Messenger

Fulfill Your Destiny

Spring 2024

Why Does God Hate Sin?

Don't Harden Your Heart

God as Creator

How Can You Know the Truth?

Introduction to God's Names

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Jesus in Luke 4:4 said that man is to live "by every word of God." He taught that the wise will build his life on the foundation of obedience to the word of God. As we look into God's word, it can show us what we are, like looking into a mirror. It is given to provide wisdom, instruction, reproof and correction. Will we believe it? Will we receive it? Will we be corrected by it? Since we are free moral agents with the power of choice, the answer to those questions is ours to decide. We are warned in Scripture, do not harden your heart. Do not stubbornly resist, to your hurt, the will of God, as did many of the people of Israel of old, and as has been typical of mankind as a whole. If we are receptive to God's word and genuinely believe it, it will work effectively in us to change our lives and accomplish God's purpose.

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Sin has resulted in ruin for many nations throughout history.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of the festivals of God, that he commanded to be kept by his chosen people, which includes not only ancient Israel, but the Church of God established under the New Covenant (Exodus 12:15-16; Leviticus 23:6-8; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8; see also chapters 9 and 10 of our book, *When Is the Biblical Passover?*, available at cogmessenger.org). One of the key lessons intended to be taught by keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread is that we are to put sin out. But what is it about sin that we should put it out? Is it that God wants to keep us from having fun? Does God hate to see people enjoy life? Or does God have our best interests in mind when he commands us not to sin?

Let's discuss why God hates sin, and why we also should hate sin, and want to put it out of our lives.

It's important that we understand how sin occurs. Sin begins in the mind, with lust, that is, illicit desire. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:14-15). First comes the desire, then as we entertain the evil thought and are drawn along, we are enticed, then lust conceives and gives birth to sin. But notice, when the sin has run its course it brings forth, or produces, death.

Why would we be enticed? Why would we desire to sin? Could it be that sin is pleasurable? (Hebrews 11:25). People don't usually sin because we love to suffer. When we sin we do so very often because we find pleasure in it. Sin appeals to our fleshly nature and appetites (Titus 3:3). Why do some people eat pork chops? Because they hate the taste of pork? No, it's because they think it tastes good.

Why do people gossip? Because to some people, gossip is so much fun. Why do people commit sexual sins? Because, at least for awhile, they find pleasure in them. Even murderers not uncommonly murder because of the thrill of it. Or if not, usually they think they'll gain some other advantage.

But, while sin may bring temporary pleasure, it is deceptive (Hebrews 3:13). The temporary pleasure of sin is far outweighed by its long term destructive effects. Eve, when she took of the forbidden fruit, was deceived (Genesis 3:1-6; 1 Timothy 2:14). She thought sin was good, and that it would produce the things she desired. Adam, though he was not deceived in the same way, followed her into sin. Both were guilty. Both suffered the penalty for their sin. They eventually died, because sin produces death (Romans 7:11). The commandment was good, but sin, which is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4, KJV), took occasion by the commandment, deceived Eve and eventually led to her death, as God had told her it would (Romans 6:23).

We need to bear in mind what the fruit of sin is. Not just the temporary, superficial fruit, but the entire range of consequences. Yes, sin may produce pleasure for a little while, but it has other ramifications, other longer term outcomes, which are not so pleasurable.

God had told Eve that the eventual outcome of sin would be death. As James wrote, “sin, when it is finished, brings forth death” (James 1:15, American King James Version; cf. Proverbs 8:36).

Though sin may bring temporary pleasure, it's final result is destruction. Sometime ago I read about an experiment where rats were fed cocaine from a device each time they pulled a lever. Cocaine produces a temporary pleasurable sensation. For that reason it's highly addictive. But in it's refined form it's also highly toxic and can easily cause death, especially when used repeatedly in higher and higher doses. In the experiment, the rats kept pushing the lever over and over until they died.

In a similar manner, the pleasure of sin can quickly become addictive. It's much easier to prevent sin by rejecting the temptation in the first place. Just like it's much easier to determine never to try cocaine to begin with, than to kick the habit once it's got a grip on you. Sin entraps and enslaves us if we allow it to. The primary meaning of the Greek word translated “enticed” in James 1:14 (“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed”) is “entrap” (Strong’s), or “lure” (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich), or “bait, catch by bait” (Thayer’s). Lust baits, entraps and then sin enslaves us, unless we successfully resist it.

Note how Solomon warns us concerning the sin of adultery for example (Proverbs 6:23-29, 32; 2:10-22; 23:27-28). The examples here concern adultery and fornication. But the principle extends to many other sins as well, especially idolatry, which is spiritual adultery. We must be very careful not to get drawn in to any lust, any sin, including religious deception.

God does not withhold anything good from us (Psalm 84:11).

But God hates sin (Proverbs 6:16-19; 12:22; Jeremiah 44:3-4; Zechariah 8:17).

God sees the destructiveness of sin. That's why he hates it. God saw in the midst of Egypt a nation in slavery—the people of Israel. He sought to free them. To give them joy instead of sorrow, health instead of sickness, freedom instead of slavery, life instead of death.

It had gotten so bad in Egypt, that Hebrew babies were being murdered as a means of birth control (Exodus 1:7-10, 15-16). Certainly that was a horrible evil. But today, we are spiritually in the same kind of slavery. Egyptians don't have to kill our babies because we're doing it ourselves. Egypt was a nation given over to gross idolatry and every kind of evil. But so is our nation (USA) today.

The whole world labors under sins of every description: oppressive governments; spouse abuse; child abuse and neglect; sexual sins; all sorts of addictions; religious deception; ethnic, national and racial hatred; class warfare; murders; fraud and other kinds of larceny; and the list could go on and on and on. The consequence is all manner of suffering and finally death.

Because of sin we live under a reign of death (Romans 5:12, 14). Where righteousness reigns, however, there is rejoicing (Proverbs 29:2). God's will is that we “may have life, and ...have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Sin prevents us from achieving the abundant, joyous life that God desires for us. Instead, it produces misery and unhappiness, and every kind of evil imaginable. So we ought to hate sin just as God does. “You who love the Lord, hate evil!” (Psalm 97:10).

Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God because he has demonstrated that he loves righteousness and hates sin (Hebrews 1:9). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). And “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (Proverbs 8:13). “In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil” (Proverbs 16:6).

In the days and months to come we need to strive to grow in our fear of God and our hatred of sin. We need to ask God to grant us the same hatred of sin that he has, so we may forsake it utterly, and live.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. (Psalms 84:11)

You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Psalms 45:7)

Don't Harden Your Heart!

by Rod Reynolds

Jesus in Luke 4:4 said that man is to live "by every word of God." He taught that the wise will build his life on the foundation of obedience to the word of God (Matthew 7:24-25).

God's word judges us. “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). "Discerner" is from the Greek *κριτικός*, an adjective that means able to judge or discern (*Greek-English Lexicon,* Bauer, Arndt and Gringrich). The English word “critic” is derived from the Greek word used here. *Κριτικός* is a cognate of *κριτής (kritēs)*, a judge, and *κρίνω (krinō)*, a verb meaning to judge or distinguish or decide. God's word judges us, and in a sense is our critic. It penetrates beyond the surface to our innermost being. In the final analysis, everyone will be judged by God's word (John 12:48).

As we look into God's word, it can show us what we are, like looking into a mirror. “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (James 1:22-24). It is given to provide wisdom, instruction, reproof and correction (2 Timothy 3:16). The question is, will we believe it? Will we receive it? Will we be corrected by it? Since we are free moral agents with the power of choice, the answer to those questions is ours to decide. We must choose if we will receive it, believe it, be corrected by it (Psalm 95:6-8; Acts 19:8-9).

We are warned in Scripture, as we will see, do not harden your heart. Do not stubbornly resist, to your hurt, the will of God, as did many of the people of Israel of old (Ezekiel 3:7; Luke 7:30), and as has been typical of mankind as a whole, for that matter.

If we are receptive to God's word and genuinely believe it, it will work effectively in us to change our lives and accomplish God's purpose (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Have you ever thought about why the world is deceived? Is it God who has deceived mankind? Some seem to think that it is. God has indeed allowed the world to be deceived. But who was it who lied to Adam and Eve? Who was it who chose not to believe God and chose to believe Satan instead? Mankind has been blinded by Satan's deceptions, because Adam and Eve chose to reject the truth and mankind has been following that pattern ever since then (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

As a result, all (nearly all) humans have been shut up together in unbelief. “For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all” (Romans 11:32). The word "committed" (or KJV "concluded") is *συγκλείω (sugkleiō)*, which means to shut together (like a net, Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament*). Darby's reads, "God hath shut up together all in unbelief...." Robertson points out, "This is a resultant (effective) aorist because of the disbelief and disobedience of both Gentile and Jew." In other words, the world is shut up or trapped in a net of unbelief, because of their unbelief. The word "unbelief" here is *πείθεια (apeitheia)*, which means both unbelief and disobedience. *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* defines it in part as, "obstinacy, obstinate opposition to the divine will." It's from a cognate word, *πειθής (apeithēs)*, which means unpersuadable.

