



2 Cor. 5:18

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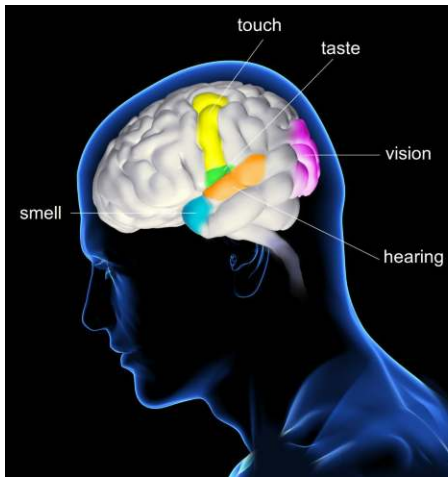
One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

No. 138

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Elements of The World

David Clayton



I recently received an email from a brother which said,

“If you knew that the name Jesus was the mark of the beast, would you still pray in the name of Jesus ?”

My response was, “if I knew that the name ‘Jesus’ was the mark of the beast then I wouldn’t use it, but it is absolute nonsense to suggest that it is!” During that same period of time I also received another message which suggested that I would lose my credibility if I insisted that focusing on the Hebrew names of God and Jesus, was simply a form of legalism. The reasoning of this brother is that God declared several times in the Bible that it was important to know that his name was Yahweh, and it was unreasonable to label something as legalistic when God himself insisted that it was a necessity.

Now it is true that the Hebrew expression of the name of God is YHWH, a word which cannot be pronounced in the way it is spelled. It is necessary to

add some vowels in order to be able to pronounce this word. Some people believe it should be pronounced as Yahweh, others say it should be Yehovah, and there are still others who suggest that the proper pronunciation should be Yahuwah. Even if we could discover exactly how to pronounce the name, would this mean that it is something important to the point that we make it into a doctrine?

I have no issue with people using these names as a matter of personal preference, I do that myself sometimes. But what I am completely against is the idea that we all need to stop saying, ‘Jesus,’ and ‘God,’ and that we should use exclusively the Hebrew expression of the names of the Father and the Son. This is legalism and this is what I want to focus on in this article.

Let me begin by sharing a verse found in Galatians 5:3.

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (Gal 5:2-3)

The word, “debtor,” used in this context, means to be under an obligation; the person under an obligation is duty bound, has a responsibility, a necessity to do something. Why is it that if a person is circumcised (according to Paul’s reasoning here) he is under an obligation to keep the whole law? It is because when a person embraces a certain way of thinking, then he will take the next logical step, then the next: if

it is necessary to keep one part of the law then of course there is no way to escape the conclusion that it is also necessary to keep the rest of the law!

PRINCIPLES

Legalism is always looking for words and statements to support its position, but the way of Jesus Christ in the new covenant is to focus on principles; the spirit and not the letter. Words by themselves can lead to very wrong conclusions: Jesus said that if a person wishes to be his disciple he must hate his mother and his father (Luke 14:26)! Are we to accept these words just as they read? Of course not! We look at the principle behind the words, we try to understand the underlying meaning instead of just accepting the literal, superficial meaning of the words. In Hebrews 5:12, Paul says:

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. (Heb 5:12)

When we are gone back to interpreting the Scriptures in such a literalistic, legalistic way, then are we not children? Are we not only fit to take milk rather than hard food? When Paul encountered

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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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this kind of thinking among the Galatians he rebuked them in a very pointed way:

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal 4:9-11)

I share the same kind of concern for some of our brethren. Paul says that these Galatians were turning again to, 'weak and beggarly elements.' He highlights what he means by pointing out that they had started to observe, 'days, and months, and times, and years.' They were ritualistically and mindlessly observing the ceremonies commanded under the old covenant in an age when those things had passed. Paul refers to these practices as, 'weak and beggarly elements.'

Everything that was in the law had to do with physical things; a physical temple, physical people, a physical land

and all the rules had to do with how people were to operate in relation to the physical space in which they lived. They had to go to a particular place to worship and carry out that worship service in a specified way. It was of the elements of the world!

WHAT IS LEGALISM?

Perhaps the first question to be addressed is the question, what is legalism? I would say that very simply put, it is the religion of the old covenant. Many people would define it as an attitude where a person believes in being saved by keeping the law, however legalism is much more than this. Essentially it is taking an attitude where one's life is governed by outward forms, by superficial things. Let me give an example of what I mean:

The sign on the door says, "please wipe your feet." So I remove my shoes and step inside, but the doorkeeper points out that I have not wiped my feet and asks me to go back and wipe them. I point out that I have actually removed my shoes, I have done something much more effective than simply wiping my feet, but he insists that I must go back and wipe them because this is what the rule says! That is the essence of legalism, it is mindless conformity to statements without reference to the meaning or the purpose of the statement, this is the approach of legalism and it embraces many things in our lives, it doesn't affect us only in the realm of religion, but it is especially harmful in religion. It leads to the conclusion that the God who made these legalistic rules is not a very intelligent person, but is more concerned about form than about what makes sense. Because there is a rule that says, "don't work on the Sabbath," you can't pick fruit on the Sabbath even if you're hungry! The legalist enjoys this kind of religion. When we are children it may be enough that we are given an assignment to go and memorize Bible verses. Responding to questions we simply produce a verse regardless of time or context and this is understandable because we are only children. But surely, when we become adults this is not

good enough! We need to understand what we are reading and to avoid misinterpreting Scriptures!

