreadful attack on the character of God.

If Ellen White's statement is correct, then logic requires answers to the following questions:

- Didn't the One True God have the option of extinguishing the fire on the altar? (Yes. The same God refused to permit Satan to ignite fire on Baal's altar during Elijah's ceremony on Mt Carmel).
- Why then, did God not only permit the fire to burn all the children, but to CAUSE the fire to burn all the Israelites' children? (Answer: Jesus said that hurting children is wicked. God is not a serial child-murderer, but Satan has a record of child murder e.g. Infants in Egypt, infants in Bethlehem, child sacrifice etc.).
- Why didn't God extinguish the fire? (Answer: The parents, not God, burnt the children. God forbade child sacrifice, but when the parents disobeyed His direction, God being rejected, was not authorised to intervene to prevent their children's deaths).
- Would the One True God burn children on an altar to a pagan god?
- Would the One True God make an offering to another god? To a pagan god?

It is absurd and offensive to make such accusations against the pure, holy Creator.

For all these questions, we can find the answers in Jesus' life.

Jesus was not a child-murderer. Jesus would not even condone the stoning of an full-grown, sinful woman taken in adultery. It is ludicrous to believe that He would condone the burning of babies and children or in fact, that He would CAUSE the burning of children on the altar of pagan gods.

Perhaps Ellen White's words have another meaning, or if not, she clearly did not intend to speak against the One True God, whom she loved. It might be however, that her words, unknowingly implicated the Father's character as a murderer of little children.

Future Sacrifices – 'God' Says Kill 7th day Sabbath Keeping Children

It might be argued that while some professed “Christians” consider God has instructed them to perform child sacrifices (as the preceding news reports demonstrate), most Christians might recoil from the concept that God would command adults to sacrifice children. However how might the majority of modern Christians react *if* they truly believed the “One True God” did convey a similar murderous command today?

Consider the following possible scenarios:

- Perhaps the president of a country might feel impressed that “God” wants him/her to declare war on an “unholy” country. Would Christians support this impression as a divine instruction?
- Perhaps “an angel of light” appears to the world and instructs the Sunday-keeping Christians that for the sake of peace and unity, all seventh-day Sabbath keepers, including children, should be exterminated. Seventh-day Sabbath keepers might be accused of desecrating the first day sabbath and of being traitors to the world. How might professed Christians respond? Would they uphold God's holy law that forbids murdering men, women and children or would they also kill the “heretics”?

In ***Christ in Collision***, (published by Pacific Press, 1982:18) the author describes a similar situation which can be compared to a possible “last day” scenario as outline above. George E Rice states:

*“There were those (Jews of Christ's day) however who would speculate conditions that would usher in the Messiah's presence, but who would not set a date. **Repentance and good deeds for example, would hasten His appearance. Some went so far as to state that keeping a single sabbath properly by all the people would bring Him immediately. Indeed if all Israel kept two sabbaths properly they felt not only would the Messiah appear but the nation would be redeemed forthwith.**”*

Perhaps when, at the end of the world, the “angel of light” appears, he (Satan) might tell the world that if one or two Sunday sabbaths were kept perfectly by everyone that God would usher in the 1000 years of peace.....

The familiar doctrine of having to do something to appease an angry god might once again be presented – on pain of death. How likely is it to occur?

It is prophesied that Satan disguised “as an angel of light” will impersonate Christ (2 Cor 11:14).

John 16:2

“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. Will God's people kill then or will it be the demon-possessed people who are killing the true Christians?”

Ellen White, Great Controversy p 624

"As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: "Christ has come! Christ has come!" The people prostrate themselves in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and pronounces a blessing upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His voice is soft and subdued, yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying: This is 'the great power of God.' Acts 8:10."

Jeremiah 9:24

"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."

Circumcision – Which Covenant?

This section presents a theory which might challenge traditionally held beliefs about God and the rite of circumcision.

Definition of Circumcision: Surgery that removes the foreskin (the loose tissue) covering the glans of the penis. The Latin "circum-" means around (or about). **Circumcision is, literally, a cutting around.** Circumcision dates back to prehistoric times. It is one of the oldest surgical operations known to have been performed by people.

What is symbolised by the sign of circumcision?

In the Christian era, baptism is said to have replaced the Hebrew rite of circumcision as a sign of the new covenant. If circumcision was a sign of the old covenant, it was not similar to baptism.

1. A sign is supposed to be visible to others – publicly noticeable. Baptism is a visible, outward sign, but circumcision is not visible unless one was naked in public. Naked adults and children did participate in sexual orgies in the pagan fertility “religious” celebrations, but the One True God's religion had no rituals that were to be celebrated in a sexual manner;
2. Baptism is an elected ritual - Adults make an informed decision to choose their allegiance to God, but circumcision is performed on a baby before the baby is able to give consent or to refuse the procedure- in a similar manner to christening which is performed in the Roman Catholic and other churches;
3. Circumcision is a violent, blood-letting ceremony, while baptism is free from pain and bloodshed.

Questions

- How practical was it to use circumcision as a sign? Completely impractical. Circumcision is not a visible sign – unless a man is naked or his genitals are exposed.
- Is it logical to expect that the One True God established a “secret” sign, when what He required was a method that could broadcast His kingdom's loving laws to the world?
- Would God be entirely truthful if He established an inflexible, permanent sign to demonstrate a flexible, free-choice religious allegiance?
- Wouldn't a perfect system have allowed for a flexible sign which might be removed if a man decided to apostatise?
- If the man apostatised, he could keep his apostasy a secret. How would anybody else know of his change in religion unless his outward, visible behaviour also changed?
- Circumcised babies did not make a choice to be circumcised. How can their circumcision be recognised as a sign of their choice to give their allegiance to the One True God?

Origin of Circumcision

At the various International Symposiums on Circumcision, research has been found that the rite of circumcision pre-dates Abraham. The following points were presented by the various International Symposiums on Circumcision:

- *Bodies preserved since 4000BC have been exhumed in Egypt and disclose evidence of circumcision* "(Breasted, 353, p.10 cited in Gerald A Larue in Religious Traditions and Circumcision, 1991 2nd International Symposium on Circumcision).
- Evidence suggest that phallic pagan worship system, which involves circumcision, might have originated in ancient Egypt.
- In Egyptian mythology, Ra - the sun god - "the source of all life" - was said to have circumcised himself. From the blood of this operation, two deities were given life, resulting in a trinity of gods.
- Akhenaten, was a monotheist Egyptian pharaoh whose capital city was the place where the circumcised penis was found - Akhetaten (modern El-Amarna).
- Circumcision was the symbol of the sun god Aten's religion with which Moses was familiar.
- Obelisks were massive stone images displayed to represent erect, circumcised penises as a sign of fertility worship. They were found outside pagan temples.
- Kings, nobles and priests were circumcised so circumcision became a status symbol in Egypt. Average Egyptians could not afford the operation.
- Egyptian priests were only allowed to serve their god/s in their temples, if they were circumcised (a condition which also applied in the Israelite religious culture).
- In pagan religions circumcision is apparently a substitutionary blood offering to the god i.e. an offering of value, involving a sacred gift (reproductive organ), involving blood (life) and pain (penance);
- Circumcision appears to be a blood-letting ritual in a fertility ceremony which gives honour to pagan fertility gods.
- There is a connection between circumcision and human sacrifice. It is thought that human sacrifice was eventually largely replaced by circumcision in pagan religions
- Circumcision is thought to have been a substitution for human sacrifice.

(G. Rawlinson -- Ancient Egypt, vol. I, p. 452).

"Was it connected with phallic worship, and thus regarded as an offering to the deity of fertility? or was it, as some think, a substitute for human sacrifice?"

John P Warren and Jim Bigelow in The Case against Circumcision

"We do not know with certainty why this operation was carried out, but many writers have suggested that it was a sacrificial rite. No doubt human sacrifice was widespread, and it seems likely that substitutes for this practice included the sacrifice of domestic animals and mutilations of the human body, of which circumcision is just one example." <http://www.come-and-hear.com/editor/br-warren/>

Jewish Culture

Today, the Jewish religion requires that, even if a baby boy was circumcised in a "religious-free" operation previously, or was born without a foreskin, he must undergo a special 'covenant ratification' circumcision ceremony. The Mohle (circumciser) will prick the baby's penis so that blood is shed in a religious ceremony/rite, or else the Abrahamic covenant is not ratified.

Note the following news report from the Sydney Morning Herald, by Barney Zwartz on 27 October, 2006. The heading read: **"Anger as Rabbis Demand Boy be Recircumcised."**

*"A BOY on the verge of his bar mitzvah was told he was not properly circumcised and therefore was not Jewish. Orthodox rabbis in Sydney said he had to be recircumcised within four days or the ceremony - which marks the transition of Jewish boys to adulthood at 13 - could not go ahead. The boy's mother, the journalist Ros Reines, said she was shocked and sickened, and refused a second circumcision. "He's undoubtedly circumcised. It's just a matter of degree," she said. She was able to arrange the ceremony on the same day this month at a Progressive synagogue (a more liberal version of Judaism). In accordance with Jewish practice, the boy was circumcised when he was eight days old. It was done in hospital by a Jewish doctor in the presence of a rabbi. Ms Reines, a convert to Judaism, told the Orthodox rabbis she would not contemplate an operation under general anaesthetic four days before the ceremony. "I said that's not an option. They then tried to persuade my son, but even if he said he wanted to, which he didn't, I wouldn't allow it. Imagine if he got an infection. "It's not a good thing to say, but those people have gone mad on their power." She said it was "so hurtful" to be told her son wasn't Jewish. If he had been in Nazi Germany he would certainly have been "consigned to the ovens". The Australian Jewish News quotes one of the rabbis, Moshe Gutnick, as saying the Progressive synagogue was "fooling the child" into believing he was Jewish. **Rabbi Gutnick said they noticed the incomplete circumcision as they prepared to take a drop of blood from the boy's penis to symbolise his Orthodox conversion. They called a mohel (ritual circumciser) who confirmed it needed to be done again. A Melbourne mohel, Dr Herschel Goldman, said yesterday a proper circumcision required the whole head of the penis to be revealed when erect. 'Do we test that? No, but often you can see,' he said. He said the boy was a convert, which required him to be circumcised, accept the commandments and take a ritual bath. If he was already circumcised, a ritual drop of blood would be taken instead, as happened here. 'It's a tragic event. It's certainly sad for the boy and his mother too.'**"*

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/rabbis-demand-boy-be-recircumcised/2006/10/26/1161749260137.html>

1 Samuel 16:7

"...for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Roman Catholic Culture

The Roman Catholic church celebrates the Feast of Circumcision eight days after the supposed birth of Christ on 25 December. (Tammuz –the Babylonian sun god, was said to be reborn each year on 25 December). The feast of Circumcision falls 8 days later on 1 January. The Roman Catholic "Feast of Fools" falls also on the Feast of Circumcision.

The "fathers" of the Catholic religion ruled that circumcision was not just a mere ceremony, but a sacramental rite.

Ancient Israelite Culture

God forbade “cutting into the flesh” operations in ceremonies which mourned the dead.

Leviticus 21:5

“They (**the priests**) shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, **nor make any cuttings in their flesh.**”

It seems strange that God forbade any cuttings into the Israelites' flesh to mourn the dead, but supposedly commanded that all male babies were to be circumcised on the 8th day of life. Even the strangers and slaves were to be circumcised – which might be seen as an amazing denial of the freedom of choice – a practice nowhere reflected in Jesus' teachings.

Genesis 17:10-13

“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. (11) And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. (12) And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. (13) He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

Abraham apparently performed the circumcision operations and the tradition was passed down through the Israelite families even while in captivity in Egypt, however for the forty years of desert wanderings under Moses' leadership, circumcision was NOT permitted, supposedly to represent that God would not recognise the Israelites as His people. After crossing into the Promised Land, Joshua announced that there would be a mass circumcision ceremony at Gilgal.

Joshua 5:8, 9

“And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. (9) And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.”

Immediately following the operations, Joshua commented that “the reproach of the Egyptians was now rolled off” them. The Egyptians considered the circumcised to be nobility class - it was the UNcircumcised males who were a reproach - they were merely slaves or commoners. Only the Pharaoh, priests and the wealthy could be circumcised.

How could the reproach of the Egyptians be rolled off the uncircumcised Israelites? Only by becoming circumcised - which would identify them (in sexual fertility ceremonies) as nobility or priests of Aten, the god of the Egyptians.

Would it not be logical to assume that a pagan god would be pleased that the reproach of the Egyptians (uncircumcision) is rolled off the Israelites? Wouldn't the pagan god be pleased that a million males were permanently marked with the sign of the sun god?, Wouldn't the pagan's god be delighted to lead the Israelite men to display their “mark of devotion” to the sun-god to the Canaanites when they joined in their fertility ceremonies?

The Israelite's mass circumcision ritual occurred in a location called **Gilgal**. The word “**gilgal**” means 'circle of stones' or 'wheel' and apparently stems from a duplication of the root *gll* meaning 'to roll' or to 'roll away.'

Gilgal was the first place that the Israelites camped after crossing the Jordan River (Joshua 4:19). After crossing the Jordan River, Joshua instructed that the Israelites set up a memorial. A monument was constructed from twelve unhewn river stones (Joshua 4:20).

The actual location of Joshua's Gilgal is not certain today, although it is interesting that some say Gilgal is currently the location of a huge five-ringed solar wheel (photo available at: <http://www.mt.net/~watcher/gilgalrefaim.jpg>) .

Amos describes Gilgal as a place to multiply transgression (Amos 4:4; 5:5). Hosea notes that evil was done at Gilgal (Hos 9:15) and makes reference to the sacrifices which were offered there as “vanity” or worthless (Hos 12:11).

When the Assyrians took control of Gilgal, the Assyrian chief god Ashur (an eagle-headed, winged deity) was worshipped there – at the place of the solar wheel. Ashur was the god of water and of corn. He was depicted in a winged - wheel and holding a bow and arrow. To the Assyrians, the solar wheel which surrounded their country's god, was a symbol of life, and the idol was worshipped as a god not of war only, but also of fertility. His blessing required human sacrifices. (**Sacred Texts** CD-ROM, chapter 14 p 346: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/ane/mba/mba20.htm>)

Perhaps it is not illogical to suppose that the Israelites believed that, just as Ashur, the Assyrian god of fertility and war would have been pacified through their blood-letting ritual, that Yahweh also might be similarly pleased, for immediately following their mass circumcision ceremony, the Israelites waged violent war against the Canaanites, apparently with the blessing of the “Lord” and at his command.

The Israelites might have believed that the Lord was “appeased” based on the story of Moses' experience in his journey to Egypt to ask Pharaoh to let God's people go.

Exodus 4:19-26

“And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. (20) And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. (21) And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. (22) And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: (23) And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. (24) And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. (25) Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. (26) So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.”

The three verses dealing with the circumcision of the baby boy appears to be “slotted in” to the main story, but it does not flow well. One finds questions brought to mind.

- If God wanted the baby circumcised, why didn't He remind or tell Moses of this vitally important condition, prior to giving him the important job of leading the Hebrew people out of bondage?
- Why did God attempt to kill Moses, when He had just given him the leadership task?
- Why did Zipporah immediately assume that the bloody ritual of circumcision was necessary to appease the angry “God?”

Some insight into this intriguing situation might be gained by understanding some of the rituals which were believed and practised in Egypt and in many of the countries of Canaan.

According to Egyptian religious beliefs, Isis was the wife and sister goddess of Osiris, the ruler of the Egyptian gods. Seth, who is Osiris' jealous brother, kills Osiris by tricking him into lying inside a wooden chest which he then locks and throws into the Nile River. Isis searches for the chest which contain the remains of Osiris, but when the chest is recovered, Seth rushes in and dismembers the body. Seth scatters the parts of Osiris' body, but Isis manages to find and gather all of them, except for his penis. Isis manages to put all the pieces together and makes a wooden penis to take the place of the missing organ. She then "breathes" into Osiris, the breath of life by waving her wings over his body parts. Then Osiris and Isis have a sexual experience, using the wooden penis and Isis becomes pregnant. Her son is born and is called Horus.

Jonathan Kirsch (1997:167) considers the similarities of the story of Zipporah and Isis. Both stories involve:

- *an attack on a husband;*
- *rescue by the wife;*
- *a penis operation;*
- *and wings. Zipporah means 'bird.'*

Kirsch (1997:173) continues:

"The notion of circumcision as a surrogate for child sacrifice begins to explain even the most bizarre and baffling details of Exodus 4:24-26. An angry and vengeful Yahweh seeks to kill the father of a firstborn son – or perhaps the child himself – because Yahweh has been denied the offering of flesh and blood to which he is entitled by divine decree. When Zipporah cuts off the foreskin of her son, her firstling, she is safely mimicking the sacrifice of the child himself - she is 'sanctifying' the baby who 'opened the womb of Israel' precisely as God had commanded. Only through the mock sacrifice in the form of a circumcision is God appeased and only then does he break off his attack....."

It is recorded in the King James Version of the Bible, that Zipporah circumcised her baby, then threw the foreskin at Moses' feet, however the KJV has used the expression "cast it at Moses' feet" when the Hebrew text actually states "made it touch his feet." The KJV also sometimes uses the word "feet" when it is referring to "genitals" (e.g. Deuteronomy 28:57).

Recall that the most valuable part of any offering that was made to the gods, was the blood - for "the life is in the blood." The blood of circumcision also sealed the covenant between Yahweh and the Hebrew race (Genesis 17:10; Acts 7:8; Romans 4:11).

John Wesley's Notes on the Bible

"Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, for all things by the law were purged with blood" (Heb 9:22; Exo 24:8)."

The sacrificial blood also sanctified and anointed the priesthood.

Exodus 29:20-21

"Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round

about. (21) And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him."

How did Zipporah use the "precious, sealing blood" of the circumcision covenant? Did she unceremoniously 'throw it away?' It seems unlikely. According to the Hebrew terms, it appears she might have used it to anoint Moses' genitals. If so, she would have been following a practice similar to that which was later recorded in the Mosaic 'anointing' laws for the sanctification of the priests, only the blood was applied to other body parts and not the genitals.

Kirsch (1997:163) remarks

Indeed we might wonder whether it was some priestly redactor,³⁵ rather than God, who cared so passionately about circumcision. The fact is that circumcision was not a uniquely Israelite ritual in the era of the Exodus; it was practised by the Egyptians and many of the native dwelling peoples of Canaan, too. So a circumcised sexual organ could not have served to readily distinguish the Israelites from their neighbors in their early history. Among the peoples of Canaan, the Bible identifies only the Philistines and the unfortunate kinsmen of Hamor, prince of the Hivites, as uncircumcised."

Conclusion

Historical evidence reveals that pagan gods were considered to possess both good and evil traits in their characters. Worshippers of these gods desired to receive 'blessings' from the gods and also to avoid receiving their 'curses.' The common pagan belief system taught that human beings could anger the gods by their misbehaviour (committing sin). To prevent the gods from retaliating against the offenders tribe, the ritual of bloody human sacrifices were designed. Pagan religions taught that the 'life was in the blood.' The shedding of blood therefore, represented the immortal spirit of the sacrificed person, and was thus considered sacred. To appease the offended gods, or to ask for favours, this blood (representing the life of the immortal soul) was presented to the gods as an irresistible offering. It was reasoned that a human sacrifice would demonstrate the belief that the god/s originated life (i.e. the god was the creator). The ritual of the human sacrifice produced a 'sacred' symbol of that life – the blood. This life, as symbolised by the blood, was returned to the god/s who were thought to have originally given that life to humanity.

However, human sacrifices were eventually seen to be very 'expensive' as each 'gift' to the gods inflicted further suffering on the remaining members of the tribe through the loss of labour, protection and potential offspring. Though it was still considered necessary to 'stay on the good side' of the pagan deities, a less costly sacrificial system was conceived.

Slowly, pagan worshippers began to develop alternative blood-letting rituals as a substitute for human and child sacrifice. The sacrifice of animals – as substitutes for human sacrifice - began to become common and yet it did not entirely replace human sacrifice.

Human sacrifices still continued in the form of the bloody ritual of circumcision. While the life of the victim was not destroyed, the 'sacred' blood was still obtained - from the organ that to the pagan mind, represented the origin of life – the penis.

³⁵ Redactor - similar to an editor

The 'precious blood' was still provided to satiate the god/s, and pain was involved for the victim, but it did not cost the life of the victim. Pain and self-inflicted suffering was thought to be especially motivating to the gods and circumcision caused pain and blood loss. Thus the rite of circumcision was a perfect substitute for human sacrifice.

Circumcision had value as appeasement offering because it:

- **substituted taking the life of the child/victim;**
- **caused strong pain;**
- **involved the shedding of blood;**
- **permitted an offering to the gods of the symbol of life – the blood; and**
- **involved the organ symbolic of life and fertility – the penis;**
- **caused a permanent sign in the flesh which symbolised that the worshipper was dedicated to the sun god (the god which was recognised to be the creator of life)**

Archaeological findings reveal that the bloody rite of circumcision was practiced in Egypt as early as 4,500 BC, pre-dating Abraham's covenant in 1875 BC by some 2600 years.

Just as the wedding ring originated from pagan customs to signify the shape and colour and eternalness of the sun, so too circumcision made a permanent, circular mark in the flesh of the male organ of reproduction that signified its wearer as a worshipper of the ultimate fertility god - the sun god– the “source of all life” (to the pagan). ³⁶

Would the One True God require His people injure themselves and to become fixated on a reproductive organ – a sign of fertility – when He is the True and Only Creator? The life of Jesus did not ever exhort God's people to injure themselves in worshipping Him, but Satan's religions certainly appear to do so.

³⁶ *To investigate the subject of circumcision further, visit www.themeofthebible.com and send email via the “contact me” button and request further information.*

Gentle Jesus?

Gentle Jesus,
Meek and mild
Look upon
A little child.

Gentle Jesus?
Or cruel and vile?
Does He like to kill
Just once in a while?

Would Jesus slit
The tender throat
Of a trusting lamb
Or a baby goat?

Would He smile
And kill the little lamb?
And would He sacrifice
Both ewe and ram?

Would He ring the neck
Of a turtle dove
As He sent a prayer
To His Father above?

Would Christ enjoy
To take the knife
And thrust it hard
To extinguish life?

A newborn calf
With eyes so brown
Would Jesus slash it?
Watch it thrash around?

Would He collect
Their blood and boast
That He would sanctify
A sinful host?

Would He then enjoy
A sausage sizzle

Consuming flesh
From which blood drizzles?

An animal writhing
In distress;
Are these the scenes
That Christ likes best?

Gentle Jesus
If you're cruel and vile
Please don't look upon
My little child.

© Sherlene Turner, 21 October, 2006

Animal Sacrifices

Animal sacrifices were prominent in the Jewish sanctuary services.

Prior to examining the issue from a Biblical perspective, this section looks briefly at modern day, Jewish animal sacrifices. Some readers might find the pictures of chickens being slaughtered distressing. Desensitised readers might not be offended or upset at the graphic scenes of chickens being slaughtered.

The following article and photographs can be found at Israel National News.com at <http://www.israelnn.com/news.php3?id=113032>

Photo Essay: An Ancient Custom on the Eve of Yom Kippur

14:39 Oct 05, '06 / 13 Tishrei 5767

by Ezra HaLevi



The custom of kapparot, performed with a live chicken, is one of the strangest and most controversial of Yom Kippur traditions. Arutz-7 brings you to Jerusalem's shuk to witness it.

Next to Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market, hundreds of chickens await their role in a ritual that is as passionately opposed as it is embraced on the eve of the Yom Kippur Day of Atonement.



A chicken waits its turn.

Kapparot, which is from the same Hebrew root as Yom Kippur and literally means 'atonements,' is a custom which aims to awaken the drive toward repentance while engaging in charity on the eve of Judaism's central day of prayer.

The practice of kapparot using live fowl entails the following: A male or female chicken is taken in hand, corresponding to the gender of the taker or family members on whose behalf they are performing the ritual. Psalm 107:17-20 and Job 33:23-24 are recited and the live bird is swung around the person's head three times. While swinging, the person recites the following three times: "This be my substitute, my vicarious offering, my atonement. This cock (or hen) shall meet death, but I shall find a long and pleasant life of peace."











“As the bird is slaughtered, the person thinks about how he himself deserves what is being done to the bird, and through this is inspired

to repent, draw closer to the G-d, and remove the decree from upon his head,” explains Rabbi Eliezer Melamed of the Har Bracha Yeshiva.





Immediately following shekhita, kosher slaughter, the chickens are placed in cones to begin the process of draining the blood, which may not be consumed.

The chickens, or the money used to purchase them, are then donated to the poor, to provide them with food before and after the Yom Kippur fast.



The feathers are removed.

The practice was vehemently opposed by various rabbis throughout Jewish history. The Rashba (Solomon ben Aderet, 1235-1310) relates that he found the custom to resemble the forbidden rites of the Amorites, proscribed by the Torah. “I distanced myself from this custom greatly and instructed that it be nullified, and with grace from Heaven my words were heard and the practice no longer remains in our city,” he wrote.

Rabbi Yosef Karo, in the *Shulchan Aruch*, his major work on Jewish law, wrote that the custom should not be performed and warned that it had parallels to polytheistic rites. Rabbi Moses Isserles, the Ramah, author of a major commentary on Karo’s work, disagrees, saying the practice is an ancient custom and should not be changed. Kabbalists such as Rabbi Yitzchak Luria of Tzfat were said to have embraced the custom and attached deep mystical significance to it. Other Kabbalists, such as the Ramban (Nachmanides), were opposed to the ritual as well.

Most of the critics, and many of the ritual’s supporters as well, worried that people would misunderstand the significance of the ritual, thinking it involved a transfer of a person’s sins to a bird to then be eradicated. The Mishna Berura reminds those who perform it to remember that it is no substitute for true repentance.

Some Jews oppose the use of chickens on the grounds of the Biblical ban on tza’ar ba’alei chayim, causing pain to animals, but it is far from certain that the waved chickens are caused any more distress in the ritual than they would be prior to any slaughter.”



Anti-kapparot demonstrators opposite the Jerusalem shuk. Sign reads "Kapparot with money and not with death."

(Photo: Daniel Sieradski)

"Those uneasy with the use of live fowl perform the ritual with money instead, giving the monetary equivalent of a slaughtered chicken (15 shekels, \$3.50) to charity on behalf of every family member. Communities that historically did not have chickens would use geese, fish or plants – but not doves or any other animals that were offered in the Holy Temple, so as not to resemble Temple sacrifices."



Many opt to perform the custom using money instead of live fowl. (Photos: Ezra HaLevi)

A sample of comments regarding public reaction to these photos on the internet demonstrates an important fact – that generally vegetarians are not in favour of the slaughtering of animals, but that those who consume meat and animal products often do not object to the slaughter of animals.

The argument appears to be that, slaughtering an animal as a sacrifice can be justified on the basis that the animal would be slaughtered to provide meat anyway. It is reasoned that slaughtering an animal for meat purposes is not wrong, so why should people consider it wrong to slaughter an animal as a sacrifice – especially when its body is going to be used to feed poor people?

Vegetarians appear to argue from the basis that it is not right – but cruel and violent - to slaughter an animal for either sacrificial or meat/food purposes.

Mary from New York writes: #1 ***theres nothing wrong with slaughtering (sic) a chicken*** #2 *these chickens that are slautered (sic) are given to the poor so it IS charity*, #3 *there is no torture involved here, so what are you people blabbing about!?"*

Shoshana Krol from Ramat Beit Shemesh writes: ***"I want to know if they eat***

chicken? It has to be killed, right? It is done properly, kosher! What will these people do when we are again required to do Temple Sacrifices?!"

Moses from New York writes: *"This practice is actually very beneficial for the chicken and elevates its spiritual essence. **Since chickens were only created to provide man food this custom allows the chicken to accomplish its purpose in a holy way by participating in the mitzvah.** The chickens feel no pain whatsoever when properly slaughtered according to Jewish law. When this practice is performed in sincere holiness by a god-fearing Shohet (Jewish ritual slaughterer) you will notice that the chickens actually quarrel among each-other in order to be chosen and sanctified by this holy mitzvah. I have witnessed this myself and it is amazing and inspiring watching these chickens courageously and fearlessly volunteer to sacrifice and sanctify their lives in holiness for sake of this holy mitzvah. I invite the self righteous so-called animal rights activists among you to sincerely and honestly consider the harm you are doing to the chickens by your libelous and hate-field words against the Torah and the holy deeds of the righteous."*

Eli from Binyamin writes: *"The previous writer obviously didn't read the article. The only difference between this ritual and year round slaughter is the painless waving of the bird. He also missed the article's explanation that the chicken does not receive the sins. Rather, **the knowledge that that chicken is about to meet its end helps bring a person to accept the precariousness of his own future and thus leads to proper repentance** & his disgust with those who merely wave a bird proves the veracity of R' Kook's statement that animal rights activism leads to hatred of those who don't join this man-made mitzvah."*

Moshe from New York writes: *"Some of the posts contain erroneous information about the custom of "Kapparoth". The poster in the picture refers to this as "Pidyon" (Redemption of sin by giving charity to the poor). The "Shehitah" (ritual slaughter) of the fowl is done according to the "halachah" (Jewish law). The fowl is given to poor families as charity. The concept of "Pidyon" is established in Jewish Law (Redemption "Pidyon" of the first-born etc). The "Shulchan Aruch" (Code of Jewish Law) and the "Mishneh Torah" of the "Rambam" provide that is a meritorious and beneficial way of giving charity before the Yom Kippur.(Day of Atonement). **Please note that the fowl is slaughtered humanely in accordance with Jewish Law.**"*

Andy from Mechanicsburg writes: *"We live on a farm and every year friends come to hunt the deer. Often we get invited to a venison meal and/or get some meat to store in the freezer for further use. However, I wouldn't go to a reataurant and have a life lobster killed for my consumption. But I wouldn't hesitate if the lobster would be already dead. So let's not be hypocritical. **If you buy meat at the store someone had to kill it before you throw it in your skillet. As long as there's no inhumane handling I have no problem with it whether this practise makes sense or not.**"*

Ryan H from Ashdod writes: *"This custome is Pagan and needs to be deleted. The Backward mindset of many Jews is embarresing (sic) to me. Kitniyot on Pesach - No Basis. Dressing like a freak in fur hats from Poland - No Basis. **People are so scared to***

break from tradition because they and their dogmatic unthinking communities are unable to differentiate between custom and law. The contention that Minhag becomes law is the most regressive of all."

Mary from Houston writes: *"The whole Torah is based upon substitutionary atonement of sins by placing the sins on innocent animals."*

EGW from Vancouver writes: *"Atonement, Substitute, Vicarious Offering. The practice is a combination of sending the pure animal into the desert, laden with the sins of the people, and the original Temple sacrifice of a person. Batya, seeing these birds in such horrible situations...what did you do about it??? Did you upbraid the shopkeeper?? I have seen many Capparot ceremonies and never saw a bird "swung" but gently circled over the head. I have practiced this custom since babyhood. We used money instead of birds. It all goes to charity and it a good practice, the Sages who disagreed, had their own reasons who knows why?"*

Avi D from Israel writes: *"Since you seem to know halacha, please explain how the mishna brura is barbaric, and what exactly the difference between korbonos (ie chatas) and kapores is- they both "absolve" good yidden of their sins using the dead of an animal. And that is the best possible use of animals anyway. Eating it is a much lower form of tikun- or are you a vegetarian?!? (sic) That would be ignoring the whole first section of Yoreh Deiah! And what is wrong with giving your chicken to poor people- do you also have something again giving tzeddaka?!?!?!?"*

Laura writes: *"This is taking animal rights too far. A bird being waved around hardly conotes savegery! And if you eat chicken you are full of bull! The birds are slaughtered the usual way and given to the poor. What is the difference if they were held over someone's head a few seconds first!?? some people have nothing better to do than criticize others. When was the last time you did an act of kindness or donated to charity. Give me a break!!"*

Avraham writes: *"The Chickens are quite calm during the kapores session. I think they get nervous when they feel the knife. Let me tell you something. People TAG animals, punch holes through cow's ears, inject chickens with microchips, etc for tracking. These animals undergo shechita and are fine - they die but don't suffer any more than the farmer picking one up and lopping off it's (sic) head. Why on earth is this an issue??? Now, for some humor, some militray Cadence... "Swing that chicken 'round your head... in a few hours, he'll be dead, sound off, 1,2 sound off, 3,4 1,2,3,4, they're dead meat. lol!! Lighten up."*

JP Sutton from New York City writes: *"Torturing an innocent (non-sinful) creature to death to absolve oneself of sins simply adds one more sin. Instead of buying a chicken/rooster, use the money for kaporos and then give it to the needy. Judaism is normally more enlightened than this barbaric, selfish practice indicates. Torturing animals in a ritual devised by man, not demanded by HaShem, is inexcusable. What a bunch of heathen savages to perform such a brutal act -- esp for selfish gain. Shame on all who participate in this disgraceful display of savagery."*

Batyah writes: *“This is a disgrace, and nowhere in Torah are we commanded to do this idiotic practice. **It makes me so ashamed when I see religious people standing around thinking they are so pious all the while they are abusing defenseless animals.** I have seen chickens at Mahane Yehuda lying in their own vomit and excrement, unable to move, with their feet wired together, and their wings broken. **What happened to Jewish kindness?** I hope that these Haredim and Chassidim who are the main practitioners of this stupidity will see the light and correct themselves. Or else go to hell for this aveira.”*

The same arguments that appear in the preceding comments as attempts to justify and support the slaughter of chickens, are also made by fishing and hunting enthusiasts. In response to concerns for the fish or animals' pain, it is stated that, “Fish don't feel the pain” or, “It's a quick death.” While these assumptions might comfort fishermen and quiet a hunter's conscience, science argues against their veracity and a sensitive conscience protests the cruelty.

For those who argue that the sanctuary services were ordained of the Creator God, perhaps a viewing of the film “Meet Your Meat” (from the www.themeofthebible.com website), would be thought-provoking. The following section presents the author's testimony, written in response to that film:

“What words could express my reaction? I am sickened and shocked to my very being; initially speechless with revulsion; amazed as to how any human being could condone such limitless cruelty; enraged at the system that hides these atrocities from the public eye in the name of 'business' and revolted by a religious system that proclaims that God commanded a similar system for the mutilation of live animals in the Old Testament sanctuary rituals.

The most dreadful footage of the poor animals hoisted up by their legs alive, and having their throats cut while still alive was too much to view. I had to turn my eyes away; my stomach reacting with revulsion, but the poor animals had no such escape from the torture and dreadful road to death. What indescribable agony! What monstrous cruelty! What absolute vileness! My senses conveyed overwhelming revulsion.

While taking fearful glimpses of the throat-slitting sections of your video, I thought about the animal sacrifices described in the Old Testament of the Bible, which were supposedly instigated by the God of Life - the Creator God Himself. This disgusting, violent, infinitely evil practice of sacrificing animals is said to be pleasing to God; this 'fact' it is stated 39 times in the first 4 books of the Bible (e.g. Exodus 29:18).

It is illogical to suggest that the Life-giver - a God worthy of worship and respect - would command the violent slaughter of animals which He created. Such a god would not be respected, but abhorred.

Is it so difficult for Christians to remove the blindfolds with which traditional beliefs have placed upon their eyes?

On the Vegetarian Network Victoria website <http://www.vnv.org.au/CD.htm> there appears a statement from the late Linda McCartney. She says, 'If slaughterhouses had glass walls, the whole world would be vegetarians.' In the same way, perhaps Christians might benefit by exposing themselves to a reality check. Perhaps those who believe that God commanded the slitting of an animal's throat as a 'holy act', in a holy place, (the sanctuary court) might benefit by viewing footage of 'Meet Your Meat.' The video reveals the intense pain involved in performing 'holy' animal sacrifices by the throat-slitting method. Perhaps Christians might be motivated to rethink their traditional position concerning the violent attributes they presume constitute God's character.

It would be interesting to consider the outcome arising from a more honest viewing of church doctrines. Why don't church leaders reveal to prospective members, the 'fine print' of the baptismal agreement?

In many churches, many baptismal candidates are required to accept that the Bible is inerrant; yet if they accept that belief, it is necessary also that they believe that God ordained, commanded and initiated the brutal, violent slaughtering of animals as ritualised sacrifices - for the Bible insists that such sacrificial rituals were commanded by God and given through Moses in the Old Testament.

Incredibly, it seems easy for many dedicated Christians to accept this 'sterilised' doctrine, perhaps due to the fact that few Christians have ever witnessed with their own eyes, the horror of an animal's throat being slit and the resultant, slow death of the pain-crazed victims. Some sacrificial proponents even claim that sacrificial animals do not suffer pain, but the evidence on 'Meet Your Meat' does not sustain that fictitious belief; in fact, it proves the belief to be a conscience-comforting fallacy – a lie.

If, as part of their Bible study preparations, adult Christians were required to view a sacrificial re-enactment scene, perhaps the heart-wreching sight might deter the candidates from declaring allegiance to the monstrous god who commands and delights in the suffering of innocent creatures. Perhaps there might be less baptisms and more logical questioning of the way God's character is viewed.

Christians need to know the character of their God and not confuse the holy God of Life and Love, with the evil god of pain, death and destruction.

Can anyone be drawn through 'love' to a god who commands the butchering of animals? It is contrary to logical thought that a loving, pure and holy God could condone, command and take pleasure in such atrocities. Only an evil, monstrous being could find pleasure in the infinite suffering, torture and abuse of helpless creatures, whether the killings take place in the abattoir or in the Old Testament sanctuary."

Clearly **the place** where the killing of an animal occurs, does not make it a holy act, but can **the purpose** of the killing, justify the death of the animal?

Consider the purposes for which animals are killed or abused:

- profit;
- sport;
- entertainment;
- food production;
- sacrificial purposes to negate guilt and sin; and
- pest control

Is it moral to kill or abuse animals for any reason? Is it ever necessary? No. God promises that He would even miraculously rebuke the devourer (pests, problem animals).

Malachi 3:11

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts."

A little faith in God might help us see things differently – from a more gentle perspective. However, just as in the pre-flood days, religious and secular violence toward human beings and toward animals is filling the earth once again.

Genesis 6:11

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.”

Movement To Bring Back Jewish Temple Sacrifices

"It's not a question of 'maybe' or 'if'," says the Temple Institute's Rabbi Yisrael Ariel. "Bringing the Paschal sacrifice is a Torah obligation incumbent upon the People of Israel these very days."

Speaking with Yoel Yaakobi of the weekly B'Sheva newspaper, Rabbi Ariel said that though there are some grave Halakhic [Jewish legal] problems associated with bringing the Paschal sacrifice, "we have found the solutions, and the obligation is as strong as ever. This is one of the only two positive Biblical commandments that those who forsake it are liable to receive the ultimate karet [cutting off] punishment. From the moment that a Jew stands on the Temple Mount and the site of the Holy Temple is under our control, the Jewish People are immediately obligated to bring this sacrifice."

Sixteen of the 613 Biblical commandments relate to the Paschal sacrifice, which must be brought on the 14th day of the month of Nissan - Passover eve - and eaten on the night of the 15th. The 200 commandments that are connected with the Temple cry out every day, 'Jews, where are you?!'" Rabbi Ariel: Paschal Sacrifice is Still Obligatory, 14:35 Apr 20, 2006 / 22 Nisan 5766 by Hillel Fendel
<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=102189>

Three arguments will be examined in this section:

- the illogical premise, that the violent act of sacrificing an animal produces penitence for sinful behaviour;
- that violent acts of sacrificing an animal enhances one's understanding and appreciation of a non-violent Person's character (Christ's) and demonstrate the plan of salvation; and
- the illogical premise that salvation can be 'bought' and forgiveness 'purchased' by material gifts that human beings bring to God i.e. the doctrine of indulgences.

Violence Begets Violence

The question has been asked, "But why would God want man to go through the awful procedure of killing an animal?"

The usual answer is similar to that given below:

"When the offerer saw the sacrifice suffering and bleeding for the sins which he had committed, he was impressed with the awfulness of sin and the penalty of death (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) the sinner deserved. THE SACRIFICE SHOWED HIM GOD'S:

- **HOLINESS because of His hatred of all evil;**

- **JUSTICE because He does not leave sin unpunished;**
- **MERCY because of His readiness to pardon the truly repentant and believing by providing a substitute for him.**

http://www.amfi.org/l_chaim.htm

The reasoning appears to be that the results of sin and sinful behaviour are not obvious in the natural world, so human beings must be shocked and horrified by the ritualistic slaughter of young and gentle animals by cutting their throats. This violent process will cause them to realise the horror of death and somehow will cause them to understand how evil are the results of sin.

Violence begets violence. Does causing the violent death of a gentle, young animal foster the development of a sensitive spirit and a gentle character in the slaughterer?

Research undoubtedly supports the opposite position. It is not sensitivity, but desensitivity that is caused by repeated exposure to the suffering of animals. Acceptance of violence against animals, is shown to be instrumental in directing violence toward human beings.

The National Anti-Vivisection Society makes the following observations:

"Criminology studies show a link between animal cruelty and violence to humans."³⁷ *It is not uncommon that a murderer or*

37 Arluke, A. and Lockwood, R. (Eds.). Society and Animals, Special Theme Issue: Animal Cruelty, Volume 5, Number 3, 1997, Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, P.O. Box 1297, Washington Grove, MD 20880-1297.

Ascione, F. and Arkow, P. (Eds.). 1999. Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, IN.

Duel, D. 2000. Violence Prevention and Intervention: A Directory of Animal-Related Programs, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Frasch, P., Otto, S., Olsen, K., and Ernest, P. "State Animal Anti-Cruelty Statutes: An Overview," Animal Law, Volume 5, 1999, pp. 69-80.

Kellert & Felthous, Childhood Cruelty toward Animals among Criminals and Non-Criminals, 38 Hum. Rel., 1985, pp. 1113-29.

Lacroix, C. "Another Weapon for Combating Family Violence: Prevention of Animal Abuse," Animal Law, Volume 4, 1998, pp. 1-31.

Lockwood, R. and Ascione, F. (Eds.). 1998. Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence: Readings in Research and Application, Purdue University Press, West

*spouse/child abuser has had a past that included deliberate harm or torture to animals. When you think about it, this makes sense because compassion is a quality that transcends species. So what does this have to do with animal dissection? Does dissection encourage violent behavior? Does it make the student less caring and sensitive to suffering? **Research indicates that the more frequently people are exposed to a certain situation, the more comfortable they become with it.** Therefore, students who may be uncomfortable with the first dissection exercise are likely to become increasingly more comfortable with the procedure with repeated exposure. **This desensitization to violence in animals and how it may translate into desensitization to violence in people is increasing gaining the attention of psychologist and sociologists.***

http://www.navs.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ain_edu_link_violence_cruelty

According to Arluke and Lockwood, “**criminology studies show a link between animal cruelty and violence to humans.**” That being the case, could anyone invent a more effective training programme to desensitise a nation, to prepare a people to commit violence against humanity; to ‘justify’ murder than what ‘god’ gave to the Israelites in the form of the sacrificial system?

What a perfect system to prepare the Israelites to commit **human** genocide as they entered the ‘Promised Land!’

Surely the god of the Israelites foresaw the dreadful psychological effect that the sacrificial system would inevitably cause the ‘chosen people!’ Clearly the killing of animals did not improve the character of the Israelites, but ensured they became even more violent. The chosen people did not escape the inevitable consequences of becoming desensitised to the suffering of animals. It can be seen in their history that their sympathetic or compassionate response to human suffering was also eroded.

Wasn’t God interested in the Israelites developing a Christ-like character? Or if not, was the Israelite religion simply a matter making the right sacrifices with the ‘right’ amount of animals, in the right way, at the right time. Just rituals? Was it a gospel of works?

Evidence is certainly not lacking to support the fact that the ancient Jewish society generally became desensitised to violence, both to the suffering inflicted upon animals and on human beings. Given the daily exposure to the death of many sacrificial animals, and the participation of the males in the daily slaughter, can it be wondered that the Jewish people were desensitised to the point that they did not consider killing the babies of pagans to be reprehensible, criminal,

deplorable - or at least 'wrong' or horrific (1 Samuel 15:3; Deut 12, 20, 32:25)? In fact, the Jewish people came to justify these genocides by claiming that God commanded the destruction of innocent babies.

Horrific as killing an animal is, some support the view that God required or encouraged human beings to perform acts of violence against animals, in order to demonstrate the evil effects that sin could produce. Is this feasible?

Violence and death are natural outcomes and consequences of sin (Romans 6:23). When a person is separated from God, the sinful nature matures and a selfish character develops. Inevitably, the consequences of acting on selfish principles will inevitably produce death. No other demonstration is necessary than that which occurs in reality.

However, if the principle is accepted that God introduced animal sacrifices to demonstrate that sin brings forth suffering and death of innocents, surely this can be interpreted to mean that, on its own, the dreadful results of sin weren't obvious enough already and God found it necessary to make sin appear more horrific than it was in reality.

Didn't sin bring forth enough suffering and death as 'natural consequences?' Selfish behaviour produces enough horrendous effects – unaided by God – that will thoroughly convince human beings – even those who are eternally lost - that sin brings forth suffering and death and that God's principles, as seen in Jesus Christ, are life-giving.

Philippians 2:10, 11

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; (11) And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (See also Romans 4:11; Isaiah 45:23).

God desired the world to be populated by gentle, peaceful, unselfish people who ate a vegetarian diet. Instead, sin has produced a violent people who participate in killing animals and each other in a warring world.

Is this what God designed or has there been a serious mistake regarding the sacrificial rituals of the Old Testament?

Pagan Sacrifices – Divine Sacrifices

It seems a little incredulous to consider that cruel, animal sacrifices were required by the One True God, just as they were required by pagan gods.

Blood-letting rituals using sacrificial animals are violent and horrific; however, the barbarous practice of slitting the throats of lambs, calves and kids, bullocks, heifers, goats, and breaking the necks of turtle doves and pigeons were undertaken by the Israelites in their many sanctuary ceremonies. Such ceremonies were said to 'point them to Christ' as the ultimate sacrifice, but obvious question begs an answer: Christ was non-violent (Isa 53:9), so how could a violent exercise reveal any aspect of Christ to those engaged in slaughtering innocent and unwilling animals? None of the sacrificial animals voluntarily laid down their lives, but their lives were taken by violent, painful force. The sanctuary services were not to typify the rough treatment of evil men, but the actions and motives of the Messiah.

Despite this illogical premise, that violent acts enhance one's view of a non-violent Person, it is said that animal sacrifices pointed to the death of Jesus Christ and the great sacrifice He would make when He died for humankind's redemption.

It is also often stated by Seventh-day Adventist theologians, that **every** act/ritual performed in the sanctuary services, depicted some facet of the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. While there is evidence that the demonstrates the plan of salvation and Christ's character, there are also obvious signs that paganism has been mixed with the true sanctuary sacrificial services, obscuring important truths concerning the life, character and sacrifice of both Father and Son. Some of these rituals will be examined in the following section.