Note that all, hyperbole, virtually or nearly all, are shut up in a net of unbelief, so that he may eventually have mercy upon all. Ultimately God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4; cf. 2 Peter 3:9). Allowing the world to stumble along blindly in unbelief and ignorance for the time being is merciful on God's part. The end result will be mercy for all.

For now, however, God has mercy upon whom he will (Romans 9:15, quoting from Exodus 33:19). Is this completely arbitrary? How does God decide on whom he will have mercy? It begins with God's purpose. God chose Jacob over Esau from the womb, because it suited his purpose, which is eventually to show mercy to all [Romans 9:10-13; "hated," is loved less by comparison (see Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament*), he preferred Jacob over Esau, cf. Hebrews 11:20; John 12:32; Romans 5:18-19]. The wisdom of God's choice was borne out by the behavior and choices of the two men as they lived their lives (cf. Hebrews 11:21; 12:16). Some have been given in this life a greater opportunity for a knowledge of God than others. For example, the true gospel has been preached far more widely in the United States in modern times than in many other parts of the world. But with that opportunity comes greater responsibility.

Despite the fact that some have greater opportunity to hear the gospel, salvation is open to any who hear if they respond in belief and faith (Romans 10:13-21). As we see here, though many hear, many who hear do not obey, Israel being an example, which we will discuss in more detail shortly.

First, however, there are other examples of those who do hear and respond in a positive way, such as the Bereans (Acts 17:11-12). Note they received the word with all readiness, searched the Scriptures to find out if what they were told was the truth, and as a result they believed. We are to receive with meekness the word (James 1:21). Note at the preaching of Peter, some received the word, were convicted, and acted on it by repenting (Acts 2:37-39, 41). Those who repent at the rebuke, reproof, or correction of God can receive God's Spirit (Proverbs 1:23). God's Spirit is given upon repentance to those who obey God (Acts 5:32).

Others who hear the same words refuse to believe, and harden themselves (Proverbs 1:20-33). Israel was a people called, even a people chosen, but note the consequences of hardening their hearts against God's word and rejecting the calling they were given (Jeremiah 7:13, 22-28; Isaiah 65:12; 66:4; Jeremiah 6:10, 17-19; 2 Kings 17:13-15).

Refusing to hear and be instructed, refusing to take God's word seriously, choosing to sin, hardens and eventually deceives us, if we allow it (Hebrews 3:13). Note how rejecting God leads to being deceived and to greater and greater sin (Romans 1:18-28).

God has mercy on those who hear and obey his word (Isaiah 66:2; Exodus 20:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:9-13). Those who harden themselves will be hardened. Pharaoh seven times hardened his own heart, and often the trigger was God's mercy (Exodus 8:15; 9:34). Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and God, at least in part, further hardened Pharaoh's heart by calling on him to do the right thing and showing him mercy. Pharaoh refused to humble himself before God (Exodus 10:3).

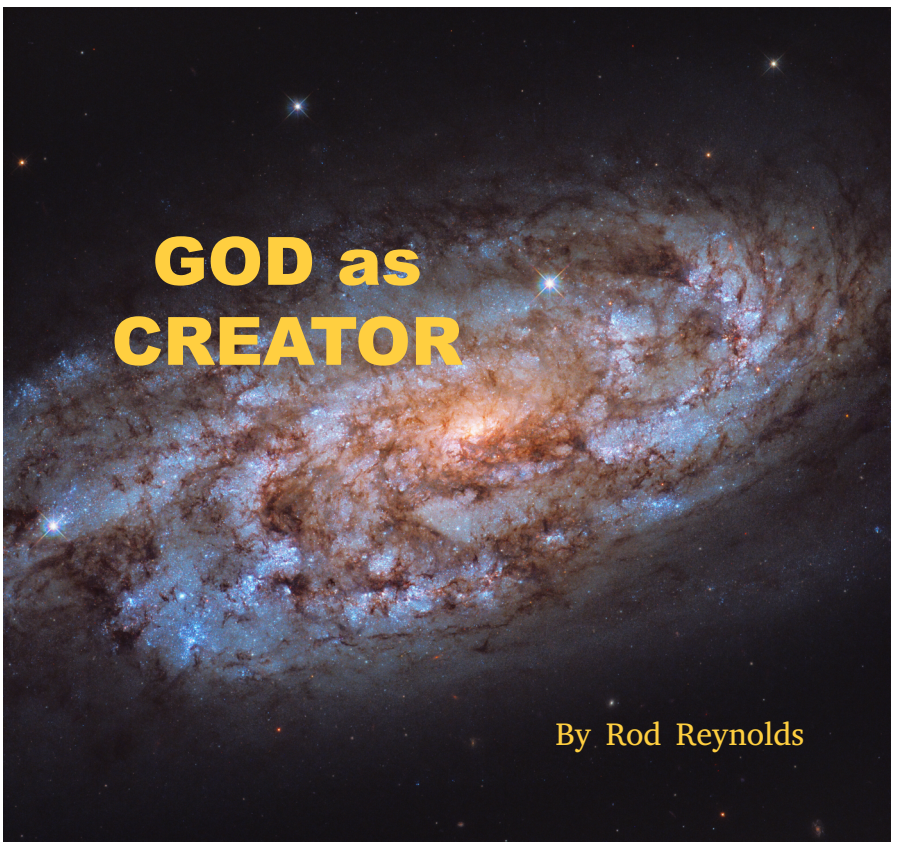
God does not tempt anyone to sin (James 1:13-18). However, if we persist in refusing God's word and choose unrighteousness, God will al-

low us to be blinded by agents of deception (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

In the end, those who will be in God's Kingdom are not just the called, and not just the chosen, but those who are called, chosen and faithful (Revelation 17:14). Such is our calling that not many mighty or noble or powerful are chosen (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). [The words "are called" is not in verse 26 in the Greek original, and many modern translations leave out these words; the meaning is not that such are not called, for many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14). For more on this subject, see our article, “Are ‘Many’ or ‘Few’ Called in This Age?”]. Of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews at the time of Jesus, all had heard Jesus' message and were commanded to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15; John 8:40), but only a couple of them—if that many—followed Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 27:57; John 19:38), identified as “a council member” (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50), believed by some to have been a member of the Sanhedrin (e.g., *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible* on Matthew 27:57), and Nicodemus (John 3:1; 7:50; 19:39; see Clarke on John 3:1). If we are to remain among the chosen we must continue faithfully in God's word.

We must make sure our hearts and minds are receptive to the truth, and that we don't harden ourselves against God's word, for any reason (Proverbs 28:13-14; 29:1; 2 Chronicles 36:11-16; Hebrews 4:1-2, 7, 11).

There's always the danger that we could become hardened in heart through neglect and the deceitfulness of sin. But if we are diligent in seeking God, and strive earnestly to abide in his word, that will not happen. We've been forewarned. Let's not let our hearts be hardened.



We live in a world teeming with a vast assortment of living creatures. There exist the one celled microbes, such as bacteria and protozoa, invisibly small microscopic creatures that nevertheless under powerful magnification show complex and intricate design. On the other end of the scale are huge blue whales which may be 100 ft. long and weigh as much as 115 tons. The earth is home to birds that soar miles above sea level and also to creatures that live in the deepest parts of the ocean. There are plants which produce flowers of exquisite beauty and fragrance, and others that look and smell like rotten meat. From space earth looks like a shimmering blue and white jewel. The earth, unique among planets, is perfectly suited for life. Its uniqueness has been further highlighted by the Mariner, Viking and Voyager spacecraft probes which have shown the other known planets to be completely hostile and forbidding to life.

Why is the earth a uniquely living planet? Why is there such a teeming abundance and variety of life on earth? Is it an accident? Or is it planned and is there a purpose behind it? If there is a purpose, what is it? These are some of the questions I want to explore with you today.

Is there any real evidence for the theory of evolution, “macroevolution” as it’s sometimes referred to, as espoused by Charles Darwin and others? Few if any doubt that organisms can adapt to an environment by limited adjustments in their genetic code (or how the code is expressed under varying conditions). But mutations that eventually produce something like a

horse from what began as a fish is entirely different. Such a theory flies in the face of considerable evidence. Many, including numerous reputable scientists, have concluded that those who believe in Darwinian evolution do

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so in spite of, not because of, the many physical evidences concerning the origin and history of life on the earth.

Please examine with me some of the factors weighing against Darwinism. And also, consider the testimony of God's word concerning the matter of creation. Doing so may lead you to a better understanding of some of the principles and purposes according to which God works, which are manifested both in his word and in his physical creation.