Legalism is based on the religion of the old covenant and if I may put it another way it is religion that centers around the physical senses. The apostle Paul says,

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col 2:8)

What does Paul mean when he speaks of, "the rudiments of the world?" He uses the same phrase when chastising the Galatians about their obsession with the legalistic principles of the old covenant law:

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (Gal 4:3)

At one time, we the people of God were in a state of spiritual infancy. Paul refers to that time as a time when we were children and he says that we were in bondage, under the control of the elements of the world. This of course refers to the old covenant age before the spirit was given, at this time the people of God were governed by the system of the law. In the previous verse, verse 4, Paul says that we were placed under tutors and governors and it was these tutors and governors which kept us under, "bondage." Paul is simply reinforcing and emphasizing something that he already stated in chapter 3:

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Gal 3:23-24)

The law was a schoolmaster, it was a tutor, a governor. It subdued and kept us under discipline until the coming of Christ. But what is interesting is that this system of the law is described by Paul as consisting of the, "elements of the world." Under the system of the law the religion established by God was based on the principles of the world. In

Colossians 2:20,21, Paul says:

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? (Col 2:20-22)

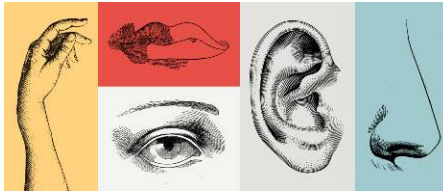
OF THE SENSES

Here we see an example of what Paul means by the, “rudiments of the world.” He is referring to things that can be discerned by the senses, things that can be touched, tasted, handled. Of course this would also include things that can be seen, heard and smelled. What Paul is really saying is that we, in Jesus Christ have been elevated to a place where our worship is no longer governed by the limited principles of this planet, the things that can be discerned by the senses. We operate on a spiritual plane which is not based on the elements of this world.

Somebody might argue that in referring to these elements of the world Paul was not referring to the things of the law because he refers to them as, “the Commandments and doctrines of men,” and of course it was God who gave the commandments in the law. But regardless of who gave the commandments, when God has abolished that system of rules and regulations, then they are no longer the commandments of God. Those who continue to promote and to require them are simply teaching the commandments of men. For example it was God who gave strict instructions for Jewish boys to be circumcised, but do we regard this as God’s commandment today? If somebody comes along and begins to insist that all Christian men must be circumcised, would this be the Commandments of God, or would it be the traditions of men? We are in a different age and we operate on different principles. The New Covenant made a great change and every Christian ought to understand this!

Paul says we should not be subject to ordinances which include, “touch not, taste not, handle not.” These refer to

things which are tangible, the things which relate to the senses. The five physical senses which we possess as humans are, the senses of touch, sight, hearing, smelling and tasting. Paul is saying that we no longer operate under the governance of a religion which focuses on the things of the senses. We died with Christ and are risen with him, we no longer operates on the principles of this physical world. That was the way of the old covenant, but we are no longer under that covenant.



In his conversation with the woman at the well, Jesus made it clear that there had been a great change. This Samaritan woman had questions concerning the correct location where God should be worshiped. The Jews claimed that the proper place was Jerusalem, but she along with the other Samaritans believed that Samaria was the correct place because that was where their ancestors had worshiped. Her focus was on a visible place, a place that could be discerned with the senses.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:21,23)

Where should we be worshiping then? Jesus said, “God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth,” not in the ways of the flesh, not in forms and representations but in relation to the things that are spirit. As Paul tells us, the things that are seen are only temporal and temporary, but the things that are not seen are the real things, the things that are eternal. The religion that is based on touch, hear, see, feel, taste – is the religion of this world and we do not belong to that

religion anymore, we have been elevated to something better, we worship God in spirit and in truth! This is the principle of the new covenant and it is the principle that takes us out of legalism. In actual fact the religion that is focused on physical things is building on the same principle as superstition. Superstition is always focused on the things you can see, touch, taste etc. and so is legalism. It is the principle of the world and it is also the principle of immature, childish Christianity.

OLD COVENANT PRINCIPLES

Under the old covenant there was a sacred race of people. People are still confused about this today and even at this moment the subject of racial superiority is still a very volatile topic among many groups of people and even in religious circles. Among the several confused groups which are racially focused, is one which refers to itself as, “Hebrew Israelites.” These confused people teach that black people are the true Jews and they insist that they are the only people who are loved and favored by God. All other races are rejected and even hated by God! This religion is not only racist, but it is foolish. It is silly to believe that the Almighty Creator of the universe who made all things including all men, is so parochial and concerned about skin color that he favors one race above everybody else! But there are people who end up with these crazy, unreasonable conclusions, because their worship of God is focused on the elements of this world.

Under the old system there were also sacred ceremonies. The books of Exodus and Leviticus are filled with instructions as to how to perform these ceremonies, which included the observance of feast days along with the rituals involved in worshiping in the earthly sanctuary. God gave instructions that these ceremonies and rituals should be carried out; he gave very strict instructions as to how and when they should be observed and in fact, the Hebrews were blessed only if they carried out

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The Champion

By Daniel Clayton

Alone He stood with deathly pall, and
broken body, bowed and pained,

With weary face and saddened eyes
'neath furrowed brows by blood drops
stained.

As feeble frame in anguish shook, none
rose to aid or lend relief,

Or friendly voice or cheering glance, or
word to soothe unearthly grief.

A mangled figure, yet, much more, The
Prince of light, from Eden slain,

The champion of ages vowed, to fight
and conquer Adam's bane!

The Chief of Angels, bound in flesh, di-
vine yet mortal, hope of man,

The Saviour and the Only Way, The
Oath of God, The Master plan!

