



2 Cor. 5:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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Personal Religion

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There are some stories in the Bible which might make you laugh, but there are often deep lessons in these stories. One such story is found in 2 Kings 14. Here we read that the king of Judah made war against the Edomites and it says in verses 7-8 of 2 Kings 14:

He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day. Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. (2 Kings 14:7-8)

The king of Judah has won a battle against Edom and he is feeling great. He sends to the king of Israel and says, “come let us do battle.” Maybe there was some friction between them from before, maybe Israel had taken some land that belonged to Judah or something like that. Anyway, he sends to the King of Israel and he says, “come let

us go to war.” It’s the answer of the Israelite King that amuses me. Verse 9 says:

And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. (2 Kings 14:9)

A thistle is just a little blade of grass. This insignificant weed proposed to marry the daughter of the cedar, which is a huge tree. But a wild beast passed by, stepped on this poor thistle, and destroyed it. At first glance it looks like this is a strange parable and you cannot figure out what the meaning is. But there is a very striking interpretation.

They were very good at telling parables during Bible times. The king of Israel was really disrespecting the king of Judah. He was saying, “you the little blade of grass, you are just a little bush, you are nothing and you want to come and measure yourself against me? You are daring to think of doing battle with me, the great cedar tree...” in other words, you are rising above your qualification level. You are so insignificant that a little beast can pass by and step on you and crush you down, yet you want to come and interfere with somebody as great as me!

But the king of Judah pushed ahead and eventually they actually went to war. The king of Israel, as he had predicted, defeated the king of Judah.

This is the way life is in this world, we have categories and classes. In India, they have a very well developed system where some people are regarded as inferior to others. They call it a “caste” system. I have never lived in such a society, but even in places like the USA for example, there was a time not long ago where people of a certain colour were considered too inferior to marry people of another colour.

In Jamaica we may not have the colour barrier, but we still have class barriers where rich people, for example do not mingle with poor people. Generally, this kind of situation is founded on the idea that certain people are inferior to others.

WHAT IS MAN?

The reason why I focused on this passage (about the thistle and the cedar) is because I wanted to compare it to another verse that is found in Psalm 144:3. It says:

LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him! (Ps 144:3)

This is a great question. Recently I spoke with a group of brethren, and I explained to them that the greatest thing that happened in my life was when I

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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realized that there is a God. I Grew up in a Christian home, was exposed to the Bible all my life, yet I never really grasped the true implications of what it means that there is a God. When I was converted at age 22 and discovered that there is a God, it was like someone took me from this world and carried me to another planet. It was like I was reborn as a different creature. The new awareness of God's existence changed everything in my life.

People love to talk about many different doctrines, but the thing that made this great impact on my mind was simply the becoming aware of the fact that **there really is a God**. I do not know if that reality has ever hit your mind the way it really should. There *is* a God! The other thing that came with that reality is that this God wanted to be my friend. That really blew my mind as well, and it changed my life. Everything else became secondary.

The truth is, if there is a God who cares for us, why should we be concerned about anything at all? With such a being is our friend, everything else means

nothing. That is the great reality of the universe, but this question, does come to us from time to time: What is man, (the little thistle in Lebanon) that you take knowledge of him?

Is it really true that The Almighty, who has eight billion people dealing with on this planet cares about *me*? There are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels in heaven, and for all I know there are many other worlds scattered all over the universe. Yet this God takes time to know David Clayton! He takes time to consider this little speck of dust, this little thistle on the ground which a wild beast can pass by and trample, and wipe out of existence!

As the Psalmist says,

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Ps 8:3-4)

THE POWER OF WORDS

One of the problems with words is that they have the capacity to become so common place that they become irrelevant and meaningless. Like most of us, I read portions of the Bible from the time that I was a child. I went to Sabbath school and they taught me these memory verses. But for the most part, I merely read the verses and memorized them without really thinking about what they meant. This is not something unusual in religious circles, In many churches the preachers read Bible verses, but few of the listeners really hear what is said, because it is the same old words they have heard over and over again. It means nothing, and in instances like these, the words of God become trivial and meaningless.

I remember when I first began to understand what righteousness by faith really means. I started to read Colossians, Ephesians and Galatians. One thought that came to me was, read it and see if you can believe what you are reading. So, I started with Ephesians, vowing to simply believe what I read, and I will tell you that it blew me away!

When I saw the things said about Christ in you, and the things that God did through Christ, one day I just started to cry while I was reading it.

There is that power in the word, but the power comes from thinking about what we are reading, understanding and most importantly *believing!* I started just sharing that idea with other people who could not understand what we were saying about righteousness by faith, I told them, "read Ephesians and ask yourself if you can believe every word that you read." Several of them got back to me with rejoicing and tears. They said something changed when they simply did that one little thing.

It is from this perspective that I repeat the question, who is man that God is mindful of him? Who am I, an insignificant little speck of dust, that God should take thought or care about me? There are so many issues in the world to be dealt with, so many things of great importance. And yet, somehow, He still considers me relevant. I mean something to Him. We have a God who is great, a being of immeasurable might. How can such a person really have something to do with me personally? Can we really believe that these things are true, or are they just nice thoughts in a book?

EVERYBODY, OR ME?

We all can embrace John 3:16 which says,

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

But, sometimes, I find my heart hungering for a word that says, "David, I mean *you!*" Even as a child, if your father says, "I love my family," it is not the same as if he takes you aside and puts you on his knee and says "I love you!" There is something different when this happens.