First let's ask if the Bible deals directly with the concept of evolution itself? It may surprise you to know that it does, even though we shouldn't really be surprised because the concept of evolution is nothing new. It is in fact very ancient. Various cultures from early in history may have viewed the details in different ways, but the basic concept of evolution is very old. For example the Babylonians believed that the earth and sky developed spontaneously out of a primeval watery chaos. Although the Babylonians personified the earth and sky and other physical manifestations by giving them names and referring to them as gods, their system nevertheless is one which is often driven by a blind evolutionary force, or you might say, by fate. In their cosmology the Babylonians confused certain elements of truth with much that was false. According to some versions of their cosmology man sprang from drops of blood from one of their gods. In other versions man was fashioned by the gods from the blood of of a condemned god. In the early cosmological mythologies, which were meant to express certain truths in poetic form and not necessarily to be taken literally, the gods are often ruled by fate or chance. Which is basically the driving force behind modern evolutionary theory.

It should be understood that at least some, if not most, ancient cultures had differing versions of how the earth and life, etc., came into being, as does our culture today. Some involved various features of the universe being personified as gods. Other versions remind one very much of what one might read in modern texts of what evolutionists call science. Among the teachings of the Egyptians was the belief that the earth arose spontaneously as a primordial mound out of a watery chaos. Man evolved from worms which lived in the Nile river.

Some versions of early Greek cosmology are very much like the Babylonian. Another popular version of early cosmology makes no mention of gods, but follows very closely the outline of modern evolutionary speculations. This system, having its origins centuries before, was summarized by Diodorus of Sicily in the first century B.C. Paraphrasing what he wrote: As the universe began heaven and earth were mingled. Eventually the fiery parts ran together forming the sun and the rest of the heavenly bodies. Meanwhile the slimy and muddy part together with moisture congealed forming the earth. The moisture collected to become the seas, the more solid parts became land.

Then the story says the sun's heat acted on the moisture and produced bubble like membranes, such as you see today in marshy areas. In these membranes life was generated. Later, when conditions had changed, the membranes could no longer generate the larger creatures, but they continued their existence by the union of the sexes. [cf. *Bibliothēkē* ("Library," also known by the Latin title *"Bibliotheca historica*"); an English translation titled *The Library of History* is available as part of the Loeb Classical Library which can be found on the Internet].

Here we see a very clear outline not all that different from modern evolutionary theory, based on the idea that life was generated spontaneously by chance in ponds or pools of water early in the history of the earth's existence.

It's interesting that while the ancient pagans were teaching that men came from the blood of slain gods, or evolved from worms in the Nile river, the Biblical account is very lucid, straightforward, and truthful. The Bible says that God created the universe by the word of his power. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:6-9).

"He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion" (Jeremiah 10:12).

"Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You" (Jeremiah 32:17).

"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Scripture implies that the creation consists in his Spirit or power. The closer science has gotten to understanding the nature of matter and the material universe the closer it gets to the picture presented thousands of years ago by God. Matter is a manifestation of energy, or power.

The Bible says in a number of places that God stretched out the heavens. "I have made the earth, And created man on it. I — My hands — stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded" (Isaiah 45:12; the phrase "My hands" is a metaphorical expression, as comparing God to a workman who makes something with his hands). Evidence from modern scientific observations and calculations established only about a century ago that the universe is expanding, just as the Bible portrays it to be. But instead of life emerging spontaneously from mud or from slime the Bible says God made or created the different life forms. As we learn more about the nature and complexity of life it becomes more and more apparent that life could have come into existence only by being created by a supernatural Supreme Being.

By the time of Jesus Christ the two most influential philosophies in the Roman world were Stoicism and Epicureanism. The Stoics believed that God was the spirit of the universe or that the universe itself was god. God was in everything and was everything. Ideas of this kind are becoming increasingly popular among many people today.

The Epicureans were atheists and completely materialistic. They believed the universe to be a result of an accidental concourse of atoms, not created and without purpose. There is no god, no supreme moral law, and no supreme judge. The world is governed by blind chance. Both Epicureanism and Stoicism held that man's destiny is controlled by fatalistic forces over which he has little or no control.

Lucretius was a Roman writer of the first century B.C. He was an Epicurean. He wrote a poem consisting of six "books," with the goal of explaining Epicurean philosophy. The Epicurean view of the origin and nature of the universe as expressed by Lucretius is summarized in the following:

"The universe, according to Epicureanism, is mindless and without a creator, being a purposeless and non-intelligent concourse of atoms without any cosmic source of direction sustaining it. Its invisible particles or atoms are constantly in motion, jostling against one another without guidance or direction. There is no end or purpose to existence, only ceaseless mutation, creation, and destruction, governed entirely by chance, in which atoms swerve around now this way, now that. Since there is no original scene of mythic creation to be invoked, Epicureanism proposes that plants and animals evolved via an extended process of trial and error. This random process, which continued over immeasurable tracts of time, is said to be responsible for the emergence of all species, animal and human. In some cases that random process was unsuccessful, resulting in creatures not properly equipped to compete for resources or to create offspring, and which succumbed to extinction — in contradistinction to perfectly formed creatures able to adapt and reproduce." (Quotation from "Evolution Versus Design: An Ancient Debate," evolutionnews.org; arti-

cle is an excerpt from the book *Taking Leave of Darwin: A Longtime Agnostic Discovers the Case for Design*, by Neil Thomas).

All life is a result of an accidental coalescence of atoms, according to the Epicurean view. This outlook is of course at the core of modern materialistic evolutionary thinking. Scripture addresses these ideas, showing that God has a plan; fate, or chance, is not in control. The Bible presents an altogether different viewpoint, as follows:

"Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, 'What does this babbler want to say?' Others said, 'He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,' because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.' For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring." Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead'" (Acts 17:18-31).

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3).

“... scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water” (II Peter 3:3-6). This is a brief history of how present world (*kosmos*: world as ordered and arranged) came to be. It declares that that the world as it previously existed was destroyed by water.

“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good. God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one” (Psalms 53:1-3). God had concluded all mankind under sin, until they are brought to repentance. To deny of God’s existence, either by words or behavior, produces a lack of understanding and knowledge, and as this psalm indicates, produces evil.

Modern evolutionary theory is more sophisticated in certain respects than former theories, but it is at its core much the same from a philosophical standpoint. Is the modern theory of evolution "true" science, as many believe? Or could it be rather, despite its wide acceptance among scientists and much of the general public, a form of "false" science based on vain speculation, which has served to undermine in the minds of many the concept of an all-powerful, Creator God with absolute authority? The Bible warns us to avoid “profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (I Timothy 6:20-21, KJV). Could evolution fit this description? Placing their trust in evolution as the correct explanation of origins, many in our secular age have indeed rejected outright any notion of God.

An important principle expressed in God’s Word is “Prove all things, hold fast that which is good” (I Thessalonians 5:21). I would not have you believe anything merely because I say it. Look carefully at the evidence, both

from the Bible and from nature itself. Weigh all sides of the issue, seek God's guidance in prayer and then decide what you will believe.

The fundamental question regarding origins is this, is the universe, and especially life, a consequence of intelligent creation or blind chance? Propagandists for evolution try to push any consideration of an alternative to their speculations out of the arena of science, claiming that religion and science are in separate spheres of knowledge and thus religion should have no bearing on scientific discussion. The Bible, however, has a great deal to say about origins, as do alternative theories, including Darwinian evolution and its offshoots. There's nothing wrong with seeing how the evidence stacks up when the speculations of evolutionists are compared with what the Bible says about origins and the implications of its statements regarding origins.

Dr. Niles Eldredge of the American Museum of Natural History is one of the leading proponents of what is referred to as "punctuated equilibrium." Having seen that the fossil record does not support the concept of gradual evolution as proposed by Darwin, Dr. Eldredge and others have proposed the idea that for long periods there are virtually no evolutionary changes, then very suddenly major changes occur which produce much different life forms. Dr. Eldredge is a confirmed evolutionist. He published a book in 1982 attacking those who believe the concept of creation or the idea that a Supreme Being created life on the earth. The book's title is *The Monkey Business: A Scientist Looks at Creationism.* Some of what follows is in reference to some of the major thrusts of his book, but also applies generally to the issue of whether life "evolved" of its own accord or was created by God.

It's not unusual for propagandists for evolutionary theory to claim for themselves exclusive right to the mantle and authority of "science," and in effect attempt to silence opposition to evolutionary theory with ridicule. However, many creationists are very knowledgeable and accomplished scientists who have done an effective job of exposing the many weaknesses, fallacies and contradictions in the theory of evolution. Generally the criticisms of evolutionary assumptions by creationists are often right on the mark. Some proponents of creationism, however, but by no means all fail to recognize that Genesis one is describing a reformation of the earth's surface and not, except in the very first verse, the original creation of the earth. This misunderstanding tends to weaken arguments for the creationist view in the eyes of those who are dubious of the idea that the earth is only 6000 years old.

