



# MESSENGER

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FULFILL YOUR DESTINY

January 2020

How will the world  
be *different*

*When Christ  
RETURNS?*

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Part 3



# MESSENGER

## Magazine

Issue No. 12 | January 2020

God's word reveals what exciting differences there will be when Christ returns. See how the reign of Christ will affect knowledge, health, and worship in the 3rd part of this exploration, "How Will the World be Different When Christ Returns?"

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Rod Reynolds

# DISPUTING DOCTRINE

**D**oes it really matter what you believe? Why can't we just mind our own business and try to get along with others, no matter what our differences in belief?

**Doctrinal disputes among those who profess to be of a particular religion or other system of belief are common – and have been for millennia. This applies not only among those who profess to be Christians, but among those of other religions, or political and other belief systems.**

**As Christians how are we to handle doctrine? And how should we deal with disputes over doctrine?**

Actually, there's a lot to be said for minding your own business and striving to get along with others, even those with whom you don't agree. We'll discuss this more later on, but first let's explore the question of the importance of doctrine.

Jesus appeared on earth as a teacher. His teaching activities are referred to far more often in the gospels than any other aspect of his ministry. His teaching, his doctrine, was a key element which set him apart from other religious leaders. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29 [KJV]; Luke 4:32; "doctrine" or "teaching," as it's translated in the NKJV, is from διδασχί [didachē], doctrine or teaching). They sought to kill him because of it (Mark 11:18; John 8: 37, 40).

Later, the Apostles Jesus sent forth to preach the gospel were persecuted for their doctrine (Acts 5:25-33). Jesus had warned that as the message of the gospel was proclaimed, families would be divided, and those involved in doing the work of the gospel would be hated (Matthew 10:16-22; Luke 12:51-53).

Christ's disciples are sanctified by belief in the truth. Sanctified means separated, set apart for God's purpose (John 17:14-19; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-15). **Note that rejecting or believing the truth is what separates those who are perishing from those who are chosen for salvation.** So yes, doctrine is one key factor which divides and separates the true disciples of Jesus Christ from others. As Paul mentions in this passage (2 Thessalonians 2:13), it was God's purpose from the very beginning to choose for salvation those who would believe the truth and act on it (Mark 16:15-16). Note carefully that belief in the truth sanctifies us, as does also the Holy Spirit, and the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:29).

So doctrine is not something we can safely ignore or take lightly. It is one of the factors that will make the difference between ultimately perishing or having salvation in God's Kingdom.

## Reject False Doctrine

As we've seen our sanctification and ultimate salvation are directly associated with the doctrines we hold to. It follows that we must be able to discern the difference between true doctrine and false doctrine, and that we must embrace the truth and reject that which is false doctrine.

But how are you to know what is true doctrine as opposed to that which is false? The only way you can know is to very carefully test that which

is taught, to determine if it's true or false, or if it's partially true, but also partially false.

Some have had the idea that you examine doctrines of a Church before you make a commitment, but once you are baptized you no longer ask questions, you just believe whatever the ministry tells you to believe. That is a formula for deception.

No longer is Scripture, the word of God, the standard of truth. That standard is displaced by the word of a minister, or the teaching of a Church. If you take that approach you are likely to wind up being deceived somewhere along the way. You become easy prey for corrupt, deceitful ministers who are often more than willing to encourage their victims to accept their claims of authority at face value.

I was told that someone, I don't remember who, had remarked something to the effect, "As long as the ministers don't teach against the Sabbath, that's all that matters." But Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath, and allowing his followers to profane the Sabbath.

In one incident, Jesus' disciples were plucking heads of grain and eating them as they walked along their way through grain fields on the Sabbath. There is no law in Scripture that would make unlawful the plucking of grain heads on the Sabbath and eating them as one walked through a field. But such was a law of their own devising that the Pharisees had promulgated. Their teaching, or doctrine, on this point was in conflict with that of Jesus. And they accused him of permitting his disciples to profane the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-24).

When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, that, too, was considered by the Pharisees a violation of the Sabbath. After Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath: "Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath [in their opinion], but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18; see our article, "Did Jesus Break the Sabbath?").

In a later incident Jesus had healed a man of blindness. "Therefore some of the Pharisees said, 'This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath'" (John 9:16).

Jesus did not really break the Sabbath, of course, but he had violated man-made rules about Sabbath keeping. Those who incited the murder of Jesus Christ were Sabbath keepers, or claimed to be, and they had falsely condemned Jesus as a Sabbath breaker.

Your understanding of doctrine has to go far beyond a superficial conception of Sabbath keeping if you want to avoid being deceived. 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).