Alone and fettered, weak and worn,
He faced the darkness of despair,

As devils black and legions swarmed,
and filled the air with manic cheer!

Hushed, angels turned their eyes away,
unable all, to bear His woe,

No mighty prince of earth or sky, could
win this war nor face this foe!

As demons howled in crazed delight,
and filled His ears with hopeless gloom,

Alone He stood, with broken heart,
aware of His impending doom!

For none was left, cherubs and men,
all vanished, He alone must stand,

He tottered, wavered, on the brink, and
human fate shook in his hand!

For it was written, man must die when
turns he from The Lord of Life,

And death must reign, and sin hold
sway, and Adam's seed know pain and
strife;

Till One is born, whose soul is pure, and
chooses right where all men fail,

Then He at last shall break sin's curse,
and death shall die, and life prevail.

And there He stood, The Chosen One,
The Mighty God in mortal frame,

To face the doubt, and dark and fear,
and save a race from endless shame!

To choose His God, and do His will, and
face the death of Adam's doom,

Or save Himself, His legions call,
and earth be everlasting tomb.

But then, in hope, a final gasp, to find
His strength, His peace, His grace,

He mustered courage, raised His eyes,
to seek, and see His Father's face!

That place of rest, perennial, sweet,
unfailing, ever present joy,

To still His heart, and quell His fear,
unrest dispel, and doubt destroy.

But light has fled! and hope is gone!
Betrayed by all, by even He,

His endless joy, and soul's delight, has
turned His back, ignored His plea!

And gloating devils, hiss and prod,
'abandon hope! Let mortals fall!

Your quest is lost, the curse must win,
and Adam's kin shall perish all!

Its them or Him, His heart must choose,
once and for all, destiny seal,

Save now Himself or thankless man,
the heart of God in truth reveal!

And on the edge, in hopeless gloom,
He sealed their fate, chose all to give,

No thought of self, His own life lost, so
Adam's race, anew could live!

Black demons snarled, and danced, and
pranced,

and earth they claimed with devilish
glee,

And angels wept and slipped away, in
horror, His demise to see.

A battle fought, it seemed in vain, in-

glorious death, the God man's fate,

No grand acclaim, or noble rites, He
fell 'midst scorn and shame and hate!

But, Hades trembles, Sheol quakes, her
black grip loosens, cold fangs break,

By ancient law ere time began, a soul
that's GOOD hell cannot take!

A sinless man that enters death, shall
break the chain and seize the key,

And death itself must be reversed, and
yield its prey eternally!

The Champion conquered! death is
doomed!

The oath fulfilled from Eden sworn!

The curse is broken! One is saved, the
greatest hero ever born!

He's risen, great and glorious He,
the dark hosts flee in frenzied fear,

Now King of kings, ALL power His, in-
vincible, God's flaming spear!

The cosmos shakes in raptured joy, as
angels burst in awestruck strains,

The dark is banished, man is saved,
now **human** King in heaven reigns!

A sinless life forged by His stripes, to
fallen man He gives anew,

The Second Father, all who claim His
gift shall break Adam's taboo!

Earth's Champion rules, His Spirit pure,
He offers freely, all may take,

A matchless gift, a second chance, no
mortal sane could durst forsake!

Now brand New Race, to Him belongs,
of men redeemed from sin and stain,

By His own life, his children purged, at
LAST are free from Adam's chain!



Elements of The World

Continued from page 3

these instructions. But these were ceremonies related to this world, they were of the elements of this world, they were not based on the principles of God's eternal kingdom. But still, at that time there was a sacred race, there were sacred ceremonies, and there was a sacred land!

But now, none of these exist anymore! Under the principles of the new covenant there is no longer any particular race that is specially favored of God, no race which he claims as his people above all others. God loves all people equally and he made a way to save all people, equally, from every race, from every tribe, from every nation! Many misguided Christians are fixated with the Jewish nation and with the land of Palestine. They believe that God still specially favors the physical Jews above everyone else, but this is because they are still operating on the principles of the old covenant. God has elevated his true religion to a higher place through Jesus Christ. Under the new covenant we do not operate on these physical principles, these elements of the world. So we no longer believe in sacred races, we no longer believe in a sacred piece of land and we no longer believe in sacred ceremonies.

A SACRED LANGUAGE?

How is it then that some of us still believe in a sacred language? Is this not something that has to do with the senses? How do we believe that because we pronounce a word in a certain way, this is of great importance to the God of the universe? That he is watching carefully to see if we use the word, Yahweh, or Yahuwah, or some similar pronunciation when we address him or speak about him? How can we believe that the Almighty God is so obsessed with a particular sound?

During the times of the old covenant the Hebrews existed in a society where they were surrounded by many nations all of which worshipped different gods. There was Bel, Ashtoreth, Dagon, Ad-

drammelech, Milcom, Chemosh and many others. In the context of a society in which so many people worshiped so many different gods, it was important that a distinction be made between the identity of the Hebrew God, and all the other gods of the nations. God's purpose in that age was to demonstrate that he was more powerful and superior to all other gods, and the way to distinguish him was simply by the Hebrew name which he gave to them.

Let us make note of the fact that God is not a Hebrew! When God confounded the language of the human race at the Tower of Babel, different language groups emerged and formed themselves into different nations each with its own unique language. The Hebrew language was just one of these languages and there is nothing special or unique about it, it is not the language of heaven and God and the angels do not communicate with each other in the Hebrew language. This language is limited to the Hebrews and is of the elements of this world.