Too many among the general public have been deluded into accepting evolution as a "scientific" theory, while concluding that belief in creation cannot be considered scientific because it is not "testable" in a laboratory. However, it should be obvious that evolution as a proposed series of events occurring in the remote past is not testable in a laboratory either. Thus it is no more "scientific" in that sense than is creation. Since neither evolution nor creation can be duplicated in a laboratory experiment, we must rely on other evidence to test the validity of each.

The authors of a book called *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories* (published 1984) are all professional scientists. They are Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen. They refer to science that deals with nonrecurring events as "origin" science. Evidence may be brought to bear by which theories of origin science can be judged "plausible" or "implausible." But such theories cannot be "falsified" by direct observation as in the case of operation science. Chemical evolution is a speculative attempt to explain a singular event — the origin of life. But is it plausible or implausible? That is a question science can answer, according to the authors.

Many accomplished scientists have rejected the Darwinian theory of evolution and its offshoots, such as the so-called "punctuated equilibrium" theory, as implausible. A document titled "A SCIENTIFIC DISSENT FROM DARWINISM" signed by more than 1000 scientists is available on the Internet. Their statement is: "We are skeptical of claims for the ability of random mutation and natural selection to account for the complexity of life. Careful examination of the evidence for Darwinian theory should be encouraged." Signatories include scholars and professors from a number of disciplines, including especially biology, biochemistry, chemistry, etc. The document and a list of signatories is available at dissentfromdarwin.org.

Both evolution and creation theory, if you want to call it that, suggest or "predict" what we might expect to find as we search the evidence available.

Dr. Eldredge asserts that evolution predicts "one coherent pattern of simi-

larity interlinking all forms of life." The Bible does also. "...what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so does the other.... All are from the dust, and all return to dust" (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20). "God...made the world [*kosmos* — the world as structured and ordered] and everything in it.... He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24-25). "...God is not the author of confusion but of peace [or harmony]" (I Corinthians 14:33).

The Creator is described in the Bible as a Being of law, order, and harmony. We would expect these qualities to be reflected in His creation. (The Bible of course goes further and explains the reasons for the chaos and confusion that at times prevail on earth.) If evolution predicts a "hierarchical arrangement of similarities" so does the Bible. In fact, a hierarchical arrangement is implicit in the order of creation found in Genesis one.

What's interesting though is what we find when the predictions of evolution and the Bible record diverge. If Darwinism were true, as Darwin himself recognized, the fossil record should show evidence of many intermediate forms in a gradual change from "simple to complex" (though there are no "simple" life forms, any form of biological life is exceedingly complex). The Bible reveals that the principle God follows in creating living organisms is that each kind should reproduce its own kind (see Genesis 1), thus we would not expect to find transitional fossils among those buried if the Bible is an accurate record of what happened. After well over a hundred years of searching the fossil record since the publication of "The Origin of Species" in 1859, which prediction has proven accurate? First, what about the claim often made that simpler forms of life appear in the fossil record earlier than more advanced forms as though there were some kind of progression? Following is a statement from a college Biology text, "The Science of Biology," by Paul B. Weisz, "It is a very curious circumstance that rocks older than about 500 million years are so barren of fossils, whereas rocks younger than that not only are comparatively rich in them, but also include representatives of most major categories of organisms. Many hypotheses have been proposed to account for this sudden and simultaneous appearance of different fossil groups. But to date, **a satisfactory explanation has not been found**" (p. 677). Actually, a satisfactory explanation has been found, it is found in the Bible, which would lead one to look for a sudden and simultaneous appearance of diverse life forms. It should be further noted that as more and more fossils have been uncovered, nearly all major categories of animal life have now been found in the earliest fossil bearing rocks, the Cambrian. The fossil record for plant life is somewhat less certain, but with a few exceptions major categories of both aquatic and land plants are believed to date to the Cambrian as well.

The systems and structures in the single cell bacterium E. coli are enormously complex

Evolution, however, has a real problem with the fossil evidence, since it doesn't show the gradual progression from "simple" to complex the theory predicts. It is true that a small number of single celled fossils have been found in rocks dated much older by evolutionists. However, the evidence does not at all suggest that these evolved into any "higher" or more complex organisms. In fact, what are believed by evolutionists to be the oldest known fossils, found in rocks they claim are three billion eight hundred million years old, "are morphologically identical to modern yeasts." Not much help for Darwinism there. It's worth noting too that the rocks contain no trace of the proposed prebiotic soup that supposedly led to the first organisms, which if it existed should have left "either massive sediments containing enormous amounts of the various nitrogenous organic compounds… or alternatively in much-metamorphosed sediments we should find vast amounts of nitrogenous cokes..." (Brooks and Shaw, "*Origin and Development of Living Systems*," p. 359)

The lack of transitional forms in the fossil record, contrary to what Darwinism predicts, is in fact the very reason the "Punctuated Equilibrium" theory has recently become increasingly popular among evolutionists. The theory of evolution failed to accurately predict what would be found in the fossil record! As it was stated in a *Newsweek* article on "Punctuated Equilibrium," a warmed over version

of the 1940's "Hopeful Monster" theory, published November 3, 1980, "Evidence from fossils now points overwhelmingly away from the classical Darwinism which most Americans learned in high school..." (p. 95). That's why many have been forced to conclude that a major overhaul of the theory is necessary to save the basic concept of a creation without a Creator. Of course, the fossil record presents no such problem for one who understands and believes the Bible record.

Since the principle revealed in the Bible is that kinds reproduce after their own kind, we would also expect to be found in the natural order a fixity of kinds, or genetic stability over long periods of time, if the Bible is true. On the other hand, since evolution asserts that kinds evolve into other kinds we would expect to find a lack of fixity of kinds or genetic stability. Which idea has proven accurate? Again the evidence confirms the Biblical record. There are numerous instances of kinds which have remained virtually unchanged over "hundreds of millions of years" according to the evolutionists' own dating methods.

In their book "*Evolution from Space*," Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe use the example of fossil insects: "It is particularly remarkable that **no forms with the wings at an intermediate stage of development have been found**. Where fossil insects have wings at all they are fully functional to serve the purposes of flight, and often enough in ancient fossils 'the wings are essentially identical to what can be found today'" (p. 86). "...beetles have an ancient history going back to about 250 million years ago. When complete specimens of beetles are found in the fossil record they are **little different from present-day forms**" (p. 118). Another example: "The earliest monotreme fossils come from the Australian Pleistocene, and they **are essentially the same** as the living forms..." (p. 87). In summarizing the evidence the authors state: "The factual evidence is **overwhelmingly confined to lines of creatures that do not change very much from generation to generation**, as for example the various orders of insects.... Wherever one would like evidence of major changes and linkages… the evidence is **conspicuously missing from the fossil record**" (p. 89). Again the prediction of evolution has proven false, that of the Bible true. Creatures remain stable over long periods, and one kind does not change into another!

The claim is made that radiometric dating has verified the positioning of the strata as previously worked out by geologists. However, radiometric dating is unreliable. Variables are involved which are subject to the researcher's own guesses and interpretations – which in turn will be influenced by his biases shaped by the general acceptance of the theory of evolution. Even then, "anomalous" dates show up quite regularly, which are usually discretely ignored by evolutionists. For example, lavas from volcanoes of known geologic ages measured in centuries or less have yielded radiometric ages varying from 100 million to 10 billion years. Petroleum, formed millions of years ago according to evolutionary geology, yields radiocarbon dates of 3000 to 9000 years. A number of coal samples, supposed to have been formed millions of years ago, have been radiocarbon dated at 30,000 to 45,000 years old. The vast majority of fossils yield radiocarbon dates of less than 15,000 years, including dates for *Homo Sapiens* no older than 8,500 years and an indicated age for *Australopithecus* fossils of about 12,500 years. Wood found in "100-million year old" Cretaceous limestone has been dated by the radiocarbon method as 12,800 years old.

Radiometric dating techniques cannot be used for most sedimentary rocks themselves, where most of the fossils are found. Fossils are typically dated by the rocks they are found in, and most rocks by the fossils found in them, which is circular reasoning. There are many problems, discrepancies, anomalies and contradictions in the age dating methods of evolutionists. A science writer named Roger Lewin wrote a book about this some years ago, called *Bones of Contention*.

There are many phenomena which cannot be accounted for by the "accepted" methods of age dating. Among them polystrate fossils such as trees that extend through supposed hundreds of millions of years worth of sediment, man made artifacts which have been found embedded in strata supposedly hundreds of millions of years old, and fossils found in strata which supposedly predated the living forms by hundreds of millions of years.