To keep the words of Jesus, the words of the Bible, you have to know what those words are. So you must study diligently, to learn what the Bible itself teaches. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:16).

The standard of truth is the inspired word of God, recorded and preserved in Scripture for our instruction (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 3:2). It is not what some person who has a title says is the word of God. Jesus praised the Church at Ephesus for putting to the test those who claimed, falsely, to be apostles. "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and



that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars" (Revelation 2:2). Paul warned the Corinthians, "For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

The standard of truth is the word of God preserved in Scripture; it is not what a particular Church organization of men teaches. Jesus said in a prayer to the Father, "Your Word is truth" (John 17:17).

A person in a leadership position in another Church of God fellowship was told by ministers in that Church that he was not to use any Scripture which might cause someone to doubt "what the Church teaches." He was also told that even if he did not believe that a teaching of the Church in question was true, he was to teach it anyway, as though he believed it "one hundred percent."

Yet, God's word says, "You shall not bear false witness..." (Exodus 20:16). And, "...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). And, "The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered" (Proverbs 11:9).

In a different fellowship, members have been told blasphemously that they have access to God only through the leader of that Church. Do not be deceived by such claims. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus told his disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6). At first they did not understand, they thought he was talking about literal bread. But when Jesus explained further, "Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew 16:12).

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the religious leaders of the day among the Jews. Their doctrines were the officially sanctioned teachings of the "Church" of the time, if you want to put it in those terms. Yet, Jesus condemned many of their teachings, and told his disciples to beware of them. Those same leaders opposed the message of Jesus, and the message of his Apostles.

The standard of truth is Scripture correctly understood and faithfully taught. It's not what self-appointed, unlearned, supposed "Bible experts" may claim is the truth (Acts 17:10-11; Isaiah 8:20). It's not fables spun through misguided speculations about prophecy, history,

the spirit world, or other philosophical fancies (1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:4). Nor is it the pretentious, scornful, derisive speculations of God-hating "scholars" who attack the integrity of the Scriptures at every turn. Nor is it the deceptive teachings of those who have subtly blended truth with philosophical speculation and practices borrowed from heathenism and called it "Christianity." Nor is it the word of anyone else who has perverted the truth or leads others into deception, whatever his methods or motives.

All sorts of unsound, false ideas have been promulgated over the years by such individuals. People who are not ministers, necessarily, although they might be, but who make false claims about this, that, or some other teaching or doctrine.

Some people automatically believe what a minister tells them, no matter how foolish or contrary to fact or a sound understanding of Scripture the teaching. On the other hand, others more or less automatically latch on to foolish ideas of novice or deranged so-called Bible scholars, no matter how shallow and misleading the teaching is.

Again, the only way you can escape deception is exercise caution, study the Bible diligently, prove from the Bible the accuracy of any teaching, and pray for understanding and spiritual wisdom. Also, be careful with whom you associate. If you are spending a lot of time with deceivers, the chances are very good that you will become one of them.

Paul contended with such deceivers during his ministry. This is mentioned several places in the New Testament. He wrote to Timothy, "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia – remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm" (1 Timothy 1:3-7).

Peter warned about those who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction. "...and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your

own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Peter 3:15-17).

Paul had preached to the Corinthians and established the Church in Corinth. He and other apostles had preached to them about the resurrections. But later, to the Corinthians he wrote: "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Corinthians 15:12).

There were self-appointed teachers among them making such claims. After discussing the subject further, Paul warns the Corinthians: "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.' Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame" (1 Corinthians 15:33-34).

Study the Bible diligently, and be very careful about drawing conclusions which cannot be sustained from a careful reading of **all** the Scriptures on a given subject.

## Guard Your Mind

Some who read this article will have been already instructed in a rich store of knowledge that few others have received. The same truths are available to others among you who are prepared to receive them.

It would be a shame to cast away the truth for some perceived temporary gain. How much is your eternal life worth? If you value the idea of being in God's Kingdom, it would behoove you to carefully guard your mind from deception from any quarter. "Understanding is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly" (Proverbs 16:22; Green's Modern King James; cf. Proverbs 4:20-23; 1 Timothy 6:20-21).

## Be Willing to Change When Shown You are Wrong

While you or I may have learned a great deal of valuable knowledge, none of us knows everything. And some things we may think we know at times may, in fact, be wrong. Aside from Jesus Christ, whose understanding was and is perfect, even the most honest and diligent students of the Bible can, and do, make mistakes.