So, most of us can understand that God considers institutions, He loves the church. But unfortunately, religious institutions have focused so much on

themselves as being favored of God, that individual church members have often found it very difficult to relate to the idea that they personally, are loved and cherished by God. In the churches we often find that those who are higher in the hierarchical structure appear to be the ones favored of God, while the rank and file members are not only at the low end of the pecking order, but they also are regarded as being low down on the measure of God's favor. They are less than the thistle on the plains of Lebanon, something a passing beast could easily tread upon and wipe out of existence.

Before I was put out of the church many years ago, (because I had been asking questions and objecting to certain things that the church was doing) the pastor that dis-fellowshipped me said to me, "you are in danger of being cast out, and when this happens you will be lost!" I was incredulous and stunned by such a statement. It was the first time somebody had said something like this to my face. I replied, 'pastor, do you think you can take my name out of heaven?' He smiled, and I in turn smiled back. I was blown away to think that this man seriously believed that he and his church had the power to remove my name from heaven.

But this is the kind of situation that prevails in the world. The idea that God can, and does have a personal and intimate relationship with each of his children, is something which few people really believe and in fact, most religious institutions are set up in such a way that this kind of relationship is either discouraged, or else it must be subject to the control of the institution. People are discouraged from thinking that God can lead them individually, and especially in ways that are contrary to the direction of the institution.

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Even within the "One God" movement, there is currently an idea that God's presence with us is by means of angels, and by the reading of the Bible. This has become a strong teaching in other circles as well. This teaching promotes

the idea that our fellowship is not with God Himself, it is not personal contact. Of course, nobody could doubt that God is able to have personal relationship with each person on earth, but this idea that God does not Himself live with, and in his people, seems to arise from the mentality that God is too great to condescend to live with feeble, insignificant, imperfect people such as we are. It is like we have been put again in the place of the thistle in Lebanon, and God is the cedar saying, "who are you to try to talk to me? Who are you to seek a relationship with me?"

I understood the thinking behind this attitude better when I was watching a TV programme, here in Jamaica, called "Religious Hard Talk." Two Muslims were being interviewed by the host, and they made the comment that Christians are presumptuous to think that they can call God "Father." To think that God, who is holy and pure, could interact



with things as unclean and sinful as we are, was in their opinion highly offensive. They found it ridiculous to think that The Almighty One could condescend to the level where he would mingle with the likes of us. Rather, they believed our sole duty is to be obedient servants, to bow, to scrape and do as we are commanded.

I remember when I was a boy going to school, there was a fellow who was overly friendly. He would sometimes pass and touch the teacher, and enjoyed always clowning around. One day, as he passed by and touched the teacher, the irritated schoolmaster exclaimed, "Boy! Don't exercise your pugnacity so ferociously!" needless to say, the entire class had a good laugh at such an expression. But what the teacher was really saying was, don't be presumptuous! Don't pass your place! Don't pass

your boundaries! I have come to realize that most people believe that this attitude of the teacher, is similar to how God feels about us humans.

When I ask myself if this attitude towards The Lord is justified, I have to admit that in some ways it is. Because the person we are dealing with is great! He is awesome! It is normal that when a lesser person is in the presence of one who is greater, there is a level of intimidation and reserve. This approach is normal and it is human. But is this what God Almighty wants?

Of course there is a widespread belief, even among Christians, that it is harmful to believe that God relates to each person on an individual, personal basis. The idea is that such a belief can be very dangerous and lead to fanaticism. People argue that such an idea leads to nothing but anarchy and confusion with everybody pulling in a different direction, and encourages people to have all kinds of fanciful ideas, with many claiming to receive special messages from God. The point they try to make is that we need other people to keep us balanced. In other words, we need a church to keep us straight and in line.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS?

It is true that we often find many strange ideas arising in little groups or among individuals where there is this strong focus on individual communication with God, and a distrust of corporate, institutionalized religious bodies. It is often among these kinds of individuals that we find people setting dates for the coming of Jesus, making predictions about earthquakes, judgments, Tsunamis, and promoting extreme behaviors such as wearing only one kind of colored clothing, or recommending long fasts etc. Ideas like these are not normally found in large, traditional church settings. The reason for this is that they already have their creeds and established systems. The pastors go around and make sure that everything is according to the settled teachings of the body. It may seem like this approach is good, but we have to look at the other side of it as well.

Look for example at the Mormon Church, this church teaches some of the strangest doctrines. According to this group, God has a wife. Each of us was once an angel in heaven and God took the spirit of this angel, put it in you and allowed you to be born on Earth as a human being. You are here developing so that you can become a god yourself, and in the next life, you will become one fully. You will be given a world of your own, and you and your many wives will populate it and make it into a place where you are the ultimate ruler.

We can also consider the Catholic Church. Here, the Pope is the head and the substitute for God on Earth. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that God is going to roast sinners forever, but in the meantime if you are not that bad, you go to a place called Purgatory, where you are roasted for maybe hundreds or thousands of years until your sins are purged away. You then fly out of purgatory and into heaven. If you die as a baby, and you were not baptized, you do not go to hell but instead go to a place called limbo, kind of in between heaven and earth. In other words, these are the kinds of perverted ideas that come from the safeguarded teachings of these esteemed churches, protected by the “safety of numbers.” Can we really be safe depending on numbers, or popular ideas when such nonsense is institutionalized among hundreds of millions?