Throw in besides the so-called "living fossils," such as the okapi, which was said to have become extinct in the Miocene Epoch about 30 million years ago, until one was captured in 1906, or the coelacanth, a fish supposedly extinct for 65 million years, until they began to be caught off the coast of Africa some years ago, as well as others. Consider too that some part of "every" geologic period rests "directly"

upon Precambrian deposits. The example mentioned above of yeast fossils in “the world’s oldest rocks” raises another question relating to rock dating methods. Since yeasts are saprophytic fungi, dependent on dead organic cells for nutrients, how could they have existed hundreds of millions or billions of years before other life forms? Another problem regarding such fossils: They are found in what is supposed to be the earliest known rocks, which leaves little or no time for prebiotic evolution. All dating methods for ancient phenomena are based on highly risky assumptions and must be considered speculative. As Professor Edward Deevey, Director of the Geochronometric Laboratory at Yale University, wrote in an article for "*Scientific American*" in February 1952, geological dating is “inspired guesswork.” My question is: who’s doing the inspiring? He also discusses some of the many variables and unknowns that can affect the outcome of, in this instance, radiocarbon dating. The truth is, no human knows for sure the age of the rocks, the earth, or the universe. Based on what the Bible reveals, and other evidence, we know it’s older than 6,000 years, but how much older is anybody’s guess.

Is there really anything to “Punctuated Equilibrium,” or the idea of sudden evolutionary leaps? Norman Macbeth is a critic of evolution (though not a creationist) and author of *Darwin Retired: An Appeal to Reason*. In an interview published in "*TOWARDS*" magazine, spring, 1982, he characterized the concept as a “pipe-dream,” a “counsel of despair, a wild hope.” He stated that the very fact evolutionists have to invoke such a concept indicates, “They are in a condition of bankruptcy.” He says, “...as any fool can see, it is extremely difficult to document, in fact impossible. It is not a scientific theory, it is only a statement that we are in such terrible shape that it must have been something on the order of a miracle.” I find it interesting that Dr. Macbeth has had intimate association with many of the scientists at the American Museum of Natural History, and has even lectured before them. He makes the point “that among themselves the scientists admit great weaknesses [in evolutionary theories, including punctuated equilibrium, genetic drift, or the Sewall Wright Effect] but they do not reveal these to the public… and at the Museum that’s what’s going on.”

There’s not a lot of space in the Bible devoted to the pre-Adamic world. But we are given a broad outline with certain "key details" of what God has done along with the principles and purposes according to which God works. From these we should be able to determine within broad guidelines what fits and what doesn’t. Among those truths which are revealed which have a direct bearing on the discussion at hand are the following:

(1) God has from the beginning and throughout all the ages since had a "specific purpose" in mind for His Creation. In Ephesians 3 Paul writes about the mystery of God’s "eternal purpose" which "from the beginning of the ages" has been hidden in God who "created all things through Jesus Christ” (vs. 9-11). We understand that that purpose involves reproducing Himself or, if you will, reproducing seed after the God kind (Malachi 2:15; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 21:7).

(2) God took a special interest in the creation of the earth, and personally designed and made it. “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone...” (Job 38:5-7). Proverbs 8:22-31 states unequivocally that the earth is a result of God’s planning or wisdom. “Who...calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?” God asks rhetorically (Isaiah 40:12). That the earth’s features (size, shape, tilt, distance from the sun, chemical composition, etc.) make it an ideal habitat for organic life is according to the Bible no accident. It was all carefully planned, arranged and brought into being by God.

(3) God is the source and sustainer of life. “God, who made the world and everything in it… gives to all life, breath, and all things” (Acts 17:24-25). Speaking of the living creatures of the earth Job spoke: “… the hand of the LORD has done this, In whose hand is the life of every living thing...” (Job 12:9-10). A number of Scriptures tell us that God is the designer and sustainer of the living things of the earth. “O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom [denotes planning and purpose] You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions — This great and wide sea, In which are innumerable teeming things, Living things both small and great.... These all wait for You, That You may give them their food in due season. What you give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good. You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth” (Psalm 104:24-30, the

latter verse may be a reference to the destruction of the pre-Adamic world and the renewal described in Genesis one, or a succession of catastrophic events in the history of the earth and subsequent renewals). And yet another scripture that reveals that all life on earth is utterly dependent on God: “Who gave Him charge over the earth? Or who appointed Him over the whole world? If He should set His heart on it, If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, All flesh would perish together...” (Job 34:13-15).

(4) In its design, the physical creation reflects God’s eternal purpose.

Among the ways in which it does so is that God specifically designed and created organic life so that any individual of each kind, or family, "is formed according to the peculiar characteristics inherent in the seed or lifegerm of its own kind." Various scientists have written in recent years about the “information content” in the makeup of living cells, and especially the set of instructions or genetic “code” (genome) that determines the peculiar characteristics of each individual life form. The information content in the genomes of mice, flowers, humans “are enormous, fantastic, quite out of all nonbiological experience” (*Evolution from Space*, p. 4). Even in the genomes of the most “ancient” life forms found in the “earliest” rocks, “the information standard remains enormously high” (p. 8). After a thorough analysis of proposed early earth models and simulations attempting to explain how life could have arisen spontaneously from nonliving matter, the authors of *The Mystery of Life’s Origin* conclude: “The early earth conditions appear to offer no intrinsic means of supplying… the configurational entropy work necessary to make the macromolecules of life” (p. 184). In essence, what the authors are saying is that the information content of organic living forms has no explanation apart from the intervention of an outside intelligence to put it there. As Hoyle and Wickramasinghe put it: “For life to have originated on Earth it would be necessary that quite explicit instructions should have been provided for its assembly” (*Evolution from Space*, p. 30). And for each different form of life, a different and unique set of instructions is needed.

The authors go on to conclude that by far the most probable explanation is that “life was assembled by an intelligence.” Indeed, they conclude that this explanation “is so obvious that one wonders why it is not widely accepted as being self-evident. The reasons are psychological rather than scientific" (p. 130). Who, what intelligence from the very beginning placed within each organic life form its own individual genetic makeup giving it its own peculiar characteristics? “...God gives it a body [its own peculiar form] as He pleases [or more correctly: "as He purposed"], and to "each seed" his [or its] own body” (I Corinthians 15:38-39). In other words it is God who has as Creator placed within each seed or germ of life the information that determines the physical characteristics of that particular kind of creature, be it men, beasts, fish, birds, etc. Very interestingly, Paul is using this analogy of the seed containing encoded within itself the form of the creature that shall arise out of it to show how we, as the seed of God, shall bear the image of God in heaven, whose spiritual seed we are: “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (I Corinthians 15:49).

I’ve already discussed evidence that creatures remain true to form generation after generation, whether existing before or after Adam, allowing for limited variations within family groups. I believe these scientific and Biblical evidences rule out absolutely any consideration of the possibility of organic macroevolution either before or after Adam.

I’m convinced that a genuine knowledge of and belief in what the Bible teaches about Divine creation does not permit us to be neutral about organic evolution as conceived by Darwin, Huxley, and their ilk. It is a philosophy emanating from and propagating a lawless spirit, hostile toward God — as even a cursory review of their writings will clearly reveal. From a historical point of view, such a theory is an attack in the name of science against the very concept of God as Creator.

The evidence of intelligent design in nature should be unmistakable to any rational person. In fact, I consider it one of the most powerful proofs of God’s existence, and it is a proof that is taken for granted in the Bible itself, as the following scriptures demonstrate: “...what may be known of God is manifest in [or among] them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...” (Romans 1:19-20). “’To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?’ says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things...” (Isaiah 40:25-26).

How Can You Know the Truth?

by Rod Reynolds

We live in a world in which confusion abounds. In every major facet of the world's society: education, politics, religion, or whatever, contradictions, conflict and confusion prevails. Almost every subject of consequence is controversial these days.

There is a continuous struggle going on for our attention. Whether you realize it or not, your mind is under siege. All kinds of elements, groups, individuals, with a point of view to sell are struggling to capture your mind—attempting to win it over to their point of view. Your mind is constantly being bombarded by conflicting ideas, beliefs and opinions.

Even something as obvious as one's sex is controversial. Are you male or female? An increasingly popular idea these days is that it's not your DNA, nor the sex organs you are born with, that determine your sex. It's whether you "feel" that you are male or female. Confusion about one's sexual identity is being deliberately sown among even very young children by prevailing forces in our society. We can feel compassion for those who are confused about their sexuality, which often results from abuse or other kinds of mistreatment. But I have a hard time feeling anything but contempt for willful proponents of such confusion.

Paradoxically, in a world where the very idea of objective truth is increasingly under assault, powerful institutions are becoming more and more intolerant of any opinions on controversial matters which do not concur with their own.

Powerful social media companies routinely censor or deplatform those posting material which runs counter to opinions they favor, even though they are supposed to be content neutral platforms. Internet browser algorithms often tend to give preference in their search engine results to websites expressing viewpoints in favor with the left-wing Establishment.

Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, which has a huge following and influence worldwide, initially had what they called a "neutral point of view" policy (NPOV). The idea was that an encyclopedia should write objectively about "what people believe" regarding a particular subject, especially a controversial subject, without advocating one point of view over another, or stating or implying that one particular view of the subject at hand is the correct point of view (cf. link to original policy in "Wikipedia is Badly Biased," larrysanger.org, retrieved 11-13-2020).