Offerings of Blood Poured Out to the Gods

It was a well known pagan custom, when after a man hunted and killed an animal for food, that he would pour out the blood on the ground, as an offering in honour of the gods who enabled/blessed his successful hunting trip. Pagan worshippers also slaughtered animals to appease their wrathful gods by the pouring out of blood as a libation on the ground or on an altar to honour their gods. "The blood was sprinkled on the image of the god....The blood of victims was sprinkled on altars, images, and trees."³⁸

The Israelites were to abide by different laws, but the same principle remained.

Leviticus 17:5-7, 9

³⁸ The Religion of the Ancient Celts chapter 26, Sacrifice, Prayer and Divination p 237, 244, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/rac/rac19.htm> Sacred Texts CD-Rom

“To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the LORD. (6) And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD. (7) “And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring....”(9) And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people.”

Leviticus 17:7 reveals that, like the pagans, the Israelites also had been offering blood sacrifices in the field to pagan gods (devils) and that this was not acceptable according to the writer of Leviticus. Specific instructions, **on pain of death**, were given to the Israelites to bring their animals to the sanctuary for sacrificing to 'god', while animals required for food purposes, were still permitted to be slaughtered in the field.

The only extra stipulation was that when the Israelites slaughtered the food animal, the blood had to be covered with dirt – probably for health reasons – instead of being poured out as a thank offering to 'god.' Just as in many pagan ceremonies, the offering of blood to the gods was not permitted to be made by anyone who was not an ordained priest. If this 'sacred' ritual was performed by a mere 'layperson', it was a serious crime and the Israelite offender earned the death penalty. He was 'cut off' i.e. killed.

In contrast, an animal sacrificed for religious purposes, was to be taken to the door of the tabernacle for a ritualistic slaughtering, and its blood was to be poured out both on the altar and at the door of the tabernacle in the shape of a circle³⁹. This same violent sacrifice was then deemed to be 'blessed' by god, simply because the location was in the tabernacle, and the mediation of the blood had been properly performed by an ordained priest.

Question

Is it likely that the same violent, blood-letting sacrificial ritual was practiced by both pagans and Israelites – the only difference appearing to be the location of the death of the animal and the mediation of an ordained priest who was qualified to pour out the blood to 'god.' Historian, Philo comments on the Jewish sanctuary services:

“The blood of the animal being poured at the altar in a circle, the perfect figure; for blood is life, and the ritual action expresses the will of the mind to serve God completely” Philo in De Spec. Leg. 1 p 204-205 cited in *The Jewish Temple*, (CTR Hayward, 1996: 117).

39 Philo, cited in *The Jewish Temple*, CTR Hayward, (1996) p 117

Did All the Sanctuary Sacrifices Represent Christ?

It was prophesied of the Messiah, that none of His bones would be broken.

Psalms 34:20

“He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.”

John's witness confirms the prophecy was fulfilled.

John 19:36

“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”

According to the instructions concerning the feast of the Passover, none of the lamb's bones were to be broken. Thus the Passover is said to symbolise Christ - that none of Christ's bones would be broken when He died on the cross. However when John demonstrated that prophecy had been fulfilled, he referred to David's prophecy, **not** to the sacrificial ceremonies in the Mosaic law. Christ certainly fulfilled the Messianic prophecy in that none of His bones were broken when He laid down His life for humanity, but why didn't Christ announce Himself as the Lamb of God?

Christ called Himself :

- ***the Bread of Heaven,***
 - ***the Bread of Life;***
 - ***the Water of Life;***
- but never the Lamb of God.

Christ is never referred to as “the bull of God”, “the goat of God” or “the turtledove of God,” so why was He called the “Lamb of God” twice and “the Lamb which was slain” three times?

Isaiah prophesied in his Messianic prophecy that **Christ's character** was lamb-like in His tolerance of the violence heaped upon Him. His **character** was demonstrated to be “harmless and undefiled.” He was, and still is, long-suffering and gentle, even under severe provocation.

Isaiah 53:7

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

John the Baptist and John the Revelator referred to Christ as 'the Lamb' (John 1:29, 26; Rev 5:6, 12; 13:8). Paul used the expression, “Christ our Passover,” and Peter also compares the blood (life/soul) of Christ to a lamb “without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19). Such expressions were used to communicate the truth to Jewish minds, steeped in the

Jewish sacrificial culture, that Jesus was the true Messiah, but Jesus Himself did not claim to be His Father's sacrificial lamb.

Christ's sacrifice of becoming a mortal, human being was the reason that sinners, were 'passed over' and offered life instead of death as they deserved. But Christ's victory was not made effective **because** of a blood-letting, torturous and abusive death. Christ made the ultimate sacrifice for humanity, when as the Son of God, He took on the responsibility of redeeming the sinful human race by becoming a mortal man and living a holy life, in sinful flesh.

Christ accepted the death sentence when He became a human being. Whenever He would have died, His death would have redeemed humanity – but only if Christ had lived a sinless life. By heaping torture upon Christ, Satan endeavoured to prevent Jesus from living a sinless, unselfish life.

In this sense, Christ is indeed our Passover. He and the Father sacrificed “all heaven” for us. Christ sacrificed His high position as the Prince of heaven and took on sinful humanity. Christ sacrificed His honour, His majesty and glory in order to redeem humanity.⁴⁰ And finally, as Satan was intent on destroying His human body, Christ laid down His life and died the death which belonged to sinful humanity. But the Father did not require a blood-letting ritual to atone for sin. He did require a perfect human character though, and in order to provide that character, Christ had to accept mortality as a human being.

Humanity owes no gratitude to Satan for organising the torturous death of the Son of God on a pagan cross. Whenever Christ laid down His life, it would have redeemed humanity – as long as Christ's life and character were sinless.

However, if all the sanctuary sacrifices are said to represent Christ's sacrifice, then shouldn't all of the sacrificial rites have avoided breaking the animals' bones?

If an animal's bones are broken, how could the sacrificed animal then represent Christ's sacrifice?

For instance, one might logically question how the turtle dove sacrifices could accurately portray Christ's sacrifice.

40 *Ellen White: “Do you contemplate that Christ sacrificed his majesty, his honor and glory to bring salvation within your reach and save every son and daughter of Adam?” An Important Testimony to our Brethren and Sisters in New York PH039.008.002 (1887)*

When poor people, who had sinned, were seeking to obtain atonement and forgiveness, they were required to bring two turtle doves to be sacrificed - one as a sin offering and another as a burnt offering.

Leviticus 5:5-9

“And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: (6) And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin. (7) And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. (8) And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder: (9) And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it is a sin offering.”

The act of wringing off the head from the neck of one of two turtle doves involved the breaking of its neckbones. This cannot represent the death of Jesus Christ, for in fulfilment of David's prophecy in Psalm 43:20, **Christ's** bones were not broken.

Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that a burnt offering typified Christ's death in any way as Christ's body was never burnt. It is interesting to note however, that sacrifices made by pagans, were burnt to represent and honour the sun god. The sun god's supposed attributes of life and energy, were represented by the fire on the altar of burnt offering.

Furthermore the Israelites' sacrificial laws involved many more abhorrent sacrificial practices, many which are still practiced in witchcraft, animist and pagan religions today. Such sacrificial rituals required:

- the slitting of the throat with a knife;
- the breaking of bones;
- the flaying or skinning of the animal;
- the tearing apart of the bodies of doves and pigeons with the hands, by grasping and pulling the wings;
- the sprinkling of animal's blood on furniture, altars and on people;
- the chopping off of the legs and tail;
- the removal of the kidneys and fat;
- the disemboweling of animals;

- washing for ritualised purification of the animal's internal organs and feet;
- the incineration of the animals' bodies by fire to please the 'god';
- the rearranging of the animals' dismembered body parts on an altar.

None of these gorey and barbaric actions are represented in a prophecy concerning Jesus' death, so how can these actions be a shadow of Christ's ministry?

In addition, God's initial plan for humanity was that they consume a non-flesh diet, but the Mosaic laws required that the priests eat animal flesh as part of a religious rite to achieve forgiveness of sins. Similar beliefs and rituals are still held and practiced in the Roman Catholic and other religions.

How can the Mosaic command to consume a flesh eating diet, be harmonised with God's original diet for humanity?

How can the Mosaic principle of eating flesh to achieve forgiveness/atonement of sins, be harmonised with the fact that forgiveness of sins is only possible through Christ empowering a conversion of the mind?

Blood Sacrifices

Did God require blood sacrifices in the sanctuary services for an atonement to be made for sin? Some verses in the Bible state "yes;" other verses state "no." Samples of both follow.

Animal Sacrifices Required:

Exodus 20:24

“An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.”

Leviticus 1:5-9, 14-17

“And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (6) And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. (7) And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: (8) And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: (9) But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD....(14) And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons. (15) And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar: (16) And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes: (17) And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.”

Ezekiel 43:23-25

“When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish. (24) And thou shalt offer them before the LORD, and the priests shall cast salt upon them, and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the LORD. (25) Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish.”

Leviticus 5:1-10

“And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity. (2) Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty. (3) Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty. (4) Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these. (5) And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in

that thing: (6) And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin. (7) And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. (8) And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder: (9) And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it is a sin offering. (10) And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.

Animal Sacrifices Not Required

Immediately following the previous section in Leviticus chapter 5, a curious situation occurs.

Leviticus 5:11-13

But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering. (12) Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it is a sin offering. (13) ***And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him:*** and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering."

Verse 13 depicts a sinner being forgiven of his sins and an atonement being made for his sins – ***without the shedding of blood.*** However, according to Leviticus and Hebrews, remission of sins is not possible without the shedding of blood.⁴¹

Jeremiah 7:21, 22

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. (22) **For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.**"

Micah 6:7, 8

41 *Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Hebrews 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."*

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (8) He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and **what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?**”

Jeremiah 9:24

“But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

Psalms 40:6-8

"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.(7) Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, (8) I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

Hebrews 10:5

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

Psalms 4:5

"Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD."

1 Samuel 15:22

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Psalms 51:17

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Proverbs 12:10

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

Proverbs 17:1

"Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

Isaiah 1:11

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats."

Jeremiah 7:21

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh."

Mark 12:33

"And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Acts 7:42

"Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is

written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to ME slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?"

Hebrews 10:1, 6

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (6) "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure."

Hebrews 13:16

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

1 Peter 2:5

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

A team of Jewish authorities (Emil G. Hirsch, Kaufmann Kohler, M. Seligsohn Isidore Singer, Jacob Zallel Lauterbach and Joseph Jacobs) suggest that among other ideas, the sacrificial system might not have been instigated by God, but was a human invention which was "**expressive of man's delight.**"

"The sacrificial scheme was the target at which gnostics and other skeptics shot their arrows. God, it was argued, manifested Himself in this as a strict accountant and judge, but not as the author of the highest goodness and mercy. In refutation, Ben 'Azzai calls attention to the fact that in connection with the sacrifices the only name used to designate God is Yhwh, the unique name ("Shem ha-Meyuqad; Sifra, Wayiqrā, ii. [ed. Weiss, p. 4c], with R. Jose b. qalafta as author; Men. 110a; Sifre, Num. 143). Basing his inference on the phrase "for your pleasure shall ye offer up" (Lev. xxii. 29, Hebr.), Ben 'Azzai insists also that sacrifices were not planned on the theory that, God's will having been done by man, man's will must be done in corresponding measure by God: they were merely expressive of man's delight; and God did not need them (Ps. I. 12, 13; Sifre, I.c.; Men. 110a).

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=35&letter=S>

From the website Jewish Veg (Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ) appears the article entitled, "***If God wanted us to have vegetarian diets and not harm animals, why were the Biblical sacrificial services established?***"

<http://www.jewishveg.com/faq03.html>

The sacrificial services are discussed and the following comment made:

“Rashi indicated that God did not want the Israelites to bring sacrifices; it was their choice. He bases this on the haphtorah (portion from the Prophets) read on the Sabbath when the book of Leviticus which discusses sacrifices is read: 'I have not burdened thee with a meal-offering, Nor wearied thee with frankincense. (Isaiah 43:23)' Biblical commentator David Kimhi (1160-1235) also stated that the sacrifices were voluntary. He ascertained this from the words of Jeremiah: For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. (Jeremiah 7:22-23) David Kimchi, notes that nowhere in the Ten Commandments is there any reference to sacrifice, and even when sacrifices are first mentioned (Lev. 1:2) the expression used is "when any man of you bringeth an offering," the first Hebrew we ki being literally "if", implying that it was a voluntary act.”

Christ's Bloodless Ceremony – the Lord's Supper

John 6:32-35; 50-58

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. (33) For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (34) Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. (35) And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst... (50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (52) The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (53) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

Cannibalism does not make anyone live forever, so clearly Christ did not institute a mindless, cannibalistic ceremony. Therefore the words Christ uttered must have a spiritual meaning.

At the Lord's Supper, Jesus demonstrated that the grape juice and bread represented a spiritual component of His ministry in the plan of salvation. The bread represented His human body which was prepared for Him so He could become mortal and therefore lay down His life. But by eating his flesh, Christ meant, believing on him – having faith in Him as their Messiah and Saviour, and thus receiving spiritual life and nourishment from him. The grape juice represented Christ's new testament *in His blood* – His life and spirit (His soul). Christ's entire life (His earthly ministry as Messiah and His spiritual ministry as High Priest) will provide eternal life to those who are justified by His life and sanctified by faith.

Luke 22:15-20

“And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: (16) For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (17) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: (18) For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (19) And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is

my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. (20) Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

If the Passover lamb represented Christ's sacrifice, it would seem logical to expect that the blood of the sacrificed lamb would represent Christ's blood. It would seem logical to expect that the flesh of the sacrificed lamb would represent Christ's body. Yet Christ chose non-blood and non-flesh emblems to represent His death. Christ instructed the disciples that the bread represented His body (His humanity) and that the grape juice represented His blood (His life, His spirit, His mind).

Some might assert Christ simply changed the sacrificial system, without regarding it as faulty. If so, why didn't Christ ever refer to Himself as the Passover lamb, or any other sacrificial beast?

Christ did refer to Himself as "the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14) and He had perfect opportunity to compare Himself to the sacrificial beasts if He chose to do so. He certainly spoke of His impending death many times, but never appeared to compare His death with the slaughter of the Passover lamb.⁴² Was Christ's silence on this issue significant?

In contrast to the Passover lamb and sanctuary sacrifices, when Christ introduced the Lord's Supper as a commemoration of His death, He compared His body (His humanity) and blood (His spirit, mind) - His entire life and existence - to non-blood symbols. Wasn't it rather unusual for Christ to institute a **memorial** supposedly of a blood-letting event, with pure, bloodless symbols?

But it is obvious from the Lord's Supper, that the bloodless symbols were considered appropriate by Christ to represent His life and death. Christ did not institute a ceremony or ritual which required the shedding of blood.

Christ assured His disciples that His life demonstrates exactly, the character of the Father. Christ declared that the works of His Father were those, which He, the Son of God, performed.

John 5:36; 14:10, 11

"But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. (10) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. "

In other words, Jesus appears to be saying, *"if you can't see that I'm the divine*

42 Concerning the origin of the Hebrew word which is translated as "passover," Alfred de Grazia, in **God's Fire and the Exodus: Management of Exodus**, writes:

"The lintels of Hebrew houses were marked with sheep's blood to inform Yahweh not to destroy his people dwelling within, particularly the first-born. Many Arabs continue this custom. Yahweh would "pass over" them. Prof. Beer finds in the word "passah" the original meaning "Jumping of the ram." Several images now occur: the original spring sacrifices, the identification of Yahweh with the ram of Egyptian Thoth (Hermes) and thus a clue to Moses' religious origins, the passing over of the god in a cometary form, the awesome destruction of most homes and buildings by violent earthquake, and the passover into the desert from Egypt."

http://grazian-archive.com/quantavolution/QuantaHTML/plaintext/gods_fire.txt

Son of God by my character, then at least believe it because of the good works you see me doing. Those works reflect the Father's character."

Jesus showed us the Father. If Jesus did not even refer to the Passover lamb as representing Himself, is it logically to assume that the Father required blood-letting sacrifices in the first place to point **towards** the death of His Son? Or might the sacrificial rites have been morphed into the true sanctuary services in error as the Israelites mixed with the pagan countries around them?

Both the fresh grape juice and the unleavened bread used at the Passover feast, were pure. No yeast appeared in the bread and no fermentation was permitted in the grape juice (Exodus 12). Both these aspects of purity typified the fact that Christ's LIFE was pure and free from any sin.

It was prophesied that a human body would be prepared for Christ, to enable Him to live and die as a human being – and as a human being (the Second Adam), to develop a perfect human character.

Hebrews 10:5

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

Christ instructed His disciples that His body soul was represented by the Passover bread and grape juice.

The Bread of Life is the righteousness of Christ's character. It is the product of His perfect life. It is the essence of His life which He made available to humanity as a covering robe. His unselfish holy spirit/mind fills the believer and gives new spiritual life, just as bread is eaten to sustain the physical life.

Christ's life demonstrated the truth about God's loving character. "If ye have seen me, ye have seen the Father" (John 14:9). By partaking of Christ's body – the Bread of Life – the Righteousness of Christ – a believer is renewed spiritually.

The Bread

Romans 5:6, 8.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Grain offerings were offered to God in the Old Testament and were called "bread."

The Hebrew word used for “bread” supports the belief that Christ did not appear to associate His body with the murdered lamb – the physical flesh and blood sacrifice of the Passover lamb, but with the sacrifice of His divine position in Heaven to become the New Representative of the sinful, human race and its inherent mortality.

Leviticus 21:6, 6, 17

“They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and **the bread of their God**, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy.... (8) Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth **the bread of thy God**: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy.... (17) Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer **the bread of his God**.”

⁶They shall be holy <06944> unto their God <0430>, and not profane <02490> (8762) the name <08034> of their God <0430>: for the offerings <00> <0801> of the LORD <03068> made by fire <0801>, and the **bread** <03899> of their God <0430>, they do offer <07126> (8688): therefore they shall be holy <06918>.

Strong's Hebrew Concordance # 03899: bread

<03899> lechem lek'-em from 3898; food (for man or beast), **especially bread, or grain** (for making it):--((shew-))bread, X eat, food, fruit, loaf, meat, victuals. See also 1036. see HEBREW for 03898 see HEBREW for 01036

Ellen White, **Bible Training School**, Sanctification ,1 February, 1904

“God requires of us conformity to His image. Holiness is the reflection from His people of the bright rays of His glory. But in order to reflect this glory we must work with God. The heart and mind must be emptied of all that leads to wrong. The Word of God must be read and studied, with an earnest desire to gain from it spiritual power. The bread of heaven must be eaten and digested, that it may become a part of the life. Thus we gain eternal life. Then is answered the prayer of the Saviour, “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth.”

How can Christians eat the Bread of Life? By asking God to send His spirit (mind) and to renew a right spirit in them (Jer 31:33).

Ellen White, 3 Spiritual Gifts, p 227

“Here our Saviour instituted the Lord's supper, to be often celebrated, to keep fresh in the memory of his followers the solemn scenes of his betrayal and crucifixion for the sins of the world. He would have his followers realize their continual dependence upon his blood for salvation. The broken bread was a symbol of Christ's broken body, given for the salvation of the

world. The wine was a symbol of his blood, shed for the cleansing of the sins of all those who should come unto him for pardon, and receive him as their Saviour."

A. T. Jones, Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald, September 18, 1900
Galatians 5:16-18

"If men were to be saved by being delivered utterly from the flesh just as it is, then Jesus need never have come to the world. If men were to be saved by being delivered from all temptation and set in a realm of no temptation, then Jesus need not have come into the world. But never, by any such deliverance as that, could man have developed character. Therefore, instead of trying to save men by delivering them utterly from the flesh just where they were, Jesus came to the world and put himself IN THE FLESH just where men are and met that flesh JUST AS IT IS, with all its tendencies and desires, and by the divine power which he brought by faith, He "condemned sin in the flesh" and thus brought to all mankind that divine faith which brings the divine power to man to deliver him from the power of the flesh and the law of sin, just where he is, and to give him assured dominion over the flesh, just as it is. And every soul can have in its fullness that victory, who will receive and keep 'the faith of Jesus.' For 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'"

The bread symbolises the "Word of God" Whose body was broken by abuse He received as a human being. If believers place faith in Christ, then His spirit/mind will prompt their character development and enable them to live victoriously. This process is called sanctification. The bread at the Lord's Supper reminds us of our dependence on Christ's spirit to develop a holy character.

The Cup

Luke 22: 20

“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

Jesus instructed His disciples that the grape juice represented the new testament [in His blood](#).

Was Jesus suggesting that His blood was to be consumed to enforce the New Covenant? No, for such an instruction would have contradicted the Old Testament command that prohibited consuming blood (Leviticus 17:14) and a command which later in the New Testament, the Jerusalem Council reconfirmed as a principle to be taught to the Gentile believers – to abstain from blood (Acts 15:20).

The new testament is not speaking about physical rituals. The new testament refers to the righteousness by faith experience which Christ's sinless life as a mortal man made possible. It is the promise that Christ can save to the uttermost, all who thirst for righteousness and will come to Him.

John 7:37

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (39) (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

The new covenant which is 'in His blood' - is the promise of a new, victorious life “in Christ” which is made possible by Christ's perfect spirit/mind 'in the life' of the believer.

Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26, 27

“[And I will give them one heart,](#) and [I will put a new spirit within you;](#) and [I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:](#) (ch 36:verse 26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my spirit within you, [and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.](#)”

Jeremiah 31:33-34

“But [this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel;](#) After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the

greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

The Old Testament asserts that 'the life in the blood.' Does the new covenant life harmonise with this concept? Yes. In fact, it is the same concept, but appears that it was misunderstood and misapplied by the Israelites.

Leviticus 17:11

¹¹For the life <05315> of the flesh <01320> is in the blood <01818>: and I have given <05414> (8804) it to you upon the altar <04196> to make an atonement <03722> (8763) for your souls <05315>: for it is the blood <01818> that maketh an atonement <03722> (8762) for the soul <05315>.

Darby Translation Notes on Leviticus 17:11:

'Life' and 'soul' are the same Hebrew word. The literal meaning is 'in souls.' Or 'that maketh atonement by the soul (or life).'

Leviticus 17:14

“For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: **for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof**: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.”

Darby Translation Notes on Leviticus 17:14:

Literally: “Its blood is for its life.” The preposition used here denotes essence.

The meaning or the essence of the blood, is life or 'life force' or spirit. So too, the grape juice is a symbol of Christ's death, but the believer's new, pure spotless LIFE in Christ, because Christ became mortal for humanity's sake.

Romans 8:2,10

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death...” (10) And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. “

EJ Waggoner, General Conference Sermons, 1891, Study #12, Romans 8:1-16

“Again Christ said, 'He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' And this He spake of the Spirit, that He would give. Said Christ again said to the woman at the well, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.' Why? 'For if the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Here is the hope of the resurrection again. What remains to be done when the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you? Only to quicken, that is, to make alive, our mortal bodies.”

The grape juice demonstrates justification – forgiveness of sins and redemption. The Lord's Supper reminds us of our dependence on Christ gift of life which He

gave to each of us at great risk to His own eternal existence.

By instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus upheld the divine principle revealed in the Old Testament concerning abstinence from blood in the diet, and then introduced a meaningful, yet bloodless ceremony to mark the significance of His pure life as the spotless Son of Man.

The Doctrine of Indulgences

Martin Luther began the Protestant reformation when he took a strong position against the Roman Catholic doctrine of indulgences, which the papal representative Tetzel was selling to those who believed they could pay a fee for the service of being forgiven. Fundamental Protestants still affirm Luther's position against indulgences, however, a very similar system operated in the Hebrew sacrificial system as recorded in Leviticus.

Leviticus 6:1-7

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (2) If a soul sin, and **commit a trespass against the LORD**, and **lie unto his neighbour** in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in **a thing taken away by violence**, or hath **deceived his neighbour**; (3) Or have found that which was lost, and **lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely**; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: (4) Then it shall be, **because he hath sinned, and is guilty**, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, (5) Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; **he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto**, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering. (6) And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: (7) **And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.**"

In the preceding paragraph, a penalty is given to 'informed' sinners who are guilty of intentionally breaking at least three of the 10 commandments (stealing; bearing false witness and coveting).

The legal process outlined in Leviticus 6 declares that three steps must be taken to restore the criminal to a 'forgiven/holy' status:

- restore the stolen goods;
- pay a fine of 20% to the victim; and
- present and sacrifice an expensive animal (a ram) at the sanctuary/temple.

There are several difficulties with these legal steps.

- heartfelt confession is not seen to be a requirement for forgiveness of sins;
- a poor person is discriminated against in four ways:
 - they are unable to afford the 20% fine; and
 - they are unable to afford the expensive sacrificial ram

- they are sold into slavery (Exodus 22:3);⁴³
- they remain unforgiven, since they could not afford to pay the fine or purchase the required sacrificial ram to secure an atonement for their sin.

This discriminatory system of penalties permitted the rich to steal (sin) to the level that their wealth dictated – and secure forgiveness, while the poor who were unable to pay the fines, were sold into slavery and remained unforgiven.

The Roman Catholic doctrine of indulgences claims that premediated sins can be forgiven – for a suitable price, while Protestants generally believe that heartfelt repentance marks true confession and a turning away from sin.

Hebrews 10:26

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins (27) But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

Jesus puts it more clearly:

John 9:41

“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.”

And Paul reiterates Christ's words.

Acts 17:30

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

1Timothy 1:13 (Paul speaking of his sinful past)

“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Ignorant sinners are shown divine mercy, but premeditated sinning is not condoned in Christ's government.

The Levitical laws mentioned in this section appear to promote

⁴³ Exodus 22:3 (concerning a financially poor thief) “... if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.”

- the use of violence against animals; and
- the doctrine of indulgences.

One might ask the question, 'would the Father – the God of peace (Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20) and gentleness (2 Sam 22:36; Psa 18:35; Gal 5:22; 2 Cor 10:1⁴⁴) – the God of equality – originate such discriminatory and violent laws?'

44 *“the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” 2 Cor 10:1*

God's Law is a Description of His Character:

- **lovingkindness**

Jeremiah 9:24

“I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

- **non-discriminatory**

Matthew 5:45; Acts 10:34

(Jesus said), “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Peter said), “God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

- **converting, causing true repentance**

Psalms 19:7

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.”

- **holy, just, good**

Romans 7:12

“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”

- **fulfilled by loving and helping others**

James 2:8; Galatians 6:2

“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.” “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

- **gentleness and meekness**

2 Corinthians 10:1

“Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you.”

- **righteousness**

Galatians 5:22, 23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (23), meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

- **non-violent, non-deceptive**

Isaiah 53:9

“And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”

Comparing the (Characters of the) Sanctuaries

In view of Ellen White's conviction that the sanctuary services were designed between the Father and Son in their heavenly counsels, one might begin to question if the sanctuary services were adulterated after the Israelites' interaction with pagan nations. Some theologians have suggested that pagan nations copied the Israelites' services, however there are problems that accompany this view (see objection #29).

The earthly sanctuary was said to be designed after the pattern of the sanctuary in heaven, but in comparing the Israelites sanctuary services with pagan nations temples and ceremonies, the similarities are extremely difficult to deny. It is apparent that it was not **God's** intention to have animals sacrificed to appease His anger; to purify the worshippers' souls; or as a means of achieving eternal life as both the Jews and pagans seemed to believe.

Despite the great spiritual darkness that Israel descended into, God was still able to make His truth known in the midst of extreme wickedness, and He did not cast off the Israelites because of the many evil practices in which they participated. God issued instructions designed to counteract evil arising from their unrighteous acts (polygamy, divorce). Could it be possible that the sanctuary services were adulterated to such a degree, that the love of God and the plan of salvation were only barely discernible – as though a veil was over their hearts? Is it possible that the original sanctuary services, which accurately reflected the heavenly sanctuary, also became obscured, because of the hardness of the Israelites hearts?

2 Corinthians 3:13-16

“And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: (14) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. (15) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. (16) Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.”

The Israelites had physically come out of Egypt, but they carried Egyptian spiritual philosophy with them still in their minds. These beliefs and practices were evidenced in their religious rituals, and were most evident at times of their national apostasy .

According to Old Testament references, along with pagan sacrifices, illicit (pagan) sexual activities appear to have been practised by the Israelites in idolatrous worship, yet they were “the chosen people” and promised to be obedient to the One True God (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7).

God had great mercy on the Israelites. He dealt patiently with them,

endeavouring to lead them out of paganism and into a deeper understanding of His loving righteousness. God would have led them out of paganism, as quickly as they would follow Him. The problem was not with God -it was with the people.

It appears that the ancient Israelites become so confused in their dealings with the pagan nations around them – so desensitised to their pagan sexual and child-burning worship rituals - that they confused the character of the pure and holy Creator, the One True God with the blended, good/evil character of the Canaanite religions?

The Biblical and historical evidence appears to strongly support this hypothesis.

Walther Zimmerli (1907–1984) was Professor of Old Testament at the University of Göttingen, Germany, and considered by many as one of the most important biblical scholars of the twentieth century. Among his many publications in English are *Ezekiel*, 2 vols. (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 1979/1983), *I Am Yahweh* (1982), *The Old Testament and the World* (1976), and *The Law and the Prophets* (1965). In *The Law and the Prophets*, Zimmerli writes:

“In this connection Hosea attacks with particular passion the priests who should have been the true guardians of the knowledge of God, and who have especially failed in this duty (Hosea iv. 4 ff.). They have allowed to pass unnoticed the very real exchange of Yahweh, the God of Israel, for the baals of Canaan. This was no longer the same threat which had occurred in Elijah's time, it was something much more dangerous. While the worship of Yahweh remained outwardly correct, in reality he had come to be regarded as a nature deity like the Canaanite Baal. From him men sought the fertility of the soil and of marriage; he was worshipped with the forms of nature religion and with sacral prostitution, as men worshipped the Baals. Yahweh became Baal. The name of one of David's warriors, which is recorded in I Chronicles 12:5 as Bealiah (Yahweh is Baal) demonstrates exactly this programmatic assertion. Thus without knowing it, Israel had begun to misunderstand the very nature of its God, because the professional guardians of a true knowledge of him were asleep” (Walther Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets*, Basil Blackwell 1965 p.70).

Columbia University Press Encyclopedia at Answers.com presents the following information concerning Baal, a pagan god who is acknowledged as an idol which represented Satan as he attempts to imitate the Creator – the One True God.

Baal (bā'el) , plural Baalim (bā'elīm) [Semitic,=master, lord], name used throughout the Bible for the chief deity or for deities of Canaan. The term was originally an epithet applied to the storm god Hadad. Technically, Baal was subordinate to El. Baal is attested in the Ebla texts (first half of 2d millennium B.C.). By the time of the Ugarit tablets (14th cent. B.C.), Baal had become the ruler of the universe. The Ugarit tablets make him chief of the Canaanite pantheon. He is the source of life and fertility, the mightiest hero, the lord of war, and the defeater of the god Yam. There were many temples of Baal in Canaan, and the name Baal was often added to that of a locality, e.g. Baal-peor, Baal-hazor, Baal-hermon. The Baal cult penetrated Israel and at times led to syncretism. In the Psalms, Yahweh is depicted as Baal and his

dwelling is on Mt. Zaphon (Zion), the locale of Baal in Canaanite mythology. The practice of sacred prostitution seems to have been associated with the worship of Baal in Palestine and the cult was vehemently denounced by the prophets, especially Hosea and Jeremiah. The abhorrence in which the cult was held probably explains the substitution of Ish-bosheth for Esh-baal, of Jerubbesheth for Jerubbaal (a name of Gideon), and of Mephibosheth for Merib-baal. The substituted term probably means "shame." The same abhorrence is evident the use of the pejorative name Baal-zebub (see also Satan). The Baal of 1 Chronicles is probably the same as Ramah 2. As cognates of Baal in other Semitic languages there are Bel (in Babylonian religion) and the last elements in the Tyrian names Jezebel, Hasdrubal, and Hannibal."

http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery.jsessionid=29l33c32f48kr?tname=baal&curtab=2222_1&hl=bealiah&sbid=lc05b

Wikipedia Encyclopedia, Baal:

*“After Gideon's death, according to Judges 8.33, the Israelites went astray and started to worship the Ba'alim (the Ba'als) especially Ba'al Berith 'Lord of the Covenant'. A few verses later (Judge 9.4) the story turns to all the citizens of Shechem – actually kol-ba'alê šäkem another case of normal use of ba'al not applied to a deity. These citizens of Shechem support Abimelech's attempt to become king by giving him 70 shekels from the House of Ba'al Berith. It is hard to disassociate this Lord of the Covenant who is worshipped in Shechem from the covenant at Shechem described earlier in Joshua 24.25 in which the people agree to worship Yahweh. It is especially hard to do so when Judges 9.46 relates that all "the holders of the tower of Shechem" (kol-ba'alê midgal-šäkem) enter bêt 'ël berît 'the House of El Berith', that is, 'the House of God of the Covenant'. Was Ba'al then here just a title for El? Or did the covenant of Shechem perhaps originally not involve El at all but some other god who bore the title Ba'al? Or were there different viewpoints about Yahweh, some seeing him as an aspect of Hadad, some as an aspect of El, some with other theories? Again there is no clear answer. We also find Eshbaal (one of Saul's sons) and Beeliada (a son of David). The last name also appears as Eliada. This might show that at some period Ba'al and El were used interchangeably even in the same name applied to the same person. More likely a later hand has cleaned up the text. Editors did play around with some names, sometimes substituting the form bosheth 'abomination' for ba'al in names, whence the forms Ishbosheth instead of Eshbaal and Mephibosheth which is rendered Meribaal in 1 Chronicles 9.40. **1 Chronicles 12:5 gives us the name Bealiah (more accurately bə'alyâ) meaning 'Yahweh is Ba'al'.**”*

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, presents information concerning Baal, from the research of AH Sayce.

“Temples of Baal at Samaria and Jerusalem are mentioned in 1Ki 1:18; where they had been erected at the time when the Ahab dynasty endeavored to fuse Israelites and Jews and Phoenicians into a single people under the same national Phoenician god. Altars on which incense was burned to Baal were set up in all the streets of Jerusalem according to Jeremiah (11:13), apparently on the flat roofs of the houses (Jer 32:29); and the temple of Baal contained an image of the god in the shape of a pillar or Bethel (2Ki 10:26,27). In the reign of Ahab, Baal was served in Israel by 450 priests (1Ki 18:19), as well as by prophets (2Ki 10:19), and his worshippers wore special vestments when his ritual was

performed (2Ki 10:22). The ordinary offering made to the god consisted of incense (Jer 7:9) and burnt sacrifices; on extraordinary occasions the victim was human (Jer 19:5). At times the priests worked themselves into a state of ecstasy, and dancing round the altar slashed themselves with knives (1Kings 18:26,28), like certain dervish orders in modern Islam."

AH Sayce demonstrates the two-tone, blended character of the pagan deity, Baal:

“As the Sun-god, Baal was worshipped under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. On the one hand he gave light and warmth to his worshippers; on the other hand the fierce heats of summer destroyed the vegetation he had himself brought into being. Hence, human victims were sacrificed to him in order to appease his anger in time of plague or other trouble, the victim being usually the first-born of the sacrificer and being burnt alive. In the Old Testament this is euphemistically termed ‘passing’ the victim ‘through the fire’ (2Ki 16:3; 21:6). The forms under which Baal was worshipped were necessarily as numerous as the communities which worshipped him. Each locality had its own Baal or divine ‘Lord’ who frequently took his name from the city or place to which he belonged. Hence, there was a Baal-Zur, ‘Baal of Tyre’; Baal-hermon, ‘Baal of Hermon’ (Jud 3:3); Baal-Lebanon, ‘Baal of Lebanon’; Baal-Tarz, ‘Baal of Tarsus.’ At other times the title was attached to the name of an individual god; thus we have Bel-Merodach, ‘the Lord Merodach’ (or ‘Bel is Merodach’) at Babylon, Baal-Melkarth at Tyre, Baal-gad (Jos 11:17) in the north of Palestine. Occasionally the second element was noun as in Baal-Shemaim, ‘lord of heaven’ Baalzebub (2Ki 1:2), ‘Lord of flies,’ Baal-Hamman, usually interpreted ‘Lord of heat,’ but more probably ‘Lord of the sunpillar,’ the tutelary deity of Carthage. All these various forms of the Sun-god were collectively known as the Baalim or ‘Baals’ who took their place by the side of the female Ashtaroth and Ashtrim. At Carthage the female consort of Baal was termed Pene-Baal, ‘the face’ or ‘reflection of Baal.’

http://www.answers.com/main/ntquery.jsessionid=29l33c32f48kr?tna me=baal&curtab=2222_1&hl=bealiah&sbid=lc05b

It is clearly demonstrated that prior to the time that the Old Testament writings were written down in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Israelites were very knowledgeable about the religion of Baal worship.

In that pagan context, is it surprising that the 'blended' character traits of 'the baals' was transferred unto the character of the One True God?

Ellen White Concerning Sacrifices

1 Testimonies for the Church, p 25

"My feelings were very sensitive. I dreaded giving pain to any living creature. When I saw animals ill-treated, my heart ached for them. Perhaps my sympathies were more easily excited by suffering because I myself had been the victim of thoughtless cruelty, resulting in the injury that had darkened my childhood. **But when the thought took possession of my mind that God delighted in the torture of His creatures, who were formed in His image, a wall of darkness seemed to separate me from Him.**"

Desire of Ages 1898, p 90 (similar passage Signs of the Times, 6 August, 1896, p 9)

"Mary often remonstrated with Jesus, and urged Him to conform to the usages of the rabbis. But He could not be persuaded to change His habits of contemplating the works of God and **seeking to alleviate the suffering of men or even of dumb animals**. When the priests and teachers required Mary's aid in controlling Jesus, she was greatly troubled; but peace came to her heart as He presented the statements of Scripture upholding His practices."

Ministry of Healing, p 316

"What man with a human heart, who has ever cared for domestic animals, could look into their eyes, so full of confidence and affection, and willingly give them over to the butcher's knife? How could he devour their flesh as a sweet morsel?"

Signs of the Times, 25 November, 1880, p18

"Here is a lesson to all who have reasoning powers, that harsh treatment, even to the brutes, is offensive to God. Those who profess to love God do not always consider that abuse to animals, or suffering brought upon them by neglect, is a sin. The fruits of divine grace will be as truly revealed in men by the manner in which they treat their beasts, as by their service in the house of God. Those who allow themselves to become impatient or enraged with their animals are not Christians. A man who is harsh, severe and domineering toward the lower animals, because he has them in his power, is both a coward and a tyrant. And he will, if opportunity offers, manifest the same cruel, overbearing spirit toward his wife and children."

Ministry of Healing, p 316, 317

"The moral evils of a flesh diet are not less marked than are the physical ills. Flesh food is injurious to health, and whatever affects the body has a corresponding effect on the mind and the soul. **Think of the cruelty to animals that meat eating involves, and its effect on those who inflict and those who behold it. How it destroys the tenderness with which we should regard these creatures of God!...(317)** Is it not time that all should aim to dispense with flesh foods? How can those who are seeking to become pure, refined, and holy, that they may have the companionship of heavenly angels, continue to use as food anything that has so harmful an effect on soul and body? **How can they**

take the life of God's creatures that they may consume the flesh as a luxury? Let them, rather, return to the wholesome and delicious food given to man in the beginning, and themselves practice and teach their children to practice mercy toward the dumb creatures that God has made and has placed under our dominion."

Desire of Ages, p 286

"Thus greater care was shown for a dumb animal than for man, who is made in the image of God. This illustrates the working of all false religions. They originate in man's desire to exalt himself above God, but they result in degrading man below the brute. Every religion that wars against the sovereignty of God defrauds man of the glory which was his at the creation, and which is to be restored to him in Christ. Every false religion teaches its adherents to be careless of human needs, sufferings, and rights. The gospel places a high value upon humanity as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and it teaches a tender regard for the wants and woes of man."

In the light of the foregoing statements, Ellen White's following statements become challenging.

Review and Herald, 6 May, 1875 p 3

"God gave a clear and definite knowledge of his will to Israel by especial precepts, showing the duty of man to God and to his fellow-men. The worship due to God was clearly defined. A special system of rites and ceremonies was established, which would secure the remembrance of God among his people, and thereby serve as a hedge to guard and protect the ten commandments from violation. (4) God's people, whom he calls his peculiar treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, given because of man's transgression of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption. Each is clear and distinct from the other. From the creation the moral law was an essential part of God's divine plan, and was as unchangeable as himself. The ceremonial law was to answer a particular purpose of Christ plan for the salvation of the race. The typical system of sacrifices and offerings was established that through these services the sinner might discern the great offering, Christ. But the Jews were so blinded by pride and sin that but few of them could see farther than the death of beasts as an atonement for sin; and when Christ, whom these offerings prefigured, came, they could not discern him. The ceremonial law was glorious; it was the provision made by Jesus Christ in counsel with his Father, to aid in the salvation of the race. The whole arrangement of the typical system was founded on Christ. Adam saw Christ prefigured in the innocent beast suffering the penalty of his transgression of Jehovah's law. (5) The law of types reached forward to Christ. All hope and faith centered in Christ until type reached its antitype in his death. The statutes and judgments specifying the duty of man to his fellow-men, were full of important instruction, defining and simplifying the principles of the moral law, for the purpose of increasing religious knowledge, and of preserving God's chosen people distinct and separate from idolatrous nations. "(6) The statutes concerning marriage, inheritance, and strict justice in deal with one another, were peculiar and contrary to the customs and manners of other nations, and

were designed of God to keep his people separate from other nations.” The necessity of this to preserve the people of God from becoming like the nations who had not the love and fear of God, is the same in this corrupt age, when the transgression of God's law prevails and idolatry exists to a fearful extent. In ancient Israel needed such security, we need it more, to keep us from being utterly confounded with the transgressors of God's law. The hearts of men are so prone to depart from God that there is a necessity for restraint and discipline. (7) The love that God bore to man whom he had created in his own image, led him to give his Son to die for man's transgression, and lest the increase of sin should lead him to forget God and the promised redemption, the system of sacrificial offerings was established to typify the perfect offering of the Son of God.”

Ellen White's position appears contradictory.

- She rebukes those who would butcher innocent animals, and yet promotes the idea that the sacrificial system, (which required the brutal slaughtering of many animals), offered the Jews an opportunity to develop their characters.
- She tells SDA's to teach their children to be merciful to animals, but how could the Jews teach their children to practice mercy toward the dumb animals, and not to be careless of their needs and sufferings, while the Jews were to instruct their children how to slit the animals' throats. (Pagan religions also required that children become instructed in these "offerings to the gods").
- How could Ellen White suggest that God's people should eat only a vegetarian diet, while the Jewish sacrificial system required every Jew to eat meat e.g. The paschal lamb?
- How could Ellen White suppose that killing thousands of animals would teach the Israelites the dreadfulness of their sins, when she agrees that God commanded the Israelites to deliberately kill men, women, children and infants? How does a lamb compare to killing a baby? It is far more traumatic to kill a baby than a lamb.

While not denying that Ellen White was shown certain divine revelations, it is still probable that there were issues which were not revealed to her.

Prostitution

Pagan Practices and Symbols

In the introduction to the Latin work PRIAPEIA - SPORTIVE EPIGRAMS ON PRIAPUS (by divers poets in English verse and prose, which was translation by Leonard C. Smithers and Sir Richard Burton), NEANISKOS [July,1890] outlined the origin of Priapus - a fertility god - and some prominent worship practices identified with the cult. Scanned at www.sacred-texts.com , December, 2000. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/priap/prpc.htm>

'In the earliest ages the worship of the generative Energy was of the most simple and artless character, rude in manner, primitive in form, chaste in idea, the homage of man to the Supreme Power, the Author of Life, the Sun, as symbolised by the reproductive force.

Afterwards the cult became depraved, a religion of feeling, of sensuousness, corrupted by a priesthood who, not slow to take advantage of this state of affairs, inculcated therewith profligate and mysterious ceremonies, union of gods with women, religious prostitution and other sexual rites. Thus it was not long before the emblems lost their real and original meaning, and became licentious statues and debased art. Hence we have the debauched ceremonies at the festivals of Bacchus, who became, not only the representative of the creative Energy, but the god of pleasure and licentiousness.

(An) Ithyphallus, (was) a piece of wood shaped like the erect virile member (a penis), which was carried about in the festivals of Bacchus. Hence, applied to Priapus, who was represented with an erect member. Priapus was also called Triphallus (triphallus), a threefold phallus, an immense phallus, on account of the extraordinary size of his member.]

*This corrupted religion readily found eager votaries, captives to a pleasant bondage compelled by the impulse of physical luxury: such was the case in India and **Egypt**, and among the Phoenicians, **Babylonians**, **Hebrews** and other Eastern races.*

Sex-worship once personified became the supreme and governing deity, enthroned as the ruling god over all; and monarchs, complying with the prevailing faith, became willing devotees to the cult of Isis and Venus on the one hand, and on

the other of Bacchus and Priapus, appealing, as they did, to the most tyrannical passion of human nature.

The worship of Priapus amongst the Romans was derived from the Egyptians, who, under the form of Apis, the Sacred Bull, adored the generative Power of Nature; and as the syllable *pri* or *pre* signifies (we are assured) principle, production, natural or original source, the word **Priapus may be translated principle of production or of fecundation of Apis.** The same symbol also bore among the Romans the names of Tutenus, Mutinus[1] and Fascinum. (continued over page)

“According to Macrobius, the corresponding deity amongst the Egyptians was called Horus--**a personification of the sun**. This Horus is painted as a winged youth, with a quoit lying at his feet, **a sceptre in his right hand**, and **in his left a Phallus** ⁴⁵ **equal in size to the rest of his body**. **The Phallus was the ancient emblem of creation, and representative of the gods Bacchus, Priapus, Hercules, Siva, Osiris, Baal and Asher, who were all Phallic deities**, the symbols being used as signs of the all-creative Energy or operating Power of the Demiurgos, from no consideration of mere animal appetite but in token of the highest reverence. Among the Greeks, the membrum virile (wooden 'penis') was borne in procession to the temple of Bacchus and was there crowned with a garland by one of the most respectable matrons of the city. **According to St Augustine the sexual organ of man was consecrated in the temple of Liber, that of women in the sanctuaries of Liberia, these two divinities being named father and mother**. Payne Knight states that **Priapus**, in his character of procreative deity, is celebrated by the Greek poets under the **title of Love** or Attraction, the first principle of Animation, the father of gods and men, the regulator and dispenser of all things. He is said to pervade the universe with the motion of his wings, bringing pure light, and thence to be called 'the splendid, **the self-illuminated, the ruling Priapus**'. According to Natalis Comes, the worship of Priapus was introduced into Athens **by express order of an oracle**.