The name Yahweh is derived from the word, YHWH and is firmly associated with the Old Covenant experience of the Hebrews and is inextricably linked to the Hebrew language. We notice that this word has no vowels and cannot be pronounced the way it is spelled. This is how it is in the Hebrew language, there are no written vowels, only consonants. There has always been controversy as to exactly how this word was pronounced and this is why today, there is still disagreement as to how it should be pronounced. Some people say, "Yahweh," others say it should be, "Yahuwah," others say, "Yahvah," and still others say it should be, "Yehovah." Some people have spent a great deal of time digging and researching trying to discover exactly what sound to make in trying to pronounce this word. Many of them believe it is extremely important that we pronounce the name with exactly the correct sound, to the point where they insist that it is a salvational issue. As we may imagine this presents quite a challenge as nobody is quite certain as to exactly how this word was pronounced.

CONTENDING FOR A SOUND

When we consider all of this it is clear that what is being emphasized is not so much the name of God, it is more the sound which we make when we speak of him, or address him! The contention over the Hebrew name of God is really contention about a certain sound! Some have drawn comparisons with human names, pointing out that people respond to their names, that they recognize when they are being addressed by the particular sound which is made. However, it is childish and simplistic to use this comparison with relation to God as though God is so limited, that he needs to hear a particular pronunciation before he recognizes that he is being addressed.

This is really an argument about a sound, and as was pointed out, sounds are one of the elements of this world. These are the things which were emphasized under the old covenant and of course God emphasized them! There was a holy race, there were holy ceremonies, there was a holy land and of course, there was a holy name for the God that they worshiped. Everything was of the elements of the world!

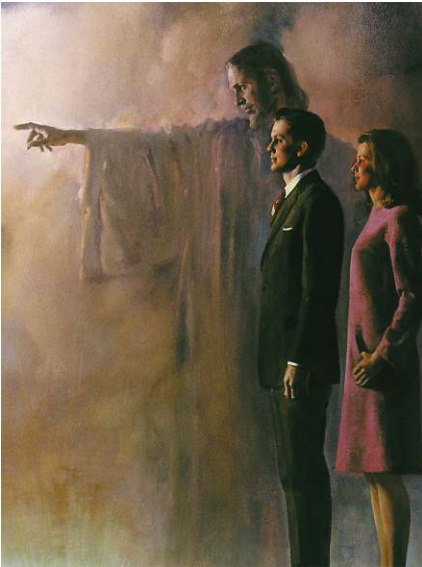
NOT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

What we find most revealing is the fact that there is not a single place in the New Testament Scriptures where the literal name of God is emphasized. It is not there because the way we pronounce the name of God is not an issue in spiritual worship. In the new covenant the emphasis is entirely upon the character of the God that we worship, not upon the sound by which we address him. The spiritual application of the name of God helps us to understand the character of the God that we worship, not merely a sound that we make when speaking of him, not at all. We operate on a higher plane and emphasize something far more important.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. (Rev 14:1)

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The Hands of God



WHAT JESUS LACKS

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Heb 13:8)

. . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt 28:20)

These are beautiful and comforting verses but in some ways, they are also disturbing because they raise some troubling questions. When Jesus was here, living among men in flesh and blood he was always performing miraculous deeds, always healing the sick, casting out devils and even bringing the dead back to life. The verse above states that Jesus is the same today as he was yesterday, and we have the assurance that as God never changes, neither does his son. So why is it that we do not see him performing the same great miracles today? Why is it that he is with us, even unto the end of the world, but still, we do not see him working in the same way as he did in the past? Is he still just as capable and willing to do his mighty works as he did when he walked physically among men? If we believe what we read in the Bible, then we have to believe that the answer is yes, so why is it that we see this great lack of power everywhere among Christians? Why have the mighty works of

Christ disappeared for so many hundreds of years if he is still with us, even to the end of the world?

Many times we have heard the phrase, "if only Jesus were still here . . ." We acknowledge that Jesus was always willing to help, always capable, always present with a miracle when one was needed. But where are the miracles today? If only Jesus were still here! But how do we deal with the fact that Jesus promised to be with his people till the end of the world? How do we deal with the fact that he promised that he would never leave us nor forsake us? Are these just empty statements, figurative, but not intended to be taken literally? Many have concluded that this is the case and that Jesus' mighty supernatural works ended when he ceased to live among us in flesh and blood.

However, there is an important fact which may explain the seeming change in Christ's way of operating. When we take a careful look at the way God has operated throughout human history an interesting fact becomes evident. It is a striking reality which may not be recognized at first, but it is true and it is the fact that God does not work outside of an agent. It was very rarely, if ever, that God himself personally did any of the great miracles which were performed in the Bible without the involvement of an agent, whether an angel or a human. Even in some of the greatest miracles recorded in the Bible when God was delivering Israel from Egypt and taking them into Canaan, there was always a human agent involved.

And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. (Hos 12:13)

And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. (Exod 7:1)

But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch

out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. (Exod 14:16)

First there was Moses, then there was Joshua, and even on a higher level, there was the angel that was sent to guide and direct them, a heavenly representative of God.

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. (Exod 23:20)

Whenever God wanted to accomplish something in the world, even if it was some extraordinary miracle he would choose somebody to work through. In other words, God always had human hands (or sometimes angelic hands) through which he did his work. Clearly, it is contrary to his policy to work himself, independently of a human being. The point is, if there is no human agent, then somehow, God is not able to work in the way that he wants to work.