Larry Sanger, a co-founder of Wikipedia, who is no longer associated with the organization, argues that, "Wikipedia's 'NPOV' is dead. The original policy long since forgotten, Wikipedia no longer has an effective neutrality policy. There is a rewritten policy, but it endorses the utterly bankrupt canard that journalists should avoid what they call 'false balance.' The notion that we should avoid 'false balance' is directly contradictory to the original neutrality policy. As a result, even as journalists turn to opinion and activism, Wikipedia now touts controversial points of view on politics, religion, and science" (*ibid.*).

In the article Sanger provides a number of examples of how Wikipedia articles are written from a biased "liberal-left point of view" (his words). One example is a statement in Wikipedia's article on abortion. The article in question asserts as fact that, "When properly done, abortion is one of the safest procedures in medicine." Sanger comments of this assertion: It is, "...a claim that is questionable on its face, considering what an invasive, psychologically distressing, and sometimes lengthy procedure it can be even when done according to modern medical practices. More to the point, abortion opponents consider the fetus to be a human being with rights; their view, that it is not safe for the baby, is utterly ignored."

One of the other examples he cites of Wikipedia bias is their article on Jesus. "It simply asserts, again in its own voice, that 'the quest for the historical Jesus has yielded major uncertainty on the historical

reliability of the Gospels and on how closely the Jesus portrayed in the Bible reflects the historical Jesus.' In another place, the article simply asserts, 'the gospels are not independent nor consistent records of Jesus' life.' A great many Christians would take issue with such statements, which means it is not neutral for that reason — in other words, the very fact that most Christians believe in the historical reliability of the Gospels, and that they are wholly consistent, means that the article is biased if it simply asserts, without attribution or qualification, that this is a matter of 'major uncertainty.' In other respects, the article can be fairly described as a 'liberal' academic discussion of Jesus, focusing especially on assorted difficulties and controversies, while failing to explain traditional or orthodox views of those issues. So it might be 'academic,' but what it is not is neutral, not in the original sense we defined for Wikipedia" (*ibid.*).

Sanger provides another example of Wikipedia's lack of objectivity and accuracy in it's article titled "Christ." The article leaves the impression that the early followers of Jesus, who would include Peter, John, Paul, Jude, and others, rarely if ever referred to him using the title "Christ." Sanger cites evidence for his conclusion that this impression is false: "Clearly, Wikipedia's claims are tendentious if not false, and represent a point of view that many if not most Christians would rightly dispute" (*ibid.*).

He also discusses some examples of how Wikipedia treats subjects dealing with science. Views on scientific subjects such as global warming, vaccines, alternative medicine, (and others) not in line with the so-called "Establishment" view are treated dismissively, scornfully, in Wikipedia articles. He points out that "scientists sometimes do not agree on which theories are and are not scientific." He concludes that Wikipedia articles "endorse definite positions that scientific minorities reject." And that "genuine neutrality requires a different sort of treatment" (*ibid.*).

Steve Deace, an opinion writer for theblaze.com, comments in one of his articles: "A prominent Christian pastor tweeted the following this week: 'Two seemingly contradictory currents mark our society 1. There is a denunciation of all claims of absolute truth 2. Yet there is also a fanaticism in which one position or group is absolutely right, nothing is ambiguous, and divergent views should be destroyed.'

"I feel ya, brother. But nothing contradictory is in fact going on at all. This is the logical destination of attempting to usurp the ultimate authority in all the universe. It is biblically defined double-mindedness perfected. 'My truth' can't help but become 'kneel before Zod.'

"As a consequence, the Beatitudes are indeed replaced with the Fanaticisms. They are ever-changing, non-eternal, entirely arbitrary power grabs that seek not to instill humility and healing but elevate lies to the level of ultimate justice" ("Mask-wearing fanaticism sure looks a lot like a religion," theblaze.com, November 13, 2020).

Thankfully, at least in the United States, although the same cannot necessarily be said of some other countries, no one is attempting to force you into a particular mode of thought at the point of a bayonet – at least not yet. Although mobs in some of our cities have recently forced some individuals into making confessions of one kind or another through violence and intimidation. And intimidation is being used in our schools and colleges in a similar manner. And individuals are increasingly being targeted by our system of "justice" for expressing certain political points of view.

In our generation, as in other ages past, whole nations have been forced to accept a particular dogma through violence and terror. Japan in the World War II era, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and other Communist countries, are only a few examples of ideologies being forced on people through terror and intimidation. In the Middle Ages it was often religious dogma that was being forced on people through mass murder and instruments such as the Inquisition.

In areas dominated by Catholic, Protestant, or Muslim authorities, conversion to the prevailing dogma was frequently forced on people. Those who did not yield were often subject to execution or imprisonment.

Not infrequently, those who would impose their will on others pose as "liberators." "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage" (II Peter 2:19).

Is it any wonder that people are confused when from positions of high authority, whether it be in politics, education, religion, or what-have-you, black is continually called white, evil is called good, rhetoric, empty promises, slander, guile, "public relations," are substituted for truth?

Is it any wonder that people are most especially confused about values? As writer, editor, and publisher Irving Kristol wrote decades ago, "America is experiencing what can only be called… a crisis in values…. People do not know what they ought to think about relations between the sexes, about relations between parents and children, about relations between the citizen and his government…. The old ways have decayed…" ("New Left, New

Right," *The Radical Left: The Abuse of Discontent*, Ed. William P. Gerberding, Duane E. Smith, Houghton Mifflin, 1970, pp. 57-58).

What was true when the book was published in 1970 is even more true now. People don't **know** what to believe about basic values—about the relationships which form the very fiber and fabric of a stable society. The **truth** about almost everything seems to have escaped us as a people. We, the United States, the western world, the whole world, don't **KNOW** the truth. And furthermore, we don't know where to find it—or even how to go about looking for it.

One area in which confusion reigns is religion itself, including what is alleged to be "Christianity," with hundreds of competing sects and denominations, often teaching doctrines diametrically opposed to one another, and not infrequently, opposite to what the Bible itself teaches.

How can you know the truth? In this article let's explore some principles to help you answer that question, to help you understand how you can **know the truth**.

But first I want to show you what the Bible says about the condition the world is in today. I want to show you **why** a knowledge of the truth is important. Then we'll discuss how you can find it.

The Bible says the whole world is today in a condition of being deceived. "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who **deceives the whole world**; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:9). The Bible describes this world as a world of darkness. Paul wrote, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, **against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places**" (Ephesians 6:11-12). In other words, the battle for truth does not just involve human beings. Our battle is against Satan and the demonic horde that influences this world. Peter wrote of those who are a part of the true Church of God in this age, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you out of darkness** into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). We are called out of this world of lies and deception, into the light of truth.

The following words of prophesy from Jeremiah apply especially to our age: "Oh, that I had in the wilderness A lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, And go from them! For they are all adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men. 'And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me,' says the Lord. 'Everyone take heed to his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; For every brother will utterly supplant, And every neighbor will walk with slanderers. Everyone will deceive his neighbor, And will not speak the truth; They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves to commit iniquity. Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; **Through deceit they refuse to know Me**,' says the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:2-6).

"Hear the word of the Lord, You children of Israel, For the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: '**There is no truth** or mercy Or knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying, Killing and stealing and committing adultery, They break all restraint, With bloodshed upon bloodshed'" (Hosea 4:1-2).

Through lying and other sins, for a lack of knowledge of the truth, our peoples are headed for destruction. Because a doctrine or practice is widely accepted, doesn't mean it's true, or acceptable to God. Many practices and teachings widely accepted—including many widely accepted by popular "Christianity"—are in fact contrary to the teachings of God's word.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (Hosea 4:6).

Why, we might ask? How is it that deceit, falsehood, confusion have come to dominate the world?

It began in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve chose to reject God's instructions, and believed Satan's lies instead. Jesus said of the devil, he "does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

What we have in short is a world turned over to Satan's control precisely because Adam, and most of his descendants, have chosen to reject God's authority over their lives. And in rejecting God's authority, Adam and his descendants have also **rejected the truth** God has to offer. They have rejected God's laws, and they have rejected the greatest and most absolute reality, or **TRUTH**, of all, which is God himself!

Therefore we have a world of darkness, of confusion, of chaos, a world ruled over by Satan—the father of lies (2 Corinthians 4:2-4).

The Bible makes it perfectly clear that the

right kind of knowledge is priceless. The Bible prophesied that at the time of the end, the time we're living in now, knowledge would increase. "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4). Knowledge has increased exponentially in the past few centuries and decades. But with increased knowledge have come increasing evils, evils that threaten human existence, and the very survival of life on this planet.

Is it the knowledge which is wrong? Or is it the way the knowledge has been abused and misapplied? Is it the knowledge which is evil, or is it the philosophical system which underlies the world's governmental and educational systems?