The popular idea is that we need to belong to an established, organized institution so that we can be kept from fanaticism. But the question is, which fanaticism? Which version of perversion and falsehood are you kept from, when these are the things the traditional establishments teach? It all depends on which church you associate with, and their ‘safeguards’ are often far worse than the strange beliefs individuals sometimes come up with. The fact is, the argument that we need other Christians to keep us safe is a fallacy.

Long ago Isaiah told the truth, when he said,

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (Isa 54:13)

So, do we have fanaticism among us as independent Christians? We do! What are we to do about it? I say, that is not our concern. My only determination and goal is to find the right relationship with The Lord so that I am not included in that list of fanatics who follow *falsehood*. Not long ago, I was having a little discussion with my family members and I was telling a little about my history as a Christian. Some of the things I did, such as leaving my job, make me look back today and wonder, was I crazy? I know I was not, but it certainly seemed that way. Many of those outside looking on said it was fanaticism.

But there is a difference between fanaticism, and believing. Everyone who truly believes the word of God will be regarded as a fanatic. This is because these words are out of sync with the ways of this world. Therefore, believing and practicing them is going to put you so much out of touch with conventions and norms of society that people will think you are crazy. Knowing this, do not let the label of fanatic be a deterrent, as long as truth is your goal.

DOES HE WANT ME?

What we need is to find the answer to this question; Am I so insignificant that God pays no attention, or does he want me to have a relationship with him? I know that I want a relationship with Him, but the question is, does He want a relationship with me? I know that I would like to meet this great personage, but does he want to meet me? Is my desire one-sided? It is God who says,

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13)

Some one might be tempted to ask, but what about you, God? Are you not seeking too? Are you not looking to find as well? It is one thing when a man is pursuing a woman because she is attractive and beautiful, and he wants her. But it becomes hard when she constantly gives him the cold shoulder, and she

is not returning his calls. Maybe when he calls, he sees that she is blocking him, and his efforts are not reciprocated. No matter how much you love a person, if this continues, after a while, you get discouraged and you will go and look somewhere else.

I know we want God, but the real question that needs to be answered is, does He want us? I do not mean, does he want the church, I mean, does He want **me**? Does He want this little speck of dust with greying hair and aging body, and a life filled with mistakes and faults and problems? Does he *really* want such a person? The answer to that question is what this whole article is really about.

Christianity depends on faith and what you believe. It is not about what you see, but rather what you believe and what your faith grasps, as you come to understand. With this in mind, let us look at a few verses which relate to the question we are asking. In John 14:21 Jesus says:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)

So, the first thing He says is, there is a way that you can show that you love me, and it is that you keep my commandments. We have long ago settled the question that Jesus was not here speaking simply of, the ten commandments, although it is probably true that you could include them as well. What He was really saying is, “the way you respond to what I say will be the evidence of whether you love me or not.”

These words have been applied in the context of Christ speaking to a community. In other words, he was saying, “here is a set of rules, these are my instructions to the believers as a body.” It is not his personal, intimate instructions as he directs me individually as his friend and child, but rather a standard set of mandates. “You just follow this set of rules which I am giving to everybody and I will extend my favour towards you.” If we view this verse in

this way, the true message it gives is lost. Jesus goes on to say,

“...he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.”

Clearly, he is speaking about *individuals*. I love the fact that Jesus is not here addressing the church, or some collective, corporate body. He does not say, I will manifest myself to my people, but rather, I will manifest myself to **him!** He is talking about a personal interaction. If any of you love me, what will you do? You will respond to what I ask you to do, you will keep my commandments. You will obey my words. And if you respond to me in this way, if I can see your love towards me being exercised in your life, my love for you will intensify, and I will show myself to you. This is what He is really saying.

THE CEDAR WANTS THE THISTLE

It is interesting that Jesus says, “I will love him. He shall be loved of my Father.” If we take this statement superficially, it would suggest that he does not love people who do not keep his commandments and His words. But this of course as we know, is not true. What I would say is that the people who do not keep His word, who have no relationship with Him, fall under the category of John 3:16. “God so loved the world.” God loves everybody, and He has generally blessed all men. But in the context of our discussion, He is talking about *intimacy*, one on one relationship, *personal* interaction.

He is talking about how we can go outside at night and look up at the stars and say, “my Father, I love you!” He is talking about feeling His presence around you, knowing a *person*. We are not in love with a principle, or an abstract concept, we are not in touch with God through organizations or through theories, or through some kind of hierarchical system or setup. It is living interaction, heart to heart, person to person. This is what it is talking about and this is what my heart wants as a Christian, This is what religion is about for me, and if this is not in religion, I do not want it!

In verse 23 of the same chapter, Jesus repeats the same sentiments a bit stronger:

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)

Notice he does not say commandments here, but instead says, ‘keep my words.’ When Abraham was told to go and kill his son, that was found nowhere in the Ten Commandments. But this personal commandment was given on the basis of a friendship, and his friend said to him, “go and offer your son for a sacrifice!” He loved and trusted this friend so much that he went to do even that! Because of this relationship, in Isaiah, God refers to him as, “Abraham, my



friend (Isa 41:8).” I think that this is the only place in the Bible where God calls somebody “my friend.” But there is a desire in my heart that if ever there was another book, similar to the Bible written sometime in the future, in it would be found the words, “David, my friend (referring to me)!”