The Priapi were of different forms, some having only a human head and the Phallus, some with the head of Pan or of a faun--that is, with the **beard and ears of a goat**. Among the paintings found in Pompeii there are several representations of hircine sacrifices and offerings of milk and flowers to Priapus. The god is represented as a Hermes on a square pedestal, with the usual characteristic of the deity, a prominent Phallus. **When furnished with arms, in his character of 'Terminus', Priapus held with one hand a reaping hook and, like Osiris, grasped with the other the characteristic feature of his divinity which was always of a monstrous size and in a state of statant energy**. One of the paintings discovered at Pompeii represents a sacrifice or offering to Priapus, made by two persons.....**it was a custom amongst the Babylonians that every woman should once in her life prostitute herself at the temple of Venus to a stranger. This practice is confirmed by Jeremiah and Strabo; The prostitution of women, considered as a religious institution, was not only practised in Babylon, but at Heliopolis; at Aphace, a place betwixt Heliopolis and Biblus; at Sicca Veneria, in Africa, and also**

45 Phallus, or privy member (membrum virile), signifies 'he breaks through or passes into'; German (pfahl); English (pole); of Phoenician origin, the Greek word, pallo--'to brandish preparatory to throwing a missile'; in Sanskrit, phal--'to burst, to produce, to be faithful', 'a ploughshare', and **also the names of Shiva and Mahadeva, who are Hindu deities of destruction**. The kteis, or female organ, as the symbol of the passive or reproductive powers of nature, generally occurs on ancient Roman monuments as the concha Veneris, a fig, barley, corn and the letter delta.]

on the Isle of Cyprus. It was at Aphace that Venus was supposed, according to the author of the Etymologicum Magnum, to have first received the embraces of Adonis. At Argalae, in Africa, women were prostituted on the wedding night. The Loricans, when hard pressed in war, vowed to offer up their daughters to be deflowered in a festival in honour of Venus, if they should be victorious. ⁴⁶ The Marquis de Sade in his priapistic book La Philosophie dans le Boudoir states Babylonian children were deflowered at the temple of Venus at an early age; and gives some curious details on the subject of prostitution in Pegu and Tartary."
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/priap/prp40.htm>

46 Jephthah, made a similar vow and she had "to bewail her virginity for two months" before the father sacrificed his daughter (Judges 11:30-40)

*"We know, of course, from the Bible that the Syrians in Palestine were given to sexual worships. There were erect images (phallic) and "groves" (sexual symbols) on every high hill and under every green tree; 2 and these same images and the rites connected with them crept into the Jewish Temple and were popular enough to maintain their footing there for a long period from King Rehoboam onwards, notwithstanding the efforts of Josiah 3 and other reformers to extirpate them. Moreover there were girls and men (hierodouloi) regularly attached during this period to the Jewish Temple as to the heathen 9p. 182) Temples, for the rendering of sexual services, which were recognized in many cases as part of the ritual. Women were persuaded that it was an honor and a privilege to be fertilized by a 'holy man' (a priest or other man connected with the rites), and children resulting from such unions were often called "Children of God"--an appellation which no doubt sometimes led to a legend of miraculous birth! Girls who took their place as hierodouloi in the Temple or Temple-precincts were expected to surrender themselves to men-worshippers in the Temple, much in the same way, probably, as Herodotus describes in the temple of the Babylonian Venus Mylitta, where every native woman, once in her life, was supposed to sit in the Temple and have intercourse with some stranger. **Indeed the Syrian and Jewish rites dated largely from Babylonia.** "The Hebrews entering Syria," says Richard Burton 2 "found it religionized, by Assyria and Babylonia, when the Accadian Ishtar had passed West, and had become Ashtoreth, Ashtaroth, or Ashirah, the Anaitis of Armenia, the Phoenician Astarte, and the Greek Aphrodite, the great Moon-goddess who is queen of Heaven and Love." **The word translated "grove" as above, in our Bible, is in fact Asherah, which connects it pretty clearly with the Babylonian Queen of Heaven.** In India again, in connection with the Hindu Temples and their rites, we have exactly the same institution of girls attached to the Temple service--the Nautch-girls--whose functions in past times were certainly sexual, and whose dances in honor of the god are, even down to the present day, decidedly amatory in character. Then we have the very numerous lingams (conventional representations of the male organ) to be seen, scores and scores of them, in the arcades and cloisters of the Hindu Temples--(p. 183) to which women of all classes, especially those who wish to become mothers, resort, anointing them copiously with oil, and signaling their respect and devotion to them in a very practical way. **As to the lingam as***

**representing the male organ, in some form or other--as
upright stone or pillar or obelisk or slender round tower--it**
occurs all over the, world, notably in Ireland, and forms such a
memorial of the adoration paid by early folk to the great emblem
and instrument of human fertility, as cannot be mistaken.

The pillars set up by Solomon in front of his temple were obviously from their names--Jachin and Boaz⁴⁷--meant to be emblems of this kind; and the fact that they were crowned with pomegranates-⁴⁸-the universally accepted symbol of the female--

47 Jachin and Boaz - '*He shall establish*' and '*in it is strength*' are the marginal interpretations of these two words found in the Bible. It is interesting that Priapus was called "the rigid god." In pagan temples, the columns symbolised the male phallus. The '*pillars*' were emblems of the Procreator <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pcc/pcc13.htm>

1 Kings 7:18-22 "And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter. (19) And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits. (20) And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter. (21) And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar; and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar; and called the name thereof Boaz. (22) And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished."

48 Pomegranates and Bells- In long established pagan rituals, pomegranates and bells were used to invoke fertility and protection from evil spirits. "Pagans used bells to summon demons, cast spells, and communicate with the dead, while 'Christians' used them to cast out evil spirits and frighten away storms. St. Anthony Abbot attached a bell to his crutch to ward off the demons who plagued him with temptations. Shakespeare alluded to the use of bells in exorcisms and excommunications with the phrase 'bell, book, and candle' (King John, III,iii,12)."

<http://ww2.netnitco.net/users/legend01/bells.htm>

The goddess Astarte is also known as Astarat and Astoreth. The **bull** and the **dove** are especially sacred to Astarte and Astoreth. The goddesses are often depicted wearing horns. The **egg** is a symbol sacred to Astarte, and represents abundant fertility. The pomegranate, which was a "fruit filled with eggs" (its seeds) was an important part of the sacred rites connected with the worship of Astarte. According to a Wiccan source, a "bell is an amulet used by primitive and Western people whose sound was intended to ward off the evil eye and dispel hostile spirits. In the Middle East bells were attached to the harness of horses and camels for the same purposes." <http://www.fortunecity.com/greenfield/tigris/567/id38.htm> Later it was believed that bells had holy powers and they were tolled during funeral processions to ward off evil spirits.

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. II: Basilica – Chambers by Philip Schaff, states "...among the pagans the priests of Proserpine announced the beginning of the sacrifice by ringing bells.

.. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/encyc02.bells.html>

In the Hebrew sanctuary services, the High Priest wore on the bottom of his robe 'a

confirms and clinches **this interpretation.**⁴⁹ *The obelisks before the Egyptians' temples were signs of the same character."*
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pcc/pcc13.htm>

pomegranate and a bell, a pomegranate and a bell' (Exodus 28:34) when He went before the Lord, so that he would not die. Exodus 28:34 -35 "A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. (35) And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not."

49 Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible

I Kings 7:21: "The right pillar-Jachin - That is, He shall establish. The left pillar-Boaz - that is, in strength. These were no doubt emblematical; for notwithstanding their names, ***they seem to have supported no part of the building.***"

(Edward Carpenter 's quote continued)

"The well-known T-shaped cross was in use in pagan lands long before Christianity, as a representation of the male member, and also at the same time of the 'tree' on which the god (Attis or Adonis or Krishna or whoever it might be) was crucified; and the same symbol combined with the oval (or yoni) formed the Crux Ansata ☐ of the old Egyptian ritual--a figure which is to-day sold in Cairo as a potent charm, and confessedly indicates the conjunction of the two sexes in one design. MacLennan in The Fortnightly Review (Oct. 1869) quotes with approval the words of Sanchoniathon, as saying that "men first worship plants, next the heavenly bodies, (p 184) supposed to be animals, then **'pillars' (emblems of the Procreator)**, and last, the anthropomorphic gods.**It is not necessary to enlarge on this subject. The facts of the connection of sexual rites with religious services nearly everywhere in the early world are, as I say, sufficiently patent to every inquirer.**" <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/pcc/pcc13.htm>

Temple Prostitutes

Leviticus 19:29;21:9

“Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. 9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.”

1 Kings 14:22-24

“And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. 24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.”

2 Kings 23:7

“And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove (image, statue).“

In the reign of Asa, sodomy and prostitution was practised as part of the Israelites' pagan worship ceremonies (1 Kings 15:12). The male temple prostitutes (whoremongers) engaged in “sacred” homosexual (sodomy) rites in special “houses” built for this particular “service.” The female temple prostitutes also participated in pagan worship rituals of the male/female fertility god whose idols were “used” in worship ceremonies. Throughout their entire Old Testament history, the Israelites were steeped in the practice of human/child sacrifice and homosexual and male/female sexual religious rites. Just prior to their Babylonian captivity, Amos related a message from God.

Amos 5:25

“Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? (26) But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. (27) Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts.“

Moloch (also called Milcom), was the fire-serpent god of the Ammonites in Canaan, to whom human sacrifices were offered. This was the same fire-serpent religion (Bol-Khan) which the Egyptians had observed in Egypt; the same religion which the Moabites practised the glory of their god Chemosh; and the same religion which the Zidonians worshipped to the glory of their god Baal.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible

2 Kings 23:7

"He (Josiah) broke down the houses of the sodomites' (pyl dqh hakkedeshim, of the whoremongers,) 'where the women wove hangings for the grove' (hr al pylb bottim laasherah, 'houses or shrines for Asherah.') Similar perhaps to those which the silversmiths made for Diana, Acts xix. 24. It is rather absurd to suppose that the women were employed in making curtains to encompass a grove. The Syriac and Arabic versions countenance the interpretation I have given above. In chap. xxiii. 6, the former says, 'He cast out the idol, dechlotho, from the house of the Lord;' and in 2 Kings xxiii. 7: 'He threw down the houses, dazoine, of the prostitutes; and the women who wove garments, ledechlotho, for the idols which were there.' The Arabic is exactly the same. From the whole it is evident that Asherah was no other than Venus; the nature of whose worship is plain enough from the mention of whoremongers and prostitutes."

Prostitution by Any Other Name is Still the Same Shame

Numbers 31:1-54 reports that the Israelites waged war on the Midianites and were victorious. The Israelite warriors killed all the adult Midianite males, but brought back all the women and children as captives. Moses was "wroth" (verse 14) and commanded that only the female virgins (32,000) were to be kept alive, so the mothers and male infants and male children were slaughtered in a blood-bath. The reason suggested for this slaughter by Moses, was that it was the Midianite women who led the Israelite men into sin at Baal-Peor with their prostitution. However, if such logic was correct, it might be anticipated that the Israelites would mostly need to be wary of the young virgins who it might be expected, had learned a trick or two from their prostitute mothers. Wouldn't it have been safer to keep the male babies alive and slaughter the virgin women – just in case the virgins tried to lure the Israelite men into sin again, as their mother's had done previously? Or to be ultra safe from sexual temptation, they might have ordered the slaughter of all the women, including the virgins.

Was the mass slaughter of the mothers and male children reasonable? The women, who worshipped their god through sacred prostitution, believed they were worshipping the true god in the way they had been taught to worship and to honour that god. God judges the motivation of the heart.

When the Israelites slaughtered the married women and children, it 'proved' to the surviving Midianite virgins that, according to the Israelites' god, having sex with men (whether it was your husband or not) is a worse crime than mass committing mass murder of entire families. What a powerful witness against the truth!

Continuing with the report in Numbers: it states that the virgins, along with the pillaged livestock and the gold etc, were distributed between the Israelite warriors and the congregation. The warriors received half the virgins and the congregation who had not participated in the battle, received the other 50% of the virgins. The priests were not overlooked and they received the 32 virgins which

were dedicated to the Lord as a type of tithe or levy. The Levites also received 1/50th of all the pillage, including their share of young virgins.

Human and animal sacrifices were common rituals which took place after battles as the victorious army would offer sacrifices to thank their gods for their success. eg King Saul told Samuel he was planning to make sacrifices with the goods that he had pillaged from the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:15).

The Biblical record informs us that 32 young pagan virgins were dedicated (Hebrew is literally *devoted*) to the Lord on that day. (Devoted literally means – *to put under the ban* or *to offer up as a sacrifice* - Lev 27:28,29).

But if we suppose that the Midianite virgins somehow escaped being sacrificed, then what purpose could they serve in the temple of God – a God whom they did not worship anyway? Even Israelite women were not even permitted to enter into the sacred areas of the sanctuary or temple, but pagans/Gentiles were absolutely forbidden to enter even the court area on pain of death.

Recall that, as 2 Kings 23:7 evidences, the Israelites were already very accustomed to utilising and employing temple prostitutes. The Bible records that the Israelites performed the same fertility rites in their worship as did the pagans. They also passed their children through the fire ie - sacrificed them as burnt offerings - to Moloch/Chemosh, the god of the Moabites (Jer 7:31).

If the young captive virgins were not used as human sacrifices, for what purpose were the Israelite men reserving them?

Leviticus 19:29;21:9

“Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. 9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.”

Is it possible that the Midianite women were utilised to fulfil the temple-prostitute role in the worship ceremonies to which the Israelites returned so often? Is it possible that the Israelites intended to replace or to prevent their own daughters from becoming Israelite whores perhaps?

Did the Israelite men want more slave women - without any inclination to use them for sex and reproduction? If so, why did they annihilate the rest of the grown women who would have been more skilled in managing a household and in producing food and clothing than would younger girls? It appears that the younger virgins were selected with a certain purpose in mind. Mature married women were not suitable for this specific purpose.

Paul A. Twelker cites Mielziner (1884) who states that “in the ethical teaching of the Talmud, eighteen was considered the proper year for a young man to be married. However, the legal age to become married was set at the age of puberty: males had to complete their thirteenth year while females had to complete their twelfth year. Marriages were void under these limits. There was one exception: the father could give his minor daughter in marriage before puberty, but he adds that “such contracted infant marriages were, as a rule, not actually consummated before the parties had reached the age of puberty.” Paul A. Twelker, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Trinity College, Trinity International University in *The Biblical Design for Marriage: The Creation, Distortion and Redemption of Equality, Differentiation, Unity and Complementarity* <http://www.tiu.edu/psychology/Twelker/BDFMChap1.htm>

Basically Israelite girls had to be 12 years of age, plus one day, before they could legally be expected to consummate marriage (ie. to have sexual intercourse), except in special circumstances. Regarding the fate of captive, pagan girls, it is not recorded whether the Israelite men were careful to ask their age and treat them in a similar fashion.

It is extremely unlikely that pagan girls fared better than Israelite girls as the oral laws (later written down as the Talmud) gave licence to Israelite men to have sex with children. The laws regarding sexual intercourse were written down between 200-500 AD in the Talmud and include the following ‘legal’ precepts:

- “It is permitted to have sexual intercourse with a girl, three years old and one day” (Sanhedrin 55b, p 376);
- “A proselyte under the age of three years and a day, is permitted to marry a priest (Vabamoth para 60b)
- “When a grown up man has intercourse with a little girl it is nothing, for when the girl is less than this it is as if one puts the finger into the eye. As tears come to the eye again and again, so does virginity come back to the little girl under three years” (Kethuboth, para 11b, footnote #7, p58);
- “The intercourse of a small boy is not regarded as a sexual act” (Kethuboth, para 11b, p58);
- “If a man commits sodomy with a boy less than nine years old, it is not sodomy” (Sanhedrin para 54b & 55a, p 371);

- “Intercourse with a dead woman is permissible” (Jebbamoth para 55b, p 371);
- “The penalty for adultery does not include sex with a minor, the wife of a minor, or the wife of a heathen (Sanhedrin 52b);
- “...with the designated bondmaid⁵⁰ one is guilty only in the case of natural connection but not in the case of perverse connection” (Kerithoth 11a);

In many cultures today, the act of having sexual relations with a 12 year old child or younger, would be classified as paedophilia; an act that would legally constitute the crime of carnal knowledge or sexual penetration of a minor., nevertheless, the Talmud permitted (in an attempt to ‘legalise’) sexual intercourse with very young female and male children.

It is amazing that, considering what they endured at the hands of the Israelite men, that the kidnapped pagan girls, who were compelled to witness their relatives' brutal murders; and then forced to enter into a sexual relationship with the murderer - that any of the young girls managed to survive emotionally.

If the same behaviour - kidnapping, murder of relatives, pillaging and forced sex was described in Western culture today, it would be considered criminal, even if it occurred during war periods. It is behaviour that occurs as part of the sex-slave trade.

It is clear that the Israelite warriors kept the pagan women alive, not for their good characters, but because they had some value as virgins to the Israelite men. That knowledge and that horrific experience is a huge load to place on any woman's shoulders, let alone upon the shoulders of a 12 year old child. Consider what sentence a jury might find applicable to a serial murderer, child-rapist and kidnapper? Consider what the sentence might be if the offender protests that he did not commit a crime and is adamant that he is not repentant.

If the criminal suggested that he was only carrying out God's commands when he committed the atrocities, it is not too difficult to imagine the judge finding the man mentally unfit to stand trial on medical grounds!

The Israelites were not of course, the only nation that practiced adult-child sex. Many pagan religions were likewise afflicted with the same problem.

⁵⁰ Designated bondmaids are unmarried adolescent girls

Despite the Israelites claim that God instructed them to behave in such horrendous ways, it is not possible to evaluate Israelite paedophilia as being more holy than 'pagan' paedophilia.

Certainly the Israelites repeatedly performed child sacrifices to pagan gods in their apostasy from God - it is well documented in the Bible in many places.

Certainly the Israelites murdered whole tribes and committed genocide with tremendous violence and 'divine' justification for their heinous deeds.

Certainly they had legalised 'promiscuous' sexual relationships with captive female minors, who were unable to exercise their right to consent or refuse to be engaged in a perhaps transient, forced sexual relationship often with their family's murderers.

Is it possible that this behaviour was inspired and commanded by the One True God?

Under these dark and fearful conditions, it is not difficult to understand how the worship of the One True God gradually became blended with the worship of pagan gods, until the distinctly opposite characters of both the Creator and pagan gods, became almost indistinguishable to the worshippers.



Child-adult sex?

A tantra worship ritual between the (supposedly) divine Shiva and Shakti.

Would Jesus Tell Us to Kill Children?

**Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Christian, Muslim, Pagan, Jew
All are special, just like you,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.**

**Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Not for raping, or abuse
Do to them what you'd like too
Jesus loves the little children of the world.**

**Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Treat them gently, treat them nice
Show the love of Jesus Christ
Jesus loves the little children of the world.**

**Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Boys and girls that no-one likes
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world.**

Marriage

By interaction with pagan nations, the Israelite's system of worship had become confused and so too had their understanding of the original, divine concept of marriage.

The Israelites religious practices reflected their conception of God's character, however the Mosaic laws concerning marriage, magnify still further the nation's distorted view of the character of God. The following questions assist the study.

- What was God's original plan for marriage?
- What constitutes a “scriptural” marriage?
- What constitutes a “scriptural” divorce?
- What is a “non-Scriptural” divorce?
- Does God permit and sanction remarriage after a “non-scriptural divorce?”

The Original Plan for Marriage

Genesis 2:21-24

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

There is no doubt that the original plan for humanity was for one man to remain married to one woman for life (and perhaps eternity if sin had not entered the world). However, because after sin entered the world, humanity to inherit carnal flesh – a selfish mind – and the plan for the perfect marriage was ignored. Practices involving sexual relationships and marriage, became corrupt. God foresaw that drastic remedial action was required and He outlined again the perfect plan for marriage in the 10 commandments.

Exodus 20:14

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

Despite receiving the 10 commandments, with the 7th commandment forbidding adultery, the Israelites required further clarification of the divine law of God. Just as the “man of sin” tries today to change the law which identifies what constitutes a valid marriage, so anciently Satan engineered strategies to make marriage dishonorable and illicit unions ‘legal’, in the Israelites experience.

Moses was required to relay further instructions to the Israelites, regarding marriage, “for the hardness of their hearts.” Still, because of their association with pagan nations, their desire to imitate their practices, and the hardness of their hearts, the Israelites encountered difficulties remaining within the confines of the seventh commandment.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. (2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. (3) And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; (4) her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.”

Divorce was not the original plan for marriage; however it was in keeping with godly principles. It was absolutely necessary that the many discarded Israelite wives be provided opportunity for support through remarriage. The Mosaic law directed that a divorce certificate to be given to such women. Many Israelite men did not wish to conform to the perfect will of God and so God provided for the welfare of the discarded women – as He did for Hagar when she was sent out of Abraham's camp (Genesis 21).

In New Testament times Paul noted that marriage was still in the line of enemy fire.

1 Timothy 4:3 (Paul commenting on the man of sin)

“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”

The Roman Catholic Church was not the first institution to recognise annulments of marriage. The Jewish culture had legalised annulments also. Under Jewish traditional laws, if a woman was “barren” (produced no children) after 10 years of married life, she could also be “sent away” or annulled – not recognised as being legal.

Regarding lawful marriage, we read that only marriage to believers in the Israelite race were considered legal and sanctioned by God. Every marriage outside of God's guidelines was illicit and/or adulterous.

Did the Israelites believe that breaking God's 7th commandment was legal (not sinful) in some instances?

Exodus 23:32

“Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. (33) They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.”

Exodus 34:12-16

“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: (13) But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: (14) For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: (15) **Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land,** and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; (16) **And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods,** and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.”

Deuteronomy 7:2-4

“And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them:(3) Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. (4) For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”

Regarding divorce and remarriage, Moses, in Deuteronomy 24, said that divorce involved 2 steps.

- the man was to cause a physical separation by sending the woman away (#07971 שלח shalach); and
- the man had to give a the woman a divorce certificate in the presence of witnesses to indicate that the separation was with his consent and that it was legal and permanent – i.e. divorce.

If only the first step was taken, then the partners were not divorced. If only the first step was taken the result for the “sent away” woman, was disastrous.

The “first step only” – the “sent away” woman had to leave the family home without any financial support (except her wedding dowry); and without her children. Some husbands even refused to give the woman back her dowry, so she was completely without support. Commonly, a man would send the woman away, but would also refuse to give the woman a certificate of divorce.

This is a similar situation to that which Michal found herself in after she criticised King David for “dancing before the Lord.” David declared that from that point onward, she would bear no children for the rest of her life. While David did not divorce Michal, certainly he prevented her from having a normal married relationship with him. David was not punished in this new arrangement with Michal, for he had many other wives with which to continue a sexual relationship and to produce children. The punishment for Michal was intense. Childlessness was seen as a “curse” and carried with it the threat of an annulled marriage. It was the custom that after 10 years of a childless marriage, a husband could legally annul his marriage with his “barren” wife. Michal was made to be as a “barren” wife. Because of her enforced celibacy and corresponding childlessness, Michal decided to raise another woman's children – 5 sons - as her own. But David's declaration that Michal would be “childless” was not an empty promise. The king punished Michal dreadfully, when he agreed that her adopted sons should be handed over to the Gibeonites to be murdered for political purposes. All five of Michal's adopted sons were murdered as political scapegoats for Saul's prior crimes against the Gibeonites at David's decree (2 Samuel 21:8).

Such was the power of the king, but also great was the power of the husband in Israel.

There is an old saying that “power corrupts.” But God is powerful and He is incorruptible. Power that is not under the restraint of the spirit of God, is the power that corrupts. This is the unsanctified power that was demonstrated by the Israelite men toward their wives.

The hardness of their hearts - “male meanness,” prevented the woman from remarrying and being supported by another man who could legally become her husband. If there was no divorce paper to prove the legal dissolution of the marriage, then anyone who married the “sent away” woman would become an adulterer for the woman was still legally married to her estranged husband. If another marriage were contracted it would not be legal, for the original marriage was not legally dissolved. If the woman remarried, she would become an adulteress, just as Jesus said. The original husband however, COULD remarry, for it was not against the law of Moses for a man to have multiple wives (Deut 21:15), but the woman could not remarry another man without a certificate of divorce – which provision was controlled by her estranged husband.

It is recorded by Bible Commentator Adam Clark or Lightfoot that some men even wrote into the divorce certificate that the woman was not permitted to remarry! This abusive man's “law” was upheld, which then robbed a “pure” but perhaps “ugly” or older woman of the opportunity to remarry and gain financial support. No wonder Jesus spoke out against the practice.

Under the “**altered**” laws of Moses found in Deut 21:10-14, such abusive treatment was “legal” for pagan, slave girls, virgins, who were “conquered” victims - trophies of war. Pagan virgins (“women” aged approximately 12-15 years) who were “desirable to look upon,” were taken captive, given a month to grieve over the murder of their families, then “married” to the men who had murdered their family and relatives. The record is given that God through Moses, instructed the warrior-husband that he has the legal right to “send away” (the new “wife” if he no longer found “delight” in her. **One is hard pressed to think that in the beginning of their “marriage, the “delight” this man found in the pagan pubescent girl was anything more than than her physical appearance (e.g. her sex appeal).** The warrior certainly was **not** delighting in the fact that the young virgin was a true worshipper of Yahweh.

Despite God's law stating that marriage to pagan women was expressly forbidden in God's law (Exodus 23:32; 34:12-16 and Deut 7:3-5), the Biblical record reveals that contradictory “law” was later written in a Mosaic book in fact, in the same Mosaic book.

Deuteronomy 21:10-14

“When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, (11) And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; (12) Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; (13) And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that **thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.** (14) And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go (send her away #07971 שלח shalach) whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, **because thou hast humbled (#6031 – forced, profaned, polluted) her.”**

So in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses declares that God supposedly completely, absolutely, totally forbids marriage to pagans under any circumstances, but 14 chapters later, he declares that God has changed His mind and that now the Israelite men are permitted to 'marry' any pagan captured virgin that appeals to their eyes; only it was not a real marriage for the relationship was not permanent. It depended entirely on whether the husband still found his desire was to the young woman. One wonders what the word desire implies? Sexual desire? Sexual desire was the reason that the young woman was selected by the Israelite warrior, to be his child 'bride' in the first place.

It appears that this supposedly “divine” arrangement describes legalised rape. Forced “marriage” is not a marriage fashioned after God's pattern given to Adam and Eve. It even appears that there was no permanency enjoined on the

Israelite men in regards to the sexual union that they forced onto their “child bride.” The Israelite men had just murdered the young girls' families! Now they were forced to “marry” their families' murderers! Happy marriage? Not likely. Under the Mosaic instructions, the Israelite men could legally “send away” the pagan girls (wives) after they had lost sexual interest in them. These teenage girls -rape victims - were then considered “profaned” or “pierced.”

“Profaned, polluted humbled and pierced” are words used to describe the pagan virgins who were “married” but then cast aside if the Israelite man, under Mosiac law, so chose. But these terms also applied to Hebrew women who experienced similar experiences; for example Tamar, King David's beautiful daughter. Amnon, her half brother lusted after Tamar. He concocted a scheme whereby he could be alone with her and then he raped her. Tamar was **“profaned, polluted humbled and pierced”** after Amnon raped her. Amnon had forced (#6031) himself sexually (#7971) on Tamar. Tamar (not Amnon), was then a “social reject” (#2491 – defiled, profane, pierced) despite being a royal princess and daughter of King David.

Under Mosiac law, it appears that illicit marriages did not require a divorce certificate, since they were illegal (but recognised as legal) marriages anyway. These illegal relationships were simply annulled i.e the woman was 'turned out' in much the same way as a stray dog might be 'dumped' or discarded.

Ezra engineered a “mass deportation” of foreign “wives” (captive women) from Israel because he realised how dreadfully wrong the Israelites had been to unite with these pagan women (Ezra 9 & 10). No divorce certificates are recorded as being issued to these women. Their illicit marriages were simply annulled because they had been illegal unions. **But clearly, as seen in Ezra's prayer, it was the breaking of God's law that made these separations necessary in these unequally-yoked, illegal inter-religion marriages. (A Bible scholar might well wonder why the Jews possessed a law, supposedly given by Moses (Deuteronomy 21:10-14), supposedly under the command from God, that Israelite men could marry pagan teenagers, captured as war trophies).**

Ezra 9:1, 2, 10-14

“Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. (2) For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. (10) And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, (11) Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. (12) Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. (13) And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance

as this; (14) Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?”

Without the certificate of divorce, the couple was not legally divorced. The woman could not remarry because the marriage was still legally binding despite the fact that she had been “sent away.” The divorce certificate was necessary because of the hardship that Israelite men, through “the hardness of their hearts” caused the women. A husband could send his wife away (#07971 שלח shalach) without a divorce paper “for any reason” according to Rabbi Akiba. Rabbi Hillel said a man could send his wife #07971 שלח shalach) away for adultery only. The Pharisees tried to trick Jesus into answering in support of one of these rabbis and so speak against the law of Moses.

Jesus did not go against the compassionate divorce law of Moses; but neither did he side with either Rabbis Hillel or Akiba.

Interlinear: Mt 5:32 (KJV text)

But <de> I <ego> say <lego> unto you <humin>, That <hoti> whosoever <hos> <an> shall **put away** <apoluo> his <autos> wife <gune>, saving <parektos> for the cause <logos> of fornication <porneia>, causeth <poieo> her <autos> to commit adultery <moichao> and <kai> whosoever <hos> <ean> shall marry <gameo> her that is **divorced** <apoluo> committeth adultery <moichao>.

Jesus said: “If you ‘*put away*’ your wife and marry another, unless it be for fornication, you commit adultery and anyone who marries the one who was **put away** commits adultery.” (Matt 19:9).

“**Put away**” and “**divorce**” are **NOT** terms which define the same concept.

Thayer says **apoluo** means, “*to dismiss from the house, to repudiate.*”

“**Apostasion**” is properly translated “divorce” or “divorcement”. [Grk. 647]

This situation was still happening in 1980 when it was brought to the attention of the world in an article called “**Jewish Women in Chains**” by Norma Baumel Joseph , published by Mike Willis Dayton in Ohio Truth Magazine XXIV: 14, pp. 227-230 3 April, 1980.

If the woman was a fornicator, the husband **could** send her away - without a certificate of divorce to cover up her sin – to put her away privately as Joseph planned to do to Mary when he suspected her of fornication when she was pregnant by the spirit of God (Matthew 1:19). The husband **could** have organised to have the woman stoned if he chose to do so. Adulteresses were traditionally stoned, not (re)married. The certificate of divorce given by a man to

his “sent away” wife was to prove that she was NOT an adulteress. It was **to facilitate** her re-marriage To give a certificate of divorce to an adulteress was pointless. Husbands or wives who fornicate have broken their marriage contract and had already proved that they are not faithful marriage partners.

Ken Crispin explains further.

Deuteronomy 24:1 says that a man might divorce his wife for some uncleanness - “*ervath dabhar.*” *This Hebrew term refers to a range of misconduct. It has definite sexual connotations and would include not only adultery, but other kinds of lewd or immoral or indecent behaviour. It is interesting to note that in that part of the passage quoted from Matthew 5 in which Jesus is normally assumed to be correcting the OT, the word which is translated as “adultery” or “unchastity” is actually poerneia. In other words, Jesus did not impose a new and more restrictive commandment but corrected the lax view of Rabbi Akiba (a man could divorce his wife for any reason) and restated and confirmed the original commandment. In fact, he had just finished saying, “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.” The concept has become confused because of the lack of any English equivalent and translators have opted to use “adultery” or “unchastity” probably because those words have been thought to be the closest in meaning. Porneia nonetheless, had a wider meaning than adultery and the normal English translation are expressed too narrowly. There was a Greek word which meant simply adultery and that word moichea was used only three sentences earlier when Jesus said, “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully already has committed adultery with her in his heart.” If Jesus intended to permit divorce only in cases of adultery, why did he change to the more general word only three sentences later? The only possible answer to that question is that he did so because he wanted to express a wider concept, namely the concept of shameful or indecent conduct already contained in the law that had been given to Moses.”....It seems to me however, that the concept should not be looked at in the abstract but in the context of a marriage, which is of course, an essentially sexual relationship. In that context it seems to me that the word may be taken to include any kind of misconduct or immorality which is so serious that it pollutes or perverts the marital relationship. If that construction is correct, it would mean that a Christian should not contemplate divorce unless there was misconduct so serious that it virtually undermined the whole marriage. On the other hand, it would mean that a wife need not feel locked into a marital relationship with a man who was repeatedly guilty of gross violence towards her and or their children merely because he had not committed adultery. That is more the kind of principle we would expect from a wise and loving father to impose upon his children. I must confess I have always had the greatest difficulty in persuading myself that God intended that women would be free to withdraw from a marital relationship if their husbands committed adultery, but not if their husbands tried to kill them.*”Ken Crispin, *Divorce, the Forgivable Sin?*, 1988, p 28,29 (out of print).

Consider the case where a wife has committed adultery and is about to be

stoned for her sin. Traditional theology maintains that Jesus must say, "You can divorce your wife only when you don't need to – such as right now - because you are about to be widowed." What good would a certificate of divorce be for the wife at this time? The divorce certificate facilitated a woman's remarriage. She was going to be stoned to death. What good would the certificate have been to the husband? He could remarry after his adulterous wife's death anyway, without giving his wife a divorce certificate.

With that logic (that adultery is the only Biblical reason for getting a divorce), Jesus would be made to add, "You can **not** divorce your wife if she is about to kill you (that's not the sin of adultery, it's murder) but you can divorce her for the sin of adultery, but she won't have long to use the certificate because she'll be stoned soon." What is the point of the wife getting a divorce certificate for a few hours before the stoning? The divorce certificate was to facilitate remarriage. The traditional "adultery only" view, is clearly illogical.

A legal marriage requires three conditions:

- recognised by God (not yoked with unbelievers)
- living together physically
- the written marriage certificate/record or form of public acknowledgement.

A legal divorce requires three conditions:

- extremely serious, recurring, unrepentant offences by a partner;
- physical separation from the partner;
- a written certificate of divorce or form of public acknowledgement.

It appears and makes more sense that Jesus is saying, Matt.5.32, "But I say unto you, Whoever puts away his wife (except for fornication) **to** marry another woman commits adultery and whosoever shall marry the one put away, commits adultery." The person marrying the "put away" woman would be guilty of committing adultery, because the woman was not properly divorced. Her husband was an adulterer and certificates of divorce were not given in cases of adultery.

Mark 10: 11 "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, **and** marry another, committeth adultery against her (12) And if a woman shall put away her husband, **and** be married to another, she committeth adultery."

These texts do not seem to harmonise with the Moses' law, however when the intention is highlighted, Jesus' statement harmonises perfectly:

"Whoever puts away his wife **to** marry another, commits adultery. And if a woman puts away her husband **to** marry another man, she commits adultery" (Phil Ward, Divorce and Remarriage, unpublished article).

Compare different versions of the Levitical texts.

Leviticus 21:7, 13-15

“They (priests) shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane (has had sexual intercourse); neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God..... And he (a high priest) shall take a wife in her virginity. (14) A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane (one who has had sexual intercourse), or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin **of his own people to wife.** (15) **Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the LORD do sanctify him.”**

⁷They shall not take<03947>(8799) a wife<0802> that is a whore<02181>(8802), or profane<02491>; neither shall they take<03947>(8799) a woman<0802> put away<01644>(8803) from her husband<0376>: for he is holy<06918> unto his God<0430>.

¹⁴A widow<0490>, or a divorced woman<01644> (Lit put away woman) (8803), or profane<02491>, or an harlot<02181>(8802), these shall he not take<03947>(8799): but he shall take<03947>(8799) a virgin<01330> of his own people<05971> to wife<0802>. ¹⁵Neither shall he profane<02490>(8762) his seed<02233> among his people<05971>: for I the LORD<03068> do sanctify<06942>(8764) him.

Young's Literal Translation

¹⁴widow, or cast out, or polluted one--a harlot--these he doth not take, but a virgin of his own people he doth take for a wife,

Green's Literal Translation

¹⁴He shall not take a widow, or one put away, or a polluted one, a harlot, but he shall take a virgin of his own people for a wife;

The Apostles' Bible

¹⁴But a widow, or one that is put away, or profaned, or a harlot, these he shall not take; but he shall take for a wife a virgin of his own people.

Strong's Concordance and Lexicon Definitions

#02181 זנה *zanah zaw-naw'*

a primitive root [highly-fed and therefore wanton]; ; v

AV- ... harlot 36, go a whoring 19, ... whoredom 15, whore 11, commit fornication 3, whorish 3, harlot + <0802> 2, commit 1, continually 1, great 1, whore's + <0802> 1; 93

1) to commit fornication, be a harlot, play the harlot

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to be a harlot, act as a harlot, commit fornication

1a2) to commit adultery

1a3) to be a cult prostitute

1a4) to be unfaithful (to God) (fig.)

1b) (Pual) to play the harlot

1c) (Hiphil)

1c1) to cause to commit adultery

1c2) to force into prostitution

1c3) to commit fornication

Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Lexicon

02491: *chahal khaw-lawl'* from <02490>;

AV-slay 78, wounded 10, profane 3, kill 2, slain man 1; 94

n m

1) slain, fatally wounded, pierced

1a) pierced, fatally wounded

1b) slain

adj

2) (CLBL) profaned

2a) defiled, profaned (by divorce)

02490:

02490 חלל *chahal khaw-lal'*

a primitive root [compare <02470>]; ; v

AV-begin 52, profane 36, pollute 23, defile 9, break 4, wounded 3, eat 2, slay 2, first 1, gather grapes 1, inheritance 1, began men 1, piped 1, players 1, prostitute 1, sorrow 1, stain 1, eat as common things 1; 141

1) to profane, defile, pollute, desecrate, begin

1a) (Niphal)

1a1) to profane oneself, defile oneself, pollute oneself

1a1a) ritually

1a1b) sexually

1a2) to be polluted, be defiled

1b) (Piel)

- 1b1) to profane, make common, defile, pollute
- 1b2) to violate the honour of, dishonour
- 1b3) to violate (a covenant)
- 1b4) to treat as common
- 1c) (Pual) to profane (name of God)
- 1d) (Hiphil)
- 1d1) to let be profaned
- 1d2) to begin
- 1e) (Hophal) to be begun
- 2) to wound (fatally), bore through, pierce, bore
- 2a) (Qal) to pierce
- 2b) (Pual) to be slain
- 2c) (Poel) to wound, pierce
- 2d) (Poal) to be wounded
- 3) (Piel) to play the flute or pipe

Strong's Hebrew Concordance

02491:

2491 chalal khaw-lawl' from 2490; **pierced** (especially to death); figuratively, polluted:--kill, profane, slain (man), X slew, (deadly) wounded. see HEBREW for 02490

01644:

01644 גרש garash *gaw-rash'*

a primitive root; ; v

AV-drive out 20, cast out 8, thrust out 6, drive away 2, put away 2, divorced 2, driven 1, expel 1, drive forth 1, surely 1, troubled 1, cast up 1, divorced woman 1; 47

1) to drive out, expel, cast out, drive away, , divorced*, put away, thrust away, trouble, cast up

1a) (Qal) to thrust out, cast out

1b) (Niphal) to be driven away, be tossed

1c) (Piel) to drive out, drive away

1d) (Pual) to be thrust out

(*Note: sent away = separation, not a legal divorce which required a certificate of divorcement)

Mosaic law permitted common priests to marry widows, but prohibited a high priest to marry a woman who had experienced sexual intercourse in any way. A High Priest was not to marry a:

1. whore;

2. widow;
3. a profane (pierced) woman (a non-virgin including divorced or raped woman);
4. sent away (separated, but without divorce certificate);

Comparing Other Religions

Dr Samuele Bacchiocchi (Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University) comments on this text from the Koran - Sura 33:50:

*"One of the benefits of fighting for the cause of Islam is the permission to take captured women as concubines, in addition to several legitimate wives.... **The notion that God would assign captured women as concubines to Muslim believers who fight for His cause, hardly reflect high moral standards of the Islam faith. Polygamy and servile concubinage have destroyed the dignity of women** and the beauty of the home. In this areas the infinite superiority of Christianity is clearly evident."* (<http://www.keithhunt.com/Islam.html>)

Does Dr Bacchiocchi realise that the OT Jewish religion authorised the same practices?

Note: The Old Testament Israelites must not have **practised** "Christian principles" as Dr Bacchiocchi outlines above, because the Israelite warriors were authorised supposedly by God to take many thousands of concubines as captives after being victorious against the pagan nations in war. These women were not necessarily kept permanently, but could be sent away and their marriages annulled (Deut 21:10-14; Judges 21:12; Numbers 31:18; Ezra 9, 10). Under Jewish traditional laws, if a woman was "barren" (produced no children) after 10 years of married life, she could also be "sent away" - her marriage being annulled – not recognised as being legal.

In another view, it might seem that Jesus, in accordance with Moses' law, is making the allowance that the wife can receive a certificate of divorce except in cases where she has committed fornication.

Perhaps the husband mercifully, might not report his wife's adultery so she escapes stoning. He might "put her away" without a divorce certificate. If so, the "put away" woman could not remarry without a divorce certificate, and would likely be assumed to be an adulteress anyway – why else wouldn't her husband give her the divorce papers?

Ezra 9 and 10 details a mass "sending away" of pagan "wives." Ezra does not specify if these women were legally married wives, however the Hebrew supports the idea that these women were captives who were forcefully taken from conquered pagan lands to become concubines to the Israelites.

God forbade marriages with the idolatrous pagans. When these captured women and their children were "sent away" there was no mention of divorce papers being necessary **as these marriages were not legally contracted**. God had forbidden them, just as He forbade Herod's marriage to his brother's wife. Just as Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "the man you are living with now, is not your husband." They were in fact, "living in sin" - an arrangement whereby the legal requirements of marriage were not met.

These relationships were not dissolved because of adultery. The objection was idolatry - the "ervath dabhar" -the "uncleanness" which was referred to in Deut 24:1. **"Ervath dabhar" must include idolatry or else the Israelites would not have been prevented from conducting proper marriages with these women.**

Traditional logic tends to verge on the ridiculous. It is clear that the traditional view of divorce preventing remarriage is a gross error and not what Jesus promoted. The "man of sin" has clearly attempted to change the 7th commandment law. Likewise, the Israelites, misunderstanding God's character and because of the "hardness of their hearts," also made the law of God of none effect because of their traditions; polygamy, "marrying" beautiful pagan slave girls; sending away their wives without properly divorcing them.

The traditions of men concerning divorce and remarriage in Jesus' time, also endeavoured to alter God's law and make "serial marriages" legal (i.e. not sinful).

Another passage of the Bible deals with remarriage.

1 Corinthians 7:7-11

"For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. (8) I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. (9) But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. (10) And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: (11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

Ken Crispin, in "Divorce, the Unforgiveable Sin?" (1988:44-47), comments on these often misinterpreted pauline verses.

"Another significant new Testament passage concerning marriage appears in 1 Corinthians 7. In that chapter, verse 10 is one which, if not kept in its context, can also be seen to be prohibiting marriage after divorce, 'To the married I give charge, no I but he Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband) and that the husband should not divorce his wife.'" For a proper understanding of that verse, however, it is crucial to remember that it immediately follows verses 8 and 9 which state, 'To the unmarried and the widow I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.' there are two Greek words, both of which are translated in the Revised Standard Version b the word 'unmarried'. Those words are parthenos and agamos. The word parthenos means a person who has never had sexual intercourse, a virgin. The other word, agamos, refers to a person who is no longer married but who

may have been married in the past. Later in 1 Corinthians 7 – in verse 25 – Paul commences a lengthy narrative of advice to the single person. That narrative commences with the phrase “the unmarried” and the word there translated as “unmarried” is *parthenos*. The advice which Paul gives in verses 25 to 40 is accordingly confined to those who have never married, the virgins. On the other hand, in 1 Corinthians 7:8, the word *agamos* has been used. Now it is important to note that Paul has referred to the widows quite separately and, consequently, did not have to use the word *agamos* in order to include them. If he had used the *parthenos* he would have made it plain that he was referring to those who were widowed and to those who had never married and could have excluded the divorced from consideration. Yet he did not do so. The word used is *agamos*. Not only was Paul a Pharisee, but he was an outstanding student; one who had the rare distinction of being permitted to sit at the feet of Gamaliel. It is scarcely likely that his use of the word *agamos* in preference to *parthenos* can have been explained by mere clumsiness of expression, especially since he used the word *parthenos* only a sentence later. It must be assumed that he chose the word deliberately and that he did so conscious of its wider meaning. Accordingly, verses 8 and 9 might be expressed more clearly in the following terms, 'To those who have never married, those who are divorced and to the widows I say to them that it is as well for them to remain single as I do. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry.' Paul had already made it plain that he really wished that all people would remain single as he was, but he recognises that whilst some are called to celibacy, others are not.”

(Ken Crispin continued)

“His summation in verses 8 and 9 indicates with the greatest possible clarity that those who cannot exercise self-control, that is those whom the Lord has not called to celibacy, should marry whether they are single, divorced or widowed. Following that clear indication that so far as remarriage is concerned the divorced are to adopt the same principle as single people and widows, Paul turns to deal with the married. In verse 10, Paul clearly uses the term “the married” in contradistinction to those referred to in the previous verses. He has dealt with the unmarried, including the divorced, and now he is passing on to deal with married people. It is to those people that he conveys Jesus' charge that the wife should not separate from her husband and that the husband should not remove or abandon his wife. Here again, the traditional English translation is confusion. The word used in verse 11 is not *apoluo* which means divorce⁵¹, but *aphiemi* which means remove or abandon. There is no reason to suppose that this passage was written in an attempt to lay down an

51 see previous notes on *apoluo* – meaning 'send away' - not divorce

inflexible rule concerning divorce. Such a construction would be quite inconsistent with what he says in verse 25. In laying down an instruction for married Christians, Paul was clearly concerned to remind them that Jesus had charged them to try to sort out their differences and remain in a proper marital relationship. In that context Paul said that if the wife did leave she should remain single or be reconciled to her husband. Clearly what Paul has in mind was a short-term situation immediately following separation. There may have been some estrangement and one party may have stormed out but the marriage has not been irretrievably destroyed. Whilst there is still hope it is the wife's duty to seek a reconciliation with her husband. Equally, it is the husband's duty to seek a reconciliation and not to abandon his wife. No doubt that is the advice which any modern Christian counsellor would offer a woman or a man for that matter, in similar circumstances. But it is important to remember that the commandment was given as advice to the married. Clearly then Paul was contemplating a period immediately following separation when the prospect of a reconciliation existed and it had not become clear that the marital relationship had terminated.