What is the truth if it is not knowledge? If you say, "I have the truth," are you not saying you have a knowledge of what is true? What does the Bible say about the value of knowledge? And how does that relate to seeking and finding the truth?

Paul wrote, "We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies" (I Corinthians 8:1). Does that mean knowledge is bad? No. Paul goes on to say, "And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know" (I Corinthians 8:2). In other words, superficial knowledge tends to give one a false sense of superiority to others. Knowledge must be subordinated to love. But any of us, no matter how much knowledge he has, knows nothing compared to what he has yet to learn. The knowledge of any of us is rudimentary and introductory, so we have nothing to be vain about, and we have a lot to learn.

"A wise man will hear and **increase learning**, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" (Proverbs 1:5). "The fear of the Lord is the **beginning of knowledge**, But **fools despise wisdom and instruction**" (Proverbs 1:7). These are just a couple of many scriptures that tell us learning, knowledge, is of inestimable value. The accrual of the right kind of true knowledge is an essential key to your spiritual growth and development. Peter wrote, "... giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue **knowledge**" (II Peter 1:5). He also admonished, "You therefore, beloved,… beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but **grow in the grace and knowledge** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen" (II Peter 3:17-18).

As Peter warned, it could prove essential to your salvation that you continue growing in knowledge and in an understanding of the truth. Otherwise, you may well be led into error.

But how do you know what is the truth? With all the conflicting ideas, teachings, beliefs, persuasions, and opinions, how are you going to know what is true?

How can you know what is true? Some have agonized over this question their entire lives, never finding a satisfactory answer.

Many have found the question so perplexing that they at least outwardly have given up even the idea of finding the truth. There are many who claim that truth is impossible to attain, that attempting to know the truth is futile. I have a biology book in which the author states that the object of science is not to find truth. One might ask, if the object is not to find truth, then what is the object?

Many people, especially those in higher education, are afraid of the word "truth." Why? Because the word implies finality and authority. And authority, other than that of themselves, is what many of the supposed wise men of our society hate above all else.

That hatred for authority, that unwillingness to subject themselves to the truth is why the wise of the world have not been able to find it. They have rejected the very first requisite to having a knowledge of the truth. This state of cultivated foolishness is described in Scripture: "… **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth**. Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also **resist the truth**: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith" (II Timothy 3:7-8).

First Key

Jesus said, "If you **abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. And **you shall know the truth**, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

The first requisite and the first key to knowing truth is to subject yourself, submit yourself, to the truth — beginning with the greatest truth — the greatest reality of all, God himself. Jesus said, "I am the way, the **truth**, and the life" (John 14:6). God is the very embodiment and source of all truth. He is the greatest reality in the Universe because all things were created by him and he existed before all else. He is not only the source and wellspring of all life —he is the source and wellspring of all that is real — of all that is true. To be cut off from God is to be cut off from that which is sound, that which is true, that which is secure and grounded in reality. "Because they **hated knowledge** And did **not choose the fear of the Lord**, They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will

destroy them; But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil" (Proverbs 1:29-33).

The truths concerning basic values which undergird all else are spiritual truths. And that which is spiritual must be spiritually discerned. It is only through the added dimension and power of God's Spirit that we can fully know and understand the framework of spiritual truth upon which all else must be ordered and arranged in order to be of permanent value (1 Corinthians 2:6-14).

And having been given a knowledge of truth, we must abide in it, that is, we must live by it, practice it, if we are to retain it. "...Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, "Man shall not **live** by bread alone, but **by every word of God**"'" (Luke 4:4). As noted earlier, Jesus said, "If you **abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall **know the truth**, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:30-32; cf. Romans 1:18-28). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who **do His commandments**" (Psalms 111:10).

Second Key

Jesus Christ promised his disciples in John 16:13 that his Spirit would guide them into all truth. But in order for it to do that we must be **seeking the truth**. That is the **second key** to knowing the truth. The principle from God's word is clear: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

In order to find the truth you must seek it. If you don't seek it you'll never find it. It takes effort, study, diligence to find the truth. "... he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

In the book of Proverbs and elsewhere the truth is compared to rubies, gems, precious metal and is said to be of even greater value (Job 28:12-28; Proverbs 3:13-15; 8:10-11; 20:15). Gems and precious metals must be sought out at great cost and effort. You don't normally just stumble over them in the dark. Solomon built a fleet of ships and sent them to search the world over for the treasures which enriched his kingdom (1 Kings 9:6-28; 10:21-23). He recognized that it takes effort to attain that which is of value.

"My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And **apply your heart to understanding**; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, If you **seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures**; Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, And find the knowledge of God" (Proverbs 2:1-5).

We need to ask ourselves, how diligent am I in praying for understanding. Am I careless about what I believe? Am I diligent in seeking the truth?

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Note that the Bible is referred to here as the "word of truth." The Bible is your primary tool as a truth seeker and is the source of basic truth because it is the revealed word of God. It is the foundation of all knowledge and nothing that is true will contradict God's word if rightly understood. This brings us to the third key.

Third Key

Learn to use the tools of study and **prove all things**.

Needless to say, the Bible has been twisted, distorted and perverted in countless ways to make it seem to support lies and contradictions. The history of mankind is one of perverting truth and exchanging it for a lie. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, **who exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Romans 1:18-25).

We are told, "**Test [or prove] all things**; hold fast what is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). In studying the Bible a most important key is that the **Bible interprets itself**. "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little. For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, To whom He said, 'This is the rest with which You may

cause the weary to rest,' And, 'This is the refreshing'; Yet they would not hear. But the word of the Lord was to them, 'Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,' That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught" (Isaiah 28:9-13). Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, all from God's word. If you ignore this vital principle, you will make little progress in understanding of the truth of Scripture.

Men are all too willing to read their own ideas and interpretations into Scripture. If an interpretation of a particular Scripture is plainly contradicted by other Scriptures, then that interpretation is false. "Theology is the whole meaning of Scripture—the sense taught in the whole of Scripture, as that sense is modified, limited, and explained by Scripture itself. It is a consistently interpreted representation of the statements of the Bible, on the various facts, doctrines, and precepts, which the book of God reveals" (*The Bible Handbook*, Joseph Angus, Samuel Green, p. 201)

There are many tools and aids that can help in studying the Bible. Learn what some of them are and learn to use them properly to help you grow in knowledge of the truth. (See from our website for reference: https://www.cogmessenger.org/en/references-for-bible-students/).

Another tool that can be used in ascertaining truth is the scientific method. Science, or what is called science, has been made a false god in our society and there are a lot of things that are labeled science that are not scientifically demonstrable at all. Indeed, much that is labeled science is demonstrably false.

But the scientific method boiled down to its fundamentals is nothing more than observing, comparing, and reasoning logically from those observations and comparisons. It involves the process of induction or reaching general conclusions from specific observations, augmented by other types of logic based on sound reasoning. Observation and induction play a key role in coming to an understanding of truth.

Sir Isaac Newton, who is recognized as one of the greatest scientists of all history and who largely developed the scientific method philosophically, was able to prove God's existence satisfactorily to himself by his method observation and logic. Of course conclusions reached sometimes can be erroneous, and are subject to being tested. Thus we are to "test all things, hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Because there were in Newton's many who wanted to reject God's existence, some philosophers, notably David Hume, sought to argue against and debunk the method of induction. Nevertheless, the method of observation and induction has proven a very fruitful tool in the development of knowledge and understanding.

The use of inductive reasoning is a very important tool in gaining an understanding of the Bible because as you read about specific happenings and events in the Bible you can then by induction gain an insight into overall principles which apply universally. The New Covenant, for example, can be understood to be a superinduction over the Old Covenant. That is, the New Covenant consists of general spiritual principles which were given a specific and temporary expression in the Old Covenant. The two covenants are not at all opposed to one another, contrary to what many people have assumed, but rather according to God's word they go hand-in-hand, the one being induced from the other.

In conclusion, remember that there are keys that you can use to get a grasp on truth. It is essential that you learn to use these keys effectively. If you don't, you may be misled by men who seem righteous, but underneath are ravening wolves (Matthew 7:15-19; Acts 20:29).

As in the past, there will be in the future apostasies, men leading people into error and rebellion against God through false teachings. Indeed, such is happening now. Remember the three keys:

(1) Submit yourself to God and his truth. (2) Seek out the truth. (3) Prove all things.

If you apply yourself diligently and prayerfully to the search for knowledge of the truth using these keys, you'll find it.