I am not out of reach; I can have the same kind of relationship. That is what New Testament Christianity is about. Not relationship by proxy, or through an organization, through a nation or through a church. But personal, heart to heart fellowship because I was made for Him. He made me for Himself and He is the only person that can satisfy me. But this is a reciprocal need. Nobody can satisfy that need in me, apart from Him and likewise, no one else can fill that David-shaped space in his heart except me.

So, He says:

“If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

God loves everybody, but there are some people that He is able to demonstrate this love to, more, because they let Him into their lives. What the cedar of Lebanon wants to say is, “I care for the thistle; I want to be friends with the thistle. But do you believe that I want to be? Will you allow me to come down to your level and get into your life? Or will you think so little of yourself, that you keep a barrier between you and me?”

THE THREE PARABLES

There are three parables in Luke 15 which I find interesting. This is the chapter of the three lost things: the lost boy, the lost sheep and the lost coin. What I love about these parables, is that in each one, the person who is represented as having lost something, has many more of that thing. In the parable of the coin, the woman still has 9 coins. In the parable of the sheep, the shepherd still has 99 sheep. In the parable of the lost boy, the father has another son at home who is very observant of the rules of the house.

In the parable of the lost boy and in the parable of the lost sheep, somebody wanders away from home. In the parable of the lost coin, through carelessness, this one gets lost. In one case, the shepherd goes looking for the lost sheep while in the other case the woman sweeps the house, and searches with a lamp until she finds the lost coin. In the third, the boy is able to turn towards home, but he is returning beaten, ragged and dirty, defeated and with very poor self-esteem. He thinks very little of himself. He knows he is worthy of nothing, but in every one of these stories, the Son of God, the redeemer with the heart of the Father, the one who is His express image, is letting us understand how God feels about you and me as individuals. Praise God!

It is wonderful that God says, “you will seek me and find me when you search with all your heart,” but more amazing

is the statement in which he says, "I will seek and I will find you, even when you are not looking for me!" He then says in Luke 15:7

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. (Luke 15:7)

So Heaven rejoices, not because the General Conference made a new decision or because the church reached a certain target, but because of you, the individual! The celestial hosts laugh and sing, they jump and dance for joy, and God the Father has a great feeling in his almighty heart because you, the *individual* sinner, the one little speck of dust, turns your heart towards Him! I can love and want a God like this! I can find joy in fellowship with a God like this!

A LOVE THAT IS JUST MINE

I am going to suggest something to you which I believe to be true; every person who becomes a strong Christian, will have a sense of being special to God. I do not mean special in the sense of feeling that you are better than other people, but you will have the sense of being specially loved. This is what makes you a strong Christian. God loves all men, but if you stay in that mindset, telling yourself that 'He loves everybody' you will be just a unit, just a number in God's database. That is what it will be in your mind. It is the personal relationship that knows, *I am loved*, that means something.

Sometimes I pick up my grandson and I see him looking into my eyes. Those little eyes stare intently, even though he cannot even speak yet. He leans backwards and interlocks his eyes with mine; it does not do the same thing to my heart when he looks at my wife or his parents like that. When he looks at *me*, it does something for *me*. It endears *me* to *him*.

This is how life is. If the woman you love comes to visit your family and declares that she loves them, that is very nice; it is great to know that she wants interaction with your kin, but it

is not what you desire ultimately. What I *really* want to hear her say is, "I love *you!*" That is the way we were designed and created, and this is the way God wants us to relate to Him. He loves the world, He loves the church, He loves the large bodies and groups! But wonder of wonders, sweetest of all truths, the greatest story ever told is that God loves *me*. **This** is what my heart responds to, this is what I want! This is what I have found, and I praise and bless Him for this truth, this experience so wonderful.

I hope that all of us who are not yet living in this way, who do not yet experience this *personal* relationship with the Lord might refocus, and make it the centre and the heart of our religion. Someday they may take some of us and lock us in dungeons. I have often thought about this, I have found that people who have really developed a relationship with God often seek solitude, they look for places to be alone. It is not that they do not like people's company, but they enjoy the time alone with God because it helps them to focus better on Him.

They may lock some of us in solitary confinement to punish us, but they will unwittingly be letting us into heaven. Because we would have the opportunity in that lonely place to be alone with our God, what a joy! In a place where they think to isolate, torture and punish you, you are saying, thank you Jesus! I have undistracted fellowship with you! You are with me, even to the ends of the earth! Even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death!

This is the joy of true Christianity! They cannot take it away from you. They can take away riches, possessions, property, your comfort, and even parts of your very body, but they *cannot* take away Jesus! When we have found Him, we have found the true meaning of life, we have found something that will keep us, and sustain us through any situation in life.



KEEP AT YOUR WORK

The Lord has given to every man his work. It is his business to do it, and the Devil's business to hinder him if he can. So sure as God has given you a work to do, Satan will try to hinder you. He may throw you from it; he may allure you by worldly prospects, he may assault you with slander, torment you by false accusations, set you at work defending your character, employ pious persons to lie about you, and excellent men to slander you. You may have Pilate and Herod, Annas and Caiaphas, all combined against you, and Judas standing by to sell you for thirty pieces of silver; and you may wonder why all these things come upon you. Can you not see that the whole thing is brought about through the craft of the devil to draw you off from your work and hinder your obedience to God?