It is challenging to admit you have been wrong, especially about a deeply held belief or ingrained tradition. It may be even more intimidating to come to the realization that your Church or a respected leader has been wrong. To openly admit such a reality may cost you long held friends, associates, or even family members.

Yet, following where the truth leads is rarely without cost. The Apostle Paul demonstrated his willingness to give up virtually everything, his status, reputation, mode of living, etc., to follow the truth. "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

Paul had been a leader among the leaders of the Jews, possibly a member of the Sanhedrin, the supreme governing body among the Jews under the Roman authority. Yet, he had to forsake his privileged position to follow Christ. [1]

Similarly, a minister, as well a lay-member, of a given Church may come to the realization that some, or perhaps even many, teachings of his Church are false. The well-known minister, founder of the Worldwide Church of God, the late Herbert W. Armstrong, wrote of the difference between a minister who chooses to put Christ first, at whatever cost, or to serve men:

*I know of evangelists who probably are sincere in supposing they are serving God – and who would like to be free to proclaim many truths they now hold back. They reason something like this: "If I go farther, and preach those things, I'll lose all my support. I'd be cut off from the ministry altogether. Then I could preach NOTHING. Better serve God by preaching as much of the Biblical truth as possible, than to be prevented from preaching anything." They are relying on the financial support of MEN, or of organizations of men. Anyone in that predicament is the SERVANT OF MEN, and NOT OF GOD, whether he realizes it or not.*  
(Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, vol. 1, ch. 30).

When you are shown very clearly from the Scripture that something you have believed is not true, you should be willing to change. Many people grow up believing all kinds of false traditions and teachings concerning the Bible. Quite often, the main impediment to their learning and growth is a refusal to abandon false teachings in favor of the truth.

Even if convicted and convinced of the truth about certain points of faith or doctrine, individuals may fail to follow where the truth leads out of fear, or stubbornness, or a desire to please men, or all of these factors. Jesus said,

"How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?" (John 5:44).

If one turns his back on truth that has been revealed to him, and rejects it outright, he may soon lose whatever understanding he might have gained. In time, if he continues to reject the truth, he may well wind up in worse shape than he was before (2 Peter 2:20-21).

The process of falling into deception can be gradual. Others sometimes, having once known the truth, and even followed it for awhile, rashly and rather suddenly throw it overboard and adopt error, and will not be dissuaded from foolish and error laden ideas no matter how much proof is presented exposing the truth (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

### We Must Be Willing to Prove All Things

Paul admonished, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21; KJV). The Greek word δοκιμάζω (*dokimázō*) translated "prove" is in the present tense, imperative mood, implying continuing action. Proving the truth is a lifelong pursuit.

While we hold fast to what is good, what is true from the perspective of Scripture, we must be flexible enough in mind to cast aside error when it's exposed and grow in grace and knowledge of the truth (2 Peter 3:18).

A willingness to admit error, to admit that you have been wrong, requires humility, intellectual honesty, a diligence in making inquiry, caution, and a mind surrendered to God and his word.

Paul instructed Timothy, "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

Are you willing to learn, to be taught from God's word, and meekly submit to it, when the truth is clearly and convincingly presented, and no reasonable objections can be made to the truth of what is being taught?

We should be praying for God to correct us where we need to be corrected, as we pray that God will preserve us in his truth (Jeremiah 10:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:15). The traditions spoken of here in 2 Thessalonians are the teachings, the doctrines, preserved in the word of God. False traditions, however, should be exposed and rejected.

### Who Sets Doctrine in the Church?

The true doctrines are those preserved in the Word of God – the Bible. The doctrines of the true Church of God, whose members are enrolled in heaven, are set by God, through Jesus Christ, who is the Logos, the Word, through whom God has spoken to us (Hebrews 1:1-2; 12:23; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

The Apostle John wrote: "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." (2 John 1:9-11).

The statement in the latter verse, "Do not receive him into your house nor greet him," is in the context of refusing to receive someone promoting heretical teachings as a brother. We are not to regard heretical teachers as members of the Church, or someone we should pay heed to. But while we may exclude such a person from spiritual fellowship, we should not be unkind to the one who is deceived (Matthew 5:47; Luke 6:35; Romans 12:17-21; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20).

But what about unity? If there is no human authority present to set doctrine won't there be disunity?

Where there is human nature, carnality, there will be a measure of disunity (1 Corinthians 3:3). Thus, in any organization involving fallible human beings, unity will be imperfect.

Unity is important, but not at the expense of the truth. Genuine fellowship among Christ's followers is predicated on our mutual fellowship with the Father and Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). Our fellowship with God, in turn, requires walking in the truth (1 John 1:6-7). Genuine unity comes about through a mutual fellowship with God and Jesus Christ, as we walk in the light of truth, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:3).