And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. (Ezek 22:30)

GOD WORKS THROUGH A BODY

It seems clear that for some reason God needs a human body through which he can work. I am not suggesting that there are limitations to God's power, obviously God has the power to work in any way that he chooses, but there is a reason why he does not operate like that. God does not operate simply on the basis that he is almighty and possesses power to do anything that he wants to. There is a contest taking place in the universe involving God and Satan and in this contest, God has clearly limited himself in the way that he operates. In other words, God has chosen to operate on the basis of rules that limit his way of working. These rules are based on

the principle of justice and fairplay; God does not use his power to take advantage in the conflict because it is important that he defeat Satan in such a way that it can be seen by all that he is just and fair. It is not simply a matter of blowing the opposition away by force of arms. If it were as simple as that, Satan would have been destroyed and the conflict would have ended as soon as it started, six thousand years ago. It is clear that in the context of his work here on earth, one of the rules is that in working on behalf of man, God must use men as his agents.

This rule is based on the principle that it is humanity that fell, it is humanity that rebelled against God and in the process of recovery from the problem, man himself must be involved in the fight to escape the bondage to Satan. God cannot work to deliver man, unless man himself is involved in that work. If man is not involved, then it would mean that God is interfering in man's free choice to serve Satan, and that he is not respecting the principle of free-will and free choice. So one consequence of this principle is the fact that in all that he is doing on behalf of men, God needs a human agent through which he may work.

We can see this clearly demonstrated in the fact that when God sent his Son to save the human race, the first thing he had to do was to make him into a human being, one of us, fully a member of the fallen race. All that Jesus did on our behalf, he did as one of us, as a member of our family. He made his choices, exercised his will, fought his battles **as a man!** This is why he was qualified to represent us, to act on our behalf. He was the man, the human agent through which God could work in accomplishing his greatest work on behalf of the human race.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (Heb 10:5)

This body that was prepared was a human body. From the body of Mary, God formed a human embryo in which he

placed the spirit of His Son. This is how the Son of God became a legitimate, literal member of the human race. It was not an act of pretense, God's Son did indeed become one of us forever, and so, he was fully qualified to stand on our behalf, to represent us in all situations, to fight the great battles on our behalf. But the important point I wish to highlight here is that God needed a human agent, he needed a man that he could depend on to accomplish his work in the world. Because there was no human who was able to do what was required, God himself provided a solution by incarnating his only begotten Son, into the human race.

The question is, has this principle changed? Has the coming of Jesus changed this principle that God works through human agents, or is it still true that God needs a human body through which he may work?

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1Cor 12:27)

MEN ARE GOD'S AGENCY

The most important task to be accomplished on this earth is the saving of people and concerning this work, the apostle Paul says:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom 10:14)

These are rhetorical questions, but the answers are self-evident. People will not hear the good news, they will not believe in Jesus Christ unless there is a preacher. It is necessary that there be somebody to carry the gospel, or else people will perish without any chance of obtaining salvation. The question may be asked, but what of angels, what of the direct work of the spirit of God? Won't God work through angels and his spirit directly in saving people? The answer is, this is not God's appointed way of saving men. Angels have not been given the task of preaching the gospel, this is the job of Christians and the holy spirit is best able to work

through committed human agents. This fact may not be evident to us at first, but if we think about the way God has worked throughout history we will see this very clearly. Whenever there was need for somebody to hear the truth, God always sent a human messenger. Even if there were angels involved, the work of the angel was to direct the person to the human messenger as was the case when the spirit sent Phillip to teach the Ethiopian Eunuch.

In the saving of men, God needs and uses human agents. But this is not only true of salvation from sin, it is also true when it comes to saving people from suffering and disease. While God possesses all power and is himself able to heal all sicknesses without the intervention of any human agent, this is not how he works. Again, it is clear that it is through human agents that he always accomplished his great miracles by which he brought relief from suffering, and even to bring back people from the dead.

And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. (Acts 9:37-38)

ANGELS' MINISTRY

Before proceeding any further we should comment briefly on the ministry of angels. Obviously they are also involved in ministering to humans. In Hebrews 1:14 the Bible tells us that they are "ministering spirit" sent forth to minister to God's people.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Heb 1:14)

All over the Bible we can see them actively involved in working with human beings, but what is also evident is that while angels are working to physically protect people, they themselves have not been given the task of preach-

ing to men and otherwise to be directly involved in the work of saving humans.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Ps 91:11-12)

And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. (Acts 12:7)

In matters of salvation man must be the agent

God sent an angel to Cornelius in Acts chapter 10 who informed him that his prayers had been heard by God and heaven. He was about to be blessed by hearing the gospel and receiving salvation. The angel knew everything that Cornelius needed to know, but instead of telling him the good news, the angel instead directed him to find the apostle Simon Peter:

And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. (Acts 10:5-6)

The same principle can be seen in the experience of the apostle Paul. Jesus himself met him on the road to Damascus and interrupted his mad crusade against Christians, but when Saul asked, "Lord, what will you have me to do," Jesus did not preach to him, instead he sent him to wait on a **human messenger**, a Christian named Ananias who baptized him and instructed him what he should do. (Acts 9:6-18)

WHY HUMAN AGENTS?

The question is, is it simply a matter that God chooses to use human beings as a personal preference, or is there some reason which makes it necessary for God to work in this way? I mean, it is evident that there are millions of people who have never heard the gospel and myriads of them will perish in darkness because nobody ever shared the good news with them. If God is able to

reach them without human intervention, and yet he does not, then of course we would have to question how much God really cares for these people, his love would be called into question. So it is evident that there is some principle by which God operates, some fundamental reason which makes it necessary that in saving men, God must work through men. It is the same reason why only a man could save the human race and thus, the son of God had to become a man in order to save us.