Keep at your work. Do not flinch because the lion roars; do not stop to stone the devil's rabbits. Do your work. Let liars lie, let sectarians quarrel, let corporations resolve, let editors publish, let the devil do his worst; but see to it that nothing hinders you from fulfilling the work God has given you. He has not sent you to make money. He has not commanded you to get rich. He has never bidden you to defend your character. He has not set you at work to contradict falsehood which Satan and his angels may start to peddle. If you do these things, you will do nothing else. You will be at work for yourself and not for the Lord.

Keep at your work. Let your aim be as steady as a star. Let the world brawl and bubble. You may be assaulted, wronged, insulted, slandered, wounded and neglected. You may be abused by foes, forsaken by friends, and despised and rejected of men. But see to it with steadfast determination, with unfaltering zeal, that you pursue the great purpose of your life and object of your being, until at last you can say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

H.M.S. Richards

Changed at Calvary



One of the strange ideas which exists among some Seventh-day Adventists, is the belief that Jesus has always been a minister in the heavenly sanctuary. They insist that even before Jesus became a man, even during the age of the old covenant, Jesus was already ministering in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of the human race. This belief is simply a natural extension of the idea that everything which Jesus came to give to the human race was already available from the foundation of the world, long before Jesus became a member of the human family. However, there is an abundance of scriptural evidence which demonstrates that this teaching is contrary to the word of God. Jesus never had a ministry in the heavenly sanctuary until after his blood was shed.

This erroneous idea is based on a text found in Revelation 13:8. This verse says,

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev 13:8)

The suggestion is made that Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world. Of course, we know he was not, but the argument is that in the mind and purposes of God he was already slain, long before he actually died on Calvary, and, as a consequence, all the benefits which he would make available later, were already present and available from the

foundation of the world. However, the meaning of this verse is distorted by a faulty translation. Christ was not slain from the foundation of the world. This translation exists ONLY in the King James version and can easily be proven to be faulty by simply comparing it with Revelation 17:8. No need to go to the original Greek words. Look at both verses below:

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev 13:8)

. . . . and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev 17:8)

In chapter 13:8, it suggests that Christ was slain from the foundation of the world, but in chapter 17:8, it shows clearly that the phrase, "from the foundation of the world," has to do with the time when names were written in the book of life, not to the time when the Lamb was slain. As I said, every other translation has it correct, except the KJV. Later translators recognized the mistake and corrected it. So the verse should really say,

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. (Rev 13:8)NASB

By using that mistranslated verse, we are led to the conclusion that in effect, Jesus did not need to come to die in AD 31, except to fulfill the legal requirements of the plan of salvation, because all that his death accomplished was already accomplished from the foundation of the world. In effect, the wrong understanding of the verse leads to a denial of the great benefits which became available to God's people after

Christ came.

In Heb 8:3, we read:

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. (Heb 8:3)

Here we are told that in order for someone to be a high priest it was necessary that that person should have something to offer. In the context of the ministry of the sanctuary, the required offering was blood. Until he died on Calvary, Jesus had nothing to offer, his blood had not been shed, but after he was offered then he became a high priest because now he had something to offer.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (Heb 9:11-12)

If we accept the teaching of the Scripture, then it is clear, this is when Jesus began his ministry as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. (Heb 8:6)

Don't forget the word, "now!" That ministry was not obtained before his blood was shed. The word "now," does not apply to any time, before Christ died.

While it is true that by faith men could take hold on the PROMISE of salvation and by faith have the assurance of eternal life, it is also important to understand that eternal life is not simply a legal status where one is forgiven. Eternal life in essence is the experience of receiving the very life of Christ who is

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November 2021

Escaping the Chains (part 6)

Howard Williams



FREEDOM!

For a long time, I could not accept the truth because of the baggage of my past and the impact it had on me. It was like being in the dark for a long time and then someone turns on a bright light: you are temporarily blinded and have to close your eyes to shut out the light. But as you adjust to the light it becomes easier and eventually you can open your eyes fully.

Freedom after being a slave is very hard. Not everyone is fit to be free. It is said that after slavery was abolished many went back to their slave masters and asked to be taken back because they could not make it on their own. For most people who have been entrenched in religion and family ties it is the hardest thing to break loose of the chains that hold them, but when you recognize the weakness in your life and how powerless you are against sin, there is a cry from deep within that calls for more. There is the longing for victory. Can we ever be free? The answer is a resounding "YES!" "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (Jn 8:36) To find

Jesus the person – not his teaching or his ways but HIM, the person – and have him live in you, this is freedom indeed!

Said the angel to Mary the mother of Jesus, "...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt 1:21) This is the very essence of Christianity! It is freedom from SIN! Only Jesus can give us this freedom, therefore who Jesus sets free from sin is free from sin!!

LIVING IN FREEDOM

The words of a well known secular song are very instructive at this moment. "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery..." Yet it is not as easy as the words are read. To be enslaved especially by the mind takes a miracle to break loose. To truly live in freedom we have to accept and believe in our state of freedom.

There has to be a never ending connection to the one who sets you free and keeps you free from all that offends. You have to be listening to that person at all times and close off the sounds of everyone else that says differently.

"What shall we then say to these things?

If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31) The very breath of our freedom comes from God and no one else. Listen now to how this author puts it together in the best possible way!

Who shall lay any thing 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." (Rom 8:33-34) Oh, what a beautiful experience!!! That God and Christ has set us free and keeps us free and we can dare stand and proclaim our reality and be brave like a lion and not flinch or fear even in the face of doubters – Hallelujah! Praise his wonderful name!!