Genuine unity of the Spirit and faith requires growing in the knowledge of the truth, avoiding error, and speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:13-15). Thus through sharing common understanding of and belief in the truth, and fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit, we are drawn together in unity.

Within the body of Christ is order and peace through the limited authority of those placed as overseers (1 Corinthians 14:33; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11-12). But adherence to the truth of God's word should never be surrendered for the sake of unity, or any other consideration. Loyalty to God and his truth must always take precedence.

### Avoid Unprofitable Disputes Over Doctrine

We are instructed often to avoid getting into foolish disputes and debates over doctrine (2 Timothy 2:23-25). The Church is not a debating society. A minister should be able to teach the truth of God's word effectively, and must teach it faithfully to be worthy of his office (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Ministers, or anyone in a teaching role in the Church, should be approachable and open to questions, but not get embroiled in endless controversies over matters which have been thoroughly explained. Some people want to argue just for the sake of arguing. A spirit of contention and debate is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20).

Quite often individuals in the Church, especially those new in the faith, want to see others, especially friends and relatives, converted, and so begin to try to argue them into believing the truth. Is this wise? Should we try to convert others?

It is our responsibility as a Church to proclaim the gospel to the world as a witness (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). The public preaching of the gospel is done through our publications, and other means. It is a collective effort. The ministers are charged with the public preaching of the gospel, although we all play a part in supporting that effort (Romans 10:14-15).

At the same time, many people have come into the Church through the influence of friends, acquaintances, or relatives. On the other hand, many have been estranged from former friends, and even family members, as a result of believing the truth. We must not be ashamed of our faith, knowing that we may suffer persecution because of it (Matthew 10:32-39).

But we are to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We should exercise graciousness, wisdom and discretion in how we deal with people (Psalm 112:5).

There are various ways you can be involved in promoting the gospel without preaching at others or haranguing them. As many have learned by experience, however, it's generally not a good idea to enter into disputes with your friends, relatives, and acquaintances over religion. Most people don't appreciate others trying to impose their religious views on them, and it often creates unnecessary offense and conflict.

When Jesus was told by his disciples that the Pharisees were offended by his teachings he said, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matthew 15:14). We are to avoid foolish and ignorant disputes (2 Timothy

2:23-24). Even Paul, when he was publicly preaching the gospel as he was commissioned to do, went only so far in disputing with those who were unwilling to hear (Acts 18:5-7; 19:8-9; 28:23-31).

The chance of you convincing someone of the truth of the Bible who is not open to receiving it is slim to none. Those who have become converted partly through the influence of members, have generally not been harangued into it. Usually they see the person's example, ask some questions, and begin to become interested of their own volition. The best way to influence others is by setting a good example in your personal conduct (Matthew 5:16; Titus 3:8-9). Do your best to live at peace with others, without compromising the truth (Romans 12:18; 1 Peter 2:11-12). You can be sure that if you are living by God's word, people will notice.

If someone asks you, however, about your faith, you should be ready to answer confidently (1 Peter 3:15). If you can't explain a doctrine clearly and effectively, you probably don't know it as well as you might have thought.

In summary, respect sound doctrine as the truth by which you are sanctified, reject false doctrine, be willing to change when you are wrong, remember that Christ sets doctrine in the Church, avoid foolish disputes over doctrine, and live as a light to others, ready to defend and explain your beliefs clearly and logically when asked about them.

These steps will help you considerably in reaching the goal of the Kingdom of God.

### Notes:

1. Paul had been trained in his youth as a Rabbi, or teacher of the law, by Gamaliel, one of the most respected of the leading Pharisees (Acts 22:3; cf. Acts 5:34). Before his conversion to Christianity, Paul had been active in persecuting Christians under direct appointment by the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:4-5; 26:10-12). He declared, "I cast down my pebble," i.e., cast his vote, to condemn to death Christians who had been arrested and brought before a council for judgment (Acts 26:10). These facts appear to strongly imply, though do not prove with certainty, that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin before his conversion. (See Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* on Acts 22:5 and Acts 26:10).



# How Will the World Be Different When Christ Returns?

Rod Reynolds

Part 3

**A** key theme of the Bible is that of a Messiah to bring salvation to the world (cf.; Isaiah 49:6; 52:10). Jesus Christ is prophesied to return to the earth in power and glory, restore peace, and establish a righteous and just government over the earth (cf. Psalm 72:1-7; Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 11:15).

After the living God, Creator of all that is made, establishes his government over the earth, it will be a much different world. In the final article in this series, we will explore some additional important ways in which the world will be different after Christ returns.