If, despite the wife's efforts, the relationship was finally extinguished then without any further step being taken both the husband and the wife would be regarded as agamos, that is unmarried. They would then be subject, not to the commandments in verses 10 and 11, but to those in verse 8 and 9. In other words, once it was clear that the marital relationship had been terminated, then each would be free to marry. As in Deuteronomy 24, there is no suggestion in any portion of 1 Corinthians 7 that the right to remarry is limited to the person who was the innocent party in the original divorce. It is clear from Matthew 5:31 that a person who divorces a husband or wife without justification of the kind recognised in the concept of porneia commits a serious sin. His conduct is tantamount to adultery. If a Christian has been guilty of such a sin in terminating his marriage then he should confess it and obtain forgiveness. Having done so he must treat it in the same manner as he would treat any other sin that he has had to confess; that is, he should accept God's forgiveness and put his sin behind him, secure in the knowledge of Christ's atonement" (end quote Ken Crispin).

The following passage was omitted from a testimony written by Ellen White when extracts of it were placed in "The Adventist Home" and "In Heavenly Places."

Ellen White, 1888 Materials Vol 3, p 1215; Manuscript Release #1019
Counsels for Husbands and Wives: also, Guidelines for Students and Faculty in a School

*"Life is a precious gift of God, and is not to be wasted in selfish regrets or more open indifference and dislike. Let the husband and wife talk things over together. Review the early attentions to each other, acknowledge your faults to each other, but in this work be very careful that the husband does not take it upon him to confess his wife's faults or the wife her husband's. Be determined that you will be all that it is possible for you to be to each other, and the bonds of wedlock will be the most desirable of ties. **Let not the thought be entertained for one moment that you are bound by irrevocable vows to one whom you cannot love. It is as a terrible nightmare for two persons to be apparently living as one through a lifetime and yet be in reality as two.**"*

Ellen White is NOT saying that marriage can be broken for sinful reasons such as "he/she doesn't love me any more" or "I just don't love him/her any more." She is counselling wives and husbands that they CAN love a "difficult" marriage partner - if the sin of being unloving is surrendered to Christ. Christ offers to supply the needy partner with His love for the husband or wife. If a partner responds to this unselfish, persistent love, then marriage can indeed be harmonious.

Love is the way that God solves marriage problems.

God Hates Divorce

Malachi 2:16

"For I hate divorce...."

God hates divorce. This verse been misinterpreted to imply that God forbids the giving of a divorce certificate when a marriage has broken down irretrievably. This concept is incorrect and does not harmonise with the teachings of Jesus, Moses or Paul.

God hates sin. It is the sin of clinging to sinful feelings (e.g. resentment) which leads to a complete breakdown of the marriage – this is what God hates. He hates the sin and selfishness that causes marriages to irretrievably break down and the suffering it causes.

Divorce was the first-aid or band-aid that was divinely applied to those who had been injured by their "hard hearted" partners (i.e. those who would not submit

their selfish feelings to Him). Divorce was God's compassionate and necessary response to those who were injured by their partner's selfishness.

Conclusion

Moses, Jesus and Paul's view on marriage, divorce and re-marriage are harmonious and reveal the compassion of our Heavenly Father toward those who suffer the consequences of sin through a broken marriage. Those who would try to deny the divorced persons the opportunity to remarry, are committing a dreadful crime against their brothers and sisters in Christ and distorting the true, compassionate character of God.

For those who might argue against this opinion, the following questions would require answering:

1. Would God design a system that rewarded commandment breakers and penalised commandment keepers? Consider – a woman marries a violent, drunken man who bashes her and their children. She divorces him, but it is thought she cannot remarry another man to help raise her children. This belief seems illogical and appears based on faulty perceptions of the character of God and a misinterpretation of Scripture. Consider the reverse situation: – a woman lives with a violent drunken man without marrying him and they have children together. She leaves the man. Later she is converted and confesses her previous “living in sin.” She is forgiven and permitted to marry other man. The first woman obeyed her conscience initially, and married a man (who later abused her), while the second woman initially “lived in sin.” Which woman's behaviour was righteous? Which woman was penalised the most? The woman who tried to live righteously. Would God be the author of such an unfair system?
2. Would God design that the only way that a righteous woman could be free from her bondage in a violent, abusive marriage is for her husband to commit adultery – by performing a sexual sin? If so, God is using sin to reward a righteous woman.
3. Does God sanction sin? Should the woman “arrange” for her husband to commit adultery so she can be free from the bondage of her marriage? Should she pray that her husband commit adultery?
4. Should persons who have remarried divorce their current marriage partners and return to their first spouses, since it is assumed that Scripture teaches that any other marriage is paramount to adultery.
5. Should a woman be able to divorce a man if he “looks after a woman to lust after her?” Jesus said that he has committed adultery with her already in his heart and adultery is all that is required to legalise divorce and remarriage.

These concepts verge on the ridiculous and contort the character of Jesus Christ and His loving Father.

Cannibalism, infanticide, polygamy, serial marriage, prostitution – the Israelites did not appear to recognise these sins as evils, but the satanic deception deepens further.

The Trinity - A Pagan Concept

1 Kings 11:33

“Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.”

The trinity of gods mentioned in 1 Kings 11:33 are all the same “deity.” The god whom the Moabites called Chemosh, was also worshipped as Baal by the Zidonians and as Moloch/Milcom by the Ammonites. This religion required child sacrifices and involved cannibalism. This religion was practiced in Egypt as the fire-serpent religion (Hyslop, the Two Babylons, ch 7 sec 1).

The Encyclopedia of Ancient Myths and Culture, 2003 p 543-544.

“Similar groupings of three existed among many other Egyptian gods. The most notable other triads of gods were worshipped at Thebes (Amun, Mut and Khons) and Memphis (Ptah, Sekhmet and Nefertum) Osiris received general acceptance throughout Egypt and was not only a state god but also a popular god to whom ordinary people could relate....”

(p 543) “Osiris had an important quality that made him more popular than the other gods. As a human king, he had experienced death and had triumphed over it and could assure his followers an eternal life. It was believed that every king would become Osiris after he died while his successor was the embodiment of Horus, his son. By the Middle Kingdom 2000BC, all worshippers of Osiris could themselves look forward to becoming an Osiris when they died and would thereby enjoy eternal life. He (Osiris) embodied the yearly cycle of the renewal or rebirth of the land of Egypt after the Nile floods.”

Egyptian Mythology (Paul Hamlyn: 1965: 17)

“Horus, Osiris and Isis formed a triad worshipped particularly at Philae. The number three seems to have had a mystical significance for the Egyptians, and their principal gods were generally worshipped in a triad, the third member proceeding from the other two. Thus Horus is the child of Osiris and Isis and inferior to them in the triad.”

The Encyclopedia of Ancient Myths and Culture, 2003 p 538.

“In Egyptian mythology, this marsh represented the first solid matter, or mound, on which the god Ra appeared and created a pair of deities, Shu and Tefnut, by masturbation or spitting. They in

turn produced the sky goddess Nut, and the earth god Geb whose children were the more familiar gods Osiris, Isis, Nephthys and Set. This group of nine gods 'enhead' were worshipped at Heliopolis, and other centres had similar groups of gods. Heliopolis was also the most important centre of the cult of the sun god Ra, who was described in many texts as the creator of everything."

It is clear that the concept of a "trinity" was existent in Egypt as it had been in Babylon. The idea of a trinity was very important to Satan who aspired to be "like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14) and to be part of the divine "council of peace" (Zechariah 6:13). Satan was, and is still determined that he will be considered a divine being. The 'enhead' comprised 9 "deities." This is interesting because nine (9) is a product of three (3) trinities.

Lewis Spence in *The Illustrated Guide to Egyptian Mythology*, (1993:57) states:

"There is no doubt, however that to the aristocracy of Egypt at least, Ra stood in the position of creator and father of the gods. Osiris stood in relation to him as a son. In fact, the relations of these two deities may be regarded as that between the Christian God the Father and God the Son, and just as in certain theologies the figure of the son has overshadowed that of the father, so did Osiris overshadow Ra."

*"The god Tem, or Atum was one of the first gods of the Egyptians....He (Tem) appears to possessed many attributes in common with Ra and later on he seems to have been identified with Osiris as well. In the myth of Ra and Isis, Ra says, 'I am Khepra in the morning and Ra at noonday and Tem in the evening,' which shows that to the Egyptians **the day was divided into three parts each of which was presided over by a special form of the sun god.** Tem was worshipped in one of his forms as **a serpent, a fairly common shape for a sun-god**, for in many countries the snake or serpent, tail in mouth, symbolizes the disk of the sun."*

The Encyclopedia of Ancient Myths and Culture, 2003 p 538.

"The sun played a central part in religious beliefs throughout Egyptian history. The sun god Ra became important as early as the second dynasty (c2,700BC) The king took the title Son of Ra and it was believed that after death he also joined his father Ra in heaven."

The sun-serpent religion taught that the multiple gods which comprised the "sacred" trinity/trinities, gave birth to other gods. It also taught that the "begotten" offspring were their divine sons and daughters.

Note the theology in "Ra and the Serpent," an Egyptian myth of creation Introduction and paraphrase prepared by Angelo Salvo.

"I designed every living creature by myself. I was still alone, for I had not exhaled Shu the Wind and I had not spat Tefnut the Rain. I wanted to have a multitude of living creatures - I wanted then to reproduce so they had children and grandchildren. In order to do that, I formed a physical union with my fist. I masturbated with my own hand, and I ejaculated the seed into my own mouth. I exhaled Shu the Wind and spat Tefnut the Rain. Old Man Nun, my father, raised Shu and Tefnut and my Eye, an overseer, looked after them during the times when I was away. Old Man Nun told me:"At first, you Ra the Sun were the only god who existed. Two other gods have emerged from you-so now there are three."

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/%7Ehummm/Resources/StudTxs/raSerpnt.html>

Note that in the pagan version of creation:

- The concept of a trinity is recurring and vital to the pagan religion;
- Satan introduced illicit sexual behaviour into the divine realm. By so doing he promoted the concept that illicit sexual activity (orgies) were “sacred” creative acts - which became known as fertility rites.
- The concept that divinity would repeatedly regenerate divine children and grandchildren gave rise to the belief in a multiplicity of gods instead of the One True God who begat a single, divine Son.
- Satan engineered the belief that if the doctrine of multiple gods is rejected, then the Son of God's divine birth (in heaven, prior to Bethlehem) must also be discarded also

Through this Egyptian, pagan creation myth, Satan counterfeited the Biblical truth that:

1. the Father was alone until He brought forth a divine Son in the ages of eternity;
2. the Son is truly divine because He was begotten from the Father in eternity (prior to Bethlehem);
3. the Father is the source of all life, and He created through His Son. The false concept is demonstrated in figurines and paintings of the “serpent with its tail in its mouth” which symbolise the creative power of the sun god Ra – who was part of a trinity of gods responsible for creating all life; and
4. the Father “brought forth” only one Son – the ONLY begotten Son of the Father – not a multiplicity of begotten divine sons and daughters.

Truths and Counterfeits

Some theologians suggest that the doctrine of the Roman Catholic trinity and pagan religion trinities, are a counterfeit doctrine of the real “true” heavenly trinity. While there are heavenly truths which Satan has counterfeited, not all the doctrines that paganism asserts are counterfeited. The following tables demonstrate both – counterfeited doctrines and lies/inventions and contradictions of the truth.

Truths	Counterfeits
The Father was initially alone – a single being – righteously jealous of His authority (Ex 20:5).	Nun was the only divine being in existence - a jealous god. (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn:1965:18).
The Father brought forth a divine Son called Michael. He was the Son of God (the Father) (Prov 8:22-31; Prov 30:4; Heb 1:1-10; John 3:16; Gal 4:4)	Nun brought forth a divine Son (by masturbation, or some texts say by circumcision). Atum was the Son of Nun (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn:1965:23, 30).
In the beginning of earth's creation, there was chaos over water (Gen 1:2).	In the beginning of earth's creation, there was chaos over water .(<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn:1965:27)
God's Son created all things through the Father's power (John 1:1-3).	Atum created Himself and everything else through his father Nun's power (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> Hamlyn:1965:128).
Lucifer: rebelled against the Son's authority (Isa 14:14, Eze 28:12-19); was instrumental in causing the death of the Son (Gen 3;15); usurped the earthly kingdom (Eph 2:2)	Osiris and Isis had a divine son named Horus. Osiris' brother, Set, hated Osiris and killed him. Set usurped the kingdom. (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn:1965:128)
Son died and rose again after the Father “called him forth” (Rom 6:4; Gal 1:1). the Son gives humanity life after death (John 6:39)	Osiris died and rose again because Isis resurrected Him (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn:1965:58).
Satan was defeated and the kingdom handed back to the Father through the Son.	Set was defeated and the kingdom given back to Osiris and Isis (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn:1965:139-142).

Satan did not counterfeit a “true trinity.” It was Satan's desire that there be a heavenly trinity – and that he would become the third being of that divine trinity. Satan's pagan trinities reflect only his desire to be included and worshipped as were both Father and Son – not the heavenly reality. The doctrine of the trinity is not a counterfeit of any truth. It is a lie.

Truth and Lies (Inventions)

Truth	Lies/Inventions/Contradictions
Newborn children are dedicated to Christ and the spirit/presence of Christ is able to purify their characters as they develop understanding	Newborn children are given immortality by being purified (burnt) by fire (<i>Egyptian Mythology</i> , Hamlyn 1965:58)
The True God is ONLY good (Matt 19:17). Normal worlds obey God's commands which are holy, just and good (Rom 7;12). Good and bad understanding comes from the tree of knowledge of good and evil – sin (Gen 2:9, 17; 3;5)	The world normally operates in balance - gods are both good AND evil (<i>The Elements of Egyptian Wisdom</i> , Ozaniec:1994 95).
The entire person dies, body and soul (Eze 18:4, 20)	The spirit (ba) does not die but leaves the body at death (<i>The Elements of Egyptian Wisdom</i> , Ozaniec:1994:66; <i>The Illustrated Guide to Egyptian Mythology</i> , Spence 1996:24).
Death comes to all men and after that the judgment. There are no second chances, spells or magic which make it possible to win a place in heaven after death occurs (Heb 9:7)	The Book of the Dead contained magic spells which the dead needed to learn in order to pass through the dark land of Duat which contained pits of fire and monsters – the underworld – which had to be travelled prior to becoming immortal (<i>The Illustrated Guide to Egyptian Mythology</i> , Spence 1996:24, 25).
There are many who are CALLED gods and lords (1 Cor 8:5) but unto us there is one God, the Father (1 Cor 8:6)	There are many gods and lords and trinities (<i>The Encyclopedia of Ancient Myths and Culture</i> , 2003:36-45)

Note:

It is interesting that along with pagan concepts, the doctrines of the orthodox trinity and tritheism are also mixtures of truth and error.

While it is generally accepted that the Son is divine, it is rejected that He is divine **because** He was begotten from the Father. The orthodox doctrine of the trinity claims that the Son was NOT completely begotten from the Father, but will always be in the process of being begotten from the Father. The doctrine of tritheism claims that the Son was NOT begotten from the Father; that there was no divine Father/Son relationship prior to Bethlehem. The Bible says that they

system that denies the Father and the Son is antichrist (1 John 2:22).

The Egyptians ardently believed that the “sacred names” of the gods, possessed magical power.

The Encyclopedia of Ancient Myths and Culture, 2003 p 582,583.

In regard to Egyptian hieroglyphs, "It was more than just a writing system and the Egyptians themselves referred to it as the "writing of the divine words." Like the representations in their art, the script was endowed with religious or magical significance. The name of a person inscribed in hieroglyphs was believed to embody his unique identity. If the representation lacked a name, it had no means of continued existence in the afterlife. Therefore, many kings' and gods' names were defaced or erased from monuments by later Pharaohs with conflicting ideals. Similarly, existing inscriptions and statues could be taken over and claimed by carving the new royal name on them."

Satan's counterfeit of the truth goes still deeper. His amalgamation of the attributes of the many gods, gave rise to the concept of "One god with three aspects or parts (orthodox trinity) AND another concept of a 3 god- combination which was assumed to be acting as "one god" (tritheism).

In the following example of the Egyptian god AMEN, definite trinitarian theology along with superstition is demonstrated.

According to David Rohl, in *A Test of Time – From Myth to History*, (1995:335), the period in which Joseph held the office of vizier (governor), was during the reign of the Pharaoh Amenemhat 3rd. Amenemhat 3 was the most powerful pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom.

The Egyptian god named AMN - (no vowels marked) means: "what is hidden, or "what cannot be seen," "the Invisible God."

*"Amen became a prominent deity, and by Dynasty XVIII was termed **the King of the Gods**. His famous temple, Karnak, is the largest religious structure ever built by man. According to Budge, Amen by Dynasty XIX-XX was thought of as "an invisible creative power which was **the source of all life in heaven, and on the earth, and in the great deep**, and in the Underworld, and which made itself manifest under the form of Ra." Shawn C. Knight in *The Egyptian Pantheon* (Last revised 3 June, 1997. Rewritten and reformatted from the original "Frequently Asked Questions and Information about Egyptian Mythology", 8 May 1994 revision, by Shawn C. Knight. <http://www.vibrani.com/gods.htm>*

Regarding the Egyptian god Amen, Lewis Spence states in ***The Illustrated Guide to Egyptian Mythology*** (1996: 62)

"The entire pesedt or company of gods was supposed to be

unified in Amen and indeed we may describe his cult as one of the most serious attempts of antiquity to formulate a system of monotheism."

The Invisible God, (as in Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17) the Source of all life (echoes sentiments from the 4th commandment) "in the heavens, in the earth and under the earth" (echoes sentiments from the 2nd commandment). One god made up out of the attributes of three or many gods – is very much a doctrine of the trinity – many triads of gods combined to form one monotheistic god.

The Elements of Egyptian Wisdom (Naomi Ozaniec:1994:18, 19)

*"The Metaphysical Neters (gods) include Amun – the hidden one; Atum – potentiality and Ra- the universal principle. Neith and the cosmic virgin mother is also included here.... **The morning sun ws Khepera, the noon sun was Ra, the evening sun was Tem.** Each aspect of the one god was worshipped separately at different cult centres. **A single god was known under many names to reveal the full range of divine functions...**"*

Shawn C. Knight in ***The Egyptian Pantheon***

Amen (Amon, Amun, Ammon, Amoun) Amen's name means 'The Hidden One.' During the New Kingdom, Amen's consort was Mut, 'Mother,' who seems to have been the Egyptian equivalent of the 'Great Mother' archetype. The two thus formed a pair reminiscent of the God and Goddess of other traditions such as Wicca. Their child was the moon god Khons." See also Amen-Ra, Khons, Thoth.

Amen-Ra (Amon-Re)

*"A composite deity, devised by the priests of Amen as an attempt to link New Kingdom (Dyn. XVIII-XXI) worship of Amen with the older solar cult of the god Ra. **In a union of this sort, the deities are said to indwell one another - so we have the power represented by Amen manifesting through the person of Ra (or vice versa).** This sort of relationship is common among Egyptian gods, particularly among cosmic or national deities. It is an example of how the Egyptian gods are viewed, as Morenz puts it, **of having "personality but not individuality."***

The pagan origins of the trinity are simply too obvious to ignore.

Effect on the Jewish Religion

While the Jewish religion did not recognise a "trinity", it is not difficult to see how Satan "set up" the Israelites to become confused over the traits of their expected Messiah.

Based on the ancient pagan religions, Satan planned that the Israelites would not consider their Messiah to be truly the pre-existent, divine Son of God, but simply a human being. The Jewish religion refused multiple gods, but they were also in danger then or rejecting the literal begottenness of the Son of God.

John 10:32, 33

"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? (33) The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (divine).

Satan's counterfeit system also taught that, after the Pharaoh (a divine “son of Ra”) was resurrected, he was able to give immortal life to all who identified with him (i.e. offered the correct sacrifices, said the right spells etc), because of Osiris' death and resurrection.

Jesus, the true Son of God said:

John 10:10

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Satan confused the Israelites, by merging truth with Egyptian error. Christ **would** give immortal life to all who believed that He was the Son of the Living God. He said:

John 5:39, 40

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (40) And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

But this truth the Jews also denied for they denied the divinity of the Son of God, the Messiah who could give them life more abundantly. Very strangely, though the doctrines of the trinity and tritheism reject the literal Sonship of Christ as begotten from the Father in the ages of eternity, it holds fast to the principle of multiple gods (i.e. 3 in 1 god or 3 gods).

Through paganism, Israelites' traditional religion, the Roman Catholic religion, the Islamic religion and other well-known religions, Satan has endeavoured again to force the concept that God's law is not binding in all cases, upon all humanity.

So Close – Yet So Far Off

It is clearly demonstrated from the Bible that the worship which the Israelites proposed was in honour of the One True God, was continually effected by false, pagan worship concepts. As Paul states, the Old Testament writers did not grasp the glory of God's character because their eyes were looking as through a thick veil (2 Corinthians 3:12- 4:6).

In comparison to the Canaanites, the Israelites had been blessed with superior knowledge about God's character and law, yet the Israelites committed the same abominations (i.e. sexual perversions and child sacrifices) that the Canaanites were condemned for practising. If God permitted the inhabitants of Canaan to be destroyed because of their evil actions, one logically asks where is the justice in commanding one evil race to exterminate another evil race?

Adam Clarke Comments on 2 Kings 21:9

“Manasseh seduced them to do more evil. He did all he could to pervert the national character, and totally destroy the worship of the true God; and he succeeded. Partly, because they were not contented with those idols which the Canaanites worshipped, but either invented, or borrowed from other nations many new idols, and partly, because as their light was far more clear, their obligations to God infinitely higher, and their helps against idolatry much stronger than the Canaanites had; so their sins, though the same in kind, were unspeakably worse in respect of these dreadful aggravations.”

The history of the Israelites – the chosen people – reads like a modern day war story. Attacks are made on a country. Men are killed, women are raped, children

are injured and killed, goods are plundered and pillaged. And the success of the mission is due to the blessing of "god"- (but it's not the blessing of the One True God).

The wrath of God is not in any way similar to the wrath of humanity (Isaiah 55:8,9), but it has been reported to be one and the same, even by Bible writers.

Graciously, God has ensured that the real truth about His character has been reported in the Bible, but it must be searched out "with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-14). Christians must compare scripture with scripture and ultimately with the Revelation of divine love - the character of Jesus Christ - who was the express image of God (Heb 1:3) and who came to "show us the Father" (John 14:8).

How did Jesus Express His Wrath?

Jesus is the full reflection of His Father's character. He is therefore our Pattern, our Example and our Guide. We need to study Christ's reactions and responses to difficult situations in order to understand the Father's character.

How did Jesus react when he was

- “much displeased,”
- “angry,”
- “disrespected,”
- “disappointed”
- abused, tortured and murdered?

Mark 10:13-14

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was **much displeased**, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

It can be seen that Christ's reaction when MUCH displeased, was to gently explain the disciples' error and to rectify the situation with a demonstration of divine love.

How did Jesus behave when He was **disappointed**?

Mark 11:12-14

“And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: 13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.”

Jesus, far from venting His “**anger**” on the barren fig tree, simply turned the disappointing situation into an object lesson for His disciples. If people are not motivated by the love of Christ to bring forth “good fruits,” then they are actually dead in trespasses and sins. A person might **appear** to be spiritually productive of “good fruits,” but in reality, is spiritually dead i.e. just performing certain works which make it appear to be spiritually alive. Christ demonstrated that one's own works might deceptively obscure the true condition of a person who is not connected to Christ. Such a person is under the curse of death. They are not only spiritually dead, but they have chosen an eternal, physical death also.

How did Jesus react to abuse, torture and being murdered?

Luke 23:33-34

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34 Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”

How did Jesus react when disrespect was being shown?

Jesus was zealous to stop assassination of His Father's character. His Father's character, was supposed to be portrayed in the temple services, but this loving character was being assassinated and deliberately distorted by merchants in the temple. The merchants were stealing from the people who came to worship God.

Mark 11:15-17

“And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; 16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. 17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

In order to prevent the continuation of theft, and thus, misrepresentation of His Father's character, Jesus overturned tables and herded cattle from the temple grounds. The thieves ran from the temple in fear – not in fear of a physical beating, but in fear caused by exposure of their sinful activities by Someone they knew to be sinless.

In another instance of **disrespect** being shown to Him, Christ demonstrated how disrespect is viewed by the divine mind.

Luke 9:52-56

“And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. (53) And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. (54) And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? (55) But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (56) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”

Jesus simply turned away from those who refused His presence. Jesus did not try to punish those who rejected Him. He even told His disciples that their thinking – of calling down fire to destroy the disrespectful village - was Satanic.

It is interesting to note that Christ did not mention the incident of Elijah calling down fire on the two groups of 50 soldiers (2 Kings 1:9-15), but he told the disciples that their suggestion (to imitate Elijah's act), was inspired by Satan.

One wonders why Christ didn't go a step further in correcting His disciples and pronounce directly to them that the Old Testament story of Elijah calling down fire on the soldiers, also demonstrated the 'wrong' spirit.

Ellen White appears to make some significant comments in The EG White 1888 Materials p 526, 527; MS Rel #1037 (MS 25, 9 Jan, 1890). She states that when

Christ came to the earth as a human being, He recognised that the truth about God's character had been "*buried and had apparently become extinct.*" It was "*placed in a framework of error*" and "*disconnected from its true position.*"

The Jewish religious leaders, despite being in possession of the Old Testament scrolls, and despite having committed it to memory and teaching the books of Moses to their youth, despite having all that knowledge, Christ recognised that they did not possess the "*gems of truth.*" For this reason, Christ endeavoured to bring the essential truths about God's character to the minds of the people. Ellen White, from the same manuscript, reveals a significant teaching strategy which Christ employed to achieve His tutorial goal.

The EG White 1888 Materials p 526, 527; MS Rel #1037 (MS 25, 9 Jan, 1890)
*“As Christ presented these truths to minds, He broke up their accustomed train of thought as little as possible. Nevertheless a new and transforming economy of truth must be woven into their experience. He therefore aroused their minds by presenting truth through the agency of their most familiar associations. He used illustrations in His teaching which called into activity their most hallowed recollections and sympathies, that he might reach the innner temple of the soul.”*⁵²

It can be easily seen that Ellen White's comment harmonises with Christ' own statement that He could not reveal all the truth to the disciples as they “could not bear it.”

John 16:12

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”

Paul also recognised that instructing others requires a 'holding back' and regulated release of the 'gems' of truth, which if given 'all in one go' would have a negative, perhaps disillusionary effect on the seekers of truth.

52 The full quote from the EG White 1888 Materials Vol 2. p 526, 527; Manuscript Release #1037 (MS 25, 9 January, 1890) reads as follows:

“Christ was the originator of all the ancient gems of truth. Through the work of the enemy these truths had been displaced. They had been disconnected from their true position, and placed in the framework of error. Christ's work was to readjust and establish the precious gems in the framework of truth. The principles of truth which had been given by Himself to bless the world had, through Satan's agency, been buried and had apparently become extinct. Christ rescued them from ther rubbish of error, gave them a new, vital force, and commanded them to shine as precious jewels, and stand fast forever. Christ Himself could use any of these old truths without borrowing the smallest particle, for He had originated them all. He had cast them into the minds and thoughts of each generation, and when He came to our world He rearranged and vitalized the truths which had become dead, making them more forcible for the benefit of future generations. It was Jesus Christ who had the power of rescuing the truths from the rubbish, and again giving them to the eworld with more than their original freshness and power. As Christ presented these truths to mind, He broke up their accustomed train of thought as little as possible. Nevertheless a new and transforming economy of truth must be woven into their experience. He therefore aroused their minds by presenting truth through the agency of their most familiar associations. He used illustrations in His teaching which called into activity their most hallowed recollections and sympathies, that he might reach the innner temple of the soul.”

1 Corinthians 3:1, 2

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. (2) I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”

It appears likely, according to Christ's own words, Paul's teaching strategies and Ellen White's statements, that Christ purposely did not expose and confront all the false beliefs which the people held as truth. Instead Christ endeavoured to establish correct concepts of God's character initially and then as the believers were converted by recognising the love of God, they would grow spiritually and be able to 'bear' more 'cutting away' of their errors and be open to receiving more of the true gems of truth. Christ promised that the holy spirit of God would lead them into **all** truth (John 16:13).

So how do Christians reconcile the parts of Old Testament that appear to be so out-of-harmony with Christ's character in the New Testament? Perhaps we should follow Christ's example. He gave no explanation to the disciples regarding Elijah's act of calling down fire to destroy human beings. Perhaps Christ judged that the disciples could not at that time, bear an assault on that cherished falsehood. However, there were occasions when Christ did explain that the Mosaic law had been given to accommodate the hardness of the human heart, and that it didn't perfectly reflect the pure loving character of the Father. However, in revealing the the Old Testament wasn't a accurate representation of the Father's character, Christ provided instead a perfect demonstration of the Father's divine character in human form - Himself.

Christ gently instructed the disciples in the truth about God's character, through parables and nature, and as they realised the depth of the Father's love, the disciples gradually laid down their false doctrines and conceptions of God. They realised eventually that the truth is "in Jesus."

It is difficult for human beings to understand the ways of God. Divine thinking is completely unnatural to fallen humanity. The carnal mind is enmity against God (Rom 8:7). It is not able to serve the law (reproduce the character) of God. God says, "My ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts (are higher) than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8,9). God's character and His thoughts are extremely different from humanity's character and thoughts. His actions are not the same as those that come "naturally" to human beings. Sadly, it appears that carnal ways of human thinking have drastically shaped the history, religious beliefs and practices of the Israelites as recorded in the Old Testament.

Instead of basing their faith in the questionable Old Testament writings,⁵³ humanity would do well to follow the teaching example of Jesus and fashion their beliefs on the life and teachings of the only begotten, commandment-keeping Son of God.

John 14:9

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"

The Ellen White 1888 Materials, Vol 1. p 125, 126

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' What does that

⁵³ According to Ellen White, MSR #1037, truth has been placed "in a framework of error." Therefore, not all the Old Testament writings are brought into question. It is only those writings which contradict the words of Jesus; which suggest that God commanded people to kill others and in so doing, to break the 6th commandment of love, that are of concern. The Old Testament prophecies which predict that Jesus was the Messiah are of course, unquestionably divine.

mean? The work must be carried on, and this little world was chosen in which to carry on this work. All the universe of heaven was interested in the great work. Every world that God has created is watching to see how the battle between the Lord of light and glory and the powers of darkness will end. Here is Satan, who has been seeking with all his power to shut out the true character of God, so that the world could not understand it, and under a garb of righteousness he works upon many who profess to be Christians, but they represent the character of Satan instead of the character of Jesus Christ. They misrepresent my Lord. They misrepresent the character of Jesus every time that they lack mercy, every time that they lack humility. Satan, by instigating in man a disposition to transgress the law of God, mystifies the character of God. Someone must come to vindicate the character of God and here is Christ, who stands as the representation of the Father, and He is to work out the salvation of the human race."

God's "Wrath"

God draws humanity through His loving character – His spirit of love. God does not employ force to coerce the human will in order to secure obedience to His government.

Zechariah 4:6

“... Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Matthew 5:44, 45

“But I (Jesus) say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”

In the New Testament, two Greek words are translated as "wrath." They are:

- **orge** (#3709) 1) anger, the natural disposition, temper, character 2) **movement or agitation of the soul, impulse, desire**, any violent emotion, but esp. anger 3) anger, wrath, indignation 4) anger exhibited in punishment, hence used for punishment itself 4a) of punishments inflicted by magistrates
- **thumos** (#2372) 1) passion, angry, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again 2) glow, ardour, the wine of passion, inflaming wine (which either drives the drinker mad or kills him with its strength).

The Hebrew language has many words that the King James Version has translated as 'wrath' but this does not always reveal an accurate translation from the Hebrew word. At times the words do not mean “wrath” as commonly understood (see appendix)

- **charah** (#2734) means 1) to be hot, furious, burn, become angry, be kindled 1a) (Qal) to burn, kindle (anger) 1b) (Niphal) to be angry with, be incensed 1c) (Hiphil) to burn, kindle 1d) (Hithpael) to heat oneself in vexation

- **Commenting on Numbers 16:15, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol 1 p 877, states that the Hebrew word *charah* (#2734) which is translated as “very wrath” in the KJV – is translated “exceedingly sad” in the Septuagint (LXX).**

- **aph** (#639) means nostril, face, nose anger.(**rapid breathing as in passion**).
- **Chemah** (#2534) 1) heat, rage, hot displeasure, indignation, anger, wrath, poison, bottles 1a) heat 1a1) fever 1a2) venom, poison (fig) 1b)

burning anger, rage

- **Ragaz** (#7264) means to quiver (with any violent emotion, especially anger or fear):--be afraid, stand in awe, disquiet, fall out, fret, move, provoke, quake, rage, shake, tremble, trouble, be wroth.
- **Ebrah** (#5678) means **outburst of passion**
- **Qetseph** (#7110) means, literally, a splinter or "chipped off". Freely translated it means to be **displeased, to fret or possibly to burst out**.
- **Kaac** (#3707) - to be **grieved or sorrowful, to be troubled**.

While some of these words do reflect the emotion **humanity** commonly understands as “wrath,” not all the Hebrew words mean strictly that emotion. Some words clearly reveal a **passionate displeasure or a sorrowful troubled spirit or exceedingly sad as the Septuagint reveals (1SDABC p 877)**. When the KJV Bible (and other versions also) was translated from the Greek and Latin where necessary, the current religious beliefs were of the trinitarian god who burns the immortal spirits of evil doers in an ever-burning hell. This misunderstanding of God's nature and character makes God appear violent, unforgiving and certainly without even human mercy. His wrath is terrifying. God appears vengeful to the extreme, permitting a baby to burn forever in hell, simply because its parents failed to “baptise” it. This “ferocious” god evolved from pagan beliefs and is still taught through major church doctrines – trinitarianism and the immortality of the soul. A closer study on the life of Jesus Christ, reveals that a more accurate translation is that God's wrath can be described as occurring at times when He is **passionately sorrowful or troubled** (by demonic and human sinfulness).

God Defines His Own “Wrath”

We make a serious error if we believe that human sinful anger and “wrath” is the same emotion that the Father and Christ experience.

Isaiah 55:9

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

God describes his anger in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 31:17-18

“Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? (18) And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.”

When God is “wrathful” He simply withdraws His holy presence from those who reject Him. As seen in the story of Job, God turns away or removes His hedge of protection, and Satan causes evil to afflict the unprotected rebels.

Deuteronomy 32:20

“And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. “

Numbers 12:1-16.

"And the Lord heard it. . . and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; **and He departed.**"

2 Chronicles 24:20

“And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.”

God will not force Himself on any person. Christ died to ensure humanity's freedom to choose whom they will serve. However, when a person chooses to serve Satan, Christ honours that choice and He permits us to follow the master we have chosen. He “gives us up” and we reap the consequences of that decision. Human beings who thus give themselves to the evil one, are “in Satan's hand.” (Job 1:12)

Romans 1:18:

"For the **wrath** (Greek word **orge**) of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (keep back) the truth in

unrighteousness....24 Wherefore **God also gave them up** to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. 26 For this cause **God gave them up** unto vile affections; for even their women did change (exchange) the natural use into (for) that which is against nature. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over** to a reprobate (debased) mind, to do those things which are not convenient (fitting)."

God's wrath is simply the grieved reaction He experiences when His creation (angels and humanity) make choices to be disobedient. His wrath is the acceptance of the grief that sinful beings cause Him, when He must honour their freedom of choice and give them up to their sinful ways to reap what they have sown. God does not force us. He withdraws His influence if we continually reject His still, small voice. He doesn't harm us nor does He obtain pleasure from our suffering which is certain to accompany sinful choices.

Consider:

Would it suit Satan's deceptive plan to have humanity blame God for the disasters that Satan himself brings on the earth?

God gives us freedom to traverse the road we have chosen. If a person chooses to remain confirmed in an evil choice, then eventually they will be taken captive by Satan (become demon-possessed). This is the result of totally rejecting the holy spirit of God.

The Hedge

God gave humanity the 10 Commandments as a protective hedge around us (Job 1:10) – to guide our choices - for our protection. God promises that if His people obey His commandments, they will be happy and safe from the power of sin. The natural consequence of breaking the divine commandments is sadness, suffering and eternal death. God doesn't warn humanity of the fearful consequences of sin, as if these consequences were a punitive action on His part –i.e. a cruel punishment for our refusal to obey Him; but God lovingly warns us that ***the natural consequences of sinful choices is death.***

Sin = death

James 1:15

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. "

Romans 6:23

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This concept might be explained in the way that parents lovingly care for their children. Loving parents warn their children not to play with matches. Loving parents don't threaten, "Don't you play with matches or I'll set you on fire and let you burn till you die!" Loving parents warn their precious children of danger. They might say, "Please don't play with matches. If you play with matches, you might burn yourself badly or even die." Our heavenly Father is much more loving than any human parent could ever possibly be. The Father wants us to prosper and be in health (3 John 1:2). However, if we decide to "go our own way" and choose Satan for our master, then our own actions will determine the painful

consequences. God will also suffer divine wrath – a pained heart – when He watches us reap what we have sown.

Galatians 6:7

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Ezekiel 33:11

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

EJ Waggoner (commenting on) Romans, p 99, 100

“Romans 8:6. 'The sting of death is sin.' 1Cor. 15:56. There could be no death if there were no sin. Sin carries death in its bosom. So it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God that death came upon men because of sin. It could not possibly be otherwise. Note the justice here. Death passed upon all men, 'for that all have sinned.' 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; Ezek.18:20.' And this is also a necessary consequence of the fact that sin contains death in it, and that death can not come in any way than by sin. (100) Everything that came through Adam's fall is undone in Christ; or, better still, all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.”

The following summary was published in the Review and Herald, VOL. 77, No. 32.; 7 August 1900, p 498 . The Author was Mary C. Wilson, from St. Helena, California.

God is the very embodiment of life. John 5:26.

1. His is a living throne. Ezekiel 1.
2. A river of life flows from the throne. Rev 22 : 1.
3. On its banks grows the tree of life: Rev 22 : 2.
4. God's words are life. John 6:63; Genesis 1.
5. Thus, he is the fountain of life, filling with life everything connected with himself.
Psalm 36:9.
6. In order to have life, we must connect with him. 1 John 5:12.
7. In his natural condition, man is alienated from the life of God. Eph. 4:18.
8. His iniquities are what thus separates him from God. Isa. 59:2.
9. Sin separates because (Hab 1 : 13) God can not sanction sin in the least degree.
10. Since sin separates from him who is life, him who is the only source of life, it surely must bring death. James 1 : 15.
11. The Jews in Christ's day refused to forsake their sins, come to Christ, and obtain life. John 5 : 40.

12. **It is not because God is angry and destroys the sinner, that death comes to him; but his own sins keep him separated from the only life there is, so only death can follow. Eze 18 : 30-32.**
13. **God declares that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; and he pleads with the sinner to turn and not die. Eze. 33 : 11.**
14. How much sin will it require to separate from 'God?--"No one will ever receive the seal of God as long as there is one sin upon his character.'" See Hab. 1 : 13.

Who is the Destroyer – God or Satan?

Job's Experience

The story of Job reveals the identity of the destroyer.

Job, a prosperous farmer and family-oriented man and devout worshipper of God, is suddenly and “mysteriously” afflicted. His wealth is removed by miraculous means and by the acts of evil men; his children are “accidentally” killed in a “natural disaster,” and eventually agonising boils break out all over his body. Job understandably questions, “What is going on?” Neither Job nor his wife understand the cause or reason for their predicament, but Job holds on anyway, having faith in the concept that God is loving and just. In stark contrast, Job's wife appears to believe that God's character is a combination of both good and evil – that He blesses humanity with good things, but also sends evil to afflict the just. Because of her faulty understanding of God's character, Job's wife is of little support to him. She advises him to “curse God and die.”

Job did not take his wife's advice. In fact, he rebuked her. Job didn't reject God's leading, nor did He sin in expressing his bewilderment apparently when he declared, “though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

Bewildered, Job retires to sit under a tree in his misery. After five days of sitting in silence, Job's friends attempt to convince him that he is suffering because of his sins. They insist that God punishes specific sins (Job 4:1 to Job 5:27). The young man Elihu finally is given permission to speak and he introduces some “new theology” - he endeavours to prove that perhaps God doesn't punish, but He disciplines those who have gone astray (Job 32:1 to Job 33:33). In the final analysis, God commands Job to pray for his friends for they had all sinned. They had not presented the truth about the origins of evil. Job's friends were not privy to the heavenly counsels (Job 1:6-12) which were revealed to Moses when he wrote the book of Job.

How much easier it would have been for Job if he has been given divine revelation of what was transpiring behind the scenes!

Under the extreme circumstances which Job suffered, his faith in God brought him victory over Satan's attacks. It is faith that overcomes the world.

1John 5:4

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

Faith overcomes the world – but - faith in what? It is faith in God's loving and just character that overcomes doubt and despair, temptation and trial.

Didn't Job realise that God wasn't trying to destroy him, but that it was Satan trying to take his life? Perhaps he didn't understand the situation for nowhere

does the Bible say that God told Job that the evil he suffered came from Satan and that Job was the object of a test of loyalty. It appears that God permits people to be "tested" in the fires of persecution for the development of their character – which in by faith in His character. Job, though not realising why the afflictions were permitted, held on by faith, that God – whatever he permitted was purely righteous and just.

The reader of the book of Job is privileged to have more insight than Job himself had of his predicament. The reader can see the “big picture.”

It is clearly revealed that God did not send the afflictions. God did not originate Job's sufferings. The source of evil and sufferings was Satan.

Likewise, God did not cause the sufferings of the French Revolution.

Ellen White, Great Controversy, p 286

"When France publicly rejected God and set aside the Bible, wicked men and spirits of darkness exulted in their attainment of the object so long desired--a kingdom free from the restraints of the law of God. Because sentence against an evil work was not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men was "fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11. But the transgression of a just and righteous law must inevitably result in misery and ruin. **Though not visited at once with judgments, the wickedness of men was nevertheless surely working out their doom.** Centuries of apostasy and crime had been treasuring up wrath against the day of retribution; and when their iniquity was full, the despisers of God learned too late that **it is a fearful thing to have worn out the divine patience. The restraining Spirit of God, which imposes a check upon the cruel power of Satan, was in a great measure removed, and he whose only delight is the wretchedness of men was permitted to work his will.** Those who had chosen the service of rebellion were left to reap its fruits until the land was filled with crimes too horrible for pen to trace. From devastated provinces and ruined cities a terrible cry was heard--a cry of bitterest anguish. France was shaken as if by an earthquake. Religion, law, social order, the family, the state, and the church--all were smitten down by the impious hand that had been lifted against the law of God. Truly spoke the wise man: "The wicked shall fall by his own wickedness." "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well with the wicked." Proverbs 11:5; Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13. "They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord;" "therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Proverbs 1:29, 31.

This same principle – that it is not God who originates destruction is seen demonstrated again in the destruction of first century Jerusalem.

The Great Controversy, p 35-37

"The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, **they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown.** Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. **Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was**

permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the (36) destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control. We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty. The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon His law. Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplation. Terrible have been the results of rejecting the authority of Heaven. But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future. The records of the past,—the long procession of tumults, (37) conflicts, and revolutions, the "battle of the warrior . . . with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (Isaiah 9:5),-- what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule."

Note that in the foregoing quote (Great Controversy p 35), Ellen White states plainly, that it is actually Satan's plan that human beings believe these destructive events have originated from God.

"Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work."

Inspiration from the book of Job and also from Ellen White reveals that evil events, whether labelled 'punishment' or harsh 'discipline', *do not originate from the Creator, but from Satan.*

Many Bible verses confirm this principle.

Psalms 89:18

“For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.”

Isaiah 14:20

“Thou (Lucifer, Satan) shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.”

Job 1:12; 2:6 (regarding Job)

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand ... And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.”

Revelation 9:11

“And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. “Apollyon means ‘destroyer.’”

John 10:10

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Psalms 68:1-2

“Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. (2) As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.”

Psalms 89:15

“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.”

Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible

Mark 6:49 (Jesus walking on the water)

“When Christ said to those that came to apprehend him by force, ‘I am he,’ they were struck down by it (John 18:6). When he saith to those that come to apprehend him by faith, ‘I am he,’ they are raised up by it, and comforted (Mark 6:50).”

Matthew Henry comments on the contrasting reactions of two type of groups who came into the presence of Jesus. In John 18:6, a violent, self-confident mob rush into arrest Jesus. Judas leads them to Jesus, but the leaders of the mob still ask for Jesus of Nazareth to be identified further. Jesus states the truth, “I am He.” His captors fall to the ground incapacitated and fearful. The mob's reaction is then compared to the disciples reaction. The disciples were

struggling with a violent storm on the sea of Galilee. Jesus walked to them on the water, but they perceived His visible presence incorrectly to be “spirit” or “apparition” (i.e. the manifestation of a demon). The disciples were terrified. Jesus immediately speaks to them, “Do not be afraid. I am He.” The disciples are immediately comforted and at peace.

Jesus' action was the same to both groups of people. **The consequences of that meeting depended upon the people's reaction to Jesus.** One group of people loved Him. The other group of people hated Him. The consequence of coming into the presence of Jesus was determined by the choice of humanity – not by the actions and choice of Jesus. So it will be at the last day. One group will love Jesus and will find comfort and safety in His presence. The other group of people will hate Jesus and be discomforted and afraid to discover that they are in His presence.

1 John 3:8

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might **destroy the works of the devil.**”

- God is the defence to all who accept Him.
- Satan is credited with slaying his followers.
- God's presence “melts” the wicked as wax, but His presence does not harm the redeemed.
- God's behaviour doesn't alter. He does nothing different to the wicked than what He does to the redeemed. He simply appears before both classes of people.
- It is the people who are different. It is THEIR condition which causes the outcome of either destruction or life– not God's actions
- Christ destroys the works of the devil – not the people!

Sin destroys everything.

God destroys sin i.e. the works of the devil.

What are the Works of the Devil?

John 8:44

(Jesus said to the Pharisees) “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

Revelation 20:14

“And death and hell (#86) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

¹⁴And<2532> death<2288> and<2532> hell<86> were cast<906>(5681) into<1519> the lake<3041> of fire<4442>. This<3778> is<2076>(5748) the second<1208> death<2288>.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon (#86)

Αἴδης hades *hah'-dace*

from <1> (as negative particle) and <1492>; ; n pr loc, AV-hell 10, grave 1; 11

- 1) name Hades or Pluto, **the god of the lower regions**
- 2) Orcus, the nether world, the realm of the dead
- 3) later use of this word: the grave, death, hell

The verse says that John saw “hades” cast into the lake of fire. Did he see literal graves cast into the lake of fire? Did he also see a literal “death” cast into the lake of fire? **Hades** originally meant, “Pluto – god of the underworld.” It might be possible that John says he saw that the devil – the god of the underworld - cast into the lake of fire and the outcome of his system – death symbolically being destroyed also. This suggestion gains support by the following verse.

¹⁵And<2532> whosoever<1536> was<2147><0> not<3756> found<2147>(5681) written<1125>(5772) in<1722> the book<976> of life<2222> was cast<906>(5681) into<1519> the lake<3041> of fire<4442>.