RISK OR CONFIDENCE

Just think of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. We are made free from sin by the receiving of God's own life. Imagine that now for every Christian "ALL THINGS ARE LAWFUL". (1Cor 10:23) Is this a risk that God is taking or is God confident? Well the principle of life that is embedded in HIS creation is "Each produces after its kind." God knows that divinity (*His own nature*) can only be righteous and do righteousness, so with confidence he gives us his life and makes us Supernaturally Extraordinary. Can we believe it?

DIVINE HUMANS

Jesus was the first of a new human race of beings and that is why he is called the "Last Adam" (1Cor 15:45) He gives his Spirit to ALL who ask him into their hearts. Once he lives in you, you are a part of this new race.

If you are a Christian this is your reality even if you never knew, believed or experienced it. Education is the key to understanding and also to experiencing. Once you know who you are then it lifts you to a higher plane to be who you are. If you are not a Christian then here is your opportunity to become a part of Christ. Christianity is not denominational-ism, it is becoming a part of the body of Christ on earth and to (re-)present Christ where ever you go.

CONCLUSION

The greatest lesson I have learned in my life is that I know nothing, but Jesus knows everything. So I am happy to have Jesus in me, living his life and teaching me to grow in him. The promise we have is that, as we grow and become mature, our faith will lead us to trust him more and more until we are formed into his image, unto the fullness of the measure of the stature

of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13)

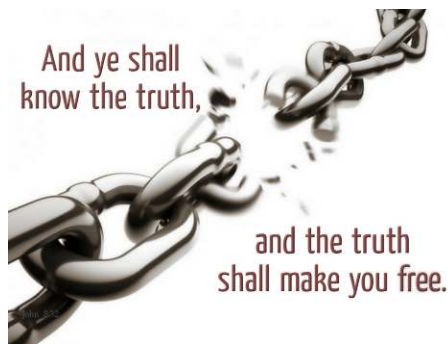
God, through his love and goodness, got me started on a journey. I am learning more of him and more from him every day. My life now is a walk – not a stagnant, stunted experience – it is an experience where I am seeing more wonderfully clear what it means to be a Christian. And it's not by wearing a title, but by living a life. True Christianity is a lifestyle that is alive and progressive. That's where my goal is: Jesus – the fullness of God! My encouragement to all who read this, my story, is that you seek him until you find him, because he that the Son has set free is FREE INDEED.

My chains are gone,
I've been set free!

My God, my Savior,
has ransomed me,

And like a flood
His mercy reigns –

Unending love,
amazing grace!



Oh! that my tongue might so
possess
The accent of His tenderness
That every word I breathe should
bless.

For those who mourn a word of
cheer,
A word of hope for those who fear
And love to all men far and near.

Oh! that it may be said of me,
"Surely, thy speech betrayeth
thee,
As friend of Christ of Galilee."

Changed at Calvary

Continued from page 7

the last Adam and the New Creation (Rom 5:10). We become a part of his body through the experience of the new birth. That is the aspect of salvation which nobody could experience before Christ came, regardless of the fact that they were justified and had the assurance of eternal life.

Of course, the spirit of God was present with men, and even in men before Christ came. The same spirit worked mightily through the disciples even before Jesus died and the Comforter came. Notice that the spirit worked mightily in Samson and also changed Saul's nature, but the point is, this did not bring about any significant change in the moral character of either of those men.

Even king David, the man after God's heart, showed characteristics which suggest that he was not born again and in many ways possessed a different spirit than that of Christ. David wrote that he hated his enemies (Ps 139:22) and this is certainly not what the spirit of Christ produces in a person. Upon his death bed he instructed Solomon to take revenge on Shimei, a man he professed to have forgiven (1 Kings 2:8,9). This is not the attitude of a born again person, at least, not if that person has been born into Christ. This behavior is hard to understand until we realize that David loved the Lord and served him faithfully, according to the law, but he was not born again into Christ, because the born again experience was not available to humanity until Christ became the last Adam and made his life available to God's people.

The fact is, that kind of thinking and behavior was perfectly acceptable based on the righteousness of the law. The law encouraged Israel to hate her enemies and to treat them with extreme prejudice. These heroes of the Old Testament age had the righteousness of Christ IMPUTED to them, but the lives they actually lived revealed a different measurement of righteousness and it

was that of the law. This is why we find people described as "perfect," such as Noah, Abraham, Job etc. when we, from our understanding today, can find difficulty in reconciling some aspects of their behavior with what we see in Jesus.

All who lived by faith were counted as righteous. It was imputed to them, but in that former age, it was not imparted (they were righteous according to the law, but not according to the righteousness of God). One reason why Christ came was in order to give humanity life. He came and **created** the saving life by living a life of victory over sin, Satan and the world. It could not have been present before he created it in himself. This is why he said,

... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

If this is bypassed, then we have to redefine what salvation means, and to question whether or not Christ's incarnated life was absolutely necessary. The impartation of the life of Christ to those Old Testament believers will have to await the resurrection when they will awaken with a different spirit than the one they died with.