First, let's review key points covered in the previous articles in this series. After Christ returns there will be: (1) An end to oppression. (2) Just government. (3) An end to war. (4) Peace and harmony among races and nations. (5) Stable government. (6) Predictable and favorable weather, and abundant produce for all.

## (7) Knowledge Will 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).

This prophesy has been and is being fulfilled in today's world. People are going to and fro on the earth to an extent not possible before modern means of transportation. Also, certain types of knowledge have increased exponentially. But concurrently the most important knowledge has been scorned and rejected. Even that which had been known has been largely cast aside in the modern world.

A number of leading universities in the United States and other countries were founded by Churches interested in promoting a knowledge of the Bible. But in most of them now the Bible is regarded with scorn, and if discussed at all, is often ridiculed as myth and fable, and not taken seriously as a historical source, nor as a guide to life.

To a large extent, in our secular culture, the materialistic theory of evolution has replaced the idea of a Creator who calls people to account.

As a result of the rejection of God and the Bible as the foundation of knowledge, our world is becoming increasingly ignorant of the

most important knowledge of all, how to live.

"Woe to those who rise early in the morning, That they may follow intoxicating drink; Who continue until night, till wine inflames them! The harp and the strings, The tambourine and flute, And wine are in their feasts; **But they do not regard the work of the Lord, Nor consider the operation of His hands.** Therefore my people have gone into captivity, **Because they have no knowledge;** Their honorable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself And opened its mouth beyond measure; Their glory and their multitude and their pomp, And he who is jubilant, shall descend into it" (Isaiah 5:11-14).

"The wise men are ashamed, They are dismayed and taken. Behold, **they have rejected the word of the Lord;** So what wisdom do they have?" (Jeremiah 8:9).

"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).

God is the source of true knowledge: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, **For wisdom and might are His.** And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He **gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things;** He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him" (Daniel 2:20-22).

The Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of knowledge and understanding. "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of **wisdom and understanding,** The Spirit of counsel and might, **The Spirit of knowledge** and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:1-2).

When Christ returns the veil of spiritual blindness cast over the eyes of most of mankind will be lifted. Lost knowledge shall be made known, and true values will be restored. "And in this mountain The Lord of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the **veil that is spread over all nations**" (Isaiah 25:6-7).

The Millennial period following the second

coming of Jesus Christ is pictured as a wedding feast. **"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,** and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come" (Matthew 22:2-3).

Marriage," in verse 2, and "wedding," in verse 3, are both translated from the plural of gamos: "A marriage feast (γάμος). The plural, as here (2, 3, 4, 9), is very common in the papyri for the wedding festivities (the several acts of feasting) which lasted for days" (Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*; compare Matthew 22:4). The singular form of gamos can also be used of the marriage feast or wedding celebration, as in Matthew 22:8 and John 2:1-2; on which Robertson comments: "A wedding (or marriage festival) took place."

A marriage feast typically included feasting, with the sharing of food and drink, playing of music, singing, dancing, and similar expressions of rejoicing. These are activities commonly included in keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, as does the weekly seventh day Sabbath. The marriage feast analogy helps us relate to the rejoicing that will occur under the reign of Christ in the Millennium.

The parable in Matthew 22 of the wedding feast, and the similar parable in Luke 14, both point to the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ, picturing it, by way of analogy, as a wedding feast, which in the custom of the Jews at the time of Christ and before usually lasted for as long as a week (cf. Judges 14:10, 17).

But there is one feature of the Feast of Tabernacles, and of the Kingdom of God, that is not typically found in a wedding celebration. That feature is the **imparting of knowledge** through teaching and instruction. Indeed, that may be included in preparing the bride and groom for marriage, but usually it's not part of the wedding celebration itself.

From the standpoint of the Bible, **formal instruction** in the word of God is to be a feature of keeping the feast of Tabernacles, along with other activities such as feasting, music, dancing, and so forth.

In describing a service held at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah on the Feast of Trumpets, we find this: "... Levites, **helped the people to understand the Law;** and the people stood in their place. So they **read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the**

sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

.....  
 "And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, **because they understood the words that were declared to them**" (Nehemiah 8:7-8, 12).

And similarly, this was done during the Feast of Tabernacles: "Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, **he read from the Book of the Law of God**. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day there was a sacred assembly, according to the prescribed manner" (Nehemiah 8:18).

The feast was a time for teaching God's word. "And Moses commanded them, saying: 'At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, **you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing**. Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they **may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law**, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess'" (Deuteronomy 31:10-13).