Were human beings being cast into a lake of fire?

906 βαλλω ballo *bal'-lo* a primary word; ; v AV-cast 86, put 13, thrust 5, cast out 4, lay 3, lie 2, misc 12; 125

- 1) to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls
- 1a) to scatter, to throw, cast into

1b) to give over to one's care uncertain about the result

1c) of fluids

1c1) to pour, pour into of rivers

1c2) to pour out

2) to put into, insert

After the 1000 years, the the wicked dead are resurrected and as they died, they again come under the complete control of Satan. God has given the wicked “into Satan's care.” This is the “without mercy” act, the strange act, that God permits to happen in order to preserve the principle of love – freedom of choice regarding whom a being will serve. The wicked chose to serve Satan – to become slaves to him.

Romans 6:16

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

This “handing over” to Satan without divine protection, is God's complete withdrawal. The results are uncertain in the sense that confusion reigns, but the ultimate consequence is predicted and certain.

Ezekiel saw that the fire came from within the devil and spreads to the whole earth. God does not “blitz” the devil, but He refuses to interfere and prevent the devil's destruction.

Ezekiel 28:18

“Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.”

Isaiah 33:11, 12

“Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you. (12) And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.”

Ellen White, Early Writings, p 54 (End of the 2300 Days)

“I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, 'If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.'”

Ellen White was protected by the Father who veiled His glory so that she would not die in His glorious presence.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible

I John 3:8:

“[He that committeth sin is of the devil] Hear this, also, ye who plead for Baal,

and cannot bear the thought of that doctrine that states believers are to be saved from all sin in this life! **He who committeth sin is a child of the devil, and shows that he has still the nature of the devil in him; for the devil sinneth from the beginning - he was the father of sin, brought sin into the world, and maintains sin in the world by living in the hearts of his own children,** and thus leading *them* to transgression; and persuading *others* that they cannot be saved from their sins in this life, that he may secure a continual residence in their heart. ...*For this purpose*] εις τούτο. *For this very end-with this very design,* was Jesus manifested in the flesh, *that he might destroy, ινα λυση, that he might loose,* the bonds of sin, and *dissolve* the power, influence, and connection of sin."

According to Adam Clarke, "***the works of the devil***" appear to be the law-breaking acts that are naturally **produced by humanity, caused by Satan's selfish principles in the human mind. This is called the carnal mind** – the sinful nature, the unconverted heart, the unregenerate heart, an evil mind.

Romans 8:6, 7

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

To have Satan's selfish mind is to commit sin - and die; not to be killed by God, but to die as a consequence of separating oneself from the Source of all Life.

Ellen White, Signs of the Times 20 June, 1895, p 6, 7

"Righteousness can be defined only by God's great moral standard, the Ten Commandments. There is no other rule by which to measure character. 'He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.' **It was the refusal of Satan to obey the commandments of God that brought sin and apostasy into the universe.** 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' (7) **Through the devices of the great apostate**, man has been led to **separate himself from God**, and has yielded to the temptations of the adversary of God and man in committing sin and breaking the law of the Most High."

6 Testimonies for the Church, p 388

"With these words of light and truth before them, how dare men neglect so plain a duty? How dare they disobey God when obedience to His requirements means His blessing in both temporal and spiritual things, and disobedience means the curse of God? Satan is the destroyer. God cannot bless those who refuse to be faithful stewards. All He can do is to permit Satan to accomplish his destroying work. We see calamities of every kind and in every degree coming upon the earth, and why? The Lord's restraining power is not exercised. The world has disregarded the word of God. They live as though there were no God. Like the inhabitants of the Noachic world, they refuse to have any thought of God.

Wickedness prevails to an alarming extent, and the earth is ripe for the harvest."

Great Controversy, p 516 - 517

"There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices. The better to disguise his real character and purposes, he has caused himself to be so represented as to excite no stronger emotion than ridicule or contempt. (517) It is because he has masked himself with consummate skill that the question is so widely asked: "Does such a being really exist?" ... Satan can most readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence, that the word of God gives us so many examples of his malignant work, unveiling before us his secret forces, and thus placing us on our guard against his assaults. **The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer.** We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the **evil angels** who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defence. **If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder and torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction.** Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims and yield to Satan's temptations, until God gives them up to the control of evil spirits. **But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people."**

The Works of Righteousness

In complete contrast with the works of the devil, Jesus did the works of His Father. He kept His Father's law, because His Father's spirit which was in Christ, produced those works.

John 10:36, 37

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (37) If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.”

John 15:10

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.”

Sin is the transgression of the law - just as - **Love is the keeping of the law.**

Satan brings death – just as - **God brings life.**

Sin destroys – just as – **Love creates.**

Satan stalks and snares – just as - **God protects and provides.**

Satan is completely, permanently evil – just as - **God is completely, permanently loving.**

So how are sinners destroyed?

To understand this subject, it is important to understand the effect sin had on humanity and the condition of humanity restored.

After the fall in the Garden of Eden, the whole human race became scarred and infected with sin – both in spirit and body. Sin invaded every cell in human flesh by some method that is not explained in the Bible. To permit the human race another probation, Christ intervened to place enmity between Satan and humanity. Thus spiritual freedom was available to those who would choose to serve God, despite possession of a fallen nature – a selfish spirit. Physically, the holy light surrounding Adam and Eve vanished. The human body became ‘sinful flesh’ – and this caused humanity to become very vulnerable through that weakened avenue.

The fleshly lusts would war against the renewed spirit but Christ provided extra power for humanity to withstand all Satan's temptations.

Because the death-gene of sin has invaded every cell of human body, ‘flesh and

blood cannot enter into heaven.’ This sinful body is a death-trap. Sin is a lethal disease, infecting the body, in a similar way as is cancer. As does cancer, so sin has power to kill those whom it infects. Because of the sin that infects every human body – in the flesh - corruption (sinful flesh and blood) cannot enter into heaven.

Sin kills the person in whose body it resides. In the presence of the unveiled glory of God, such death is instantaneous to the sinful race, but such destruction does not originate from God. God protects humanity and prevents their deaths by veiling His glory from them. His 'strange act' (Isaiah 28:21) occurs when He finally does not veil His glory to protect the wicked and their own sin which is in their spirit/minds, destroys them.

If the devil suddenly ceased to exist, there would still be sin, destruction and death in the human race, because “the seeds of sin” would still dwell in unrepentant human minds. The sinful nature – the mind of Satan – already in the human race, would still lead humanity to sin for all have been born with sinful flesh. Without the spirit of Christ, sinful flesh can only commit sin. It is impossible for the carnal mind to obey the commandments of God (Romans 8:7). Only those whose minds have been “reborn” with the spirit of Christ, will obtain power to cease sinning - lawbreaking. Sinful minds will ultimately be destroyed, because sin brings death. Sinful flesh will be destroyed with sinful minds because sin is found in every cell of the human body. In order to house the pure, unselfish characters of the saints (their spirits/minds), God provides the saints with new sinless bodies at Christ’s second coming.

1 Corinthians 15:50-52

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

1 Corinthians 6:9 -11

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Christians are promised that ‘we shall be like Him.’

1 John 3:2

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see

him as he is.”

Spirit has not flesh and bones

Jesus had a glorified body, but He still had flesh and bones. A spirit has not flesh and bones; and neither has the fictitious being - an apparition (ghost). The disciples believed in demons and holy angels which could become visible and appear to human beings. This was the “spirit” or “apparitions” (visible manifestation) which the disciples believed they saw until Jesus reassured them that He was not a spirit (the visible presence of a holy angel or demon).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon # **05326**: φαντασμα phantasma *fan'-tas-mah* from <5324>; ; n n

AV-spirit 2; 2 ;1) an appearance ;2) an apparition, spectre

Luke 24:39

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”

A spirit has not flesh and bones, but Jesus, in His humanity, did possess flesh and bones.

Jesus possessed a mind with a sinful flesh (body) from the time of His incarnation till His death. His mind was sinless – as that of a converted, born again Christian.

Jesus after His resurrection, was changed into a glorified body - sinless flesh and bones. He was not a ghost - a mind minus a body. He possessed both mind and glorified body at His resurrection. The saints are promised a new sinless body – incorruption, immortal. In this way, they will be as was Jesus after His resurrection.

Unrepentant sinners will not inherit a new body. Their future is totally different to that of the saints.

Sin Brings Forth Death

Cause and Effect

2 Peter 2:1

“But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and **bring upon themselves swift destruction**.”

Isaiah 33:11

“Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: **your breath (#7307), as fire, shall devour you.**”

The Hebrew word 'rwach' is legitimately translated as breath, but also as spirit/mind)⁵⁴

Ezekiel 28:18

"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore **will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee**, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

Isaiah 29:5

"Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, **it shall be at an instant suddenly.**"

Ellen White was told of this serious consequence by Jesus, in a vision.

Ellen White, Early Writings, p 54 (End of the 2300 Days)

"I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. **I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, 'If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.'**"

In this passage it is clear that Jesus was not threatening to kill Ellen White. Instead, Christ assured her that she was protected by the Father who had intentionally veiled His glory so that she, a (repentant) sinner, would not die in His glorious presence.

Modes of Destruction

It appears that there are at least three examples of sinners' destruction in the Bible. ALL destruction involves the natural consequences of the sinner's choice to separate from God and to reject God's presence, which is life.

- **Sinners destroy themselves** by their own actions or are destroyed by the actions of others ("sleeping" death eg accidents, illnesses, smoking, suicide, wars, environmental interference <http://www.s8int.com/atomic1.htm> I);

54 Strong's Hebrew concordance #7307 ruwach roo'-akh from 7306; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions):--air, anger, blast, breath, X cool, courage, **mind**, X quarter, X side, **spirit**((ual)), tempest, X vain, ((whirl-))wind(-y). see HEBREW for 07306

- Thus sinners reject the protection of God and are permitted to be **destroyed by Satan** - “are handed over to Satan” 2 Kings 17:39; 21:14; Jer 15:9 (first death, but await the second death);
- Eventually sinners are **destroyed in the chaos that results from the removal of God's sustaining creative power** eg. The earth quakes and explodes and becomes chaotic (Sodom and Gomorrah; Noah's flood, the plagues on Egypt, Lake of Fire).

Matthew 10:28

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather **fear him** which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Revelation 14:7

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of his judgment is come.”

God is the Source of All Life. Only the Creator is able to provide eternal life. When Eternal Life (God's creative power) is withdrawn, as occurs in permanent death, the soul is eternally dead. The judgment determines which persons elected to serve God and which elected to separate themselves from Him.

Before sinners can destroy themselves, God's protective hedge of holy angels must be removed. This protective hedge **will be** removed from those who ***repeatedly resist*** the spirit of God and instead, choose to serve Satan. God will not force His presence on those who are determined to reject Him, but when God removes His presence, His protection is also removed. Sometimes Satan rushes in immediately to destroy them. At other times, he uses them in his attacks against God and His people.

Psalms 27:12; 140:1,2

“Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; (2) which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war.”

Ezekiel 31:11

“I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness.”

Psalms 91:3, 4

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. (4) He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”

Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even

as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

Sin equals death (Romans 6:23). Certainly, there is no doubt that sinners will be destroyed, but is their destruction caused by a vengeful, wrathful divine Being, or as a consequence of **their choices** to alienate themselves from the protection of the Creator: the Source of all Life?

When God's creative and sustaining power is removed, chaos occurs, both spiritually and physically. Demonstrations of this was evident during Noah's flood; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Christ's death on the cross.

The Flood (Gen 6)

Genesis 1:2

"And the earth was without form, and void..."

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible (Genesis 1:2)

*"The earth was without form and void. The original term **tohu** and **bohu**, which we translate **without form and void**, are of uncertain etymology; but in this place, and wherever else they are used, they convey the idea of **confusion and disorder**."*

In the flood, almost the entire world chose to serve Satan. God respectfully withdrew his patient entreaties from the confirmed wicked, leaving them to the consequence of their own violent and disruptive actions, without divine protection and under Satan's control. However, it does not appear that Satan, with his angelic power, caused the flood. It seems that there are perhaps a combination of two modes: man's own actions and withdrawal of the sustaining and protective power of God.

What Happens When God Withdraws?

Does anything happen to the physical world when God withdraws His presence?

It is clear from Isaiah's prophecy, that there has been at least one time when the sun has 'gone down' and the moon has 'withdrawn itself.'

Isaiah 60:19, 20

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. (20)

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

Young's Literal Translation renders verse 20 as such:

"Thy sun goeth no more in, And thy moon is not removed, For Jehovah becometh to thee a light age-during. And the days of thy mourning have been completed."

When does Isaiah's prophecy apply? When did the moon withdraw itself – move away from the earth? When did the sun go down – in the sense that its strength appeared to have decreased?

Is it possible that these prophecies are referring to the physical actions that occurred in the sun and the moon at the time of the flood?

Did the removal of God's sustaining presence initiate the flood? If so, perhaps the divine withdrawal caused the moon and the sun to stumble from their orbits. These celestial reactions appear to coincide with a time of the withdrawing of God's spirit – His rejection - from the earth.

Did God's withdrawal so greatly effect the sun and the moon that it caused them to become unstable? Did their instability cause the world-wide flood?

The Creator knows the result that His withdrawal from the earth would have (and will have) on the heavenly planets. It has been prophesied that they would be moved out of their natural orbits. The earth also would 'reel to and fro as a drunkard' and the earth's surface would break open, causing the 'fountains of the deep to open up" and every mountain to be moved out of its place (Isa 24:20; Gen 7:11; Rev 6:14).

Knowing the cataclysmic conditions that would occur if He was forced to withdraw His presence from those who rejected Him, God in His mercy, arranged a way of escape from the destruction, for those who would accept His leading. Noah was instructed to build a life-boat as part of God's emergency plan to save humanity from the destruction that would occur when He withdrew and ceased to sustain the natural forces.

Why Did God Withdraw if He Knew that Destruction Would Follow?

The following passage authored by the disciple Peter, gives insight into the reason the God withdrew His spirit, whilst knowing full well that destruction would follow His retreat.

2 Peter 2:1-9

"But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and **bring upon themselves swift destruction**. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and **their damnation slumbereth not**. (4) For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; (5) And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (6) And turning the cities of Sodom

and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; (7) And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (8) (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) (9) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

When God withdraws His life sustaining and protective presence, both physical and spiritual catastrophe occurs.

The principles of love and the law of God's government are founded on freedom of choice. Thus, God was required to act in harmony with the principles of His law. He had to withdraw His presence from those who refused and rejected His leading. There is no sanction of force in God's government which operates totally on love (unselfishness) and freedom of choice.

Thus, the action of God in withdrawing His sustaining presence from the earth, was not an act of frustrated divine anger and wrathful revenge, but simply the operation of His law of love. God will not force His presence on any being.

As a direct result of being rejected by the majority of the world, God's reluctant withdrawal appears to have resulted in an alteration in the physical condition of the sun and the moon – and to have caused the flood.

Ellen White states that during the flood, God showed mercy - to the earth. Could this mercy have been only a partial withdrawal of His spirit – instead of a complete withdrawal?

Review and Herald, 21 December, 1897

“In Noah's day, men had disregarded the law of God until almost all remembrance of the Creator had passed away from the earth. Their wickedness reached so great a height, violence, crime, and every kind of sin became so intensely active, that the Lord brought a flood of water upon the earth. Yet mercy was mingled with judgment. Noah and his family were saved, but the wicked inhabitants of the world were swept away. In the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, also, when fire came down from heaven and destroyed those wicked cities, we see that the Lord will interfere for his people.”

The Lord showed mercy and interfered to save those who loved Him. God warned of the destruction that was looming over Sodom and Gomorrah and which would occur when God was forced to withdraw protection (via His restraining angels) from those who were 'joined to their idols.” The laws of God's own character and government required that he respect the choices of sinful humanity and insisted that He withdraw from those who rejected Him and His principles of unselfish love. Those left without His spirit were then unprotected from natural disasters, evil angels and evil humanity.

In a similar way, the mercy of God (His remaining presence and protection) is exercised prior to the close probation, by restraining the work of the evil angels.

Great Controversy, p 614

"When He (Jesus) leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. **The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent.** God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; **the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one.** Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. **As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose.** The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."

Desire of Ages, p 306

"Hearts that respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit are the channels through which God's blessing flows. Were those who serve God removed from the earth, **and His Spirit withdrawn from among men, this world would be left to desolation and destruction, the fruit of Satan's dominion.**"

When Jesus at His second coming, shall come close to the earth - in great glory - the usual cycles of the sun and the moon are prophesied to be again interrupted.

Joel 2:1,2

"...for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; (2) A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations....(10) The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:"

Zephaniah 1:14, 15

“The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. (15) That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”

Recall that at the time of the flood, God's spirit has been rejected and His presence withdrawn from the earth. In a situation similar to the flood, the spirit of God will again be withdrawn from the earth just prior to the second coming of Jesus. It is extremely relevant to notice that at both the flood AND just prior to the second coming of Jesus, similar changes occur in the sun and moon with similar consequences – flooding, earthquakes, volcanic activity, wind, tempests, tsunamis.

Luke 21:25

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.”

Amos 8:8,9

“Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. (9) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.”

Further to the consequences which God's withdrawal causes on the forces of nature, so the withdrawal of His loving spirit will further distress humanity. The wicked will seek to destroy God's people AND each other.

Matthew 24:21, 22

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (22) And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”

Jesus states that the end of time, just prior to His second coming, conditions on the earth will be similar to those just prior to the flood (Matt 24:37). At the present time, people have invented and used, weapons of mass destruction – weapons which can alter weather patterns and cause tsunamis and other destructive forces. Did pre-flood humanity also possess weapons capable of effecting the earth itself?

Prior to answering that question, consider that even the Greek civilization possessed fearful weapons – the scorpion bomb; incendiary devices – ancient flame-throwers which contained sulphur, resins, tar, and petroleum; the ram and turtle (battering ram much like a modern day tank); the 8 metre high moveable

tower and troop carrier; catapult and ballista. In the third century BC, Archemides who lived in the Sicilian city of Syracuse, invented a steam powered cannon which so terrorised the attacking Roman armies that they retreated in fear. Archimede's Claw was another mechanically advanced invention which shocked the Romans and unexpectedly sank their boats. (Refer Polybius - Greek, c. 200-118 BC, Universal History; Livy - Roman, 59 BC-17 AD, History of Rome from its Foundation; Plutarch - Greek, c. 45-120 AD, Parallel Lives: Marcellus; Dio Cassius - Greek, c. 155-235 AD, Roman History); Lost Worlds: Ancient Discoveries Pt 1 – Ancient Warfare: UK, video).

These weapons reveal that civilizations 300 years prior to Christ's first appearance, possessed great destructive power against humanity, but is there any evidence that pre-modern civilizations had weapons of mass destruction that could cause destruction to the earth itself?

Nuclear Weapons in Ancient Times?

[Rene Noorbergen](#) in his book, *Secrets of the Lost Races: New Discoveries of Advanced Technology in Ancient Civilizations*, (1977) presents the supposition that at least some ancient civilizations were not ignorant of nuclear technology.

Chapter 4 of [Noorbergen's](#) book discusses evidence for "Advanced Aviation in Prehistoric Times", and chapter 5 supports the concept of "Nuclear Warfare Among the 'Primitives'."

The author's claims of nuclear technology and even weaponry as used in the prehistoric era, may seem a ridiculous proposition, but it does appear that quite a few of Noorbergen's claims are backed up by scientifically valid evidence.

Fifteen years after Noorbergen's book was published, the following report by Bryant Stavelly in the United Kingdom's *World Island Review* (January 1992), appeared and seem to give credibility to Noorbergen's "nuclear weapon amongst the primitives" claim.

Bryant Stavelly's report revealed the following:

An ancient city in India appears to have levelled by an atomic blast 8,000 - 10,000 years ago. A construction team discovered the radioactive site in Rajasthan, (a state of India) while preparing to build a housing development.

A heavy layer of radioactive ash was found in a three-mile-square area which concealed an ancient city. Evidence appears to show that an atomic blast dating back thousands of years, from 8,000 to 12,000 years, destroyed most of the buildings and probably a half-million people.

In his report Stavelly noted that after its discovery, the ancient city became suspect as the cause of a high rate of birth defects and cancer in the region. 'The levels of radiation at the city site registered alarmingly high and the Indian government cordoned off the region.

Interestingly, the Indian Mahabharata (sacred writings) appears to have recorded an atomic or similar event.

According to **OOPARTS** (out of place artefacts) at <http://www.s8int.com/atomic1.html> the Mahabharata sacred writings proclaim:

*'A single projectile charged with all the power in the Universe...An incandescent column of smoke and flame as bright as 10,000 suns, rose in all its splendor...it was an unknown weapon, an iron thunderbolt, a gigantic **messenger of death**⁵⁵ which reduced to ashes an entire race," says the sacred text. The Mahabharata is thought to have been composed in 6500BC **Historian Kisari***

⁵⁵ It is very interesting to note that the Indian sacred writings refer to the "unknown" weapon of genocide as "the messenger of death." This terminology is the same as that chosen by the Israelites to describe the destruction which the Egyptian firstborn were subjected to by the Angel of Death. The English translation of the Hebrew word for "Angel" is messenger.

Mohan Ganguli says that Indian sacred writings are full of descriptions which sound like an atomic blast. There are passages that mention fighting sky chariots and weapons....weapons decimate entire armies which are blown away as if they are leaves.

The Indian sacred writings also comments about the contamination of food and people's hair falling out and burning. <http://www.s8int.com/atomic1.html>

On the same website, OOPARTS also reports that:

“Archeologist Francis Taylor says that etchings in some nearby temples he has managed to translate suggest that they prayed to be spared from the great light that was coming to lay ruin to the city.”

Were the ancient residents of Rajasthan the victims of a nuclear blast, or was their country the recipient of a radioactive meteorite strike?

Avinash Nair reported in **Rediff.com News** on 11 August, 2005 that a radioactive meteorite fell in the Indian state of Rajasthan and that it was:

“a rare radioactive cosmic object. Elaborate tests... revealed it to be a very rare iron meteorite showing significant radioactivity.”

The meteorite fell on 25 June 25, 2005. It is recorded that more meteorites fall in Rajasthan, than fall in any other state in India.

Since only about 126 falls have been observed all over India in the past 2 centuries, this frequency of fall (1 every 2 years) in a small area of Rajasthan anomalously high. In comparison, no more than 10 falls have been reported from the rest of India in the past 15 years. The scientists remarked, “We were able to detect the radioactivity because the meteorite was sent to us immediately after it fell, he said, adding radioactivity slowly wanes away with the passage of time.”
<http://www.rediff.com/news/2005/aug/11met.htm>

It is interesting to note that God set in place, systems that protect the earth from collision with meteors and from receiving too much solar radiation. It is becoming obvious that human activities are destroying these protective systems. e.g. the greenhouse effect.

In the light of the historical evidence, it seems plausible to consider that as God's spirit was resisted and withdrawn from the earth, and His holy angels reluctantly release their hold over the 'winds of human and demonic strife.' At that time, satanic forces begin to work unimpeded on both evil humanity and on the natural elements of the earth. These evil forces then are able to create “weather chaos” which spirals out of control (Refer www.weatherwars.info or the video by Bob Fletcher, “Weather Control as a Weapon”).

Not only are demons working to destroy God's people, but the wicked, who are

under the complete control of demons, also cooperate in destroying not only God's people, but other unsaved people also – and their property, animals, and the earth itself.

Regardless of whether the ancient antediluvians perished by a flood caused by nuclear warfare or by meteorite strikes – it can be seen that because they rejected the pleadings of the spirit of God, they caused Him to withdraw His protective presence and the wicked were left without a divine shelter in the destruction that followed.

Summary

As the Creator withdrew His presence (His spirit) from the earth, the very life and stability of the whole created world swayed precariously. The earth was destroyed “in mercy” i.e. it was only destroyed to a limited degree. God did not completely withdraw His sustaining power from the world. If the Creator had done so, it appears logical to assume that the world would have exploded in a way similar to the description of the “lake of fire” when the world is destroyed without mercy i.e. without any of the Creators' sustaining power. Mountains are cast into the sea, islands move from their place; the earth reels like a drunkard without the sustaining and stabilising power of the Creator to hold everything in place (Psalm 33:9).

Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19)

Some suppose that when the Bible describes “fire falling from heaven” it means that God originated the fire as a means of destroy wicked people. However, Job's story reveals that 'people' who misunderstand the principles of God's kingdom, tend to consider that God originates destructive fires.

Job 1:16

“While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.”

While God is blamed for the fire falling from heaven, the Bible clearly demonstrates that Satan caused the fire to fall.

Job 1:12

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

Apply the same principles of God protecting and Satan causing destruction, to Sodom and Gomorrah.

When God withdrew His creative power and His angels ensured that Lot was removed from the city of Sodom, fire destroyed the cities of the plain. Did God cease to sustain the cities of the plain, or did His withdrawal of the holy angels, permit Satan to rush in and destroy the unrepentant sinners?

Or did God foresee perhaps, that a volcano was brewing in the vicinity of Sodom, which His hand had held back while there was still time for the Sodomites to repent?

Jesus referred to both the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as being demonstrations of what would happen at the final destruction of sinners (Luke 17:29, 30). For this reason, it seems likely that God withdrew His creative and sustaining and protective power from the cities of the plain and this resulted in the explosive, fiery destruction of the wicked who chose to remain in that city.

The scenes described in the destruction of Sodom are similar to those which describe some violent, explosive volcanic eruptions (Mt Vesuvius eruption AD 79; Mt Pelee eruption in the West Indies in 1902; the Mt St Helens explosion in 1980; Mt Krakatoa explosion in 1833).

*“The 1883 eruption of Krakatoa is among the most violent volcanic events in modern times (a VEI of 6, equivalent to 200 megatons of TNT - about **thirteen thousand times** the yield of the Little Boy bomb which devastated Hiroshima, Japan. (Little*

Boy was officially recorded at "only" 15 kilotons. In contrast, the biggest bomb ever exploded by man, the Tsar Bomba, had an explosive power of 57 megatons."
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krakatoa>

In Lexiline, A Renaissance in Learning, the author states:
The Hebrews call the Dead Sea Yam ha-Melah ("salt sea") and some think the name "dead sea" was so named because nothing can live in the salt sea.

But in Arabic the Dead Sea is called al-Bahr al-Mayyitt ("Sea of Death") or Buhayrat Lut ("Sea of Lot") <http://www.lexiline.com/lexiline/lexi58.htm>. Could these names refer to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? In the Arabic translation reference is made to Lot. Being called the "Sea of Death" perhaps might indicate a reference to the death of the inhabitants of the plain where five cities had thrived previously.

Lot's wife, was recorded to have 'looked back' and then was turned to a pillar of salt (actually powder #4417 Strong's Hebrew Concordance).

It is interesting to note that, there have been incidences recorded during volcanic explosions, where human bodies were covered with dust or ash and then became petrified into stone. e.g. at Pompeii when Mt Vesuvius erupted in AD 79.)

If this was the case, one would expect to find archaeological evidence of the volcano.

The Ancient Five Cities of the Dead Sea plain - Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Ziboiim and Zoar (Bela) were all destroyed. The five cities were situated in the Vale of Siddim which the Bible states became the Dead Sea.

Genesis 14:3

"And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea)."

Between 1973 and 1979 two archaeologists, Walter E Rast of Valparaiso University, Indiana and R. Thomas Schaub of Indiana University of Pennsylvania surveyed an area around the South East of the Dead Sea and located the remains of five sites each at the head of a small wadi. From North to South the sites are: Bab Edh-Dhra (first discovered in 1924); Numeira (found by Rast and Schaub in 1973); Safi; Feifa; and Khanazir.

Safi, one of the sites discovered, has been positively identified by a map found on the floor of a 6th century AD Byzantium Church which identifies Safi with Zoar, one of the Cities of the Plain.

The principal site of Bab edh Dhra, lying right at the edge of the Lisan, which is the peninsular jutting into the Dead Sea, consists of a town and a cemetery

which contains an estimated 500,000 people.

Did a natural catastrophe occur to cause the death of so many people? If a volcano was to have occurred, fire, ash and brimstone would give supportive evidence of such an occurrence. Was there a tsunami which destroyed the fresh water pools and raised saline levels in the soil? If so, these conditions would certainly have resulted in difficult living conditions. The land would have become unproductive and the water source fouled.

But is there any evidence of volcanic or seismic activity around the Dead Sea?

David Graves & Jane Graves, in Electronic Christian Media report:

“From the research of geologist Frederick G. Clapp, who visited the area in 1929 and 1934, it was discovered that there are fault lines along the east and west sides of the Dead Sea. The cities of the plain lie at the edge of the Ghor right along the eastern fault line. Also, earthquakes are common to the area. In Clapp's research, asphalt and petroleum accompanied by natural gas were found in the area. From Genesis 14:10, it is evident that the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. This tar is naturally occurring asphalt. Genesis 11:3; Exodus 2:3. It is a well-known fact that the southern end of the Dead Sea is a location for these tar pits. With the assistance of the imagination, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain can be recreated” (continued over page).

(quote continued)

“Bryant Wood speculates that, ‘these combustible materials could have been forced from the earth by subterranean pressure brought about by an earthquake resulting from the shifting of the bounding faults. If these combustibles were ignited by lightning or some other agency as they came spewing forth from the ground, it would indeed result in a holocaust such as described in Genesis 19.’ From the 1973 report by Rast and Schaub there is evidence of widespread burning in the case of three of the cities. At Bab edh-Dhra, handfulls of ashy soil and charcoal could be removed from the surface of the ruins. At Numeira, a pit was dug which cut through a seven foot thick layer of dark ash and at Feifa, much the same evidence of destruction by fire could be found Genesis 19:28. The site at Bab edh-Dhra was destroyed at the end of the early bronze III age 2600-2300 B.C. The other two cities were also destroyed around this period. Are these five sites the five cities of the plain described in the Biblical record?”
<http://www.abu.nb.ca/ecm/topics/arch5.htm>

The Encyclopedia Britannica notes that:

“The Dead Sea occupies part of a graben (a downfaulted block of the Earth’s crust) between transform faults along a tectonic plate boundary that runs from the Red Sea–Gulf of Suez spreading centre to a convergent plate boundary in the Taurus Mountains. The eastern fault, along the edge of the Moab Plateau, is more readily visible from the lake than is the western fault, which marks the gentler Judaeen upfold.... Thermal sulfur springs also feed the rivers” (i.e. the four perennial streams that flow into the Dead Sea.)
<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9029627>

With sulfur springs, converging plate boundaries, fault-lines, tar pits and flammable gases being emitted from the region, the area certainly appears to lend itself to the theory that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorroah might well have been caused by a natural disaster, from which God had been protecting His people.

Desolate Jerusalem

Jeremiah 6:8

“Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.”

Jeremiah 9:11

“And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.”

Jeremiah 44:6

“Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and

desolate, as at this day.”

Ezekiel 12:19,20

“And say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord GOD of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel; They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, **because of the violence of all them that dwell therein** (20) And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.”

From the foregoing Old Testament verses, it certainly appears convincing that God is so angry with Jerusalem that He is going to personally destroy the city and the land of Judah, leaving the entire area desolate. However, as Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, He demonstrates the reality of how rejection affects His Father.

Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

Desire of Ages, (1989) p 829

“The holy Shekinah, in departing from the first temple, had stood upon the eastern mountain, as if loath to forsake the chosen city; so Christ stood upon Olivet, with yearning heart overlooking Jerusalem.”

Furthermore, though God states unequivocally that HE will destroy Jerusalem and Judah, the prophesied siege of Jerusalem and its destruction was accomplished by the Roman army, under Titus – a pagan.

Great Controversy, p 33

“Blood flowed down the temple steps like water. Thousands upon thousands of Jews perished. Above the sound of battle, voices were heard shouting: “Ichabod!”--the glory is departed.”

General Conference Daily Bulletins, 1899-03-07.005 (2 August, 1895)

“Their beautiful temple was in ruins, and ‘Ichabod, Ichabod, the glory is departed from Israel,’ was heard in songs of lamentation.... The Lord permitted them to be broken up until they should find in him their center of attraction.”

Great Controversy, p 24

“In the presence of Christ, and in this only, did the second temple exceed the first in glory. But Israel had put from her the proffered Gift of heaven. With the humble Teacher who had that day passed out from its golden gate, the glory had forever departed from the temple. Already were the Saviour’s words fulfilled: ‘Your house is left unto you desolate.’ Matthew 23:38.”

God did not personally destroy the city of Jerusalem. Neither did He send holy angels to massacre the rebellious Jews. God simply withdrew His presence and protection from Jerusalem. The divine glory departed. Once this was done, Satan, the “deity” who controlled the pagan Romans, and whom the Jews chose as their leader in stead of Christ, destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem and made the land as desolate as the nation was spiritually.

Christ's Death, Resurrection and Return

When Christ died there was an earthquake (Matt 27:54). When Christ was resurrected there was another “great earthquake” (Matt 28:2). When Christ

returns the earth will be “reeling like a drunkard,” “clean dissolved” and “moving exceedingly” (Isa 24:19,20). Chaotic events are demonstrated to occur when the spirit of God is withdrawn. The earth collapses however, when God's sustaining and stabilising power is completely withdrawn after His third coming to the earth – eventually resulting in the Lake of Fire.

The Red Sea Crossing – (please refer to Objection #43 where this incident is dealt with in more depth)

Rejecting the Spirit of God

After God is continually rejected, He withdraws. His withdrawal removes life, not as a punitive action, but as a consequence of the withdrawal of the Source of ALL life. His withdrawal removes the stability of nature which human beings often take for granted.

In the sense that God is the ONLY Life-Giver, it might be said that by withdrawing from them, He kills sinners; but in reality, sinners choose their own death by pushing away and rejecting the only Source of their life. God removes away reluctantly, as a real Gentleman, respecting the individual's choice to serve another god.

For God to surrender to the rejection of His created beings and withdraw His protective life sustaining power, is called "His strange act."

Isaiah 28:21

"For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act."

The Trinity's Character - Versus - the Father's Character

When we look at the trinity doctrine, which column is represented by their beliefs? The concept of a god who has a nature which is a blend of both good and evil traits - the Masonic “black and white” god; the Roman Catholic’s “good and bad” god; the pagan religions “male and female” god. In short, the god who is a bit good and a bit bad. The god who presents as an angel of light, (2 Cor 11:14) but is really a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Roman Catholic Orthodox Trinity Assassinates the Character of the One True God

Consider the following Roman Catholic traditions which, according to the Catholic Handbook, p 16, are all based on the doctrine of the trinity. Purgatory, Penance, Ever-burning hell, Flagellation, the Stigmata, Eucharist, the Deity is so angry that an Intercessor is required to approach the Son (Mary), Humanity is never-good enough – even when “in Christ,” hierarchical order, can't overcome sin, confession of sins to priest who is the mediator between sinner and Mary and the saints, rituals and traditions, mandatory offerings for ritualised ceremonies. The trinity doctrine denies the Father/Son relationship and the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ – once for all humanity. It certainly promotes the concept of an angry, violent, impatient god, who is pleased when his followers suffer.

Tritheistic Trinity Assassinates the Character of the One True God

In many churches there is a hierarchical order. If members don't agree to submit to the leadership, their membership is often terminated. i.e. “the chosen people syndrome.”

Jeremiah predicted in Jeremiah 31:34

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

In fulfilment of the prediction, Christ instructed in Matthew 23:8

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.”

Paul informs us, that, far from being an isolated, wrathful God, as depicted in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, the Father is a God of comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3,4

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

The Son of God is humanity's only Advocate, (1 John 2:1) the only Mediator (1

Tim 2:5) and the only Intercessor (Heb 9:24; Isa 53:12). Christ also is our only Comforter (Jn 14:18). 'The Father of all comfort' (2 Cor 1:2,3); comforts us *through His Son*. The Son of God dwells in humanity (John 14:10,11,20,23) by faith, via the ministry of His holy angels, who minister His divine thoughts to human minds.

This is not the current position of the SDA church which officially accepts that there are 2 Comforters - Christ and the 3rd Person of the Trinity. In their book published by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1988 called, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p 63 it states: "The only **other** Parakletos mentioned in Scripture is Christ Himself." This statement seems to deny that Christ is our **only** Mediator with the Father (1 Tim 2:5).

Christianity or Churchianity

In their published material, the SDA church, in keeping with Roman Catholic trinitarian theology, appears to verge on claiming that the organisation itself is another necessary intercessor for salvation. (Please note that the following quotes are not from Ellen White. They are from contemporary writers).

Adventist Review 9 August, **1984**, p 18.

"There is some relationship between **salvation and church membership**."

Adventist Review, 2 November, **1989**, p 8

"I appeal to all who are outside the fold just now....If you are not here, He [Christ] misses you....The Father owns the house. **Return to Him**. For every good love story should have a happy ending."

Adventist Review, 2 June, **1988**, p 9.

"When we backslide from the church, **we also backslide from God**."

Despite words to the contrary, the tritheistic trinity doctrine presents an unloving God - "not the Father who Himself loveth thee." (John.16.27). Also in 1 John 4:9; Galatians 4:4 and John 3:16, we are told that the Father's love for the world is demonstrated in that He sent His only Son. The trinity doctrine assassinates the character of the Father – shooting away the very fact that reveals His deepest love for the world.

The tritheistic god promotes a remote, aloof Father. He is portrayed as a punitive Being. Obedience is sternly required, but not evoked from the heart which was created to respond to the Father's drawing love. As a result, legalistic theology – which in practice is salvation through works - became common in many mainstream Christian churches.

Legalism presents a stern and loveless religion which:

- prompts parents to physically force children into obedience - perhaps with

- bashings – instead of drawing them with love and patient guidance;
- tinges the privilege of paying tithe with the undercurrent concept that God might be cornered into pouring out a financial blessing (works programme) – instead of recognising that God loves a cheerful giver;
 - elevates traditions and rituals e.g. Simple baptism into the name of Jesus was replaced by a “special trinitarian formula” - the three names - when this formula is not practised in the Bible. Such rituals tend to bring unity, but it is not unity based on truth as revealed in Jesus, but in a ritualistic works programme condoned by tradition;
 - encourages self-righteousness and a critical spirit – people “keep” all the laws and therefore are saved by their own works - a condition known today as ***Pharisaism***.

Bible-believing Christians are in danger of making the Bible their god or their idol. Christians ought not to worship the Bible, but they need to search the Bible to find the true character of the God of the Bible. This can only be found by measuring all advocated teachings in the Bible against the life and teachings of Jesus Christ – whose life demonstrated the principles of the 10 commandments.

It is not suggested that persons from religious organisations are not sincere. It appears however that many have been taught to look to human traditions and rituals instead of searching out the truth on the Father's character - by aligning it with that of Jesus' character. Perhaps we need to seriously consider stepping away from all traditions, rituals and ceremonies, in order to remove preconceived ideas about God's character.

We might need to question if these beliefs are Bible-based. It may also be necessary to recognise co-dependency on churches and a subconscious reliance on other people's thinking.

Jeremiah 31:34

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Matthew 23:8

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.”

John 16:13

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.”

God is Not Double-Minded

According to some major Christian churches' doctrines, God is not consistent. For instance, God says, "I change not" (Mal 3:6) and yet it seems that His relations with human beings certainly do change. For example, did God tell the Israelites that they must keep His 10 Commandments - and yet that at other times – almost immediately they were written down - that the 'chosen people' could 'legally' break several of them?

Also, Jesus said the entire 10 commandments should be kept, but prominent churches declare that humanity is now exempt from at least some of the claims of the law of God.

James 2:10-12

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (11) For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. (12) So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

Once again, it is obvious that it is humanity that has misunderstood God's words and character. God is not inconsistent. God does not encourage law-breaking. Commandment -breaking stems from the lusts of the flesh. The Israelites had lusts of the flesh to contend with and so also do Christians today. However, the only perfect Man who ever lived, did not flaunt His Father's law, but kept it until death and He is still keeping His Father's law.

James 3:10-12

"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (11) Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? (12) Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."

God's people will be identifiable by their Christ-like characters. They won't be double-minded people. The 144000 won't be killing "less perfect human beings" – pagan men, women, and little children. They won't be stealing pagan virgins for their own use etc. (as advocated in Deut 21:10-14; Numbers 31) when Jesus comes.

James 3:14-4:2

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits,

without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."

Wrath Falls on Jesus

Jesus suffered the Father's wrath (separation) when He became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). Could the wrath of God fall on anyone else in the Bible account, as severely as it did on Christ – who took into His body, the sins of the entire world?

Isaiah 59:2

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.”

Matthew 26:36-38

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:”

Mark 14:32-33

“And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, (#1568) and to be very heavy (#85).”

The Greek words *ekthambeo* (translated as sore amazed) and *ademoneo* (translated as very heavy) reveal that Jesus was “struck with terror;” that He became depressed to the most extreme level expressible in the Greek language; that He was greatly distressed and in anguish of mind.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines #1568 ***ekthambeo*** from <1569>

- 1) to throw into terror or amazement
- 1a) to alarm thoroughly, to terrify
- 2) to be struck with amazement
- 2a) to be thoroughly amazed, astounded
- 2b) to be struck with terror

- #85 ***ademoneo***

- from a derivative of adeo (to be sated to loathing); ; v
- 1) to be troubled, great distress or anguish, depressed

This is the strongest of the three Greek words (<85>, <916>, <3076>) in the New Testament for depression or grief.

Ellen White, 2 Testimonies for the Church, p 209

“Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the sense of His Father's displeasure which made His cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross. It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of His Father's

wrath. The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left Him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon Him and forced from His pale and quivering lips the anguished cry: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

Jesus felt the grief and depression that lost humanity will experience when the spirit of God is finally removed from them. They will cry out to God for mercy, but it will be too late. Finally they will realise they "are not saved."

Jeremiah 8:20

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Isaiah 55:6

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: "

Proverbs 1:28

"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:"

The depression experienced by the wicked, will soon transform into the horror of fear.

Revelation 6:16

"And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:"

2 Timothy 1:7

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Fear is a prominent instrument of Satan weaponry (Rev.21.8) It is an attack on God's character. It attacks trust in God's faithfulness (Mark 4:40).

Satan knew that the presence of the Father would be withdrawn from Christ as part of the plan of salvation. Prophecies predicted this event. (Ps 22; Isa 53). So the weapon of fear was used to the greatest degree when Christ was most vulnerable – separated from His Father. Likened unto the treading of the winepress, the spirit of the Father was "pressed out" in the Garden of Gethsemane (Isaiah 63:3).

North Pacific Union Gleaner, 23 March, 1910 p 7

"Often in the silent watches of the night I think of the sufferings of Christ in our behalf. Behold the Redeemer in the Garden of Gethsemane. The thought of being separated from his Father was the burden pressing so heavily upon his soul. He felt as if he might be unable to pass through such an experience. 'If it be possible,' he prayed, 'let this cup pass from me.' So great was his agony that

'his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' It was for the sake of ransoming a lost world that he passed through this agony."

Proverbs 1:27

"When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Hosea 9:12

"Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!"

Psalms 22:1, 11, 19, 20

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. 19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. 20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling (# 3173 *yachiyd* – only begotten, beloved son) from the power of the dog (#3611 – attackers) "

When the presence of the Father was retracted from the Son, Jesus experienced the full depth of the punishment that the unrepentant wicked will experience. The separation from God permits Satan to rush in and to attack the wicked. Christ was attacked, for although He had done no sin, He accepted "to be made sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21) and took upon Himself the full responsibility and consequences of our sins.

If Christ had not anchored His faith in the knowledge of His Father's loving character then He would have been overcome.

Satan tempted Christ to doubt His Father's character – His faithfulness – His pledge to redeem humanity, (despite their extreme sinfulness), through Christ's life and sacrifice. But, despite experiencing the Father's full wrath (withdrawal of His glory and presence), Jesus held on to the knowledge of His Father's loving, faithful character. It was Christ's **FAITH in the unchanging, loving character of His Father** that won the victory.

Summary:

Christ became sin for the redemption of the world. This caused the Father's presence to be withdrawn for God is a consuming fire to sin (Isa 59:2; Heb 12:29). The Father did not destroy His own Son. He withdrew His protection from His Son. This withdrawal is termed the Father's "wrath." When the Father's protection was no longer over Christ, Satan rushed in to forcefully tempt and try to destroy Christ's faith in the Father's character.

Separation from God – the hiding of His Father's face – God's wrath – the reward of sinners - THAT is the wrath of God. Jesus experienced this wrath to its deepest depths.

However, while experiencing the wrath (separation from His Father) Christ also had to endure the evil opportunist. Satan ever awaits such opportunities where sin separates humanity from divinity. In His humanity, separated from the divine spirit of the Father, Christ was vulnerable. Satan rushed in with his evil angels, to tempt Christ's humanity to sin and if possible, to destroy Him, but **Christ's faith in the Father's character**, gave Him victory.

Wrath Falls on Humanity

When those who allow Satan's weapon of fear to weaken their faith in Christ, they make incorrect assumptions or decisions and commit sin. They doubt God's character is loving and that He is faithful to save them out of Satan's hands. When this fear/doubt is cherished, they separate themselves from God. The fearful (those who doubt God's character – the faithless) are counted with the wicked and are then easy prey for Satan's attacks.

Revelation 21:8

“But the **fearful, and unbelieving**, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Hebrews 10:26, 31

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries....31 It is a fearful thing to fall (#1706 be entrapped) into (#1519 against) the hands of the living God.”

It is a fearful thing to fall out of the protective hands of the living God, because in that situation, there is no protection from the devil and his evil angels.

Ellen White's Definition of the Character of God

Humanity's perception of God's character has been warped since the first lie Satan told about God in the Garden of Eden. Satan is still assassinating God's loving character, and casting on it, images of his own ferocious and depraved character.

Bible Echo, 16 April, 1894 p.12, 13

"God's law is a copy of His mind and will. **The sins forbidden there could never find a place in Heaven.** It was love that prompted God to express His will in the ten precepts of the decalogue. Afterward He showed His love for man by sending prophets and teachers to explain and illustrate His holy law. 13 God has given man a complete rule of life in His law. Obeyed, man shall live by it, through the merits of Christ. Transgressed, it has power to condemn. The law sends men to Christ, and Christ points them back to the law."

4 Spirit of Prophecy, p 273

"They had by faith followed their High Priest from the holy to the most holy, and they saw him pleading his blood before the ark of God. Within that sacred ark is the Father's law, the same that was spoken by God himself amid the thunders of Sinai, and written with his own finger on the tables of stone. Not one command has been annulled; not a jot or tittle has been changed. While God gave to Moses a copy of his law, he preserved the great original in the sanctuary above."

Pacific Union Recorder, 31 December, 1903

"I am instructed to say to our people, Let us follow Christ. We may safely discard all ideas that are not included in His teachings."

Ellen White said there is a lot to learn, and a lot to unlearn She specified that the Pharisees, the leaders of the "chosen people" had to "unlearn" their traditional understanding of the character of God.