This is what Hebrews 11:39,40 is addressing. Notice that Enoch, Moses, Elijah, David, Samson are all included in this statement:

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." (Heb 11:39-40)

What "promise," did they not receive? Obviously it is the promise relating to being "made perfect." If we do a simple word search in the book of Hebrews it becomes clear what Paul is referring to. The following verse makes it clear:

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Heb 7:19)



Healthy Cooking Oils

Lenworth Frankson



TYPES OF FATS

When it comes to choosing which type of oil to sauté, fry, bake and drizzle with, home cooks have quite a few options. In this article I will only look at a few seeing that there are so many choices. Oils like olive oil, are well known while others like hazelnut, avocado or pumpkin seed oil, are less familiar. The question that many people are asking is this. Which oil is right for my cooking? The answer to the question depends largely on the type of cooking you are doing. The oil's smoke point, which is the point when oil starts burning and smoking, is one of the most important things to consider. If you heat oil past its smoke point, it not only harms the flavor, but many of the nutrients in the oil degrade, causing the release of harmful compounds called free radicals.

We have to understand that an oil's pluses do not always outweigh its minuses. Oil is fat, regardless of what kind you use. At 9 calories per gram, fats are far more calorie-dense than carbohydrates or protein, which have 4 calories per gram. Even healthier oils, such as avocado and olive oil, are still fats. Keeping our fat intake between 25-35% of your total daily calories is good to keep in mind when consuming about 2000 calories a day.

There are many cooking oils available to use therefore it is important to un-

derstand the different types of fats (both good and bad) that make up these oils. By knowing which fats provide health benefits and which fats are harmful to our diet, our educated choice in cooking oils will be easier to make.

UNHEALTHY FATS

Saturated fats: The less we have of these fats, the better. Less than 7% of your daily fat calories should come from saturated fats. To cut back on saturated fats, limit or eliminate: Butter, whole milk, yogurt, cheese, Lard, definitely no bacon, red meat, the skin of poultry, coconut oil and palm kernel oils

Trans fats: Eliminate trans fats from your diet by staying away from foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils. Many packaged or processed foods contain these oils, so make it a habit to read the ingredient list before buying.

HEALTHY FATS

Monounsaturated fats: Get the benefits of these fats from olives, avocados and nuts. Use extra virgin olive oil as often as possible. For higher heat cooking or baking, consider almond, peanut oil or avocado oil for good ways to get monounsaturated fats.

Polyunsaturated fats (omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids): Focus on eating more foods packed with omega-3s. Choose oily fish (salmon, herring, sardines) and walnuts, chia seeds and flaxseeds. In some cultures the diet tends to be omega-6 heavy. A diet too high with omega-6 fatty acids can increase inflammation, bringing a higher risk of many chronic diseases. The proper ratio for omega-3:omega-6 is 1:4.

OLIVE OIL

Nutrition and cooking experts agree that one of the most versatile and healthy oils to cook with and eat is olive oil, as long as it's extra virgin. An "extra virgin" label should mean that the olive oil is not refined or over processed and

therefore of high quality. Extra virgin olive oil contains a large amount of monounsaturated fats and some polyunsaturated fatty acids. Olive oil has a relatively lower smoke point compared to other oils, so it's best for very low or no heat cooking. It is one of the healthiest oils to use when baking and making salad dressing. Keep in mind that sometimes olive oil that is labeled "extra virgin" is not what it claims to be. Olive oil has been proven to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) and raise HDL (good cholesterol) levels when used to replace saturated fat such as butter. It also contains beta carotene, vitamins A, E, D and K plus many more healthful nutrients. Research shows these nutrients have beneficial effects on almost every bodily function.

Extra-virgin olive oil has the lowest oxidation rate of cooking oils. Oxidation promotes free radicals, chemicals that are highly reactive and can damage cells. Some of this damage may lead to cancer and other types of diseases. It is also an excellent source of antioxidants, which also protect cells from damage and oxidation. Extra-virgin olive oil also has properties that are excellent for skin care.

COCONUT OIL

Depending on who you ask, coconut oil should either be avoided or embraced in moderation. The main point of conflict is its high saturated fat content; unlike other plant-based oils, coconut oil is primarily a saturated fat. Not everyone agrees that such a concentrated source of saturated fat is bad for health, but some experts argue that replacing foods that are high in saturated fat with healthier choices can lower blood cholesterol levels and improve lipid profiles. Still, science is starting to suggest that not all saturated fats are bad for you. I am not against coconut oil and our bodies do need some saturated fat but the industry has done a

great job to make it seem like it is a superfood. I am not saying that we should stop using coconut oil altogether because it is a good choice for a healthier oil to use when cooking at a very high temperature or frying food. I must say however that frying should be done in moderation.

AVOCADO OIL

Avocado oil is a great choice. It is unrefined like extra virgin olive oil, but it has a higher smoking point, which means it can be used to cook at higher heat and is great for stir-frys. It does not have much flavor, which makes it a good option for cooking. Avocado oil contains both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. This oil has one of the highest monounsaturated fat contents among cooking oils as well as vitamin E. The downside is that it tends to be more expensive.

PEANUT OIL

Peanut oil is high in heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. Research shows that a diet rich in peanut oil can help lower your LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol levels. Lowering your LDL reduces your risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke. In addition to providing heart-healthy fat, peanut oil contains phytosterols. These plant compounds block the absorption of cholesterol from food, reducing the amount of cholesterol that ends up in your blood. Both unrefined and refined peanut oils contain more phytosterols than extra-virgin olive oil. Vitamin E is a nutrient that we all need more of and peanut oil is an excellent source of it. Vitamin E acts as an antioxidant within the body and also helps maintain our immune system and metabolism. Most people with a peanut allergy can safely eat highly refined peanut oil, according to Food Allergy Research & Education. Gourmet peanut oil (cold-pressed, expelled, or extruded peanut oil) should still be avoided. Peanut oil has a high smoke point of 450°F.