Not only is this part of the very purpose of the feast, it also points to the teaching of knowledge, especially spiritual knowledge, during the time when Jesus Christ rules the earth. Christ will rule in wisdom and knowledge. "The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness.

**Wisdom and knowledge** will be the stability of your times, And the strength of salvation; The fear of the Lord is His treasure" (Isaiah 33:5-6).

The teaching typically done on the Sabbath also is, in part, a type of the teaching that will be done under the government of Jesus Christ after he returns to the earth in power and glory (cf. Mark 1:21; Luke 6:6; Acts 18:4).

God will teach knowledge to mankind. "He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see? He who **instructs the nations**, shall He not correct, **He who teaches man knowledge?** The Lord knows the thoughts of man, That they are futile. Blessed is the man **whom You instruct, O Lord, And teach out of Your law**, That You may give him rest from the days of adversity" (Psalm 94:9-13).

The nations will after a time be ready, even eager, to learn God's ways: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in

the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; **He will teach us His ways**, And we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:1-3).

God will commission teachers to impart knowledge: "'Return, O backsliding children,' says the Lord; 'for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, **who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.**"' (Jeremiah 3:14-15).

The knowledge of God that has been lost, or that was never known before, will be revealed, and taught to mankind during the Millennium. "The eyes of those who see will not be dim, And the ears of those who hear will listen. Also the heart of the rash will **understand knowledge**, And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly" (Isaiah 32:3-4). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For **the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea**" (Isaiah 11:9).

**No longer will nations be ignorant** of the true God, and they will learn to understand his ways. The potential for the revealing and the learning of knowledge then will be unlimited, and it will be based upon a proper spiritual foundation.

### (8) Health and Longevity

In the United States today, it's estimated that about 60 million people have some form of long term respiratory disease, such as hay fever, asthma, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

About 23 million Americans have or have had a serious cardiovascular disease, and this does not include those diagnosed with high blood pressure. Twenty-three percent of Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control, have some form of arthritis. It's estimated that about 43 million Americans have some form of mental illness. About 1 in 6 Americans get sick with a food borne disease each year. One in nine Americans 65 and older are afflicted with Alzheimer's disease. In a given year about 11 percent of women in America have a urinary tract infection. About 29 million Americans have diabetes. Six to ten percent of the population has thyroid disease. More than 4.5 million contract some form of venereal disease each year. ("10 Most Common Health Conditions,"

Norene Anderson, [www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com); June 15, 2018).

These are just some of the diseases that afflict the population of the United States. Other countries in the world have their share of diseases among their own populations as well.

A study of global disease in 2013 published in *The Lancet*, a medical journal, concluded that 95% of the world's population was sick with some kind of significant illness during the year. A third of the population was found to have had more than five chronic or acute illnesses during the year ("A sick world: More than 95% of us are ill," [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au), retrieved 9-27-18).

An average of more than \$10,000 per person is spent in the USA on health care each year (as of 2016). ([www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/health-expenditures.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/health-expenditures.htm)). An estimated \$477 billion was spent on pharmaceutical drugs in the United States in 2016, according to CDC statistics (*ibid.*, table 94, retrieved May 28, 2019).

These statistics tell us that sickness of some kind is the norm in our society. Some people remain relatively healthy until close to the time of death at an advanced age. But it seems this is not the expectation for a very large segment of the world's population.

God told the people of Israel when they were in the wilderness: "If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15: 26).

He also said to them: "Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them. Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you....

.....  
 "And the Lord will **take away from you all sickness**, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known" (Deuteronomy 7:11-13, 15).

When Jesus Christ returns to earth to establish his kingdom, he will come with the power to heal the sick, and bring health to the nations.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to **heal the brokenhearted**, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who



mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified" (Isaiah 61:1-3).

A preview of the healing that shall occur at the second coming of Christ is found in the healing displayed at his first coming in the flesh: "Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He **healed** them. So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel" (Matthew 15:30-31).

Many prophecies testify to the healing that will occur with the coming of Jesus Christ, including the following: "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you. **Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing**" (Isaiah 35:4-6).

"But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With **healing** in His wings" (Malachi 4:2)

"Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, **Who heals all your diseases**" (Psalm 103:1-3).

"Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. **He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds**" (Psalm 147:1-3).

"Behold, I will bring it [Jerusalem] health and healing; I will **heal** them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me" (Jeremiah 33:6-8).

"As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture,

and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,' says the Lord God. 'I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, **bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick**" (Ezekiel 34:12-16).

"Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home, A tabernacle that will not be taken down; Not one of its stakes will ever be removed, Nor will any of its cords be broken. But there the majestic Lord will be for us A place of broad rivers and streams, In which no galley with oars will sail, Nor majestic ships pass by (For the Lord is our Judge, The Lord is our Lawgiver, The Lord is our King; He will save us)

.....  
 "And the inhabitant **will not say, 'I am sick**'; The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:20-22, 24).

Physical healing will accompany the **spiritual restoration and healing** that will occur at that time as well (cf. Psalms 85:1-8; 107:17-20; Proverbs 3:7-8).

Physical human beings will in general be granted very long lives during the millennial period following the return of Jesus Christ. "They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; **For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people**, And My elect shall **long enjoy** the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:21-22). Trees are perhaps the longest living of life forms on the earth, living for hundreds, even sometimes thousands, of years. This implies that many in that period will live physically for probably hundreds of years.

So in contrast to the world of sickness and disease we have today, in the world under Christ's rule, there will be health, freedom from sickness and disease, and long life for the fleshly human beings who will live in that age, except for the relatively small number who rebel against him.

### (9) Nations Will Learn to Worship the True God

In today's world most people are in spiritual bondage to false gods, and false worship. There are many churches, many religions of every conceivable description. Yet the true God and his ways are largely hidden from the view of mankind.

When God gave his commandments, three of them pertained specifically to idolatry, or false worship: "And God spoke all these words,

saying: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **You shall have no other gods before** [or **besides**, as it could be translated] **Me**. You shall not make for yourself a **carved image**, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **you shall not bow down to them** nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the **name of the Lord your God in vain**, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.'" (Exodus 20:1-7).

Yet, the people of Israel, although nominally worshiping Yahweh, persistently broke the commandments forbidding idolatry and false worship.

This is mentioned in many places in the Bible, among them the following: "Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their **fathers' idols**. Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live [i.e., laws of their own making]; and I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire, that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the Lord. Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "In this too your fathers have blasphemed Me, by being **unfaithful to Me**. When I brought them into the land concerning which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings. There they also sent up their sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings. Then I said to them, 'What is this high place to which you go?' So its name is called Bamah to this day.' Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations? For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you **defile yourselves with all your idols**, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, 'says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.'"" (Ezekiel 20:23-

31).

For these sins the people of Israel anciently were sent into captivity. "For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had **feared other gods**, and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the Lord had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

"Also the children of Israel secretly did against the Lord their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves **sacred pillars and wooden images** on every high hill and under every green tree. There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the Lord had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger, for they **served idols**, of which the Lord had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.'

"Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways, and **keep My commandments and My statutes**, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.' Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; **they followed idols, became idolaters**, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them.

"So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a **molded image** and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.

"Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone. Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight." (2 Kings 17:7-20).

For theses same sins, God is going to allow

the peoples descended from Israel, and others who live among them, in our age [including many Americans, Britons, and others] to be taken into captivity in a similar manner. But then God will intervene, to bring out those who are left alive, and restore them.

"Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of **Jacob's trouble**, But he shall be saved out of it. 'For it shall come to pass in that day,' Says the Lord of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the Lord, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And **your seed from the land of their captivity**. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, **And no one shall make him afraid**.'" (Jeremiah 30:7-10).

When physical Israel is brought out of captivity following the return of Jesus Christ, they will come out repenting of their idolatry, and other sins.

"For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel,' says the Lord God, 'there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. **And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed**. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel,' says the Lord God.'" (Ezekiel 20:40-44).

The nations will see the example of the people of Israel being freed from the grasp of their captors: "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and **the nations shall know that I am the Lord**,' says the Lord God, 'when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

'Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all

your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

'Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations.

'Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. Not for your sake do I do this,' says the Lord God, 'let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!'

"Thus says the Lord God: 'On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited. **Then the nations** which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it.

"Thus says the Lord God: 'I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. **Then they shall know that I am the Lord**.'" (Ezekiel 36:23-38).

Having been gathered out of captivity, and repented, the peoples descended from Israel after they are restored will cleanse the land of idols. "Thus says the Lord God: 'I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. **And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God**. But as for those whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and



their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,' says the Lord God." (Ezekiel 11:17-21).

The Gentile nations also, seeing the example of Israel, will forsake their idols: "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, 'that it shall no more be said, "The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt," but, "The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them." For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishermen,' says the Lord, 'and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes. And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols.' O Lord, my strength and my fortress, My refuge in the day of affliction, **The Gentiles shall come to You From the ends of the earth and say, 'Surely our fathers have inherited lies, Worthlessness and unprofitable things.'** Will a man make gods for himself, Which are not gods? Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know My hand and My might; **And they shall know that My name is the Lord.**" (Jeremiah 16:14-21).