Review and Herald, 3 August, 1897, p 5

"When Moses desired to see the glory of God, God revealed his character to his servant. "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." He who made this proclamation to Moses was the One who now spoke to the Pharisees, though now his divine character was veiled by the garb of humanity. **But the priests and rulers had not that which they needed so much,--a knowledge of God's character.** For this reason they were constantly misrepresenting him. They had much to unlearn of the traditions and inventions of men; they had need to learn the true principles of the law of Jehovah. "

What did the Jews have in their tradition? They had vengeful, violent, murdering

laws. *Stone the Sabbath-breaker. Stone the adulterer. Poke out the eye. Knock out the tooth.* They were the "chosen people" - and that made them incredibly racist, thinking they had the "right" to annihilate many other races – and even that God told them to do so. How was their code of living, different to the other nations around them, who served pagan gods? Other nations had gods (Satan) who delighted in war and prompted them to attack the Israelites. Who told the Jews to do these horrendous things? Not the true God! Nor His Son! God's character and law says, "Love your enemies. Revile not again." And He had NO VIOLENCE in Him - only healing came from His hands. (Isa. 53:9; Mark 6:56; Matt 4:24; Matt 8:16; Matt 14:14; Mark 1:34; Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40; Sun of Righteousness – healing in His wings (Mal 4:2); I am the Lord thy God that healeth thee (Exo 15:26) healeth all thy diseases (Psa 103:3).

Ellen White emphasises that God's government does not involve principles of force.

Desire of Ages, 1898 p 759, 22

“God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. **Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God's government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power...**” 22 “The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings” Malachi 4:2.”

Great Controversy, p.569

“It is Satan's constant effort to misrepresent the character of God, the nature of sin, and the real issues at stake in the great controversy. His sophistry lessens the obligation of the divine law and gives men license to sin. **At the same time he causes them to cherish false conceptions of God so that they regard Him with fear and hate rather than with love. The cruelty inherent in his own character is attributed to the Creator;** it is embodied in systems of religion and expressed in modes of worship. Thus the minds of men are blinded, and Satan secures them as his agents to war against God. By perverted conceptions of the divine attributes, heathen nations were led to believe human sacrifices necessary to secure the favor of Deity; and horrible cruelties have been perpetrated under the various forms of idolatry. The Roman Catholic Church, uniting the forms of paganism and Christianity, and, **like paganism, misrepresenting the character of God...**”

Who then, correctly represents the Father's character? Who can teach humanity the truth about the Father?

Ellen White answers repeatedly. - only One. Christ, the Son of God.

8 Testimonies, p 265, 266

“Christ came to teach human beings what God desires them to know. In the heavens above, in the earth, in the broad waters of the ocean, we see the handiwork of God. All created things testify to His power, His wisdom, His love. But not from the stars or the ocean or the cataract can we learn of the personality

of God as it is revealed in Christ. God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. Had God desired to be represented as dwelling personally in the things of nature,--in the flower, the tree, the spire of grass,--would not Christ have spoken of this to His disciples when He was on the earth? But never in the teaching of Christ is God thus spoken of. Christ and the apostles taught clearly the truth of the existence of a personal God. (266) Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed. He is the divine Teacher, the Enlightener. Had God thought us in need of revelations other than those made through Christ and in His written word, He would have given them."

Ellen White states that Christ is the Divine Teacher.

Special Testimonies on Education, p 141 (Australia, March 21, 1895)

"The disciples of Christ are not called upon to magnify men, but to magnify God, the source of all wisdom. Let educators give the Holy Spirit room to do its work upon human hearts. The greatest Teacher is represented in our midst by his Holy Spirit."

Christ is the Great Teacher

6 Testimonies for the Church, p 159, 160

"The Great Teacher who came down from heaven has not directed teachers to study any of the reputedly great authors. He says: 'Come unto Me. . . . Learn of Me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Matthew 11:28, 29. Christ has promised, and in learning lessons of Him we shall find rest. All the treasures of heaven were committed to Him that He might give these gifts to the diligent, persevering seeker. He is of God made unto us 'wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' 1 Corinthians 1:30. Teachers must understand what lessons to impart, or they cannot prepare students to be transferred to the higher grade. They must study Christ's lessons and the character of His teaching. They must see its freedom from formalism and tradition, and appreciate the originality, the authority, the spirituality, the tenderness, the benevolence, and the practicability of His teaching. Those who make the word of God their study, those who dig for the treasures of truth, will themselves become imbued with the Spirit of Christ, and by beholding they will become changed into His likeness. Those who appreciate the word will teach as disciples who have been sitting at the feet of Jesus and have accustomed themselves to learn of Him. In the place of bringing into our schools books containing the suppositions of the world's great authors, they will say: Tempt me not to disregard the greatest Author and the greatest Teacher, through whom I have everlasting life. He never mistakes. He is the great Fountain head whence all wisdom flows. Then let every teacher sow the seed of truth in the minds of students. Christ is the standard Teacher."

Christian Education 1893 p 108

“The best educated in the sciences are not always the most effective instruments for God's use. There are many who find themselves laid aside, and those who have had fewer advantages of obtaining knowledge of books, taking their places, because the latter have a knowledge of practical things that is essential to the uses of every-day life; while those who consider themselves learned, often cease to be learners, are self-sufficient, and above being taught, even by Jesus, who was the greatest teacher the world ever knew.”

5 Testimonies for the Church, p 253

“When Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, His disciples were gathered close about Him, and the multitude, filled with intense curiosity, also pressed as near as possible. Something more than usual was expected. Eager faces and listening attitudes gave evidence of the deep interest. The attention of all seemed riveted upon the speaker. His eyes were lighted up with unutterable love, and the heavenly expression upon His countenance gave meaning to every word uttered. Angels of heaven were in that listening throng. There, too, was the adversary of souls with his evil angels, prepared to counteract, as far as possible, the influence of the heavenly Teacher. The truths there uttered have come down through the ages and have been a light amid the general darkness of error. Many have found in them that which the soul most needed--a sure foundation of faith and practice” (continued over page).

(EG White continued)

"But in these words spoken by the greatest Teacher the world has ever known there is no parade of human eloquence. The language is plain, and the thoughts and sentiments are marked with the greatest simplicity. The poor, the unlearned, the most simple-minded, can understand them. The Lord of heaven was in mercy and kindness addressing the souls He came to save. He taught them as one having authority, speaking the words of eternal life."

Special Testimonies on Education, 1895 p 232

"Jesus Christ is the knowledge of the Father, and Christ is our great teacher sent from God. Christ has declared in the sixth chapter of John that he is that bread sent down from heaven. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' **The disciples did not comprehend his words. Says Christ, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'**"

Southern Worker, 15 September, 1908, p 5

"...Jesus, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor, was opening to him the treasures of divine love. The Holy Spirit was pleading with him to become an heir of the inheritance that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." He had seen evidence of the power of Christ. **Now the opportunity was his to speak to the great Teacher,** to express the desire uppermost in his heart. But, like the man with the muck-rake in Bunyan's allegory, his eyes were fixed on the earth. He saw not the crown above his head. Like Simon Magus, he valued the gift of God as a means of worldly gain."

Special Testimonies on Education, 1897 p 206,

"The religion of Jesus Christ never degrades the receiver, it never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hard-hearted. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and purifies and ennobles the thoughts, by bringing them into captivity to Jesus Christ. God's ideal for his children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. **The living God has given in his holy law a transcript of his character. The greatest teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ. And what is the standard he has given for all who believe in him to reach? - "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." As God is perfect in his high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness.** There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and

upward toward perfection of character. (See 2 Tim. 3: 14-17; Rom. 15:4; Col. 2:8-10.)”

Review and Herald, 12 May, 1896, p5

“There are souls famishing for the bread of life, thirsting for the waters of salvation; and woe unto that man who by pen or voice shall turn them aside into false paths! The Spirit of God is appealing to men, presenting to them their moral obligation to love and serve him with heart, might, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbors as themselves. The Holy Spirit moves upon the inner self until it becomes conscious of the divine power of God, and every spiritual faculty is quickened to decided action. Jesus said, “I will send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” A deep, thorough work is to be wrought in the soul, which the world cannot see. Those who know not what it is to have an experience in the things of God, who know not what it is to be justified by faith, who have not the witness of the Spirit that they are accepted of Jesus Christ, are in need of being born again. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” What can the world know of Christian experience?--Verily, nothing. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” **The great Teacher explained this instruction**, saying, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

Review and Herald, 3 June, 1890 p 10

“Those who stand in vindication of the law of God, are in a position where they need much of the Spirit of God.” If ministers are wanting in meekness, if they are easily irritated when opposed, it is evident that they need divine enlightenment. Men must manifest the grace of Christ as they labor for souls. **The truth as it is in Jesus** will have altogether a different influence upon the minds of unbelievers, from that which it has had when presented as a theory or as a controversial subject. If we do our very best to present the truth in its stirring character, crossing the opinions and ideas of others, it will be misinterpreted, misapplied, and misstated, to those who are entertaining error, in order to make it appear in an objectionable light. There are few to whom you bring the truth, who have not been drinking of the wine of Babylon. It is hard for them to comprehend the truth, therefore the necessity of teaching it as it is in Jesus. **Those who claim to be lovers of truth can afford to be meek and lowly of heart, as was the great Teacher.** Those who have been diligently working in the mines of God's word, and have discovered the precious ore in the rich veins of truth, in the divine mysteries that have been hidden for ages, will exalt the Lord Jesus, the Source of all truth, by revealing in their characters the sanctifying power of what they believe. **Jesus and his grace must be enshrined in the inner sanctuary of the soul. Then he will be revealed in words, in prayer, in exhortation, in the presentation of sacred truth, for this is the great secret of spiritual success.** When self is woven into our labors, then the truth we bear to others does not sanctify, refine, and ennoble our own hearts; it will not testify that we

are fit vessels for the Master's use. It is only through fervent prayer that we may hold sweet fellowship with Jesus, and through this blessed communion the words and the spirit are made fragrant with the spirit of Christ. There is not a heart that will not bear watching. Jesus, the precious Saviour, enjoined watchfulness. The oversight of self must not be relaxed for a moment. The heart must be kept with diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Watch and discipline the thoughts, that you may not sin with your lips."

Kress Collection, p 82

"God desires to see the souls of His people in Africa mastered by heaven-born purposes. But what a work needs to be done there! The people have not learned of the great Teacher. Human nature, when unsubdued, unsanctified and depraved, is a very curious and wonderful thing. It assumes a great many forms because it is not worked by the Holy Spirit. But when the Lord Jesus is an abiding presence in the soul, none need to question the value of the human being, man or woman."

Review and Herald 8 October, 1895, p 6

"...All need wisdom to understand that it is true greatness to keep company with Jesus Christ, to walk in meekness and humility with God, cultivating single-hearted simplicity, and being ever ready to receive instruction from the great Teacher. God has promised his Holy Spirit, which is sufficient to teach us, illuminating to our minds the word of God, which, if practiced, will thoroughly furnish a man unto all good works. **God's commandments are exceeding broad.**"

Pamphlet: Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity, 16 January, 1907, p 22
 “While respecting authority...in accordance with wisely-laid plans, every worker is amenable to the Great Teacher for the proper exercise of his God-given judgment and of his right to look to the God of heaven for wisdom and guidance. God is Commander and Ruler over all. We have a personal Saviour, and we are not to exchange His Word for the word of any man. In the Scriptures the Lord has given instruction for every worker. The words of the Master-Worker should be diligently studied; for they are spirit and life. Laborers who are striving to work in harmony with this instruction, are under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and need not always, before they make any advance move, first ask permission of some one else. No precise lines are to be laid down. Let the Holy Spirit direct the workers. As they keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, the gifts of grace will increase by wise use.”

Signs of the Times, 16 May , 1900, 'Ministry'

“In His life and lessons Christ gave a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and upholding all things, He is constantly ministering to others. Satan misrepresented God to the world, as he did to Adam and Eve. Selfishness has its origin in Satan, and just as far as it is indulged, so far are Satan's attributes cherished; but Satan charged God with these attributes, and belief in his principles was becoming more and more widespread. By the Son of God these principles must be demonstrated as false, and God's character shown to be one of love. By Him the Father must be rightly represented. God committed His ideal to Christ, and sent Him into the world, invested with divinity, yet bearing humanity. Christ stooped to take man's nature, that He might reveal the sentiments of God toward the fallen race. Divine power was brought within the reach of all, that sinful human beings might reveal the image of God. Christ assumed our nature in order to counterwork Satan's false principles. He came to give by His ministry an expression of the mind of God. And with clearness and power Christ set forth the attributes of God. He is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person," even "the image of the invisible God;" yet He humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant. Our Redeemer is a perfect revelation of the Godhead; and it is of importance that, as His disciples, we understand through Him God's relation to us, and our relation to God. He is the world's great Teacher; and what we know of God through Him is the measure of our practical knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set us an example of true service. He would not leave this great subject in man's charge. Of so much consequence did He regard it, that He Himself, one equal with God, washed the feet of His disciples.”

Ellen White Explains The 'Wrath' and 'Curse' of God

The expressions “**the wrath of God**” and “**the curse of God**” are used often in Christian circles. Such subjects are traditionally associated with horrendous, fearful scenes. Plagues, suffering and death originate from a furious deity, whose anger knows no bounds.

In this section, these two expressions are examined with reference to the Bible's own terminology and descriptions and also from the writings of Ellen G White.

The Wrath of God - How Wrath Fell on Jesus

Ellen White describes the total wrath of His Father as it fell on Christ (who was made sin for us 2 Cor 5:21), in the Garden of Gethsemane.

EG White, 2 Testimonies for the Church, p 203, 204, 209

“Could mortals view the amazement and sorrow of the angels as they watched in silent grief the Father separating His beams of light, love and glory, from his Son, they would better understand how offensive is sin in His sight. As the Son of God in the Garden of Gethsemane bowed in the attitude of prayer, the agony of his spirit forced from His pores sweat like great drops of blood. It was here that the horror of great darkness surrounded Him. The sins of the world were upon Him. He was suffering in man's stead, as a transgressor of His Father's law. Here was the scene of temptation. The divine light of God was receding from His vision, and He was passing into the hands of the powers of darkness. In the agony of His soul He lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing His Father's frown. The cup of suffering Christ had taken from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it Himself, and, in its place, give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man, was now falling upon Christ.... (204) The sins of a lost world were upon Him and overwhelming Him. It was a sense of His Father's frown, in consequence of sin, which rent His heart with such piercing agony and forced from His brow great drops of blood, which, rolling down His pale cheeks, fell to the ground, moistening the earth....(209) Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the sense of His Father's displeasure which made His cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross. It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of His Father's wrath. The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left Him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon Him and forced from His pale and quivering lips the anguished cry: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' ”

The wrath of the Father is called “the Father's frown.” It is described as the

separating of His light, love, glory and sustaining presence. When the Father withdraws His spirit (light, love, glory and sustaining presence) then Satan and his demons – the powers of darkness - rush in and bring horror and destruction. Ellen White continues this theme throughout her writings.

Ellen White – Sinners are Destroyed by the Wrath of God

Ellen White, Early Writings, p 54 (End of the 2300 Days)

"I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, 'If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.'"

In this passage it is clear that Jesus was not threatening to kill Ellen White. Instead, Christ assured her that she was protected by the Father who had intentionally veiled His glory so that she, a sinner, would not die in His glorious presence. The sin in humanity kills the person in whom it resides. In the presence of the unveiled glory of God, such death is instantaneous to the sinful race, but such destruction does not originate from God. God protects humanity and prevents their deaths by veiling His glory from them.

Review and Herald, 17 September, 1901 p 8

"God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance. In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. **Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work."**

Great Controversy, 1911, p 36

"We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God's mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest." **"The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the**

evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. The destruction of Jerusalem is a fearful and solemn warning to all who are trifling with the offers of divine grace and resisting the pleadings of divine mercy. Never was there given a more decisive testimony to God's hatred of sin and to the certain punishment that will fall upon the guilty. The Saviour's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have another fulfillment, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and **trampled upon His law.** Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime. The heart sickens, and the mind grows faint in contemplation. **Terrible have been the results of rejecting the authority of Heaven.** But a scene yet darker is presented in the revelations of the future. The records of the past,—the long procession of tumults, conflicts, and revolutions, the "battle of the warrior . . . with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (Isaiah 9:5),— what are these, in contrast with the terrors of that day **when the restraining Spirit of God shall be wholly withdrawn from the wicked, no longer to hold in check the outburst of human passion and satanic wrath! The world will then behold, as never before, the results of Satan's rule.** (p 37). But in that day, as in the time of Jerusalem's destruction, God's people will be delivered, everyone that shall be found written among the living. Isaiah 4:3. Christ has declared that He will come the second time to gather His faithful ones to Himself: "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." "Matthew 24:30, 31. Then shall they that obey not the gospel be consumed with the spirit of His mouth and be destroyed with the brightness of His coming. 2 Thessalonians 2:8. **Like Israel of old the wicked destroy themselves; they fall by their iniquity. By a life of sin, they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God, their natures have become so debased with evil, that the manifestation of His glory is to them a consuming fire.**"

Signs of the Times, 6 January, 1890, p 7

"If the Lord did not continue his guardian care over us by day and night, Satan would exercise his power against us, and we should be consumed. The Lord has appointed his angels to shield his people, that the wicked one may not destroy us. But because of the preserving care and tender mercies of the Lord, men become careless. The wise man says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." The patience and forbearance of God should soften instead of hardening the hearts of men. Do not presume upon the forbearance of God, but rather seek to understand his dealings with the children of earth."

Signs of the Times, 5 January, 1891, p 3

"Satan is the author of all doubt, all transgression. He leads men captive, binding

them to do his will; in order to fulfill his purpose, he holds them in the veriest slavery. To break this bondage, the Lord, in man's behalf, has given to the world his only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Through the power of Christ, the captives of Satan may all be set free. Had there been no interference on the part of God, Satan and men would have united in an unbroken warfare against the God of heaven. When Christ came to the world, evil angels conspired with evil men, and the energies of apostasy were united to destroy the Saviour of the world. This enmity was due to the fact that Christ would not license the evil passions of the natural heart, and made a decided warfare against all lust and every form of evil."

James 4:1, 2

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence? even of your lusts that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

Signs of the Times, 4 December, 1893, p 4

"Jesus was the truth, yet he was scorned as a deceiver. He was hunted from place to place as a malefactor. His own nation took the most active part in throwing contempt upon him. His friends, and even his own brethren, denied and forsook him. **Every cruelty that an apostate angel could instigate was set in operation.** He was buffeted with temptations, lacerated with stripes, crowned with thorns, mocked and derided as a false king, and at last crucified on the cross. 5 **Satan has kept up his system of cruelty, and still employs his planned agency of crookedness and deception, and accuses and condemns and tortures in order that he may control the conscience.** While exercising his power in torturing those whom he controlled through demoniacal possession, he yet laid the blame of it upon the Lord God of heaven. He put his own interpretation on his Satanic actions, **and charged God with being the author of all evil. "**

Signs of the Times, 12 March, 1896, p 3

"Satan and his confederacy of evil have tempted the world to believe a lie as they tempted Adam and Eve in Eden. It has been the purpose of the enemy to unsettle the whole fabric of truth, and to set the world adrift in the mazes of skepticism; but truth is immutable. **A wily foe has perverted the senses of men so that they have chosen falsehood rather than truth.** The Christian world has accepted the falsehoods of Satan, and has believed and advocated a change in the fourth commandment, which was given as a commemoration of God's creative power in making the world. **This falsehood has been working out its baleful results in making of no effect the whole law, in placing upon the human mind the impression that God is not invariable, invincible truth. This is the cup of intoxication that the Christian world is drinking, with which the inhabitants of the earth are becoming drunken. Satan is seeking**

to destroy the force of the Ten Commandments, urging his agents to declare that Christ nailed them to his cross. The cross is an immutable argument of the unchangeable character of the law of God. Christ died in order that a way might be provided for saving the sinner, in meeting the demands of the broken law. The law was written with the finger of God upon tables of stone, ..."

1 Testimonies, p 301

"I was shown that Satan cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. **Those who depart from the right** are in serious danger now. They separate themselves from God and from the watchcare of His angels, and Satan, ever upon the watch to destroy souls, begins to present to them his deceptions. Such are in the utmost peril; and if they see and try to resist the powers of darkness and to free themselves from Satan's snare, it is not an easy matter. They have ventured on Satan's ground, and he claims them. He will not hesitate to engage all his energies and call to his aid all his evil host to wrest a single human being from the hand of Christ. Those who have tempted the devil to tempt them will have to make desperate efforts to free themselves from his power. But when they begin to work for themselves, then angels of God whom they have grieved will come to their rescue. Satan and his angels are unwilling to lose their prey. They contend and battle with the holy angels, and the conflict is severe. But if those who have erred continue to plead, and in deep humility confess their wrongs, angels who excel in strength will prevail and wrench them from the power of the evil angels."

1 Testimonies, p 345

"I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and crowding about these souls to stupefy their sensibilities. Holy angels were anxiously watching and waiting to drive back Satan's host. **But it is not the work of good angels to control the minds of men against their will. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they shall not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help.** Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves."

Christ's Object Lessons, p 74

"Notwithstanding Christ's warning, men have sought to uproot the tares. To punish those who were supposed to be evildoers, the church has had recourse to the civil power. Those who differed from the established doctrines have been imprisoned, put to torture and to death, at the instigation of men who claimed to be acting under the sanction of Christ. But it is the spirit of Satan, not the Spirit of Christ, that inspires such acts. This is Satan's own method of bringing the world under his dominion. God has been misrepresented through the church by this way of dealing with those supposed to be heretics. Not judgment and condemnation of others, but humility and distrust of self, is the teaching of Christ's parable."

Early Writings, p 221

"Satan looks with great satisfaction upon those who profess the name of Christ, yet closely adhere to the delusions which he himself has originated. His work is still to devise new delusions, and his power and art in this direction continually increase. He led his representatives, the popes and the priests, to exalt themselves, and to stir up the people to bitterly persecute and destroy those who were not willing to accept his delusions. Oh, the sufferings and agony which the precious followers of Christ were made to endure! Angels have kept a faithful record of it all. Satan and his evil angels exultingly told the angels who ministered to these suffering saints that they were all to be killed, so that there would not be left a true Christian upon the earth. I saw that the church of God was then pure. There was no danger of men with corrupt hearts coming into it; for the true Christian, who dared to declare his faith, was in danger of the rack, the stake, and every torture which Satan and his evil angels could invent or inspire in the mind of man."

Desire of Ages, 1898, p 487

"It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas."

Ellen White states that "There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who did not appreciate their work." The Jewish nation adopt this course to those nations who did not appreciate their religion and who acted contrary to Jewish ideas. What spirit does Ellen White reveal that actuated the killings? Satan's spirit – not the gentle, holy, law-abiding spirit of God.

1 Spiritual Gifts, p 19

"When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, then his malice and hatred began to be manifest. He consulted with his angels, and a plan was laid to still work against God's government. When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden, Satan was laying plans to destroy them. A consultation was held with his evil angels. In no way could this happy couple be deprived of their happiness if they obeyed God. **Satan could not exercise his power upon them unless they should first disobey God, and forfeit his favor. They must devise some plan to lead them to disobedience that they might incur God's frown, and be brought under the more direct influence of Satan and his angels.** It was decided that Satan should assume another form and manifest an interest for man." (continued)

(Ellen White's quote continued)

"He must insinuate against God's truthfulness, create doubt whether God did mean as he said, next, excite their curiosity, and lead them to pry into the unsearchable plans of God, which Satan had been guilty of, and reason as to the cause of his restrictions in regard to the tree of knowledge."

Great Controversy, 1911, p 517

"The power and malice of Satan and his host might justly alarm us were it not that we may find shelter and deliverance in the superior power of our Redeemer. We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the **evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder and torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives. Their only delight is in misery and destruction. Fearful is the condition of those who resist the divine claims and yield to Satan's temptations, until God gives them up to the control of evil spirits.** But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people."

Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White (1851) p 33, 34

"At the general conference of believers in the present truth, held at Sutton, (Vt.) September, 1850, I was shown that the seven last plagues will be poured out after Jesus leaves the Sanctuary. Said the angel, **It is the wrath of God and the Lamb that causes the destruction or death of the wicked.** At the voice of God the saints will be mighty and terrible as an army with banners; but they will not then execute the judgment written. The execution of the judgment will be at the close of the 1000 years. After the saints are changed to immortality, and are caught up together, with Jesus, receive their harps, crowns, &c., and enter the City, Jesus and the saints sit in judgment. The books are opened, the book of life and the book of death; the book of life contains the good deeds of the saints, and the book of death contains the evil deeds of the wicked. These books were compared with the Statute book, the Bible, and according to that they were judged. The saints in unison with Jesus pass their judgment upon the wicked dead. Behold ye! said the angel, the saints sit in judgment, in unison with Jesus, and mete out to each of the wicked, according to the deeds done in the body, and it is set off against their names, what they must receive at the execution of the judgment. This, I saw, was the work of the saints with Jesus, in the Holy City before it descends to the earth, through the 1000 years. Then at the close of the 1000 years, Jesus, and the angels, and all the saints with him, leaves the Holy City, and while he is descending to the earth with them, the wicked dead are raised, and then the very men that "pierced him," being raised, will see him afar off in all his glory, the angels and saints with him, and will wail because of him. They will see the prints of the nails in his hands, and in his feet, and where they thrust the spear into his side. The prints of the nails and the spear will then be his

glory. It is at the close of the 1000 years that Jesus stands upon the Mount of Olives, and the Mount parts asunder, and it becomes a mighty plain, and those who flee at that time are the wicked, that have just been raised. Then the Holy City comes down and settles on the plain. (34) Then Satan imbues the wicked, that have been raised, with his spirit. He flatters them that the army in the City is small, and that his army is large, and that they can overcome the saints and take the City. While Satan was rallying his army, the saints were in the City, beholding the beauty and glory of the Paradise of God. Jesus was at their head, leading them. All at once the lovely Saviour was gone from our company; but soon we heard his lovely voice, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." We gathered about Jesus, and just as he closed the gates of the City, **the curse was pronounced upon the wicked.**⁵⁶ The gates were shut. Then the saints used their wings and mounted to the top of the wall of the City. Jesus was also with them; his crown looked brilliant and glorious. It was a crown within a crown, seven in number. The crowns of the saints were of the most pure gold, decked with stars. Their faces shone with glory, for they were in the express image of Jesus; and as they arose, and moved all together to the top of the City. I was enraptured with the sight. (35) Then the wicked saw what they had lost; and **fire was breathed from God upon them, and consumed them.** This was the Execution of the Judgment. The wicked then received according as the saints in unison with Jesus had meted out to them during the 1000 years. **The same fire from God that consumed the wicked, purified the whole earth.**⁵⁷ The broken ragged mountains melted with fervent heat, the atmosphere, also, and all the stubble was consumed. Then our inheritance opened before us, glorious and beautiful, and we inherited the whole earth made new. We all shouted with a loud voice, Glory, Alleluia."

Christ's curse is His final turning away from the wicked. Matthew 7:23 "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

The wicked are left to themselves, to suffer the consequences of their own sinful choices - without God, without life, without hope.

Review and Herald, 29 August, 1893, p 1

"In the scene representing the work of Christ for us, and the determined accusation of Satan against us, Joshua stands as the high priest, and makes

56 **Christ's curse is His final turning away from the wicked.** Matthew 7:23 "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

57 The same life-giving and purifying creative act that recreates the earth and gives life to animals etc, destroys the life of the wicked. The wicked, through their own choices, are "hard wired" to sin and by their own choice, are not protected from divine powerful creative and purifying forces, as are the righteous.

request in behalf of God's commandment-keeping people. At the time, Satan represents the people of God as great sinners, and presents before God the list of sins he has tempted them to commit through their lifetime, and **urges that because of their transgressions, they be given into his hands to destroy. He urges that they should not be protected by ministering angels against the confederacy of evil.** He is full of anger because he cannot bind the people of God into bundles with the world, to render to him complete allegiance."

Prophets and Kings p 278 (c. 1914)

"We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another – fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed."

1 Kings 19:11, 12 (Elijah's experience on Mt Sinai)

"And he (God) said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; **but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: (12) And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."**

Isaiah 24:19, 20

“The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. (20) The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.”

Examination of both Biblical statements and Ellen White's comments reveals that God's judgments occur when He leaves sinners to the sinful consequences they have chosen. When sinners separate themselves from the God of unselfish love, by persistent refusal to accept His spirit of love, then divine protection He had offered them is reluctantly removed. Without God's restraining holy spirit and power, unrepentant sinners are left unprotected against unbridled human and demonic wrath. Unrepentant sinners are plunged into dreadful situations where humanity devours itself and abuses the natural world also. Without God's sustaining power, even the physical world reels in confusion. Nature dissolves under the assault of sinful humanity. Nuclear war melts the elements of the earth. Such environmental abuse causes catastrophes of huge magnitude. The war, famine, bloodshed, earthquakes, fire and flood – these are the consequences achieved by sinful humanity – and are not the result of a supernatural, monstrous 'act of God.'

The Curse of God

Typical, human thinking concerning “the curse of God,” involves the concept of divine punishment for sins. The Jews held this belief in Jesus’ day as did His disciples. They believed that God would ‘strike a person down’ for their sins. However, Jesus repeatedly overthrew this argument.

John 9:1-3

“And as [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man which was blind from [his] birth. (2) And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? (3) Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Luke 13:1-5

“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.(2) And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? (3) I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (4) Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? (5) I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Ellen White reveals that the Jewish rabbis held this view that God especially, actively placed a curse i.(e.an evil ‘magic spell’) on those who failed to carry out His instructions or who committed some especially ‘bad’ sin.

Desire of Ages, 1898, p 69, 268

“In the days of Christ the town or city that did not provide for the religious instruction of the young was regarded as under the curse of God.... The rabbis had waited anxiously to see what disposition Christ would make of this case (the paralytic). They recollected how the man had appealed to them for help, and they had refused him hope or sympathy. Not satisfied with this, **they had declared that he was suffering the curse of God for his sins.**”

Ellen White dispels the Jewish (and pagan) belief that the curse of God is a kind of divine ‘magic spell’ designed to bring pain and torment, but demonstrates that it is a natural consequence of man’s rebellion. Human beings sin, but it is the results of sin that causes pain and torment, not an ‘act of God.’ Sin negatively effects sinners and the innocent. It hurts animals, the ecology and the earth itself.

It is clear that when humanity refused to abide by God’s unselfish principles, all nature was negatively affected because it was ‘cut off’ from its Creator and Sustainer. God’s original purpose in creating the earth was thwarted by sin. God

predicted the evil results that would come on the earth because of sin, but God did not cause those evil results.

To demonstrate this situation, consider the following analogy. If a light is switched off, darkness occurs; however, person who turned the light off, did not manufacture the darkness. They simply took the light away. Darkness resulted in the absence of light. Similarly, when God is shunned, only negatives remain.

Notice how Ellen White states that the curse of God occurred. When we don't have God's blessing, we suffer from the omission of His presence and power.

Australasian Union Conference Record 28 July, 1899 p 606; Counsels on Diet and Foods, p 357

"The light given me is that it will not be very long before we shall have to give up any animal food. Even milk will have to be discarded. Disease is accumulating rapidly. **The curse of God is upon the earth, because man has cursed it.**"

Union Conference Record (Australasian), July 28, 1899, 644.

"The light given me is that it will not be very long before we shall have to give up using any animal food. Even milk will have to be discarded. Disease is accumulating rapidly. **The curse of God is upon the earth, because man has cursed it. The habits and practices of men have brought the earth into such a condition that some other food than animal food must be substituted for the human family.** We do not need flesh food at all. God can give us something else."

Counsels on Diets and Food p 411, 414

"I present the word of the Lord God of Israel. **Because of transgression, the curse of God has come upon the earth itself, and upon the cattle, and upon all flesh. Human beings are suffering the result of their own course of action in departing from the commandments of God. The beasts also suffer under the curse.**.... I did not varnish the matter one particle. I said that should those in our health home bring the flesh of dead animals upon the table, they would merit the displeasure of God. They would defile the temple of God, and they would need the words spoken to them, **Whoso defileth the temple of God, him will God destroy.** The light that God has given me is that the curse of God is on the earth, the sea, the cattle, on the animals. There will soon be no safety in the possession of flocks or herds. **The earth is decaying under the curse of God.**

Manuscript 76a, 1901; 1BC 1085.5

"All nature is confused; **for God forbade the earth to carry out the purpose He had originally designed for it.** Let there be no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord. The curse of God is upon all creation. Every year it makes itself more decidedly felt."

4 Spiritual Gifts, p 121; 1BC 1085.6

"The first curse was pronounced upon the posterity of Adam and upon the earth, because of disobedience. The second curse came upon the ground after Cain slew his brother Abel. The third most dreadful curse from God, came upon the earth at the Flood."

4 Spiritual Gifts, p 155; 1BC 1085.7

"**The land has felt the curse, more and more heavily.** Before the Flood, the first leaf which fell, and was discovered upon the ground, caused those who feared God great sorrow. They mourned over it as we mourn over the loss of a dead friend. **In the decaying leaf they could see an evidence of the curse,**

and of the decay of nature.”

Letter 22, 13 February, 1900; 1BC 1085.8

(Rom. 8:22).—“The sin of man has brought the sure result,—decay, deformity, and death. Today the whole world is tainted, corrupted, stricken with mortal disease. The earth groaneth under the continual transgression of the inhabitants thereof.”

Letter 59, 1898; 1BC 1085.9

“The Lord’s curse is upon the earth, upon man, upon beast, upon the fish in the sea, and as transgression becomes almost universal the curse will be permitted to become as broad and as deep as the transgression.”

Review and Herald, 8 November, 1898; 1BC 1085.10

"After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth seared and marred by the curse, in the briers, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth."

Manuscript 84, 1897; 1BC 1085.11

"God said to Adam, and to all the descendants of Adam, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread; for from henceforth the earth must be worked under the drawback of transgression. Thorns and briars shall it produce."

Letter 22, 13 February, 1900; 1BC 1086.1

"There is no place upon earth where the track of the serpent is not seen and his venomous sting felt. The whole earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof. The curse is increasing as transgression increases."

Manuscript 65, 1899; [published in FD Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics]; 1BC 1086.2

"Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the Master, 'Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? how then hath it tares?' The Master answered, 'An enemy hath done this.' All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares."

God foresaw and prophesied the tragic, suicidal outcome of adopting selfish principles. He warned humanity of sin's dreadful power and predicted the pain consequences. However, God is not the source of those deadly results! It is God's enemy who has engineered the certain outcome for those whom he succeeds in deceiving.

James 1:15

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Sin has the seed - or virus - of death in it. Sin is lethal. Sinners commit suicide – God does not murder them! God does not have to artificially apply 'curses' to sinners for evil things to occur. Evil consequences follow the commission of sin, as surely as night follows day. It comes 'naturally' without any supernatural interference from God.

God does not want His people to serve Him out of fear; but if God applied evil 'magic spells' or curses to those who did not keep His laws, He would be producing that which He does not want – obedience out of fear. His reluctant

followers would be obedient only through fear of incurring divine wrath and supernatural curses. ***God is honoured only by those who acknowledge the superiority of His government because it is based on unselfish principles. Coerced, forced allegiance is not acceptable to God.***

Ellen White, That I May Know Him, p 57

“Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience.

Patriarch and Prophets (1890), p 49

"God placed man under law, as an indispensable condition of his very existence. He was a subject of the divine government, and there can be no government without law. God might have created man without the power to transgress His law; He might have withheld the hand of Adam from touching the forbidden fruit; but in that case man would have been, not a free moral agent, but a mere automaton. Without freedom of choice, his obedience would not have been voluntary, but forced. There could have been no development of character. Such a course would have been contrary to God's plan in dealing with the inhabitants of other worlds. It would have been unworthy of man as an intelligent being, and would have sustained Satan's charge of God's arbitrary rule. God made man upright; He gave him noble traits of character, with no bias toward evil. He endowed him with high intellectual powers, and presented before him the strongest possible inducements to be true to his allegiance. Obedience, perfect and perpetual, was the condition of eternal happiness. On this condition he was to have access to the tree of life...So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God."

Patriarchs and Prophets (1890), p 331, 332

"To stir up rebellion in the fallen race, he [Satan] now represented God as unjust in having permitted man to transgress His law. "Why," said the artful tempter, "when God knew what would be the result, did He permit man to be placed on trial, to sin, and bring in misery and death?.... There are thousands today echoing the same rebellious complaint against God. They do not see that to deprive man of the freedom of choice would be to rob him of his prerogative as an intelligent being and make him a mere automaton. It is not God's purpose to coerce the will. Man was created a free moral agent. Like the inhabitants of all other worlds, he must be subjected to the test of obedience; but he is never brought into such a position that yielding to evil becomes a matter of necessity. No temptation or trial is permitted to come to him which he is unable to resist. God made such ample provision that man need never have been defeated in the conflict with Satan."

God never forces His presence on the free-will beings He has created. To do so, would be to act out of accordance with the principles of liberty enshrined in His own law. However, when God is rejected, He - the Source of All Life - ceases His futile efforts to woo humanity and makes the declaration, "leave Ephriam alone." Rejection of God - in the form of His government's principles - causes humanity and the entire earth to suffer the pangs of death.

The law of love demands liberty of choice and thus God is legally required eventually to cease following and entreating the non-repentant sinner. Divine "non-intervention" never occurs while there is ANY chance that the sinner might

reconsider and return to God.

Acceptance of the sinner's self-destructive choice is painful for God. 'Letting go of' or 'giving up' the sinner is His strange act.

Holding Himself back from intervening to assist sinners is not easy for God, for "love never fails, never gives up" (1 Cor 13). This act of the divine 'holding back,' has become negatively known as the 'curse of God' or the 'wrath of God.'

Instead of focusing on the blessings that come from God and the emptiness that results in His absence, conventional, traditional views tend to imply that God actively inflicts pain and sorrow on those who reject His principles of government.

Divine Wrath in The American Civil War (1861–1865)

The example of the American Civil War also demonstrates the principle of God's wrath and divine punishment as Ellen White details in the testimonies for the church.

The Rebellion (Ellen G White)

1 Testimonies for the Church, p 355, paragraph 1

"The dreadful state of our nation calls for deep humility on the part of God's people. The one all-important inquiry which should now engross the mind of everyone is: Am I prepared for the day of God? Can I stand the trying test before me? I saw that God is purifying and proving His people. He will refine them as gold, until the dross is consumed and His image is reflected in them. All have not that spirit of self-denial and that willingness to endure hardness and to suffer for the truth's sake, which God requires. Their wills are not subdued; they have not consecrated themselves wholly to God, seeking no greater pleasure than to do His will. Ministers and people lack spirituality and true Godliness. Everything is to be shaken that can be shaken. God's people will be brought into most trying positions, and all must be settled, rooted, and grounded in the truth, or their steps will surely slide. If God comforts and nourishes the soul with His inspiring presence, they can endure, though the way may be dark and thorny. For the darkness will soon pass away, and the true light shine forever. I was pointed to Isaiah 58; 59:1-15; Jeremiah 14:10-12, as a description of the present state of our nation. The people of this nation have forsaken and forgotten God. They have chosen other Gods and followed their own corrupt ways until God has turned from them. The inhabitants of the earth have trampled upon the law of God and broken His everlasting covenant.

Page 356

I was shown the excitement created among our people by the article in the Review headed, "The Nation." Some understood it one way, and some another. The plain statements were distorted, and made to mean what the writer did not intend. He gave the best light that he then had. It was necessary that something be said. The attention of many was turned to Sabbathkeepers because they manifested no greater interest in the war and did not volunteer. In some places they were looked upon as sympathizing with the Rebellion. The time had come for our true sentiments in relation to slavery and the Rebellion to be made known. There was need of moving with wisdom to turn away the suspicions excited against Sabbathkeepers. We should act with great caution. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." We can obey this admonition, and not sacrifice one principle of our faith. Satan and his host are at war with commandment keepers, and will work to bring them into trying positions. They should not by lack of discretion bring themselves there. I was shown that some moved very indiscreetly in regard to the article mentioned. It did not in all respects accord with their views, and instead of calmly weighing the matter, and viewing it in all its bearings, they became agitated, excited, and some seized the

pen and jumped hastily at conclusions which would not bear investigation. Some were inconsistent and unreasonable. They did that which Satan is ever hurrying them to do, namely, acted out their own rebellious feelings. In Iowa they carried things to quite a length, and ran into fanaticism. They mistook zeal and fanaticism for conscientiousness. Instead of being guided by reason and sound judgment, they allowed their feelings to take the lead. They were ready to become martyrs for their faith. Did all this feeling lead them to God? to greater humility before Him? Did it lead them to trust in His power to deliver them from the trying position into which they might be brought? **Oh, no! Instead of making their petitions to the God of heaven and relying solely upon His power, they petitioned the legislature and were refused.** They showed their weakness and exposed their lack of faith. (continued over page)

(EGW quote continued)

All this only served to bring that peculiar class, Sabbathkeepers, into special notice, and expose them to be crowded into difficult places by those who have no sympathy for them.

Page 357

Some have been holding themselves ready to find fault and complain at any suggestion made. But few have had wisdom in this most trying time to think without prejudice and candidly tell what shall be done. I saw that those who have been forward to talk so decidedly about refusing to obey a draft do not understand what they are talking about. Should they really be drafted and, refusing to obey, be threatened with imprisonment, torture, or death, they would shrink and then find that they had not prepared themselves for such an emergency. They would not endure the trial of their faith. What they thought to be faith was only fanatical presumption. Those who would be best prepared to sacrifice even life, if required, rather than place themselves in a position where they could not obey God, would have the least to say. They would make no boast. They would feel deeply and meditate much, and their earnest prayers would go up to heaven for wisdom to act and grace to endure. Those who feel that in the fear of God they cannot conscientiously engage in this war will be very quiet, and when interrogated will simply state what they are obliged to say in order to answer the inquirer, and then let it be understood that they have no sympathy with the Rebellion.

Page 358

There are a few in the ranks of Sabbathkeepers who sympathize with the slaveholder. When they embraced the truth, they did not leave behind them all the errors they should have left. They need a more thorough draft from the cleansing fountain of truth. Some have brought along with them their old political prejudices, which are not in harmony with the principles of the truth. They maintain that the slave is the property of the master, and should not be taken from him. They rank these slaves as cattle and say that it is wronging the owner just as much to deprive him of his slaves as to take away his cattle. I was shown that it mattered not how much the master had paid for human flesh and the souls of men; God gives him no title to human souls, and he has no right to hold them as his property. Christ died for the whole human family, whether white or black. God has made man a free moral agent, whether white or black. The institution of slavery does away with this and permits man to exercise over his fellow man a power which God has never granted him, and which belongs alone to God. The slave master has dared assume the responsibility of God over his slave, and accordingly he will be accountable for the sins, ignorance, and vice of the slave. He will be called to an account for the power which he exercises over the slave. The colored race are God's property. Their Maker alone is their master, and those who have dared chain down the body and the soul of the slave, to keep him in degradation like the brutes, will have their retribution. The wrath of God has slumbered, but it will awake and be poured out

without mixture of mercy. Some have been so indiscreet as to talk out their pro-slavery principles--principles which are not heaven-born, but proceed from the dominion of Satan. These restless spirits talk and act in a manner to bring a reproach upon the cause of God. I will here give a copy of a letter written to Brother A, of Oswego County, New York:

(EGW quote continued) Page 359

'I was shown some things in regard to you. I saw that you were deceived in regard to yourself. You have given occasion for the enemies of our faith to blaspheme, and to reproach Sabbathkeepers. By your indiscreet course, you have closed the ears of some who would have listened to the truth. I saw that we should be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. You have manifested neither the wisdom of the serpent nor the harmlessness of the dove. Satan was the first great leader in rebellion. **God is punishing the North, that they have so long suffered the accursed sin of slavery to exist; for in the sight of heaven it is a sin of the darkest dye. God is not with the South, and He will punish them dreadfully in the end.** Satan is the instigator of all rebellion. I saw that you, Brother A, **have permitted your political principles to destroy your judgment and your love for the truth.** They are eating out true Godliness from your heart. You have never looked upon slavery in the right light, and your views of this matter have thrown you on the side of the Rebellion, which was stirred up by Satan and his host. Your views of slavery cannot harmonize with the sacred, important truths for this time. **You must yield your views or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other.** Satan has been stirring you up. He would not let you rest until you should express your sentiments upon the side of the powers of darkness, thus strengthening the hands of **the wicked, whom God has cursed.** You have cast your influence on the wrong side, with those whose course of life is to sow thorns and plant misery for others. I saw you casting your influence with a degraded company, **a Godforsaken company; and angels of God fled** from you in disgust. I saw that you were utterly deceived. Had you followed the light which God has given you, had you heeded the instructions of your brethren, had you listened to their advice, you would have saved yourself and saved the precious cause of truth from reproach. But notwithstanding all the light given, you have given publicity to your sentiments. Unless you undo what you have done, it will be the duty of God's people to publicly withdraw their sympathy and fellowship from you, in order to save the impression which must go out in regard to us as a people. **We must let it be known that we have no such ones in our fellowship, that we will not walk with them in church capacity.**

Page 360

You have lost the sanctifying influence of the truth. You have lost your connection with the heavenly host. You have allied yourself with the first great rebel, and **God's wrath is upon you;**⁵⁸ for His sacred cause is reproached, and the truth is made disgusting to unbelievers. You have grieved God's people, and despised the counsel of His ambassadors upon earth, who labor together with Him, and are in Christ's stead beseeching souls to be reconciled to God. I was shown that as a people we cannot be too careful what influence we exert; we should watch every word. **When we by word or act place ourselves upon the enemy's battle ground, we drive holy angels from us, and encourage and attract evil angels in crowds around us.** This you have done, Brother A, and by your

⁵⁸ Note that though this man was suffering the 'wrath of God,' God had not struck the rebellious man dead.

unguarded, willful course have caused unbelievers to look upon Sabbathkeepers all around you with suspicion. These words were presented before me as referring to the servants of God: 'He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me.' May God help you, my deceived brother, to see yourself as you are, and to have your sympathies with the body.'

Our kingdom is not of this world. We are waiting for our Lord from heaven to come to earth to put down all authority and power, and set up His everlasting kingdom. Earthly powers are shaken. We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth." (continued over page)

(EGW quote continued)

"Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together. Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly.