VEGETABLE OIL

The term “vegetable oil” is used to refer to any oil that comes from plant sources. Most vegetable oils on the market are

a blend of canola, corn, soybean, safflower, palm and sunflower oils. Most vegetable oils on the market are refined and processed, which means they lack flavor as well as nutrients. It is called ‘vegetable’ so that the manufacturers can substitute whatever basic oil they want like soy, corn, cottonseed or canola, without having to print a new label. The processed oils have been pushed past their heat tolerance and have become rancid in the processing. Some of these oils, especially palm, are associated with massive deterioration of land for production. I think that using olive oil whenever you can instead of corn or soybean oil is much.

CANOLA OIL

Canola oil is derived from rapeseed, a flowering plant, and contains a good amount of monounsaturated fats and a decent amount of polyunsaturated fats. The canola plant is a member of the Brassica family, which includes broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. It is a domesticated rapeseed-oil plant that has been bred to improve its taste and nutritional content. It is bright and yellow-flowering in the field and is grown primarily in Western Canada. Canola gets its name from “Canadian” and “ola,” which means oil. Of all vegetable oils, canola oil tends to have the least amount of saturated fats. It has a high smoke point, which means it can be helpful for high-heat cooking. However, in the United States, canola oil tends to be highly processed, which means fewer nutrients overall. Rapeseed oil is one of the oldest known vegetable oils, but historically was used in limited quantities due to high levels of erucic acid, which is damaging to cardiac muscles of animals.

SUNFLOWER OIL

Organic sunflower oil leads the list of oils that have lower amounts of saturated fats (about 11%) and a greater amount of “good” fats”. It has one of the greatest quantities of polyunsaturated fat, nearly 69%. Furthermore, monounsaturated fat content in sunflower oil exceeds 20%. All of this makes sunflower oil an overall healthy option

for the health of your heart, as compared to every other cooking oil out there. Unsaturated fats are easily metabolized by your liver and can therefore keep your cholesterol levels low. These fats are good for your heart and maintain a healthy balance in your body. It is an all-purpose oil capable of withstanding high cooking temperatures due to its high smoke point. However, studies show that a high smoke point does not correspond with an oil’s stability under heat. One study found that sunflower oil released the highest amount of aldehydes into cooking fumes, compared with other plant-based oils in three types of frying techniques. Aldehydes are toxic compounds that can damage DNA and cells and thus contribute to conditions like heart disease and Alzheimer’s. The longer that sunflower oil is exposed to heat, the more aldehydes it emits. Therefore, gentle, low heat cooking methods such as stir-frying may be a safer use of sunflower oil.

GETTING THE MOST BENEFIT

Sauté instead of fry

Pan-frying uses a substantial amount of oil and higher heat for longer periods. Deep fat frying also uses a lot of oil at high heats but can be done for shorter periods. But frying foods in oil, or any kind of fat, promotes free radicals. Sautéing can cook small pieces of food in small amounts of oil for less time. Planning meals with foods that don’t need frying is certainly a better option when baking, grilling or quickly sautéing your food. This reduces the amount of fat you consume. An important point to always remember is that all oils that are safe to use at very high heat should be consumed in the least amount possible.

Use fresh oils

When you buy oil and store it for long periods, it eventually oxidizes and develops free radicals. It is better to buy oil in small amounts, keeping it fresh all the time. Store it in a cool, dark and dry place and be sure to replace any that smell rancid or off. Check the “best used” date because oils should be used

within 30-60 days after opening.

Grapeseed and walnut oils are an exception: Store them in the refrigerator so they don't become rancid. The cloudiness in refrigerated oils will clear once they return to room temperature.

Know the smoke point

Because of their chemical makeup, different oils have different smoke points. Some oils are better suited for cooking at higher temperatures. Generally, the more refined the oil, the higher the smoke point. Smoke point relates only to fresh oil; oil that is used for cooking and then strained and reused loses its integrity.

Oils with a high smoke point are best for searing, browning and deep frying which clearly we should avoid.

Oils which are essentially fats are a necessary part of your diet. People use

oils almost daily for cooking and for drizzling over salads. While some oils, such as hydrogenated vegetable oil, can contribute to cancer, heart disease and stroke, according to the American Heart Association, others, such as olive and coconut oils can be helpful in reducing risks of heart disease and diabetes. Natural oils such as coconut, olive, flaxseed, walnut, avocado and hemp seed have built-in anti-inflammatory properties that we can all benefit from.

When shopping for oils, we should try to select oils that have been derived from nuts or seeds, without the use of any chemicals, and incorporate these healthy oils into our diet to enhance the flavor of food while promoting health.



Smile while you think

Your teeth may be false,
but let your words be true.

Love looks through a telescope,
envy through a microscope.

Who is a bore? A person who talks
when you want him to listen.

What is a cynic? A man who knows
the price of everything and the value
of nothing.

There are two things to aim at in life.
First, to get what you want, and after
that to enjoy it. Only the wisest of
men ever achieve the second.

A coward is one who in a perilous
emergency thinks with his legs.

Open Face

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