What is this principle? It is the principle of **corporate identity**, or to put it another way, the principle of family connections. When Adam disobeyed God and took of the forbidden fruit, it was not just Adam and Eve who fell into sin and came under the dominion of Satan, it was the entire human race, the entire family of Adam, all who were born from his lineage. This is the principle of corporate identity. Even though each human being is an individual with his own identity and personality, yet in another sense the human race is a single entity, we are all inheritors of the same life of Adam and so the Scriptures tell us that "in Adam, all die (1 Cor 15:22)." This is the same principle that made it possible for one man, Jesus Christ to provide salvation for the entire human race in himself. He became a man for this purpose and as a man he defeated sin and Satan and provided a way for all humans to escape Adam's condemnation. He was able to do this because he was a man, he was a member of our family.

This is why in the work of saving men, man must be the agent through which God works. It is true that there is the **persuasive power** of a changed life. It is very impressive when people see a person, a human being like themselves who has been entirely transformed by the power of Jesus Christ. This is one of the greatest testimonies to the truth of the gospel and the only being in the universe who is able to provide this kind of testimony is a redeemed human being. This is one reason why men are chosen to witness to other men.

But even more important is the issue of the **authority** which Christians possess in Jesus Christ. Everything revolves around the right of an individual to interfere with another person's property. The entire world came under Satan's dominion when Adam submitted to him. All men became his legal subjects and even the God of heaven respects this reality and operates with that fact in mind. The only person who could deliver humanity from Satan's control was a human being, somebody who could reverse the damage done by Adam. As we have seen, this is exactly what Jesus did. However, this deliverance exists **only** in Jesus Christ. The only persons who benefit from this deliverance are those who become a part of the new human family, who are a part of the corporate identity of Christ.

This is why Christians are uniquely qualified to preach the gospel and to be the agents for delivering human beings from Satan's dominion. We are members of both the family of Adam and the family of Christ, the last Adam. Though we have been delivered from Adam's condemnation, yet we are still genetically identified with Adam and so, we have the right and authority to deliver other members of Adam's family (our family) who are still under Satan's bondage. We have the legal right, the authority to do so because we are a part of Adam's existence and in a sense, we are simply making decisions on behalf of our own identity (our existence as Adam). So we may act on behalf of other humans in delivering them from sin, disease, devil-possession and even death (the elements of Satan's dominion). This is why God works through men to save men, and only through men. It is a question of legal authority and this is why if Christians will not work to save their fellow men, millions will perish who might otherwise have been saved, because angels are not qualified to preach the gospel.

We are the hands of God, the only agents which he is able to use in accomplishing his great work on behalf of

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Elements of the World

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His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. (Rev 19:12)

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. (John 17:6)

Here are three verses from the New Testament, they mention the name of God or the name of the Son of God. Yet, it is very obvious that not one of them refers to the sound of a name, but rather to the character of the person mentioned. In one case it even says that the only person who knows his name is Christ himself! Obviously this is not the sound by which others address him, but rather, the character he possesses, based on his own personal experience. This is what a name really signifies and this is what we should focus on when we speak of the name of God, not the way we pronounce it, but what it means.

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2Cor 3:6)

Here Paul tells us that we have been made ministers of the new testament and he specifies the difference between the old and the new. The old covenant focuses on, "the letter," while the new covenant is of, "the spirit." This is absolutely applicable in understanding the name of God. The letter is simply what is written, it is the bare statement without understanding the principle behind it. The word YHWH is the letter, the meaning or the understanding of the word is the spirit. Under the new covenant it is the meaning that we emphasize, not the sound, not the letter. We are New Testament Christians, or we ought to be! We worship God in spirit and in truth, not in form, ritual, ceremony or sounds. In Luke 17:20-21, the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus said in

response,

. . . . The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:20-21)

Jesus said that this kingdom would not be something that could be observed, so it could not be seen! Could it be smelled, touched, tasted or heard? Of course not! The kingdom of which he spoke was not of this world and it did not operate on the principles or the elements of this world.

FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER

The truth is that one thing leads to another. When a person starts out on a certain pathway then it is natural that he will continue in the same logical pattern that led him to take that path from the beginning. Ultimately he will end up at a destination which is the logical end result of the path that he has chosen. This is why Paul stated that if a person was circumcised he was under an obligation to keep the entire law. The same understanding that made a person believe he needed to be circumcised would lead him eventually to believe that he needed to keep the rest of the law. The law was a package and circumcision was just one part of it, why should a person pick out one little piece of it to observe and leave the rest of it alone? That would not make sense and so the adoption of circumcision would lead to the observance of the entire law.

In the same way if a person sets out to operate on the principle of the elements of this world, adopting one part of that worship system as being necessary, then there is no logical reason why he should not adopt the rest of it. This is why many of the people who insist on using Hebrew names go on to observing feast days and other ceremonials of the law, even to the point where they feel that they need to adopt the speaking of Hebrew, and identifying everything by Hebrew terms! Some of them even go on as we have seen, to identify themselves as literal Jews! It is the logical

consequence of building on the wrong principle, it is the result of operating on the principles of the world. The insistence on using the Hebrew names to address God is a step in that direction. As an example of what I mean, look at the following statement which was posted on Facebook by one of these people who is focused on these Hebrew names:

"If you kept the Qadash Feast days of YaHUaH for his year of 2022 May he Barak Rapha and Shamar you in his Shalam Aulam b'ha'sham YaHUsHa Ha'mashiach's sham aman.