Introduction to God's Names

by Rod Reynolds

Left: Hebrew name of God inscribed on the page of a Sephardic manuscript of the Hebrew Bible (1385)

Have you ever considered that there are many names and titles used of God in the Bible? Some of the Hebrew names used of God are: Elohim, Yahweh, Adonai, Yah, El, Eloah, Elyon, Shaddai. Some of these are used in combination with other words to form divine titles, such as Yahweh-Jireh (The Eternal Will See or Provide), Yahweh-Ropheka (The Eternal Who Heals You), Yahweh-Nissi (The Eternal My Banner), Yahweh-Mekaddishkem (The Eternal Who Sanctifies You), Yahweh-Amah (The

Eternal Our Maker), Immanuel (God Is with Us), these being only a few.

Other titles and descriptive names are used of God as well, such as Melchizedek (King of Righteousness), and in English such titles as the Portion of Jacob, the Rock of Our Salvation, the Prince or King of Peace, Wonderful, Holy One of Israel, Counselor, Redeemer, Shepherd of Israel, Everlasting Father, Savior, Refuge, Strength, Fortress, Deliverer, Creator. All these and more are from the Old Testament. The New Testament adds more, such as Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Lord God Omnipotent, Apostle, High Priest, the Light of the World, the Father of Lights, the Bread of Life.

Why so many names for God? The reason is that God in his word names things what they are. God is a great being, greater than our minds can fully comprehend. He fills many roles, many offices, has many responsibilities. There are a multitude of facets to his character and nature. The various names and titles highlight different aspects of who God is and what he is like.

The more we understand of God the more close and personal our relationship with him can be -- the more we can love him (Psalm 91:14-16). Understanding the meaning of God's names can help us to grasp more fully the greatness of his power and mercy -- and hence trust in him more (Psalm 20:7).

"There is no one like you, Yahweh [or Eternal, or Everliving One]; you are great, and **your name is great** in might. Who should not fear you, King of the nations?" (Jeremiah 10:6-7, World English Bible). The better we know God the more we can learn to fear and reverence him. Israel in ancient times forgot God's name through the deceit of false prophets who misrepresented God and lied to the people (Jeremiah 23:25-27). The people themselves were rebellious against God and wanted to believe lies (Isaiah 30:9-14). As a result they lost their inheritance (2 Kings 17:5-10; Jeremiah 24:8-10; 25:1-11). Similar events are in the beginning stages of happening today among the modern nations consisting largely of peoples descended from Israel, including the United States, British and some other English speaking nations, and some of the western European peoples -- formerly professing to be "Christian" nations, but increasingly casting off any restraint based on Scripture. And those peoples are already beginning to experience God's blessings being withdrawn, and hence eventually losing the physical inheritance promised to Israel's descendants in the "latter days" (Genesis 49:1). God's inheritance is the reward of those who properly fear his name (Ps. 61:5). [Note: Various authors have researched and written about peoples and nations identified as having descended from the tribes of ancient Israel (cf. a partial list: *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy,* Herbert W. Armstrong; *The 'Lost' Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!*, Steven M. Collins; *The Story of Celto-Saxon Israel*, W. H. Bennett; *Missing Links Discovered in Assyrian Tablets*, E. Raymond Capt; hebrewnations.com; ephraimswatchman.org; britam.org; I don't necessarily agree with all the claims and conclusions in these resources, but there is much to learn from them, and the reader can examine the evidence and draw his own conclusions)].

The faithful who abide in God's word are called by his name (Jeremiah 15:16). The true Church bears the name of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; et al). It is said of the Philadelphia era of the Church in part "you...have not denied my name" (Revelation 3:8). He who overcomes bears the name of God (Revelation 3:12). Those present in the New Jerusalem shall have the name of God on their foreheads (Revelation 22:4), symbolic of having engraved in their minds the knowledge of the inherent meaning of God's name and the spiritual and intellectual likeness of God which his name expresses.

We are not to take or use God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7). God's name should never be used carelessly or thoughtlessly. It should never the used as a byword. Often in the world, and sometimes even among Church members, we hear the expression "My God" or "Lord" used as an exclamation. We should never use God's name in such an irreverent, disrespectful manner. We are to pray "Hallowed [holy] be Your Name" (Matthew 6:9). And we should always treat God's name as holy and worthy of the deepest care and respect.

Below I discuss just a few of the names and titles of God as an introduction to the subject. It will be only a bare introduction because as we've seen there are many names used of God, each with it's own meaning and implications. It would be worthwhile to systematically study the names of God and learn all you can about them.

Elohim -- plural of El (or Eloah) -- mighty or strong one. Elohim means literally "mighty ones" or "Gods." However, it is commonly used in a singular sense, and is properly translated "God." As a plural word often used in a singular sense Elohim lends itself to the concept of God as a compound unity, that is, a unified Godhead consisting of more than one being. That is the concept of God presented in the Bible, and is the true implication of the phrase, "the LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Elohim, being a plural word, reveals that God is a family: "Let us make man in our image..." (Genesis 1:26-27: also John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:14-15). Elohim is

first used in Genesis 1:1 and is the only name for God used in Genesis 1. Its use there connects the name Elohim with God's role as Creator. Elohim accentuates the power and might of God as Creator of all things. Its use generally implies God's relationship as Creator to his creation or his creatures, including mankind. This is in contrast to Yahweh, which is used in connection with God's covenant relationship with his people. (See the contrast in 2 Chronicles 18:31: Jehoshaphat, name of the king of Israel, a compound word meaning Yahweh-judged or judges, and "God," Elohim, diverted the Syrians). The name occurs 2,250 times *(Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, "God, Names of," p. 297).

Yahweh -- is derived from the Hebrew root *hayah* (to be). It means the one who is, the One who exists, or by extension, the Self-existing One or the Eternal. Yahweh being derived from the verb *hayah* to be, was considered to signify God as *eternal* and immutable, who will never be other than the same. It's meaning is defined in Genesis. 21:33; Psalm 90:1-2 (*olam* -- everlasting, simply means an unknown or indefinite period of time, often, depending on the context, a very long period of time; the expression "everlasting to everlasting," however, means eternity). The meaning of Yahweh was also explained by God to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM" -- God is explaining that his name Yahweh implies an existence and nature unbounded and unaffected by time (Exodus 3:13-15. See also Revelation 1:8; Colossians 1:17).

While *El* is used in connection with God's relation as Creator to his creatures, *Yahweh* is the covenant name of God. It is this name that God especially uses in connection with his covenant relationship with Israel and the people of the earth. He created the earth as Elohim. He dealt personally with Adam and eve as Yahweh-Elohim (the Eternal God). When Noah emerged from the ark he built an altar and sacrificed to Yahweh -- the Eternal (Genesis 8:20). God revealed himself to Abraham and made a covenant with him as Yahweh (Genesis 15:1-7). God also revealed himself to Abraham using other names as well, which have their own significance (Genesis 17:1, 3; 21:33; 24:27).

It's pointed out in some commentaries that Yahweh was the national name of Israel for God, because Israel stood in a special covenant relationship with God. All idols worshipped by men are things made by God or even things made by men, such as images made of metal, wood or stone. But the true God is Eternal, self-existing, and far transcends the idols and images worshipped or manufactured by men (Isaiah 40:18-31; 46:3-13; Psalms 89:6-18; Jeremiah 10:16). The name Yahweh, the Eternal or self-existing One, should be a constant reminder of the supremacy of the true God over idols (Exodus 20:1-5). God wanted Israel to remember that he is invisible and Eternal God, unlike the Gods of the nations. They made a golden calf, and called it the Eternal (Exodus 32:4-5). Associating the name of God, especially Yahweh, with idol worship was a sin Israel continued in for most of its history. For this God rejected them. He will not share his glory with idols (Isaiah 42:8). Since God is the Eternal and unchanging God and represents himself in that very way as a covenant God (Malachi 3:6), we can be assured that he will keep the promises of his covenants, with Abraham, with Israel, with the Church, with each of us. Also, as the Eternal, God is the source and well-spring of all life (Job 12:9-10; Psalms 104:24-31; John 6:35, 53-54; Acts 17:25).

Jesus Christ -- English translation of Greek *Iēsoûs Christós*, which in turn is from the Hebrew. *Yehoshua Mashiach* = the Eternal Savior King & Priest ("Christ" from the Greek *Christós* means "Anointed One": As God's anointed one (Hebrews 1:8-12), the prophesied Messiah (John 1:41), Jesus Christ unites the offices of King and Priest, along with also prophet and apostle). Jesus Christ is eternal (John 8:58; Revelation 1:8). He is Savior (Philippians 3:20). He is King (Revelation 11:15; 19:11-16). He is High Priest (Hebrews 9:11). A prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15; Luke 7:16; Acts 3:22-23). An Apostle (Hebrews 3:1). The full covenant name embodies the two cardinal points of the covenant (Hebrews 10:16-17).

We're told that if we reverence God and meditate on God's name he will remember us (Malachi 3:16). Why not spend time often meditating on the name, or names, of God? Why not look up in the Scriptures other names of God, and learn all you can about them, and meditate on them. Think about God's name often, it will help you develop a more meaningful and fruitful relationship with him, the kind that he wants us to have.

"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation. " (Psalms 91:14-16)

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