Page 361

*I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." He who has God's law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God's people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme. I was shown that God's people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. They can appreciate no other. Worldly policy and public opinion comprise the principle of action that governs them and leads them to practice the form of rightdoing. But God's people cannot be governed by these motives. The words and commands of God, written in the soul, are spirit and life, and there is power in them to bring into subjection and enforce obedience. **The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good laws.** Those who love God's commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?*

Page 362

*In consequence of long-continued and progressive rebellion against the higher constitution and laws, a gloomy pall of darkness and death is spread over the earth. The earth groans under the burden of accumulated guilt, and everywhere dying mortals are compelled to experience the wretchedness included in the wages of unrighteousness. I was shown that men have carried out the purposes of Satan by craft and deceit, and a dreadful blow has recently been given. It can be truly said: "Justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter," "and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." In some of the free states the standard of morality is sinking lower and lower. Men with depraved appetites and corrupt lives have now an opportunity to triumph. **They have chosen for their rulers those whose principles are debasing, who would not check evil, or repress the depraved appetites of men, but let them have full sway. If those who choose to become like the beasts, by drinking liquid poison, were the only sufferers; if they alone would reap the fruit of their own doings, then the evil would not be so great.** But many, very*

many, must pass through incredible suffering on account of others' sins. Wives and children, although innocent, must drain the bitter cup to its dregs.

Page 362

Without the grace of God, men love to do evil. They walk in darkness, and do not possess the power of self-control. They give loose rein to their passions and appetites until all the finer feelings are lost and only the animal passions are manifested. Such men need to feel a higher, controlling power, which will constrain them to obey. **If rulers do not exercise a power to terrify the evildoer, he will sink to the level of the brute.** The earth is growing more and more corrupt.

(EGW quote continued)

Page 363

Many were blinded and grossly deceived in the last election, and their influence was used to place in authority men who would wink at evil, men who would witness a flood of woe and misery unmoved, whose principles are corrupt, who are Southern sympathizers, and would preserve slavery as it is. **In positions of trust in the Northern army there are men who are rebels at heart, who value the life of a soldier no more than they would the life of a dog. They can see them torn, and mangled, and dying, by thousands, unmoved.**

The officers of the Southern army are constantly receiving information in regard to the plans of the Northern army. Correct information has been given to Northern officers in regard to the movements and approach of rebels, which has been disregarded and despised because the informer was black. And by neglecting to prepare for an attack, the Union forces have been surprised and nearly cut to pieces, or what is as bad, many of the poor soldiers have been taken prisoners to suffer worse than death. If there were union in the Northern army, this Rebellion would soon cease. Rebels know they have sympathizers all through the Northern army. The pages of history are growing darker and still darker. **Loyal men, who have had no sympathy with the Rebellion, or with slavery which has caused it, have been imposed upon. Their influence has helped place in authority men to whose principles they were opposed.** Everything is preparing for the great day of God. Time will last a little longer until the inhabitants of the earth have filled up the cup of their iniquity, and then the wrath of God, which has so long slumbered, will awake, and this land of light will drink the cup of His unmingled wrath. The desolating power of God is upon the earth to rend and destroy. The inhabitants of the earth are appointed to the sword, to famine, and to pestilence. **Very many men in authority, generals and officers, act in conformity with instructions communicated by spirits.** The spirits of devils, professing to be dead warriors and skilful generals, communicate with men in authority and control many of their movements. One general has directions from these spirits to make special moves and is flattered with the hope of success. Another receives directions which differ

widely from those given to the first. Sometimes those who follow the directions given obtain a victory, but more frequently they meet with defeat.

Page 364

The spirits sometimes give these leading men an account of events to transpire in battles in which they are about to engage, and of individuals who will fall in the battle. Sometimes it is found to be as these spirits foretold, and this strengthens the faith of the believers in spiritual manifestations. And again it is found that correct information has not been given, but the deceiving spirits make some explanation, which is received. The deception upon minds is so great that many fail to perceive the lying spirits which are leading them on to certain destruction.

The great leading rebel general, Satan, is acquainted with the transactions of this war, and he directs his angels to assume the form of dead generals, to imitate their manners, and exhibit their peculiar traits of character. And leaders in the army really believe that the spirits of their friends and of dead warriors, the fathers of the Revolutionary War, are guiding them. If they were not under the strongest fascinating deception, they would begin to think that the warriors in heaven (?) did not manifest good and successful generalship, or had forgotten their famed earthly skill. **Instead of the leading men in this war trusting in the God of Israel, and directing their armies to trust in the only One who can deliver them from their enemies, the majority inquire of the prince of devils and trust in him. Deuteronomy 32:16-22** (continued over page).

(EGW quote continued)

"Said the angel: "How can God prosper such a people? If they would look to and trust in Him; if they would only come where He could help them, according to His own glory, He would readily do it."

Page 365

I saw that God would not give the Northern army wholly into the hands of a rebellious people, to be utterly destroyed by their enemies. I was referred to Deuteronomy 32:26-30: "I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this. For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?"

There are generals in the army who are wholly devoted and seek to do all they can to stop this dreadful Rebellion and unnatural war. But most of the officers and leading men have a selfish purpose of their own to serve. Each is looking for gain from his own quarter, and many of the true, whole-hearted soldiers are becoming fainthearted and discouraged. They nobly perform their part when in an engagement with the enemy, but the **treatment which they receive from their own officers is brutal.** Among the soldiers there are men that have fine feelings and independence of spirit. They have never been accustomed to mingling with so degraded a class of men as war brings together, and being tyrannized over and abused, and treated like brutes. It is very hard for them to endure all this. **Many officers have brutal passions, and as they are placed in authority they have good opportunity to act out their brutal natures. They tyrannize over those under them as Southern masters tyrannize over their slaves.**

Page 366

These things will make it difficult to procure men for the army. In some cases when generals have been in most terrible conflict, where their men have fallen like rain, a reinforcement at the right time would have given them a victory. **But other generals cared nothing how many lives were lost, and rather than come to the help of those in an engagement, as though their interests were one, they withheld the necessary aid, fearing that their brother general would receive the honor of successfully repulsing the enemy.** Through envy and jealousy they have even exulted to see the enemy gain the victory and repulse Union men. Southern men possess a hellish spirit in this Rebellion, but Northern men are not clear. Many of them possess a selfish jealousy, fearing that others will obtain honors and be exalted above themselves. Oh, how many thousands of lives have been sacrificed on this account! Those of other nations who have conducted war have had but one interest. With a disinterested zeal

they have moved on to conquer or to die. Leading men in the Revolution acted unitedly, with zeal, and by that means they gained their independence. **But men now act like demons instead of human beings.** Satan has, through his angels, communicated with officers who were cool, calculating men when left to themselves, and they have given up their own judgment and have been led by these lying spirits into very difficult places, where they have been repulsed with dreadful slaughter. **It suits his Satanic majesty well to see slaughter and carnage upon the earth. He loves to see the poor soldiers mowed down like grass.** I saw that the rebels have often been in positions where they could have been subdued without much effort; **but the communications from spirits have led the Northern generals and blinded their eyes** until the rebels were beyond their reach (continued over page).

(EGW quote continued)

And some generals would rather allow the rebels to escape than to subdue them. They think more of the darling institution of slavery than of the prosperity of the nation. **These are among the reasons why the war is so protracted.**

Page 367

Information sent by our generals to Washington concerning the movement of our armies might nearly as well be telegraphed directly to the rebel forces. There are rebel sympathizers right at the heart of the Union authorities. This war is unlike any other. The great lack of union of feeling and action makes it look dark and discouraging. **Many of the soldiers have thrown off restraint and have sunk to an alarming state of degradation. How can God go forth with such a corrupt army? How can He, according to His honor, defeat their enemies and lead them on to victory?** There is discord, and strife for honor, while the poor soldiers are dying by thousands on the battlefield or from their wounds and from exposure and hardships. This war is a most singular and at the same time a most horrible and heartsickening conflict. Other nations are looking on with disgust at the transactions of the armies of both North and South.

They see such a determined effort to protract the war at an enormous sacrifice of life and money, while at the same time nothing is really gained, that it looks to them like a strife to see which can kill the most men. They are indignant.

I saw that the Rebellion had been steadily increasing and that it had never been more determined than at the present moment. Many professed Union men, holding important positions, are disloyal at heart. Their only object in taking up arms was to preserve the Union as it was, and slavery with it. They would heartily chain down the slave to his life of galling bondage, had they the privilege. Such have a strong degree of sympathy with the South. **Blood has been poured out like water, and for nought. In every town and village there is mourning. Wives are mourning for their husbands, mothers for their sons, and sisters for their brothers. But notwithstanding all this suffering, they do not turn to God.**

Page 368

I saw that both the South and the North were being punished. In regard to the South, I was referred to Deuteronomy 32:35-37: "To Me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. **For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. And He shall say, Where are their Gods, their rock in whom they trusted?**" (end quote EGW)

Comments:

Regarding the American Civil War, Ellen White states that God was punishing both armies - North and South. When God punished them, He simply withdrew His protection which permitted evil warriors to kill each other. **God did not punish evil men in 1861, by conscripting "holy" men (ie.g. early SDA church members) to exterminate the evil doers.** *In fact, the SDA pioneers officially refused to bear arms in accordance with the divine command, "Thou shalt not kill." [Read the denomination's first official non-combatancy statement authorised by the General Conference and published on 2 August 1864] reproduced in Francis McLellan Wilcox's book entitled, Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War*

In fact, the pioneers gave Biblical evidence in defence of their position which opposed killing and murder during warfare on the grounds that it was breaking the commandments of God.

<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ITOW/ITOW1936/index.djvu>

Some questions are begging for answers:

- 1. If, in ancient times, God used holy men to punish (kill) both rebellious Israelites and pagans, why didn't He employ the same punitive strategy against nations that required divine punishment in 1861?***
- 2. If a divine punitive strategy (killing) was at one time considered appropriate, acceptable and sinless, how could the same action be considered inappropriate, unacceptable and sinful in 1861?***

In the foregoing testimony, Ellen White clearly demonstrates that::

- evil works begin as thoughts in the minds of the unconverted people who are under the inspiration of evil angels;
- God's wrath is expressed in the action of removing His holy influence from rebellious people, leaving them unprotected from Satan's angels;
- The expression of divine wrath only occurs after God has been continually rejected by His people.

As seen repeatedly in this study, God's strange act is, that in order to honour the free choice He has given humanity, He "turns His face away from them." His spirit retreats and His holy angels are commanded to leave the rebels to experience the consequences of their sinful choices. ***Because God does not intervene by sending protective angels, He is seen to be responsible for the outcome. His part in this destruction is only that He allows or permits the destruction to take place without***

divine interference. *This action was again seen to occur in the American Civil War, as just outlined by Ellen White in 1T, p 355-386.*

The SDA Pioneer Position on the 6th Commandment

In harmony with the theme of this book, the SDA pioneers' non-combatancy position rests on Christ's example and His non-violent teachings. Unlike other "Christian" religions, the pioneers did not appeal to records of Old Testament to justify breaking God's commandments during warfare in modern times.

Why Seventh-day Adventists Cannot Engage in War (George W. Amadon *Review and Herald, 7 March, 1865*, published during the Civil War; representative of the SDA denominational position; reprinted in *Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War* by Francis McLellan Wilcox (1936)

1. They could not keep the Lord's holy Sabbath. "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work." Ex :20:10. Fighting, as military men tell us, is the hardest kind of work; and the seventh day of all days would be the least regarded in the camp and field.

2. The sixth command of God's moral law reads, "Thou shalt not kill." To kill is to take life. The soldier by profession is a practical violator of this precept. But if we would enter into life, we must "keep the commandments." Matt. 19:17.

3. "God hath. called us to peace ;"and "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." 1 Cor. 7:15; 2 Cor. 10:4. The gospel⁵⁹ * permits us to use no weapons but "the sword of the Spirit."

4. Our kingdom is not of this world. Said Christ to Pilate, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight." John 18:36. This is most indisputable evidence that Christians have nothing to do with carnal instruments of war.

5. We are commanded to love even our enemies. "But I say unto you," says the Saviour, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Matt. 5:4-4- Do we fulfill this command when we blow out their brains with revolvers, or sever their bodies with sabers? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8:9.

6. Our work is the same as our Master's, who once said, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56. If God's Spirit sends us to save men, does not some other spirit send us to destroy them? Let us know what manner of spirit we are of.

59 Note: #3*The gospel permits us to use no weapons but "the sword of the Spirit." The same gospel applied to the ancient Israelites as applied to the early SDA pioneers. The Desire of Ages p 290 "When banished from Paradise, our first parents still worshipped in the fields and groves, and there Christ met them with the gospel of His grace."

7- The New Testament command is, "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matt. 5:39. That is, we had better turn the other cheek than to smite them back again. Could this scripture be obeyed on the battlefield?

8. Christ said to Peter, as he struck the high priest's servant, "Put up again thy sword." Matt. 26:52. **If the Saviour commanded the apostle to "put up" the sword, certainly His followers have no right to take it.** Then let those who are of the world fight, but as for us, let us pray. (end quote by Gorge W. Amadon)

Changes to the 6th Commandment by the SDA Church

The First World War caused division in the Seventh-day Adventist church. SDA church members in Europe were facing great problems over the question of whether the church ***internationally*** condoned its members serving in combatant roles in the armed forces – the position which had been taken by the German leadership. In an effort to assist in resolving these issues, some theological questions were put to the General Conference.

Of particular concern was the church's international position regards the law of God, especially the 6th and 4th commandments: "Thou shalt not kill" and the Sabbath rest.

Elder Daniells' replied:

"As soon as the war broke out in Europe, we in America studied this matter carefully. And we took this position:.. Let everyone act according to his conscience in this question. Then we had some brethren who had the spirit of love for their country, and went to the battle line, and fought. They came to England and France, and went to the trenches, and I don't know what they did while they were there, but they served and came back when the armistice was signed. ... We regret the war, and we are against it. But we must permit every citizen to act toward the authorities according to the dictates of his own conscience. Not one of these persons was disfellowshipped from our church. Not one of them was treated as if he was not a Christian. As long as we do not have precise limits towards the authorities, it must be left with each one to act according to his own conscience. The brethren in America took the same moderate and tolerant position as our brethren in Europe....After all this we are convinced that our brethren here, too, take the noncombatant position. We have talked with brethren who were in the war, and I can tell you that I have not found in any brother in Europe a greater military spirit than in America. And I can say, too, that in their spirit and in their procedure, our brethren in Europe have been as faithful as our brethren in America. I will say it all over again in other words: We are sorry for some of the declarations that have been issued. But when we consider the spirit and the purpose that led them to do that, we find that these brethren stand as faithful and upright in the work as we ourselves... **And I must say that everyone has had the right to set up his own conviction and form his own conscience with reference to the war question.** ... We believe that you brethren [referring to the representatives of the disfellowshipped minority] are completely wrong in the position you represent. **We do believe in the fourth commandment as we have ever believed in it. But we cannot agree with your interpretation in connection with it. What would you have said about Moses a few days after he had received the law on mount Sinai, if he had told you to go and kill the king of Bashan, and all the men, women, and children? Would you have accused him of murder? But God commanded him to violate the sixth commandment. You see that there are many things to be found in the interpretation of the commandments, and we must have freedom to read and understand them,**

without being bound to the interpretation of any small corporation." *Minutes of the Conference with the Movement of Opposition* (held in Friedensau, July 21—23, 1920), published by the SDA Church. (Read on line at: http://www.sdarmgc.org/origin/his_07_reconciliation.html)

Note Daniells' appeal to the Old Testament to justify breaking the 6th commandment – just as the "Mother" church religion does! One wonders why the General Conference President, Elder Daniells did not refer to the non-violent position that **Jesus, the Son of God and our Perfect Example** advocated. One also wonders what might have been Daniells' response had Ellen White still been alive.

Is Daniells' theology correct? Are the 10 commandments so loosely defined that it is left to fallen, sinful humanity to decide which precepts should be kept or how they should be interpreted? Surely Jesus' own definitions should be of major consideration in any decision regarding the keeping of the law of God!

Compare Daniells' position with other SDA literature published during the same era below.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS BEAR ARMS? by RC Porter, president, South African Union Conference during the first World War.

“The true Christian can never fight his fellows for personal ends. All wrongs that he is caused to suffer, he endures. He does not kill or murder his fellows. His loyalty to God will not allow him to revenge himself in any way, regardless of injustice or severe personal injury. Christians are charged: “Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” Rom. 12:19. In the early church it was thought that followers of Christ should be separate from the world, and they did not voluntarily join the army. They endured all kinds of persecution, and even suffered death for their faith, but they would not take life. When Constantine outwardly accepted Christianity, he did so as a converted pagan general. Later he persuaded Christians to fight in his army. From then on professed Christians were less and less conscientious; and the more worldly the church grew, the more willing to join the government in war did she become The Christian is a citizen of an unseen country, whose King reigns in the heart. His citizenship is in heaven, and he looks for a “city . . . whose builder and maker is God.” He recognizes earthly governments as ordained of God to punish evildoers; but he is unable to obey laws where obedience compels him to break the moral law of his Creator. Undoubtedly the conflict between the state on the one hand and the true people of God on the other, must ever bring forth conflicting views of the duty and the rights of the Christian. **The state generally believes in war, and often in conquest; the Christian believes in obedience to the state for the good of humanity, and is cheerfully obedient to all that the state requires when he is permitted to worship God as he understands the Holy Scriptures to teach. But he does not believe that he can be a Christian and take human life. To him this is a matter of conscience. In this realm the state has no divine right to interfere.”**

MINISTRY (June/July, 1935, editorial) .I. H. Evans, vice-president, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church

“If the use of the sword by true Christians can be justified on any grounds, it would seem that Peter was justified in defending the Son of God who was soon to be crucified by a mob. Christ is the Christian's perfect pattern. As He lived, we are to live. It would be unthinkable that Christ and His chosen twelve should have joined the Roman army and followed the Roman eagle. Nor can we think

that the people of God can live the Christian life when engaged in taking human life."

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN TIME OF WAR by Francis McLellan Wilcox, (1936)

The Divine Law and Human Requirements

*"WHAT relation does the Christian sustain to war? In harmony with his high and holy profession as a follower of the Prince of Peace, **can he engage in the destruction of his fellow men?** This is a question which has confronted the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church through- out its entire history. From their study of the life and example of Christ and the teachings of the gospel, they have been forced to take the position of noncombatants."*
<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ITOW/ITOW1936/index.djvu>

Satan's Work Confused with God's Work

Review and Herald, 26 January, 1897, p 8

"When the Lord Jesus visited our earth, he brought with him renovating energy. He put enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent. But there is no enmity between fallen angels and fallen men. **Both, through apostasy, are evil; and wherever there is evil, with no disposition to repent, it will always league with Satan against God.** Fallen men and fallen angels unite in a desperate struggle to destroy God's great standard of righteousness. There was a bond of sympathy among the angels that Satan succeeded in drawing into rebellion, and he made them his allies in the effort to dethrone God and to abolish his law. **Satan's work in our world to day is to destroy the moral image of God in man, by making void the divine law; and our enemies are inspired by his spirit. By casting aside God's great standard of character, he can deprave human nature, and win men and women to his standard; for, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." With what triumph, then, he watches the professedly Christian world, as they earnestly do the very work he is doing."**

*What did the ancient Jews do in breaking God's commandments? They killed, committed adultery, stole. They performed Satan's work – His evil character prompted vile atrocities which were all committed "**in the name of the Lord.**"*

Signs of the Times, 23 December, 1886, p 12

"Our Saviour himself was a victim of religious intolerance. 'He came unto his own; but his own received him not.' Had he praised and exalted men, had he called corruption purity, and given license to human creeds by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, they would have received him gladly." "But his zeal for God, the righteous fervor with which he denounced every abomination that was done in the land, and, **above all, the sinless purity of his own character, aroused the bitter hatred of the 'whited sepulchres' who deceived the people by the appearance of great sanctity.** Satan and evil

angels united with evil men to destroy from the earth the champion of truth.

There was a bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman, when Christ was scorned as a deceiver, and was hunted down and put to death as a criminal; but could Satan have induced him to commit one sin, there would have been a bruising of the head, and the world would have been abandoned to the power of the prince of darkness. 13 The religion of Christ is for men to accept, with all its inconveniences. They may invent an easier way; but it will not lead to the city of God, the saints' secure abode. **Only those who "do his commandments," will have "right to the tree of life," and "enter in through the gates into the city."**

Ellen White explains that Satan tries to convince humanity that all evil comes from God. He tries to convince humanity that God's character is really evil or at least has portions of evil in it.

Jesus suffered from character assassination also. ***He was accused of using demonic power to do good things when in fact, He used the power of God to do good. This amounted to blasphemy.***

Mark 3:22-30

"And the **scribes which came down from Jerusalem** said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. (23) And he called them unto him, and **said unto them in parables**, How can Satan cast out Satan? (24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (26) And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. (27) No man can enter into a strong man's house (**Satan's house**), and spoil his goods (*take back dominion of the world*), except he will first bind the strong man (*Satan*); and then he will spoil his house. (28) Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: (29) But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: (30) Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

Review and Herald, 18 January, 1898 p 7

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, contemptuously, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." These words were inspired by Satan. The enmity and prejudice of the rulers were stirred into a fury of madness; and priests and rulers, Pharisees and Sadducees, united in pouring forth their hatred. From the treasure-house of their hard, stubborn hearts came the words, "This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." They could not ignore Christ's wonderful works, or attribute them to natural causes, so they said, They are the works of the devil. In unbelief they spoke of the Son of God as a human being. The works of healing done before them, works which no man had ever done or could do, were a manifestation of the power of God. But they charged Christ with being in league with hell. Their

talent of speech was used to abuse the world's Redeemer, and the recording angel wrote their words in the books of heaven. They attributed to satanic agencies the holy power of God, manifested in the works of Christ. Thus the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost. Stubborn, sullen, iron-hearted, they determined to close their eyes to all evidence, and thus they committed and unpardonable sin."

The Pharisees knew that the Old Testament prophecies identified Jesus as the Messiah. However, because they did not WANT to accept Him as the Messiah, the Pharisees accused Jesus of doing good works, by ***using Satan's power.*** The Pharisees knew their accusation against Christ, was false. While Jesus WAS doing good, He was not using Satan's power. By rejecting what their own consciences (God's spirit pleading with them) testified was truth, the spiritual leaders of the "chosen people" committed blasphemy and condemned themselves.

As a consequence, Christ labelled this false accusation as ***blasphemy against His spirit*** because they ***knew*** Christ was not using evil powers for He WAS their Messiah.

Consider:

Contemporary spiritual leaders know that "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). They know that Christ came to reveal the Father's character (John 14:8-11). They know that there was no violence or law-breaking in Christ (Isa 53:9; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22), even toward people whose probation was closed (eg Caiaphas, Judas, Jerusalem). There is no debate between religious leaders over whether Christ taught His followers to love and pray for their enemies. If contemporary spiritual leaders were to accuse God of committing evil acts, (but claimed He was righteous to do so) - wouldn't it also be classified as blasphemy against the spirit of God? Would not such an accusation – that God commits and commands evil acts - be blasphemous against the spirit, the mind, the character of God? Would not the accusation that God breaks his own commandments – when necessary – be blasphemous against the spirit of God also? Would not the accusation that God's law is imperfect and that (in certain situations) it needs to be put aside, also be considered blasphemous against the spirit of our holy God?

Isn't there a similar situation in existence today?

Consider this question:

Who supplies the supernatural power for the "faith-healing" miracles which occur in many Pentecostal churches?

Answer:

Many Christians would reply that Satan is the active agent in these instances.

Question:

Is Satan's power actually doing a "good" work in these "faith-healing" experiences?

Answer:

No, for Jesus tells us that a bad tree cannot produce bad fruit and a good tree cannot produce good fruit (Matt 7:16-19).

In a similar manner, Satan apparently intends to deceive Christians, that in the Old Testament, God did "bad" things (commandment-breaking e.g. killed people), for "good" reasons.

In this scenario, ***the end justifies the means***. In other words, ***whatever action is needed "to get the job done," is considered to be "right."*** e.g. An example of a job that needs to be done is that the wicked might need to be destroyed from time to time. But a complication arises because God has a universal, unchangeable law which states that "Killing is not loving, so do not kill." So, Satan suggests, that for God to achieve the goal of destroying the wicked, He must put aside His law - momentarily. This strange doctrine requires that God is somehow "licensed" to break His unbreakable law; and furthermore God also licenses other sinful human beings to momentarily break His law in order to assist Him to achieve the goal of "getting rid of sinners." And furthermore, the doctrine requires that God is justified in breaking His law ***because of the importance of the job's objective***.

Satan suggests to Christians, that because it is "**God**" who breaks the law, it is somehow "holy" for Him to do so! This satanic concept entices Christians to believe is **that God actually commits evil** and that when "God" does evil things, those evil things (sins) must actually be "good" things (righteous acts)! This deception is accepted by many Christians, even though they understand that "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4) and that the law is a transcript of God's character which doesn't change (Mal 3:6; James 1:17; Heb 13:8).

Beware of this deception, because this doctrine introduces again the pagan blended deity; the good and evil god! The black and white god! The gentle/violent god! The loving/wrathful god! The law-abiding/law-breaking god! The changeable god; the variable god. Such characteristics were never seen in Jesus Christ whose mission it was to "show us the Father (John 14:11), whose character changes not (Mal 3:6; James 1:17) and in which there is not even the faintest shadow of turning (Heb 13:8).

Doing Bad Things with “Good” Motives

Proverbs 14:12

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

Isaiah 55:8, 9

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

When confronted with the situation of the genocide of the Canaanites by the Jews, mainstream Christianity claims that it was necessary. It was "good" because their "cup of iniquity was full" - "their probation was up." Since when do we believe that a baby's probation is over? Since when do young virgins' probation extend past their baby brothers' probation?

The Mosaic law (Deut 21:10-14) claimed that the virgins were permitted to live on and be “married” to the murderers of their parents and family; but the males, including the infant males, were slaughtered.

In actual fact, the 'marriage' of the pagan virgin was a only a 'legalised, sanctified' rape. Such a union did not constitute a permanent arrangement for provision was made that the “humbled” (literal Hebrew is 'pierced') virgin, could later be abandoned without any support if she was no longer of use to the Jewish man. No divorce certificate was issued, neither was it legally required, because the union was not legal under Mosaic law. Exodus 23:32 and Deut 7:3,4 forbade marriage to pagan women. So, was this “marriage with a pagan woman” done for any "sacred" reason? Or was it the god of lust that determined that particular law which was credited with being a Mosaic law?

What is good and holy about “marrying” pagan virgins for sexual gratification - only to discard them later when they were 'humbled,' (pierced and now of reduced value?). A woman who was unmarried and not a virgin, was in placed in a serious financial predicament. She had no support from the 'husband' (rapist, murder of her family). She had no family who survived the massacre. She invariably would suffer post-traumatic stress disorder brought on from the emotional shock of witnessing the slaughter of her family and; then a from being forced into a rape/sexual slavery situation over which she had no control. Then if this young woman was discarded by the 'husband', where could she go? Would she be safe in trying to find her way to her own country, through a land full of bandits and rapists; where she did not speak the language, and had no money? What were the options of this young woman? There was probably only one option open to her and that would likely be a life of prostitution. In addition to having multiple wives, it appears that many men of Israel certainly appreciated

and availed themselves of the services of prostitutes.

What is good and holy about killing babies, raping girls and exterminating entire races? Nothing. It is breaking God's commandments - "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery." To break these commandments is to go completely against God's character. But Satan tries to convince religious, legalistic people who don't **know** Jesus i.e. who don't know His pure loving, non-violent character (Isa. 53:9) that God is a violent, murdering, wrathful, fearsome, double-minded being. The evil character traits displayed by the law in Deuteronomy 21:10-14 and Numbers 31:1-54, is in keeping with the Egyptian sun god Amen-Ra (who was depicted as a trinity – the rising sun, the midday sun and the setting sun). This pagan "god" was worshipped by the Egyptians at the time that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Jesus says that attributing Satan's evil character to God, is sinning against the Holy Spirit!!! (Mark 3:22-30) - and Ellen White agrees.

Great Controversy, 1911 p 534-5 (in reference to the "burning forever in hell" doctrine)

"Thus the archfiend clothes with his own attributes the Creator and Benefactor of mankind. **Cruelty is satanic. God is love**; and all that He created was pure, holy, and lovely, until sin was brought in by the first great rebel. Satan himself is the enemy who tempts man to sin, and then destroys him if he can; ...Satan is seeking to overcome men today, as he overcame our first parents, by shaking their confidence in their Creator and **leading them to doubt the wisdom of His government and the justice of His laws. Satan and his emissaries represent God as even worse than themselves**, in order to justify their own malignity and rebellion. **The great deceiver endeavors to shift his own horrible cruelty of character upon our heavenly Father**, that he may cause himself to appear as one greatly wronged by his expulsion from heaven because he would not submit to so unjust a governor. He presents before the world the liberty which they may enjoy under his mild sway, in contrast with the bondage imposed by the stern decrees of Jehovah. Thus he succeeds in luring souls away from their allegiance to God.... Where, in the pages of God's word, is such teaching to be found? **Will the redeemed in heaven be lost to all emotions of pity and compassion, and even to feelings of common humanity? Are these to be exchanged for the indifference of the stoic or the cruelty of the savage? No, no; such is not the teaching of the Book of God.** Those who present the views expressed in the quotations given above may be learned and even honest men, but **they are deluded by the sophistry of Satan. He leads them to misconstrue strong expressions of Scripture, giving to the language the coloring of bitterness and malignity which pertains to himself, but not to our Creator.** 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?' Ezekiel 33:11. (p 536) What would be gained to God should we admit that He delights in witnessing unceasing tortures; that He is regaled with the groans and shrieks and imprecations of the suffering creatures whom He holds in the flames of hell? **Can these horrid sounds be music in**

the ear of Infinite Love? It is urged that the infliction of endless misery upon the wicked would show God's hatred of sin as an evil which is ruinous to the peace and order of the universe. **Oh, dreadful blasphemy! As if God's hatred of sin is the reason why it is perpetuated.** For, according to the teachings of these theologians, continued torture without hope of mercy maddens its wretched victims, and as they pour out their rage in curses and blasphemy, they are forever augmenting their load of guilt. **God's glory is not enhanced by thus perpetuating continually increasing sin through ceaseless ages.**"

If God would not be pleased for sinners to burn in hell forever, would not the murder of innocents at the hands of the Israelites also have been unthinkable to a holy God? Wouldn't the shrieks of children and infants being murdered by the "chosen people" be comparative with the shrieks of the doomed burning in hell? Would a divine command for genocide be consistent with God's loving character? Does either strategy reveal the love of God for sinners?

God is consistent. He is a God of love. The One True God, through His Son Jesus Christ commands, "Love one another and love your enemies." However the Bible also records that God, in special circumstances, was said to command, "Kill your enemies."

This contradiction can only be clarified in the light of God's character which was demonstrated to the world by His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus words must take precedence over the words which were **reportedly** given to Moses from the Son of God. Should we elevate the words of Moses above the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and commit the same error as that committed by the Jewish nation?

As he did in the Garden of Eden, Satan attempts to undermine God's law. (Gen 3:4) He desires worship (Isaiah 14:13, 14) and endeavours to achieve that goal by casting his own hateful character onto God (Job 1).

It is clearly the evil angels who do the evil work of destruction, but this evil work is only permitted when God is forced (by His respect for human freedom of choice) to totally withdraw His spirit from wicked humanity. As soon as God withdraws His holy, protecting angels, Satan's angels rush in, but God gets the blame for the destructive work. What God permits, He is responsible for (in the Biblical view) – since He is the ultimate Source of All Life (Also see ST.1893-12-04.004; P&P 404). When God withdraws His sustaining, creative power, nature reverts to its former chaotic state. God is then blamed for causing the destruction of a world that is separated from its Sustainer.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing p 77

"God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart."

SDA 7 Bible Commentary p 976 ; ST 6 May, 1897
"Force is the last resort of every false religion."

Ministry of Healing p 409; 113

"The knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character." p113 "Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer."

Christ's Object Lessons, p 69, 415

"When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own..... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love."

6 Testimonies for the Church, p 388

"With these words of light and truth before them, how dare men neglect so plain a duty? How dare they disobey God when obedience to His requirements means His blessing in both temporal and spiritual things, and disobedience means the curse of God? Satan is the destroyer. God cannot bless those who refuse to be faithful stewards. All He can do is to permit Satan to accomplish his destroying work. We see calamities of every kind and in every degree coming upon the earth, and why? The Lord's restraining power is not exercised. The world has disregarded the word of God. They live as though there were no God."

Education, p 25, 26

"The reason Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden was because it could no longer teach them the lessons they must learn to re-enter Paradise. They must now see the contrast between the character of God and the character of Satan written on the face of nature."

Physical Changes Caused by Sin

When Adam and Eve sinned, some permanent changes occurred in their physical and spiritual make-up, affecting every cell of their bodies.

Ellen White, The Story of Redemption, p 20, 21; Lift Him Up, p 47

"This sinless pair (Adam and Eve) wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. While they lived in obedience to God, this circle of light enshrouded them."

Ellen White, Conflict and Courage, ch 17

"Had Adam and Eve never disobeyed their Creator, had they remained in the path of perfect rectitude, they could have known and understood God. But when they listened to the voice of the tempter, and sinned against God, the light of the garments of heavenly innocence departed from them; and in parting with the garments of innocence, they drew about them the dark robes of ignorance of God. The clear and perfect light that had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light, the posterity of Adam could no longer trace the character of God in His created works."

Ellen White, Manuscript 10, 1894, p. 10. ("Keep the Commandments," February, 1894.) "Awake and see that at this time you must put on the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness. "Buy of Me," He says, "gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." **What was the matter with Adam and Eve? They saw that they were naked. The covering of God was not enveloping them.** God says, "Buy of me." Well, what? **Buy of Me My righteousness.** "Buy of Me gold tried in the fire, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." Are you clothed with it, or are you transgressing the commandments of God by your traditions and by the maxims of men? **The righteousness of God never covers a soul all polluted with sin....** Shall we give to the world the **evidence of the character of God** because of our rectitude in keeping His commandments? May God help us to be loyal servants of His."

It is never the intention of God to destroy the sinner, but to save him, yet, it is the Father's glory or holy presence which on exposure, causes all sinful beings (repentant, converted or rebellious), to cease to exist.

Early Writings, p54

"I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, **"If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist."**

Why would Ellen White, a repentant sinner, cease to exist if she beheld the glory of God the Father? It would not be because God purposely 'zapped' her! **Sin is in every cell of sinner's bodies, whether they are repentant or unrepentant.** This is the reason that at the second coming, God gives the righteous a new, sinless body. Unrepentant sinners do not have the recreated, sinless bodies. At the second coming, when the glory of God appears unveiled to both saints and sinners, it is the sin, still in every cell of sinners' bodies that ignites. Fire comes from within them as the sin in each cell, self-combusts.

1 Thessalonians 15:50-57

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. (54) So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (55) O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? (56) The sting of death [is] sin; and the strength of sin [is] the law. (57) But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Desire of Ages, 1898 p 600

"The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire."

The purpose of Christ's second coming is not to slay the wicked. He comes to save the righteous from certain destruction which has been made inevitable by sinful humanity.

The Final Destruction

Psalms 34:21

"Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate."

If God slays the wicked, then He must be considered evil! Clearly, God is not evil!

Isaiah 33:11, 12

"Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you.

(12) And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire."

Satan likewise is consumed in the same manner.

Ezekiel 28:18

"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee."

The wicked dead are not alive when Jesus and the righteous come down from heaven and the Mt of Olives splits open at the touch of Jesus' feet. Then the wicked are 'awoken' or raised. Jesus and the saints are within the New Jerusalem, with its transparent walls.

Great Controversy p 665

"Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance. 666 As soon as the books of record are opened, and the eye of Jesus looks upon the wicked, they are conscious of every sin which they have ever committed. They see just where their feet diverged from the path of purity and holiness, just how far pride and rebellion have carried them in the violation of the law of God. The seductive temptations which they encouraged by indulgence in sin, the blessings perverted, the messengers of God despised, the warnings rejected, the waves of mercy beaten back by the stubborn, unrepentant heart--all appear **as if written in letters of fire...** 669 Satan seems paralyzed as he beholds the glory and majesty of Christ. He who was once a covering cherub remembers whence he has fallen. A shining seraph, "son of the morning;" how changed, how degraded! From the council where once he was honored, he is forever excluded. **He sees another now standing near to the Father, veiling His glory.** He has seen the crown placed upon the head of Christ by an angel of lofty stature and majestic presence, and he knows that the exalted position of this angel might have been his."

The Gospel Message for Today, Sermon by W. W. Prescott, Sunday, 29 March, 1903

General Conference Conference Daily Bulletin Vol 3, No. 4 p 54

"A word further concerning that blotting out of sin: **It is the revelation of the glory of God that blots out sin. The time for the blotting out of sin has come when our High Priest takes all the sins of the people upon Himself, and goes into the most holy place, and stands in the immediate presence of the glory which blots out sin.** The sins blotted out are the sins confessed, confessed upon the Priest, not that by arbitrary act of ours we can lay our sins upon Him; God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Our confession is that we

personally confess that our sins are on Him. We agree to that, and, having confessed that, and agreed to that, we let go of them; we say our sins are on Him. **Our very agreement with Him, in the confession that our sins have been laid upon Him, is God's means of removing them from us, and letting them be upon Him in our behalf.**"

Great Controversy, p 670

"For thousands of years this chief of conspiracy has palmed off falsehood for truth. But the time has now come when the rebellion is to be finally defeated and the history and character of Satan disclosed. In his last great effort to dethrone Christ, destroy His people, and take possession of the City of God, the archdeceiver has been fully unmasked."

Ellen White, Desire of Ages, p 758

"Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion."

Early Writings, p 52; Review & Herald, 1 November, 1850, p 6

"Then Satan imbues the wicked, that have been raised, with his spirit. He flatters them that the army in the City is small, and that his army is large, and that they can overcome the saints and take the City. 53 While Satan was rallying his army, the saints were in the City, beholding the beauty and glory of the Paradise of God. Jesus was at their head, leading them. All at once the lovely Saviour was gone from our company; but soon we heard his lovely voice, saying, "Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." We gathered about Jesus, and just as he closed the gates of the City, the curse was pronounced upon the wicked. The gates were shut. Then the saints used their wings and mounted to the top of the wall of the City. Jesus was also with them; his crown looked brilliant and glorious. It was a crown within a crown, seven in number. The crowns of the saints were of the most pure gold, decked with stars. Their faces shone with glory, for they were in the express image of Jesus; and as they arose, and moved all together to the top of the City, I was enraptured with the sight. 54 Then the wicked saw what they had lost; and fire was breathed from God upon them, and consumed them. This was the Execution of the Judgment."

How does sin destroy the sinner? The redeemed saints possess sinless, glorified bodies.

Philippians 3:21

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

1 Corinthians 15:52

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

However, the wicked are not raised physically incorruptible – with sinless bodies and minds. Sinners made the hopeless decision to separate from the Source of All Life.

John 5:28, 29

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Ellen White, Desire of Ages, p 106, 600

"To sin, wherever found, 'our God is a consuming fire.' Heb. 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.... (Jacob's) transgression had been forgiven, and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the revelation of God's presence. But wherever men came before God while willfully cherishing evil, they were destroyed. At the second advent of Christ the wicked shall be consumed "with the Spirit of His mouth," and destroyed "with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thess. 2:8. The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.... **The glory of His countenance**, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire."

After unmasking Satan's evil character, the Father's glory is revealed to the righteous, who see Him face to face without any physical or mental discomfort. But the Father's unveiled glory – the revelation of His pure and unselfish character - destroys the wicked who have been experiencing dreadful mental anguish (gnashing of teeth – Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28) brought on by the plagues which their own actions have brought upon themselves.

When sinners are finally destroyed, it will simply be the result of sin. Sin causes death – it carries the seeds of death within it. God, however, carries eternal life – and only life – within Him. God's presence destroys sin though the plan of salvation, but it cannot forcibly protect unrepentant sinners from their own, chosen destiny of death. God is "a consuming fire" to sin – not to sinners. Fire – destruction - comes from inside the wicked themselves – internally from their own cells – and outwardly as a result of uncontrolled human wrath, unrestrained 'natural' disasters, and unrestrained human warfare. The suicidal experiment with sin is concluded. The unrepentant sinner destroys himself and sin is consumed (Isa 33:11; Eze 28:18; Heb 12:29). All systems are chaotic when God removes His sustaining, creative power.

The Father and Son do not take delight in the destruction of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11), but they are grief-stricken on-lookers to the destruction.

God's vengeance is not to be seen as human, selfish vengeance. God's vengeance is the liberation of His people from their enemies. God removes His people at the second coming while the rebels are left to reap the consequences of their own behaviour.

The wicked who are alive at the second coming of Christ, die a temporary death. Their death is only temporary because Christ has purchased eternal life for the whole human race. God's unselfish love and His government's principles are yet to be 'judged' and examined before the world. In order to do this, the unrepentant wicked are revived after 1000 years when Christ brings the righteous back to the earth outside the New Jerusalem. Under Satan's control, the wicked attempt to "charge" the New Jerusalem and to take it by force. The destruction of the wicked occurs in the same way as has been witnessed in the preceding six thousand years of earth's history. In the final demonstration of selfishness, the universe witnesses the complete uncontrolled human and demonic passion. Sinners' fury is combined with the total forces of unsustained and unrestrained natural forces of the earth for God's patient spirit has finally been removed from the earth.

In this way, God is a consuming fire to sin (refer to Objection # 11). It would appear to be far better to let God destroy the sin in our lives while humanity is still under His protective righteous covering – His holy character as our robe of righteousness - than to meet His divine presence - unprotected - when His righteousness will destroy sin where ever it is found – by its withdrawal.

The connection between the physical and spiritual aspects of humanity are inseparable. What happens to the physical effects the spiritual and vice versa.

The glory of God – His character - is not a special weapon to facilitate the destruction of sinners – but is naturally destroys sin. Sinners' destruction is caused because he/she clings to his/her cherished sin. Sin destroys sinners, because they chose to live without the physical and spiritual, life- sustaining power of God.

Great Controversy p 676

"I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Revelation 21:22. The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. 'Now we see through a glass, darkly.' 1 Corinthians 13:12. We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence and behold the glory of His countenance."

When God completely withdraws His life-sustaining and stabilising power from the earth, the elements melt with fervent heat and a process begins which causes the earth to revert to its original chaotic condition (Genesis 1:2) and the earth is purified by the fire which pours out from the earth.

Isaiah 24:17-23

“Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. 18 And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. 19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. 20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. 23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

Revelation 6:12-14, 17

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places....17 For the **great day of his wrath** is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

2 Peter 3:9-11

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.”

Since the Father is the Source of all life, He is credited with the destruction of the wicked. God is implicated, but not directly intentionally responsible for their death. God repeatedly warned that the natural consequences of holding on to sin was death (Rom 6:23). The wicked willingly clung to their sins, knowing that at one day, all humanity would “stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10); knowing that God is a consuming fire to sin (Heb 12:29);

knowing that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), knowing they neglected the offering of a great salvation (Heb 2:3). God, respecting the principle of the freedom of choice, permits the wicked to move away from Him – an action that leaves the sinner unprotected.⁶⁰

Great Controversy, p 541

“God has given to men a declaration of His character and of His method of dealing with sin. “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” Exodus 34:6, 7. “All the wicked will He destroy.” “The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.” Psalms 145:20; 37:38. The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being. God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. **“The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. Christ declared that He taught nothing except that which He had received from His Father. The principles of the divine government are in perfect harmony with the Saviour's precept, ‘Love your enemies.’** God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited. He would make them happy if He could do so in accordance with the laws of His government and the justice of His character. He surrounds them with the tokens of His love, He grants them a knowledge of His law, and follows them with the offers of His mercy; but they despise His love, make void His law, and reject His mercy. While constantly receiving His gifts, they dishonor the Giver; they hate God because they know that He abhors their sins. The Lord bears long with their perversity; but the decisive hour will come at last, when their destiny is to be

60 EJ Waggoner (commenting on) Romans, p 99, 100 “Romans 8:6. ‘The sting of death is sin.’ 1Cor. 15:56. There could be no death if there were no sin. Sin carries death in its bosom. So it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God that death came upon men because of sin. It could not possibly be otherwise. Note the justice here. Death passed upon all men, ‘for that all have sinned.’ ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; Ezek.18:20.’ And this is also a necessary consequence of the fact that sin contains death in it, and that death can not come in any way than by sin. (100) Everything that came through Adam’s fall is undone in Christ; or, better still, all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.”

decided. Will He then chain these rebels to His side? Will He force them to do His will? (542) Those who have chosen Satan as their leader and have been controlled by his power are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Pride, deception, licentiousness, cruelty, have become fixed in their characters. Can they enter heaven to dwell forever with those whom they despised and hated on earth? Truth will never be agreeable to a liar; meekness will not satisfy self-esteem and pride; purity is not acceptable to the corrupt; disinterested love does not appear attractive to the selfish. What source of enjoyment could heaven offer to those who are wholly absorbed in earthly and selfish interests? Could those whose lives have been spent in rebellion against God be suddenly transported to heaven and witness the high, the holy state of perfection that ever exists there,-- every soul filled with love, every countenance beaming with joy, enrapturing music in melodious strains rising in honor of God and the Lamb, and ceaseless streams of light flowing upon the redeemed from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne,--could those whose hearts are filled with hatred of God, of truth and holiness, mingle with the heavenly throng and join their songs of praise? **Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb?** No, no; years of probation were granted them, that they might form characters for heaven; but they have never trained the mind to love purity; they have never learned the language of heaven, and now it is too late. **A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven.** Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; **the glory of God would be a consuming fire.** They would long to flee from that holy place. **They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God.** (543) Like the waters of the Flood the fires of the great day declare God's verdict that the wicked are incurable. They have no disposition to submit to divine authority. Their will has been exercised in revolt; and when life is ended, it is too late to turn the current of their thoughts in the opposite direction, too late to turn from transgression to obedience, from hatred to love. In sparing the life of Cain the murderer, God gave the world an example of what would be the result of permitting the sinner to live to continue a course of unbridled iniquity. Through the influence of Cain's teaching and example, multitudes of his descendants were led into sin, until "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Genesis 6:5, 11. In mercy to the world, God blotted out its wicked inhabitants in Noah's time. In mercy He destroyed the corrupt dwellers in Sodom. Through the deceptive power of Satan the workers of iniquity obtain sympathy and admiration, and are thus constantly leading others to rebellion. It was so in Cain's and in Noah's day, and in the time of Abraham and Lot; it is so in our time. It is in mercy to the universe that God will finally destroy the rejecters of His grace. (544) 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Romans 6:23. While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: 'I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.' Deuteronomy 30:15. The

death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is "the second death" that is placed in contrast with everlasting life. In consequence of Adam's sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. 'There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;' 'for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15:22. But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. 'All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' John 5:28, 29. They who have been 'accounted worthy' of the resurrection of life are 'blessed and holy.' 'On such the second death hath no power.' Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression -- 'the wages of sin.' They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, 'according to their works,' but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: 'Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.' And another declares: 'They shall be as though they had not been.' Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion. (545) Thus will be made an end of sin, with all the woe and ruin which have resulted from it. Says the psalmist: "Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name forever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end." Psalm 9:5, 6. John, in the Revelation, looking forward to the eternal state, hears a universal anthem of praise undisturbed by one note of discord. Every creature in heaven and earth was heard ascribing glory to God. Revelation 5:13. There will then be no lost souls to blaspheme God as they writhe in never-ending torment; no wretched beings in hell will mingle their shrieks with the songs of the saved."