We don't keep the Feast days because we're Jews we keep the Feast days because we're Set-apart unto YaHUaH through YaHUsHa and look forward to the promise of things yet to come."

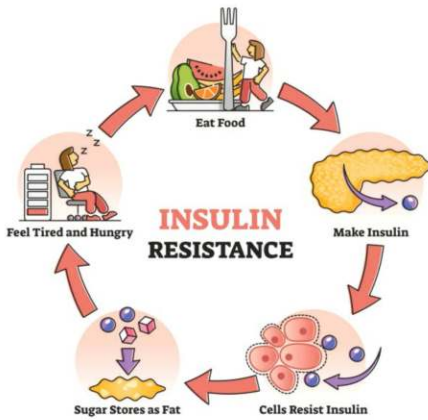
Quite likely, this person will soon go on to attempting to speak only Hebrew, believing that in doing this he obtains some kind of merit with God! This is worldly, trivial, pointless religion. It does nothing for anybody and does not draw anyone closer to God. It may impress some people, like people dressing up all in white when they go to church or practicing some other outward form to demonstrate religious piety. It makes them look good in the eyes of foolish people, but it does nothing for their relationship with God and in fact it hinders it, because it keeps them locked into the worship pattern of the old covenant. God is not impressed with outward forms but as he told Samuel, he looks on the heart.

As I said, if a person chooses to use these Hebrew names as a matter of personal preference, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this. However when people begin to insist that it is necessary that we all do this and even to suggest that this can somehow affect our salvation, then this becomes a harmful practice, an erroneous teaching and something that needs to be resisted. It is an effort to drag us backwards into the religion of the old covenant. May we be preserved from this backward step into darkness.



Improve Insulin Sensitivity

Lenworth Frankson



Insulin is a hormone your pancreas makes that's essential for life and regulating blood glucose (sugar) levels. Insulin resistance, also known as impaired insulin sensitivity, happens when cells in your muscles, fat and liver do not respond as they should to insulin. Insulin resistance affects at least 60% of the adult population (and almost all women with PCOS -- Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome). Insulin resistance can be temporary or chronic and is treatable in some cases. Knowing how to improve your insulin sensitivity can help you reduce insulin resistance and the risk of many diseases, including diabetes. These are the steps that show how insulin functions generally under normal circumstances.

First your body breaks down the food you eat into glucose (a type of sugar), which is your body's main source of energy. Next, glucose enters your bloodstream, which signals your pancreas to release insulin. Third, the released insulin helps the glucose in your blood to enter your muscle, fat and liver cells so they can use it for energy or store it for later use. Fourth, when glucose enters your cells and the levels in your bloodstream decrease, it signals your pancreas to stop producing insulin. However for various reasons, your muscle, fat and liver cells can respond in-

appropriately to insulin, which means they cannot efficiently take up glucose from your blood or store it. This is insulin resistance. As a result, your pancreas makes more insulin to try to overcome your increasing blood glucose levels. Your pancreas senses high blood sugar, it makes more insulin to overcome the resistance and reduce your blood sugar.

Over time, this can deplete the pancreas of insulin-producing cells, which is common in type 2 diabetes. Also, prolonged high blood sugar can damage nerves and organs. A person is most at risk of insulin resistance if they have prediabetes or a family history of type 2 diabetes. Being overweight or obese is another factor in developing type 2 diabetes.

Here are a few natural ways to decrease your insulin sensitivity.

GET MORE SLEEP

Getting a good night's sleep is important for one's health. A lack of sleep on the other hand can be harmful and increases your risk for infections, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and more. Several studies have linked poor sleep to reduced insulin sensitivity. One study involving nine healthy volunteers found that getting just 4 hours of sleep in one night reduced insulin sensitivity and the ability to regulate blood sugar, compared with getting 8 1/2 hours of sleep. Getting plenty of sleep each day can help to regulate the hormones associated with feeling hungry, and to reduce the risk of glucose metabolism dysfunction. Try to get at least 7 hours of sleep each night.

EXERCISE MORE

Regular exercise is one of the best ways to improve insulin sensitivity. Exercise helps move sugar into the muscles for storage and promotes an immediate increase in insulin sensitivity, which lasts

2–48 hours, depending on the exercise. For example, one study found that 60 minutes of cycling on a machine at a moderate pace improved insulin sensitivity for 48 hours among healthy volunteers. Resistance training also helps improve insulin sensitivity. Studies have also found an increased insulin sensitivity among men and women with or without diabetes. One study of overweight men, without diabetes, found that when participants performed resistance training over a 3-month period, their insulin sensitivity improved, independent of other factors like weight loss. While both aerobic and resistance training improve insulin sensitivity, combining both in your routine appears to be most effective.

HEALTHIER CARBS

All carbs raise blood sugar. However sugary or processed “white carbs” will cause a more rapid spike. Rapid spikes of blood sugar put more demand on the pancreas to make insulin. Low glycemic carbs will cause a slower rise of blood sugar and insulin. Carb sources that are low-GI include dried beans and legumes, non-starchy vegetables, some starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes, most fruit, and many whole grain breads and cereals (like barley, whole wheat bread, rye bread, and all-bran cereal) High glycemic carbs include: white bread, cornflakes, instant oatmeal, bagels, cakes and other sugary foods.