The Gospel Message for Today, W. W. Prescott, Sunday, 29 March, 1903

General Conference Conference Daily Bulletin Vol 3, No. 4 p 54

"A word further concerning that blotting out of sin: It is the revelation of the glory of God that blots out sin. The time for the blotting out of sin has come when our High Priest takes all the sins of the people upon Himself, and goes into the most holy place, and stands in the immediate presence of the glory which blots out sin. The sins blotted out are the sins confessed, confessed upon the Priest, not that by arbitrary act of ours we can lay our sins upon Him; God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Our confession is that we personally confess that our sins are on Him. We agree to that, and, having confessed that, and agreed to that, we let go of them; we say our sins are on Him. Our very agreement with Him, in the confession that our sins have been laid upon Him, is God's means of removing them from us, and letting them be upon Him in our behalf."

Desire of Ages, 1898 p 600

“Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed.”

Ezekiel 33:11

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

God is a consuming fire to sin – in every person, both saved and unsaved (refer to Objection # 11). It would appear to be a far better decision to let God destroy the sin in our lives – our characters - while humanity is still under His protection, than to endure the anguish of realising that it is too late to seek His loving, forgiving, protecting presence.

In desperation and mental agony, unrepentant sinners will destroy themselves; and the planet also. Humanity was given dominion of the planet, and the majority of humanity has rejected God's unselfish principles of government. Therefore, the restraining spirit of Love is forced to remove not only from human hearts, but the 'natural' world also. The earth 'reels like a drunkard' and human beings also become irrational with rage. This is the results of selfishness. This is the result of sin.

AT Jones, Review and Herald Jan, 24 & 31, 1899.

“Yet, what every one must understand is this: the only way that God does, or can, separate anybody from sin is by that very consuming fire of his presence. The only way, therefore, in which you and I can ever be so separated from sin as to meet God as he is, in the flaming fire that he is, in that great day, is to meet him TODAY as he is, in the consuming fire that he is. The only way that we can be prepared to meet him at his coming in that great day is to meet him in his coming today. For there is a coming to men now , as really as to the world in that great day. 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will COME TO YOU.' John 14:18. But do not forget that whether he comes to you or to me now, or whether he comes to other people in that great day, he comes only as a consuming fire.”

The Two Deaths

Romans 6:23

“The wages of sin is death.”

The Bible speaks of two “deaths,” and distinguishes and defines those deaths. Certain questions come to mind when considering these two deaths.

How can one type of death be different to another death? Which death is earned by sinners as the ‘the wages of sin?’ Which death did Christ die?

It is understood that ‘the wrath of God’ brings death. As previously defined, the Bible clearly attests that the wrath of God is the sad result that occurs when sinners turn away from the Creator. By their own choice, they are left unprotected and separated from the Source of their own lives. They choose death when they reject Christ (Proverbs 8:36).

John 3:36

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

It is clear from studying Romans 5:12-21 that Christ lived and died corporately and individually for all humanity – i.e. the human race.

By His life and perfect character, Christ restored to the human race, everything Adam lost

EJ Waggoner (commenting on) Romans, p 99, 100

“Romans 8:6. ‘The sting of death is sin.’ 1Cor. 15:56. There could be no death if there were no sin. Sin carries death in its bosom. So it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God that death came upon men because of sin. It could not possibly be otherwise. Note the justice here. Death passed upon all men, ‘for that all have sinned.’ ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;...Ezek.18:20.’ And this is also a necessary consequence of the fact that sin contains death in it, and that death can not come in any way than by sin. (100) Everything that came through Adam’s fall is undone in Christ; or, better still, all that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.”

By His own individual perfect character, Christ restores the image of God in those individuals who accept His life's record as their own and who accept the new mind which comes only through Him.

Therefore, Christ died the death that Adam would have died if there was no plan of redemption available. Adam received eternal death for his own personal, individual disobedience, but as the head of the human race, he also sentenced

all humanity to death as a consequence of his action. Jesus accepted the corporate and individual consequences of Adam's sin. He risked His eternal existence when He died corporately for the race, but because of His own personal individual perfect human character, which He developed in sinful flesh, Christ was justified to be resurrected. Christ died the complete death for humanity corporately, but He was resurrected on account of His own perfect character.

The second death signifies the destruction of the record of all sinners' characters. The sinful thoughts and acts, as recorded in the books of heaven, are finally 'cleansed' and the sinful 'spirits' of sinners cease to exist.

Psalm 9:5, 6

"Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name forever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end."

Bible commentator JM Stephenson wrote an article which is available from from <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH1854-V06-02/index.djvu>

Stephenson's article is titled, **Atonement and Reconciliation Differ** and was published in the magazine **Review and Herald**, 22 August 1854. Stephenson states:

Having briefly investigated the nature of the atonement, I will now consider:-

II. The difficulties in the way of man's salvation, which renders an atonement necessary. They are:-

*1. **The penalty of God's law for Adamic, or original transgression.***

*2. **The penalty for individual, or personal transgression.***

To have clear views of the relation these penalties sustain to the atonement, it is of great importance that we understand, first, the relation they sustain to each other. They are denominated by some writers, a first and second death. But the terms first and second, are relative terms, pointing out the order in which the events specified occur. They are in all cases dependent on the supposed or actual existence of each other. A second supposes a first, and a first supposes a second. Death, being the negative of life, must be preceded by life, hence a first and second death must be preceded by a first and second life. It would, therefore, be just as proper to call the rewards of the gospel a first and second life, as to call the penalties of the law a first and second death. The same that would make these a first and second would those also. There must be two lives and two deaths, to make either a first or a second, But had not the scheme of redemption been devised, man would never have lived a second life, consequently, could never have

died a second death. What, in such case, would the penalty have been for the sin of our first Parents? Would it have been a first death? Nay, verily; because no second would ever succeed it; hence it could not be a first.

But, from the fact that man is actually exposed to two deaths, we call the one that occurs first, a first death, and the one that occurs second, a second death, just as we speak of a first and second life, a first and second birth, and a first and second Adam, simply to denote their order, and not their nature.

The penalty of God's law for original sin is death, (not a first death.) Mark the import of the language in which the first penalty is clothed! "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "As in Adam all die," &c. The penalty for personal sin is equally explicit. "The wages of sin is death." (Not a second death, but simply death.) "Sin when finished bringeth forth death." To illustrate: The penalty in the State of Illinois for murder is death. Now, suppose a man to be executed according to their law, then to be raised from the dead, and executed a second time, for another offense, would the fact of the same man being put to death a second time, make the penalty in that State, for murder, a first death? Certainly not. But, in case the same man should die a second time, it would be, in reference to its order, a first death.

Christ not having died a previous death, and not being exposed to a subsequent death, could die neither a first nor a second death, but, as the Scriptures plainly teach, "He died the death of the cross." "For if when we were sinners, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," &c. Not a first, or a second death, but "the death." This brings us to consider the difficulties in the way of man's salvation:-

1. The penalty of the law of God for the sin of our first parents, or the death threatened Adam in the Garden of Eden. The investigation of the nature of this penalty properly belongs to another part of this subject. The actual existence of such a penalty, or the fact of man's being exposed to death for Adam's transgression, is all I propose investigating under this head.

God having created man, appointed to govern him by a just, wise, and holy law, the reward of which was eternal life, the penalty of which was death. This reward and penalty was represented by two trees, i.e., the "tree of life," and the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." Man's will was left free to choose the one and to refuse the other. Eating the fruit of these trees involved the great principles of obedience or disobedience; hence by eating of the fruit of the tree of life, Adam would have received the promised reward for obedience, which was eternal life; but, by eating

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he must suffer the penalty which was death. Gen.ii,16,17. 'And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' By this passage, we learn that the penalty of the law of God threatened Adam for disobedience was death. But did Adam disobey? He did. Chap. iii,1-14. Did he suffer the penalty? He did. Chap. v,5. "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died." Some may object to this view, because Adam did not die a literal death in the day he ate of the forbidden tree; he must, therefore, have died a spiritual death. This objection will be noticed in connection with the nature of the penalty threatened Adam.

But what relation do Adam's posterity sustain to this penalty? Are they exposed to the same death? Ans. They are. To this, the whole Scriptures bear testimony. The decree has never been repealed, that "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Mark the doom of Adam's immediate posterity. They shared their father's fate. The record reads thus: "And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died."

"And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years; and he died." "And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died." "And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years; and he died." "And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years; and he died." "And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years; and he died." "And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years; and he died." Gen.v,8-31. Noah died; [Chap. ix,29;] Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died; [Chaps. xxv,8; xxxv,29; xlix,33; Heb.xi,13;] David, a man after God's own heart, must also die; 1Kings ii,10; Acts ii,29. Time would fail to speak of Joshua, Samuel, and all the Prophets, who died in the hope of a "better resurrection." Heb.xi,35. Job declares the grave to be the final destination of all living. "For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Job 30:23.

The apostle Paul places the question beyond the possibility of a doubt: he plainly teaches that Adam's sin involved his whole posterity in death. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom.v,12. Not that all have sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" [verse 14;] but by, or through Adam, as our representative, all have sinned. Adam sinned personally, whereas, his posterity sinned by proxy, or by their representative. Adam, being the representative of the entire human race, as a natural consequence, entails his own nature and

destiny upon all his posterity. Having, therefore, incurred a mortal, corruptible, dying nature, he entails the same nature upon the generations proceeding from him. Of course he could give his children no better nature than that which he himself possessed. Again, the same Apostle says, "For as in Adam all die;" [1Cor.xv,22;] thereby teaching that all mankind suffer the penalty threatened Adam in the garden of Eden.

- a. Enoch and Elijah are excepted; and the righteous living at the Advent of our blessed Redeemer, will be exceptions to this statement, unless those did, and these will, undergo a change equivalent to death. Who dare say they did not, and these will not?
- b. The first penalty, or the death it inflicts, is unconditional. There were no conditions, or provisoes attached to the penalty. The language in which it is expressed, excludes the possibility of pardon, without setting the law and its penalty aside. "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." It is inflexible; it must have the life of its victim.
- c. It being unconditional, the righteous suffer it as well as the wicked; hence all die, (infants not excepted,) irrespective of moral character. "In Adam all die."
- d. This death being entailed upon the human family by their first parents, or by an act over which they had no control, they are not personally responsible. This brings me to notice:-

The penalty of the law of God for personal sins. It is death. Both Testaments represent man as being exposed to death for personal sins. But, inasmuch as all die for original sin, none can die for personal sin, without a resurrection to a second life; hence the Bible teaches that there will be a resurrection of the dead, "both of the just and the unjust." To be preceded by a second life, it must, in the nature of things, be a second death; hence while the penalty for personal sin is only one death, yet in reference to its relation to the penalty for original sin, it will be a second death. When I speak of this death as a second death, I wish to be distinctly understood as having no reference whatever to the nature of the penalty for personal sin, but only its relation to a previous death. This must be the only sense in which the Bible speaks of it as a second death.

That man is exposed to die a second time is evident from many very explicit texts of Scripture. Moses makes the most solemn and touching appeal to the children of Israel, saying, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

This was a life which might be obtained by obedience; and a death that would be incurred by disobedience; hence it cannot refer to the first life or first death; for these are not conditional. Prov.xix,16. "He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die." All die the first death whether they "despise his ways" or not. Eze.xviii,4. "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Verse 20. All die the first death, whether they sin or not; it must therefore refer to a second, or another death. Chap. xxxiii,11. "Say unto them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel."

The death threatened Adam cannot be averted by turning to God, consequently, this text must refer to another death. Jer.xxi,8. "And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the Lord, behold I set before you the way of life, and the way of death." Jesus Christ says, "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John viii,24. This was a death that might be averted by faith; hence it must refer to another death, besides the one all men die, whether they believe or not.

Paul addresses personal agents who are responsible for their own actions, and tells them that the wages of sin is death. Rom.vi,23. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Man cannot have eternal life in the present life, it must therefore refer to a future life; the death here threatened refers to the same state; hence both must be in the world to come, when man receives his reward for obedience or disobedience. See John v.28,29; Mark x,28-31; Rom.ii,7; Tit.i,2. Life and death are also contrasted in Chap. viii,13. Sin when finished bringeth forth death. James i,15. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Personal sins will not finish their work until man is raised to a second life, to die again. But they that shall be accounted worthy to attain to that resurrection ("the resurrection of the just," Luke xiv,14,) and the world to come (Mark x,30,) will not die again, but be as the angels. Luke xx,35,36. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more."

This is the peculiar privilege of none but the righteous: "They which shall be accounted worthy," &c. The unworthy will have part in the second resurrection [Rev20:4,5,6,] and the second death.

2. "Neither can they die any more." This cannot mean more and most death; but, that they cannot die again. We are plainly told that all who do not overcome (are not worthy) shall die again, i.e., a second time.

Rev.ii, 11. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death." The converse is, he that does not overcome shall be hurt of the second death. See also Chap. xx,6. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power," &c; the opposite of which is, cursed and unholy is he that hath part in the second resurrection: on such the second death shall have power. The lake of fire produces the second death. Rev.xxi,8. "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." The Bible nowhere teaches a resurrection from this death.

- a. This is a second death, not to denote the penalty for personal sins, (that is death,) but to denote its relation to a previous death, which the same characters will have died.*
- b. The penalty for personal sins is inexorable. There are no conditions, or provisos, attached to it, whereby it may be enforced, or set aside as the judge may choose. It must be inflicted, if justice be maintained. The penalty is inflicted, if a substitute be accepted, the same as though the guilty suffer it. It must be suffered, either by the guilty, or by a substitute. And the only difference between the penalty threatened Adam, and that threatened his posterity, is, the Judge would accept no substitute in that case; (Adam and his posterity must die,) whereas, in this, he freely offers to accept the death of his Son in our stead.*
- c. Those who die in infancy, not being personal sinners, the law will have no claims on them for personal transgressions; hence not being subject to die again, when made alive by the second Adam, they will live forever. Now, until these difficulties be removed, there can be no permanent salvation for fallen man. Any salvation wrought out for him in the present life, can avail but little while death remains back to captivate its victim. Any salvation in the future life, will be of little value, while another death remains still back, to drag its hapless victim down to irretrievable ruin." (end quote Stephenson)*

Christ lived for humanity – corporately and also on an individual basis. Corporately, all humanity benefited by receiving another probation, but Christ's perfect life is also substituted for individuals who repented of their sins. By His perfect life, (which ended on Calvary), Christ overturned the death that would eventually occur as a tragic outcome of their sinful choice to sin. Stephenson states that "Personal sins will not finish their work until man is raised to a second life, to die again." **Christ therefore died two deaths at once – the first and second deaths.** Christ died as a result of Adam's sin (the sleep, which almost all humanity dies as a result of Adam's original sin) and Christ, by taking our sins into His own body, also died the same death that lost human beings will die for their own unrepented, personal sins.

Vengeance is Mine and I Will Repay

What about the following **vengeance** texts? Don't they show that God is full of frenzied wrath, about to crush and destroy His enemies?

Isaiah 2:10-22; Isaiah 4:1-6 ; Isaiah 11:10-17; Isaiah 13:9-16 ; Isaiah 24:21-23; Isaiah 26:20,21; Isaiah 63:1-6; Isaiah 66:15-24; Revelation 19:11-21

Recall that as Anton LaVey outlined in ***The Satanic Bible***:

"Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek"
(Barrett, 2001:343).

Ellen White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 1896, p 56

"The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him'" (1 John 3:15).

In contrast to Satan's character, Jesus' life demonstrated that God is infinite, unchanging love.

The 'vengeance passages' are lengthy, so only samples of each passage are reproduced here.

Isaiah 2:10-22

Verse 19 "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks... for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he arised **to shake terribly the earth.**" (As God's presence is removed from the earth, His sustaining, maintaining power is also removed. The earth "reels to and fro" etc. This is a sign of the withdrawal of God's presence, not His active aggression towards the earth).

Isaiah 4:1-6

Verse 2, 4, 5 "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.(4) When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by **the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.** (5) And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. " (Zechariah 2:5 refers to a similar image:- "And I will be unto her a wall of fire round about; And a glory (margin – defence, covering) will I be in the midst of her." In the wilderness, the Israelites were protected from the Egyptians by (Christ in the form of) the pillar of fire and the cloud. This Cloud did not destroy the Egyptians. After the 1000 year

millennium, Christ will again protect the redeemed saints from the wicked, but He will not destroy the wicked. The wicked shall cease to exist because they are joined to sin through their sinful, mortal bodies. This occurs because of a physiological reason not explained in the Bible, however it is revealed that sinful human beings (even repentant human beings) when in the presence of God, would cease to exist if God did not veil Himself from human view. Somehow the glory of God - the Source of All Life – causes the sin which abides in every human cell, to cease to exist. God brings life, but His presence sparks an inevitable reaction with sin which still remains in the 'body of death,' causing self-destruction and eternal death.

Early Writings, p 54 (End of the 2300 Days)

"I saw a throne, and on it sat the Father and the Son. I gazed on Jesus' countenance and admired His lovely person. The Father's person I could not behold, for a cloud of glorious light covered Him. I asked Jesus if His Father had a form like Himself. He said He had, but I could not behold it, for said He, 'If you should once behold the glory of His person, you would cease to exist.'"

Isaiah 11:10-17

Verses 16, 17 "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire (17) And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day." **(The wicked do not receive eternal life or eternal dying. Their reward is eternal death).**

Isaiah 13:9-16

Verse 9 "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it."

(After the earth has been desolate for 1000 years, unrepentant sinners will be raised to reap the consequences of what they have sown. They reap the wages of their sinful lives – eternal death. At no stage is God revealed to be "cruel, wrathful or with fierce anger" as humanity understands those concepts).

Isaiah 24:21-23

Verses 21-23 "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. (22) And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. (23) Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his

ancients gloriously.”(Rev 20:5 – *For 1000 years, the wicked are sleeping in the prison of a temporary death, then they are raised to receive the reward for their sinful lives- eternal death. This deathly reward is also called 'punishment.'* Jesus calls it everlasting punishment in Matt 25:46).

Isaiah 26:20, 21

Verses 20, 21 “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. (21) For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” (*The wages of sin is death - Romans 6:23. This deathly reward is also called 'punishment.'* Jesus calls it everlasting punishment in Matt 25:46).

Isaiah 66:15-24

Verses 15-17 “For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. (16) For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. (17) They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.” (*Anger with “fury” means anger with judgment – see Isaiah 59:16, compare Isaiah 63:5; or can also mean “fervour.” God's “fervent” rebuke is His protective defence of His people. Jesus rebuked demons and storms Luke 8:24; Mark 4:39; Mark 9:25 to protect His people. Christ also rebuked the Egyptians with the cloud, protecting the Israelites from attack.*

The Lord 'pleads' with His sword – His spirit. Those who continue to reject Christ's pleadings will die in their sins, as they attack the saints - not because Christ attacks them).

Revelation 19:11-21

Verses 11, 13 “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war...(13) And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God...(15) And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: **and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.** (21) And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. **(See Isaiah 63:1-6 in Objections section)**

Isaiah 25:4, 5

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. (.5) Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. **(Unveiled divine glory is a protective shield to the saints, but a destructive fire to the wicked. God is protecting His saints - not being aggressive).**

Isaiah 34:8

“For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. (9) And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.” **(Refer to Objections # 23, 24)**

Isaiah 35:4

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.” **(Refer to Objections # 23, 24)**

Isaiah 61:2

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;” **(Refer to Objections # 23, 24)**

Jeremiah 51:6, 7

Jeremiah 51:6

“Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense. (7) Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.” **(Refer to Objections # 23, 24)**

Luke 21:20-23

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. (21) Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. (22) For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (23) But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." (Refer to [Objections # 23, 24](#))

2 Thessalonians 1:7,8

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Refer to [Objections # 23, 24](#))

If the true gospel of Jesus Christ is unknown, there can be no saving knowledge of God.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

#1557, εκδίκησις ekdikesis *ek-dik'-ay-sis*

from <1556>; ; n f1) a revenging, vengeance, punishment. In 2 Co 7:11 -- meeting out of justice; doing justice to all parties. See Lu 18:3, 21:22. The word also has the sense of acquittal and carries the sense of vindication.

(Vincent III, p. 329))

#1556 - to protect, defend, one person from another

Revelation 6:8-17;7:1

Verse 10, 16 "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (16) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:(17) For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (17:1) And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Thayer's Lexicon defines "avenge" # 01556:

as

1) to vindicate one's right, do one justice

1a) to protect, defend, one person from another

2) to avenge a thing

2a) to punish a person for a thing (See section Objections, 23, 24 and "the wrath of God.")

Revelation 18:2-19:2

“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. (3) For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (4) And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (5) For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (6) Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. (7) How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. (8) Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (9) And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, (10) Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. (11) And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: (12) The merchandise of gold, ...and (13) souls of men. ... (15) The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, ... (17) For in one hour so great riches is come to nought... (18) And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! (19) And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. (20) Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” (21) “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. (23) ... for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. (24) And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (19:1) And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: (2) For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”

Who Sends the Plagues?

Revelation 11: 3 - 6

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. (4) These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the

God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: (5) and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. (6) These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”

The two witnesses have long been considered to be the Old and New Testaments. It would appear however, that the description better fits with the description of Isaiah 8:20 - “to the law and to the testimony:”

1. the 10 commandments (which are a transcript of the character of God);
and
2. the testimony of the life of Jesus Christ – the True Witness (Rev 3:14).

When people reject the character of God as expressed in the 10 commandments and also in the life of Jesus Christ, they “have not the Father or the Son” (1 John 2:23). Though professed Christians, these people will have no protection from the destruction (the plagues) **that humanity is bringing upon itself**. Through cooperation with evil angels, humanity have already designed technology with the potential to cause all the plagues mentioned in Revelation 15, 16.

For an example of the nanotechnology already in existence and for planned technology which will cause complete devastation on the world, refer to such sources as ***The Dark Secret of Handrik Schoen*** which aired on SBS, 8 January, 2006 (Australian Television) and “Weather Control as a Weapon” www.weatherwars.info (video) by Bob Fletcher available at Better Life Productions (02) 65678166, PO Box 392 West Kempsey NSW 2440.

The third plague is purported to be depicting God, via an angel, cursing the earth and turning water into blood.

Revelation 16:4

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

It is interesting to note a similar occurrence is known to have occurred already, where the water appears to turn to blood. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia has the following entry concerning rivers and fountains of blood.

“Red rain in Kerala was a phenomenon observed sporadically from 25 July to 23 September 2001 in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Heavy downpours occurred in which the rain was primarily red, staining clothes and appearing like blood. Yellow, green, and black rains were also reported. It was initially suspected that the rains were colored by fallout from a hypothetical meteor burst, but the Government of India commissioned a study which found the rains had been colored by spores

from a locally prolific aerial algae. Then in early 2006, the Kerala colored rains suddenly rose to worldwide attention after media reports of an extraordinary theory that the colored particles are extraterrestrial cells, proposed by Godfrey Louis and Santhosh Kumar of the Mahatma Gandhi University in Kottayam.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_rain_in_Kerala

It's Raining Blood

In the 2 March 2006 issue, New Scientist Magazine ran an article written by Hazel Muir which discussed 'red rain' which fell in India from July to September, 2001.

Recently, the New Scientist received some reader feedback, commenting on the article and the usual occurrence.

Vincenzo Liguori Manly, from New South Wales, Australia wrote:

“I'm surprised that neither your article nor the original paper suggest a fairly obvious explanation for the red rain that fell over Kerala in India (4 March, p 34). If indeed the link between the red rains and a meteorite can be proven, then it has been known for a while that organic compounds in meteorites can form vesicles that look like cells when they interact with water. This phenomenon is mentioned with regard to the Murchison meteorite on NASA's website: web99.arc.nasa.gov/~astrochm/vesicle.html It is also mentioned in an interview with a co-investigator for the Stardust mission, referring to interstellar ice www.biblibio.org/astrobiology/index.php?page=interview06. Although I can't find the references, I seem to remember that vesicles obtained by similar processes can be made to "replicate" under certain circumstances.”

Martin Pitt, of University of Sheffield, South Yorkshire, UK wrote:

“To a microbiologist, the particles in the red rain may look superficially like red blood cells, but to a chemical engineer they look like liposomes or microcapsules. These are bubbles of oil which can spontaneously trap aqueous material. They are typically spherical when formed, but may partially collapse with change of temperature and/or pressure. The activity that the researchers observed in cedar wood oil at 300 °C may be rearrangement of material rather than reproduction. There are many known methods of formation, and more to be discovered, but I would suggest that a source of oil mist or smoke has condensed on particles of ice and dust, which could even be meteoric in origin. One possible source would be a ship burning red oil in the Arabian Sea. The reported sonic boom could have been the rupture of an aircraft oil tank, a military cargo plane with 50 tonnes of hydraulic oil, perhaps, though the length of time the

red rain continued suggests a longer release. The absorption spectrum is not that of haemoglobin, but is feasible for an iron complex precipitating at a surface."

Kevin Gardner, from West Huntspill, Somerset, UK wrote:

"Rhodophyceae 'red' algae are a likely cause of Hazel Muir's red rain. The description and the low resolution of the cell photo points in particular to a Porphyridium species, such as is commonly seen in bird baths where soluble salts collect. It can form mucilaginous masses resembling drops of blood or even tomato sauce at times of population explosions. It is an alga that is open to desiccation, which is when its distribution and survival mechanism kicks in."

Rachel Cave, of National University of Ireland, Galway, Republic of Ireland wrote:

"If the material creating the red rain in Kerala turns out to be mammalian blood, there is no need to invoke exploding bats to find a source for it. It was commonplace in my childhood in Ireland for slaughterhouses to dump their effluent into nearby watercourses and I wonder if the same practice goes on in India today. All that is then needed to provide downpours of blood in rainfall over succeeding days is a tornado of the kind that empties water bodies of their fish or frogs along with the water....."

Ian Simmons, Penarth, from Vale of Glamorgan, UK wrote:

"Godfrey Louis's paper on the Kerala red rain will not be the first time the organic nature of such falls has been considered in the scientific press. Charles Fort, in his Book of the Damned (1919), summarises quite a variety of red rains, mostly culled from the scientific press. In the on-line version (www.resologist.net/damnei.htm) Fort scholar "Mr X" (his real name) gives the references for all the cases Fort refers to, many of them from reputable journals including Nature. A number of the reports Fort cites involve the fall persisting over one area for several days, being preceded by loud "thunderclaps" and on occasions being accompanied by falls of "slag" that may be of meteoric origin. Also, in the early days of London's Royal Society, its collection included a sample of a "rain of blood" collected in the Isle of Wight by Sir John Oglander. It is unfortunately now lost."

From issue 2543 of New Scientist magazine, 18 March 2006, page 24
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg18925430.300.html>

If the phenomenon of 'red rain' was shown to John the Revelator in vision, it is likely that he might have been shown something similar to what occurred over India for two months. At the time of the end, just prior to Christ's second coming, the earth's ecosystems are predicted to be 'upside down.' Meteorites, algae-blooms and nuclear activity might all contribute to the formation of 'red rain' or something that has the appearance of blood, although the majority of the world will apparently consider such occurrences to be 'natural disasters' or 'wrathful acts of an angry God.'

Revelation 15:1

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

However, the "wrath of God" has already been shown to be a reluctant, but final withdrawal of His divine presence and protection from those who insist on rejecting Him – i.e. Rejecting the principles of His character as stated in the life of His Son and in the 10 commandments. It is not an outburst of frenzied anger by a temporarily insane being.

- Babylon is fallen; its **probation is over**; the whore is "found wanting" (Verse 1).
- Who makes the whore desolate? **The demons who completely control her.** (Verse 2)
- God calls His people out of Babylon before the plagues fall. **Anyone still in Babylon must share some responsibility for her sins – not because God is angry – but because the people refuse to leave Babylon. (Just as Lot had to leave Sodom, so God's people must leave Babylon prior to its destruction, or be destroyed with and by the false religious/political system).**
- Who sends the plagues? **When the angels are instructed to "hold," it is to prevent disastrous plagues from coming on the earth, not to send trouble to the earth. When the angels loose the winds, then destruction follows. The protection of the angels will be removed from the earth, not so that they can better destroy the earth, but because the majority of the inhabitants on earth insist that they will NOT accept God's involvement in their lives!**
- God says to reward her proportionately for her iniquities. Who is to do this task? The law of sowing and reaping applies. **If wickedness is sown, wicked consequences will be reaped. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).**
- The Lord God judges Babylon and then Babylon is destroyed with fire. Where does the fire originate that consumes the sin? Where is the sin residing? **Within sinners because they are "joined to their idols." When they come into the glorious divine presence of the Father, their sins will be**

consumed. Just as Jesus became “sin” for us, taking sin into His own body, so the wicked retain their own sins in their own bodies. The fire that destroys sin comes forth from within sinners and from within Satan – from the bodies where in sin resides in their minds and bodies. They are “joined to sin.” Ye (unrepentant sinners) shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, as fire, shall devour you. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire” (Isaiah 33:11, 12). Thou (Satan) hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee (Eze 28:18).

- In one hour her judgment is come. When is the one hour period? Before the burning?
- In one hour Babylon has become desolate. Is this the same hour as her judgment?
- God has avenged someone on Babylon. **God is not the avenger – Satan is the avenger. He will ultimately reap the consequences of his own devising and reap an evil harvest. Satan has defiled Heaven, persecuted and murdered the apostles and prophets. He will be destroyed as a consequence of clinging to his own sins.**
- How did God avenge heaven (the holy inhabitants - angels), the apostles and prophets? **God “balances the scales” by supplying divine interference. He will protect holy heavenly beings from sin; He will protect His persecuted people on earth from sin and from the consequences of the actions of the wicked people which bring on the plagues. Christ, (the Son of God) will resurrect the righteous prophets and apostles, covering them with His own righteousness and eternal life. God will further protect them from their enemies when they attack the New Jerusalem.**
- How is Babylon thrown down? **With violence. Babylon is a violent system. From what this system sows it will reap the natural consequences. If violence is done, violence will be returned to the one committing that violence.**
- What does the millstone represent? **Inescapable death, destruction which results as a consequence of sin (Romans 6:23).**

(More thoughts in future updates)

Who Gets the Blame for the Plagues?

Plagues in Egypt

In contrast to the theory that God sent the plagues on Egypt, it is highly likely that the plagues on Egypt resulted from a removal of divine protection and a consequent exposure to severe natural disasters. Refer to Graham Phillip's book, "The Moses legacy – the Evidence of History, section on the plagues of Egypt. (<http://www.grahamphillips.net/Books/Moses.htm>).⁶¹ Creditability is gained for this theory from archaeological evidence researched by Egyptologist and ancient historian David Rohl.

David Rohl's description of the early Hyksos invaders of Egypt, as portrayed in his book, ***A Test of Time –The Bible from Myth to History*** (1995:288-289), casts light on the belief that **God** sent evil angels to destroy the Egyptians as the last plague just prior to the Israelites' exodus. Apparently, after the 9 previous 'natural disasters',⁶² the country of Egypt was a "sitting duck" to other warlike tribes.

Psalm 78:49, 50,

"He (God) cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. (50) He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;"

Of this verse David Rohl comments:

*The context of this verse is that of God's final punishment following the calamitous events of Exodus. Who then are the 'evil angels' sent by God to destroy the Egyptians? Velikovsky again comes up with an interesting observation. He notes that the phrase usually translated 'evil angels' is **malakhei-roim**, but the literal translation would then be 'angel of evils.' The correct Hebrew for 'evil angels' is **malakhim-roim**. Could it be that here we have another textual corruption resulting from a misunderstanding on the part of the redactor?⁶³ If the Psalmist, who originally composed this verse probably sometime in the tenth century BC, was aware of the agents of God's punishment of the Egyptians, then he would have written the verse as follows:*

61 Please note: By referring readers to Graham Phillips' material, the author does not wish to imply that Graham Phillips' theories are also her own, but just that his theories and the evidence to support the theories, are quite thought -provoking on the subject of the source of the Egyptian plagues.

62 See Graham Phillips in "the Moses Legacy" who demonstrates how the plagues might well have been the result of natural phenomenon which, without God's protection was able to cause devastation to the Egyptians.

63 A "**redactor**" is someone who seeing information from a different perspective, revises or edits information.

'He loosed the full heat of his anger, fury and rage and destruction by sending an invasion of king-shepherds against them. The hrase 'king-shepherds' in biblical Hebrew is malakhei-roim." "The 'Early Hyksos' invaders of Egypt were Amalekite tribesmen who migrated through Sinai from northern Arabia. This marauding army met the Israelites in battle during the Sinai wanderings. They settled at sites such as Avaris in the eastern delta and drove the native Egyptian pharaohs back to their captial at Itj-Tawy in Upper Egypt. The Amalekite warriors can be identified with the non-Egyptianised Asiatic newcomers who occupied Avaris at the beginning of stratum F...."

Another author, Alfred de Grazia, writes in **God's Fire; Moses and the Management of Exodus**, writes:

"An immense gravitational-electric strain interrupted the Earth's rotation. Earthquakes faulted the ground and fires broke out, mingling with the electrical fires. In many areas most houses were shattered. The pyramids stood the strains well. They were an excellent solution in stone for shock-proof structures. They must have been ablaze with Saint-Elmo's fire with great eyes of the gods alight at their peaks, The eye at the peak of the pyramid is of this age. (Thanks to the Masonic order, it may be found today on the American dollar bill.) Now the Earth prepared to tilt, in order to decelerate less. A tilt of the axis wreaks less strain upon it than a sudden slowdown of rotation or revolution [48] . An oblique approach of the comet would also have contributed to the choice of the tilt over the abrupt slowdown, since its electrical-gravitational pull was at a sharp angle to the rotation. Whether it actually tilted is a highly debatable question, to which we address only a few remarks in this book. We say here merely that the strain to tilt must have occurred and had consequences. The question is not beyond the capabilities of geophysics to resolve. A research team would obtain a set of measurements showing the angles of stress of disturbed monuments and geological features; it would postulate several chronological settings; it would calculate a number of possible movements of the crust resulting from combinations of decelerating and tilting forces; and significant statistical correlations would be computed. Tidal waves swept the coastal areas, and whenever the land was flat, raged inland for many miles. If the Delta area of Goshen was spared some of the disaster until some of the Hebrews had left, it was a miracle, perhaps related to the preventive measures that Moses and the leaders ordered. But Goshen may have been overturned as the Hebrews were crossing the Sea of Passage; a Jewish legend says that the cities they had built for the Pharaoh collapsed."

Alfred de Grazia continues:

"Here again is what happened, told, now, from the Egyptian viewpoint. It is taken from the papyrus of Ipuwer, an Egyptian writing shortly after the Exodus (reference supplied). Velikovsky located it in its true historical context, and independent sources have fixed the same time for it (reference supplied).

'Forsooth, great and small say: I wish I might die.... Would that there might be an end of men, no conception, no birth! He who places his brother in the ground is everywhere, There is not a house where there was not one dead. The children of princes are dashed against the wall; The children of princes are cast out in the streets. It is groaning that is throughout the land, mingled with lamentations. O that the earth would cease from noise, and tumult be no more! Years of noise. There is no end to noise The land turns round as does a potter's wheel. The towns are destroyed.' "Upper Egypt has become dry. All is ruin. The land is not light. Gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire The fire has mounted up on high. Plague is throughout the land. Blood is everywhere. The river is blood. Men shrink from tasting and thirst after water. Hair has fallen out for everybody. Women are barren; none can conceive. Trees are destroyed. No fruit nor herbs are found. Grain has perished on every side. Cattle are left to stray. The laws of the judgement-hall are cast forth. The storehouse of the king is the common property of everyone. Behold no craftsmen work. A man strikes his brother. One uses violence against another. If three men journey upon a road, they are found to be two men; the greater number slay the less. Noble ladies go hungry. She who looked at her face in water is possessor of a mirror. Serfs become lords of serfs. The Desert is throughout the land. A foreign tribe from abroad has come to Egypt. There are none found to stand and protect themselves. Enemies enter into the temples - weep. Woe is me because of the misery of this time.'

Alfred de Grazia comments:

'We note here, in addition to the other plague evidence of the Bible, complete social breakdown of a type never observable in modern disasters, even at Hiroshima (where outside help came); prolonged chaos, for Ipuwer has experienced weeks and months of it; a foreign desert tribe has taken over the country and its temples; death is everywhere; wobbling of the Earth, possibly the tilting axis slowly coming to rest; fires mounting to the sky, consuming stone; radiation disease (falling hair, women barren); all Upper Egypt affected as well as Lower Egypt. Ipuwer mentions the baffling death of his Pharaoh, but much more detail is supplied, again from the Egyptian side, particularly as to the manner of death of King Thoutmose III. This is from the inscribed stone of el-Arish [51] :

'The land was in great affliction... It was great upheaval in the residence... Nobody left the palace during nine days, and during these nine days of upheaval there was such a tempest that neither the men nor the gods could see the faces of their next.... His majesty went to battle against the companions of Apopi [fierce god of darkness]. His majesty [the culprits] finds on this place called Pi-Kharoti. Now even the majesty of Ra-Harmachis fought with the evil-doers in this pool, the Place of the Whirlpool, the evil-doers prevailed not over his majesty. His majesty leapt into the so-called Place of the Whirlpool.'

The el-Arish inscription reports that the King's son led a search party that heard "all that happened... the combats of the King Thourn" and that the prince was badly burned and his companions killed by a "blast." "The children of Apopi... fell upon Egypt at the fall of darkness. They conquered only to destroy." The prince fled the land in the face of the invading Hyksos. Later "the air cooled off, and the countries dried."

http://grazian-archive.com/quantavolution/QuantaHTML/plaintext/gods_fire.txt

Religious Opinion United on One Point

The Mosaic Law, The Islamic religion, the Roman Catholic religion, the Christian religion are all united on one theological doctrine – that God will actively punish and annihilate the disobedient.

Mosaic Law - God Will Punish the Disobedient

Deuteronomy 8:19, 20

“And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. (20) As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 11:26-29

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; (27) A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: (28) And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. (29) And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.”

Joshua 8:34

“And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.”

Jeremiah 11:7-8

“For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice. (8) Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.”

Malachi 2:1-4

“And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. (2) If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. (3) Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. (4) And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Islam – Allah Sends Punishment on the Disobedient

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,25689-1952823,00.html>

The Times December 22, 2005 - Tsunami was God's revenge for your wicked ways, women told From Nick Meo in Aceh

MARLUDDIN JALIL, a Sharia judge who has ordered the punishment of women for not wearing headscarves, was uncompromising: “The tsunami was because of the sins of the people of Aceh. Thundering into a microphone at a gathering of wives, he made clear where he felt the fault lay: “The Holy Koran says that if women are good, then a country is good.” A year after the disaster which many see as a divine punishment, emboldened Islamic hardliners are doing their best to eradicate sin — and women are their prime targets....The Wilayatul Hisbah, which loosely translates as “Control Team”, has arrested women, lopped off their hair, and paraded them in tears through the streets while broadcasting their sins over a megaphone. More than 100 gamblers and drinkers — men and women — have been caned in public and some clerics are calling for thieves’ hands to be amputated....The Sharia police say the tsunami happened because women ignored religion.....”Sin starts small and gets bigger,” he said....“Another tsunami is possible,” he said. “The Holy Koran says that if humans don’t listen to Allah they will be punished.” (Times Newspapers Ltd.)

Roman Catholic – God Punishes the Wicked

New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07207a.htm>

“Hell (infernus) in theological usage is a place of punishment after death.”

Christians – God Sends Punishment on the Disobedient

Robertson says Sharon's stroke is God's punishment

http://www.kare11.com/news/cooler_article.aspx?storyid=115851

"The Reverend Pat Robertson says Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's massive stroke could be God's punishment for giving up Israeli territory....He noted that former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. Robertson said God's message is, "This land belongs to me. You'd better leave it alone" (Copyright 2006 by The Associated Press).

Jesus – God Does Not Destroy

When Sinners Persistently Reject Him, God Withdraws His Presence (and Protection) Leaving the Unprotected Vulnerable to their Enemies

When Roman soldiers sacked Jerusalem, was Jesus (or His Father) responsible for the atrocities which were committed against the Israelite people? No. The enemies of God performed these wicked acts.

Luke 19:41-44

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, (42) Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. (43) For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, (44) And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Jesus had wept over Jerusalem. He wanted to protect the city as a hen protects her chickens, but the proud city had rejected Him. He was forced to "depart" and at that point, the city became desolate - without God, without the Saviour and without divine protection.

Matthew 23:36-39; 24:1

"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (37) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (38) Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (39) For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (24.1) And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple:"

Luke 9:52-56

“And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. (53) And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. (54) And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? (55) But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. (56) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”

In both the preceding examples, when Jesus experience rejection, He withdrew. He did not punish, reprimand or curse those who would not receive Him.

By His example, Jesus taught that it is not in His Father's character to destroy sinners either. Sinners choose to separate themselves from God. Then Satan and his wicked angels use various means to destroy the unprotected sinners; they use supposed “acts of God” - natural disasters – and blame it on God. Evil angels inspire other human beings to create warfare to destroy the unprotected also. This too is blamed on God.

To which category does the Mosaic law fit? Is the law of Moses to be seen as being in harmony with Islamic faith and the supposed militant Christian faith which teaches that God destroys; or does the Mosaic law fit in with the demonstration of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who revealed that it is separation from God and leaving His protection which causes destruction?

Summary

Unrepentant sinners will reap eternal destruction, “for the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). However, the destruction of sinners does not occur because a vengeful, hateful Being (God) has “had enough,” loses His temper and in a frenzied, furious fit, violently destroys sinners.

When sinners are finally destroyed, it will simply be the result of sin. Sin causes death – it carries the seeds of death within it. To sin is to commit suicide.

God, however, carries eternal life – and only life – within Him. God's presence destroys sin through the plan of salvation, but it cannot forcibly protect unrepentant sinners from their own, chosen destiny of death. God is “a consuming fire” to sin – not to sinners. Fire – destruction - comes from the wicked themselves; as a result of uncontrolled human wrath, technologically-manufactured ‘natural’ disasters, and unrestrained human warfare. The unrepentant sinner destroys himself and sin is consumed (Isa 33:11; Eze 28:18; Heb 12:29). All systems are chaotic when God removes His sustaining, creative power. The Father and Son do not take delight in the destruction of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).

God's vengeance is not selfish, human vengeance, but the liberation of His people from their enemies.

God removes His people at the second coming and the rebels are left to reap the consequences of their own behaviour. The wicked who are alive at the second coming of Christ, die a temporary death. Their death is only temporary because Christ has purchased eternal life for the human race. God's unselfish love and His government's principles are yet to be 'judged' and examined before the world. In order to do this, the unrepentant wicked are revived after 1000 years when Christ brings the righteous back to the earth in the New Jerusalem. Under Satan's control, the wicked attempt to "charge" the New Jerusalem and to take it by force. The destruction of the wicked occurs in the same way as has been witnessed in the preceding six thousand years of earth's history. In the final demonstration of selfishness, the universe witnesses the devastation caused by complete uncontrolled human and demonic passion. Sinners' fury results in world cataclysm. The abused earth rocks back and forth like a drunkard – not from God's wrath, but as a direct result of technological warfare inflicted by evil humanity. Devices such as HAARP⁶⁴ blast the earth's ionosphere with billions of watts of electricity causing colossal vibrational damage through earthquakes and resulting floods and tsunamis. ChemTrails cause droughts and floods and hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones and other weather disturbances which wreak havoc on primary industries and human life. More devastation is caused through nuclear/atomic warfare. Such demonic actions are no longer restrained by the spirit of God – the God of All Peace - for in response to continued rejection, God's patient spirit has finally been removed from the earth. God is loving. His love prevents Him forcing acceptance of His leadership. Rejected, He tells the holy, protective angels to "Let Ephraim alone. He is joined to his idols."

This is where the confusion lies in the Bible writings: Whatever consequences that God is unable to prevent (through honouring the individual's freedom of choice), **He is considered as causing.**

(God is a consuming fire to sin **in our characters** - refer to Objection # 11).

It would appear to be far better to let God destroy the sin in our lives while humanity is still under His protection, than to suicide by staying joined to sin. In those last days, there will be no protection from the certain death which will result as a consequence of the selfish choices made by the unrepentant sinners.

The wages of SIN is death (Romans 3:21). The wicked reap the harvest from what **they** have sown (Gal 6:7).

⁶⁴ For more information on how HAARP can be used to cause earthquakes and tsunamis visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkLTzesBxGE> and view the CBC broadcast, which was originally shown on **Undercurrent** - 16 January, 1996, reporter Wendy Mesley.

God doesn't pay wages for sin. To suggest that God imposes an arbitrary punishment on sinners is to suggest that God 'creates' artificial consequences and imposes them on the sinner. But sin is more sinister, more deadly than perhaps we ever realised. Sin brings forth death. Sin pays its own wages. God gives free gifts to His children (Roman 3:21). God saves the righteous (repentant sinners) from out of the hellish destruction by which Satan and his agents attempt to destroy them.

Just as in the Hollywood movies, God is the Hero who saves the innocent from the 'bad man' at the last minute, but unlike Hollywood, the True Hero does not use His strength to destroy the wicked, but to save the righteous by taking them from this burning planet.

At the very time when human life (on this earth) is made impossible by the violent actions of evil people and demons, God intervenes to save His people by taking them off this dying planet - our earth - and transports them to heaven.

AT Jones, Review and Herald Jan, 24 & 31, 1899.

'Yet, what every one must understand is this: the only way that God does, or can, separate anybody from sin is by that very consuming fire of his presence. The only way, therefore, in which you and I can ever be so separated from sin as to meet God as he is, in the flaming fire that he is, in that great day, is to meet him TODAY as he is, in the consuming fire that he is. The only way that we can be prepared to meet him at his coming in that great day is to meet him in his coming today. For there is a coming to men now , as really as to the world in that great day. 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will COME TO YOU.' John 14:18. But do not forget that whether he comes to you or to me now, or whether he comes to other people in that great day, he comes only as a consuming fire.

The Gospel Message for Today, W. W. Prescott, Sunday, 29 March, 1903
General Conference Daily Bulletin Vol 3, No. 4 p 54 (sermon)

"A word further concerning that blotting out of sin: It is the revelation of the glory of God that blots out sin. The time for the blotting out of sin has come when our High Priest takes all the sins of the people upon Himself, and goes into the most holy place, and stands in the immediate presence of the glory which blots out sin. The sins blotted out are the sins confessed, confessed upon the Priest, not that by arbitrary act of ours we can lay our sins upon Him; God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Our confession is that we personally confess that our sins are on Him. We agree to that, and, having confessed that, and agreed to that, we let go of them; we say our sins are on Him. Our very agreement with Him, in the confession that our sins have been laid upon Him, is God's means of removing them from us, and letting them be upon Him in our behalf."