EAT MORE FIBER

Fiber has numerous health effects in the body including decreased risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, weight management to name a few. There are many different types of fiber often categorized into 2 major groups: soluble and insoluble. Most foods contain a combination of several different kinds of fiber. Insoluble fiber mostly acts as a bulking agent to help prevent constipation. Soluble fiber helps to lower cho-

lesterol and keep you feeling full. Several studies have found a link between high soluble fiber intake and increased insulin sensitivity. This study showed that placing insulin-resistant individuals on a high-fiber diet (50 g) where the fiber comes not from supplements, but from fruits, vegetables, legumes, and selective grains, significantly improves insulin sensitivity after six weeks. A study in 264 women found that those who ate more soluble fiber had significantly lower levels of insulin resistance. Soluble fiber also helps feed the friendly bacteria in your gut, which have been linked to increased insulin sensitivity. Foods that are rich in soluble fiber include legumes, oatmeal, flaxseeds, sweet potatoes, avocado and fruits like apples and oranges.

FOODS RICH IN POLYPHENOLS.

Polyphenols are plant chemicals found in almost all fruit and vegetables. They have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic and other biological properties, and may protect you from certain types of stress and diseases. Polyphenols derived from green tea and cocoa (70% or higher,) are two examples. Apples also are emerging as powerful facilitators of insulin responses as well as being potent anti-inflammatory compounds. Blueberries are rich sources of polyphenols. There are some clinical studies that suggest that these foods decrease insulin resistance. Resveratrol is another polyphenol found in the skin of red grapes, peanuts and some berries. Resveratrol may increase insulin sensitivity, especially in those with type 2 diabetes.

REDUCE INTAKE OF ADDED SUGARS

There is a big difference between added sugars and natural sugars.

Natural sugars are found in sources like plants and vegetables, both of which provide lots of other nutrients. Conversely, added sugars are found in more highly processed foods. The two main types of sugar added during the production process are high-fructose corn syrup and table sugar, also known as sucrose. Both contain approximately

50% fructose.

Many studies have found that higher intakes of fructose can increase insulin resistance among people with diabetes. The effects of fructose on insulin resistance also appear to affect people who do not have diabetes, as reported in an analysis of 29 studies including a total of 1,005 people who were moderate weight and overweight or had obesity. The findings showed that consuming a lot of fructose over less than 60 days increased liver insulin resistance, independent of total calorie intake. Foods that contain a lot of added sugar are also high in fructose. This includes candy, sugar-sweetened beverages, cakes, cookies, and pastries. High intakes of fructose are linked to a higher risk of insulin resistance.

LOSE SOME WEIGHT.

If you are overweight, losing some weight may be the most important thing you can do to improve insulin sensitivity. As your fat cells get smaller, they become more sensitive to insulin. This means your body can make less insulin to get the blood sugar into the cells. Not only does it save your pancreas from overworking, it will lower the insulin levels in your blood which decreases health risks. The good news is that by losing 5-7% of your body weight you could improve insulin resistance. One study found that people with prediabetes who lost 5-7% of their total weight over six months reduced their risk of type 2 diabetes by 58% for the next three years. For someone who weighs 200 pounds, that is a loss of around 10-20 pounds.

Having insulin resistance or high levels of insulin in your blood can have numerous consequences on your health, ranging from mild to very serious. Here are some of them:

Carb craving, loss of energy, mood disorders, increased rates of depression, worsened symptoms of PCOS, weight gain and difficulty losing weight, high triglycerides, inflammation, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, increased risk of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, el-

evated blood pressure and an increased risk of vascular diseases such as heart disease. Insulin resistance is definitely associated with health risks, but this information is not intended to scare anyone but rather to bring awareness of its dangers. The more insulin resistant you are, the greater the health risks but the good news is that diet and lifestyle can play a major role in decreasing insulin resistance, thereby improving your health.



The Hands of God

Continued from page 8

humanity. The work of God actually languishes because God's hands are so limited and strangely, so weak! When Jesus was here on earth, the Scripture says of him, "a body hast thou prepared me." Now that he is gone, the Scripture says,

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1Cor 12:27)

The reality is, Christ still has a body in this world! When we say, "if only Christ were here, things would be different," we are really denying the truth! The Bible teaches that Jesus is still here in the person of those who possess his life, we constitute the body of Christ, the human body in which he still works to accomplish his work in the world! The real problem is that this body of Christ is so malnourished, by false teachings, by feeding on spiritual garbage, so ignorant of its true capabilities, so disconnected from its head that effectively, Christ has no hands in the world. The apostle Paul acknowledged this reality and explained that God has given gifts to the Church for the very purpose of curing the body of Christ of this imbalance.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith,

The Hands of God

Continued from previous page

and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (Eph 4:11-15)

What we have here is the picture of a man with a big head and a very small body. God's purpose is that the body should grow up so that it is proportionate to the head and to this end, he has

given spiritual gifts to the church.

I truly believe that we are now living in the last moments of time and I believe that the people of God, those who constitute the true body of Christ are beginning to experience this process of growing up to the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The process is not done, there is still a lot of growing up to take place, but it is evident that with the explosion of technology and the availability of information, there is far greater opportunity for the exchange of ideas, and the deep truths about God and his purposes which have been long hidden or confused by denominational bias and unsanctified ministers, are finally emerging in their true beauty and power! Something is hap-

pening in the world and among true Christians and the effects are being seen and felt everywhere. In every corner of the planet Christians are beginning to understand the truth about God's identity, God's character, the nature of the conflict between good and evil and the part that we have to play in this great controversy.

All the different elements of God's great plan are coming together and now at last, there is real hope that the work will be finished. May we all understand and cooperate that God may find in us, the hands that he needs to accomplish his



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