In this series of articles we have discussed a variety of differences between the world as it is now, and the way it will be under the reign of Jesus Christ.

There will be an end to oppression; just government; end to war; harmony among races and nations; stable government; favorable weather and abundance for all; knowledge will increase; health and longevity will be the norm rather than sickness and short lives; the nations will learn to worship the true God. This is by no means an exhaustive list of differences to be made by the presence of Jesus Christ on the earth. But I hope it provides food for thought about what it will mean when, we expect in the not too far distant future, the Kingdom of God under Jesus Christ is administering God's government over the entire world.

## PSALM 147:1-11



Praise Yah,

for it is good to sing praises to our God;  
for it is pleasant and fitting to praise him.

Yahweh builds up Jerusalem.

He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.  
He heals the broken in heart,  
and binds up their wounds.

He counts the number of the stars.

He calls them all by their names.

Great is our Lord, and mighty in power.

His understanding is infinite.

Yahweh upholds the humble.

He brings the wicked down to the ground.  
Sing to Yahweh with thanksgiving.

Sing praises on the harp to our God,  
who covers the sky with clouds,  
who prepares rain for the earth,  
who makes grass grow on the mountains.

He provides food for the livestock,  
and for the young ravens when they call.  
He doesn't delight in the strength of the horse.

He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.  
Yahweh takes pleasure in those who fear him,  
in those who hope in his loving kindness.

# The Mystery of Life's Origin

Book Review

by

Rod Reynolds

*The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories*

Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, Roger L. Olsen

Foreword by Dean H. Kenyon

New York: Philosophical Library, 1984, 228 pages

## Note:

This book is no longer in print, but it is still relevant to the issues regarding chemical macro-evolution theory. It can as of November 2019 be obtained second hand at various websites, including Amazon.com. For more recent publications on this question, see links at our website [cogmessenger.org](http://cogmessenger.org) under the heading "Intelligence Verses Nonsense," and also see the website [evolutionnews.org](http://evolutionnews.org). An Internet browser search "Thaxton The Mystery of Life's Origin" brings up some interesting links.

Some admit it, others don't, but for evolutionists origin of life research has reached an impasse, a point of crisis. To find out why, read this book!

For more than 30 years (as of 1984) scientists have been attempting to understand and simulate processes which they believe might have led to earth's first living organisms. This book is the first to correlate and critically evaluate the various lines of theoretical and experimental research in this field. Research in prebiotic or chemical evolution spans a number of scientific disciplines. Each of the authors has a Ph.D. and numerous professional credits in a discipline relating to problems involved in chemical evolution. Their backgrounds are in chemistry (C.T.), materials science (W.B.) and geochemistry (R.O.).

Some have doubted that questions about the origin of life are really even in the domain of legitimate science. Sometimes science is narrowly defined as a method of inquiry involving phenomena which can be repeated for observation. The authors refer to this kind of science as *operation science*. The planets continually revolve around the sun. Their motions can be observed on a recurring basis. Theories about the motions of the planets can thus be checked by observation. This is an example of operation science. But science can be more broadly defined to include non-repeatable, or singular, events. The authors 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.

Modern origin of life research is usually

considered to have begun with the prebiotic simulation experiments first reported by Stanley L. Miller in 1953. Miller sent an electric spark through an apparatus containing hydrogen, ammonia and methane gases and water vapor. The mixture was supposed to simulate the hypothetical early earth atmosphere. Among the compounds produced by the experiments were some amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. Subsequent experiments using various compounds (often in solution, to simulate hypothetical ocean conditions) along with varying sources and levels of energy have succeeded in producing most of the twenty amino acids found in natural proteins and all of the five bases commonly occurring in ribonucleic acid (RNA) and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Proteins and nucleic acids are critical information bearing constituents of living cells. The problem of their synthesis under prebiotic conditions must be hurdled before any further progress towards chemical evolution can be considered.

In addition to the amino acids and nucleic acid bases mentioned above, prebiotic simulation experiments have succeeded in producing polypeptides (chains of amino acids bonded together) of up to 200 units long (called "proteinoids"). Sugars, including fructose, ribose, deoxyribose and many others, have been synthesized. Also, short links of bonded nucleotides (oligonucleotides), averaging about six units each, have been formed. Globules or aggregates which superficially resemble organic cells in certain respects have been formed from proteinoids, lipids and other organic materials. These achievements have helped create an impression in the minds of many scientists and people in the general public that chemical evolution is a very plausible scenario for the origin of life, if not a certainty. These results are in fact the strongest evidence in support of evolution. A closer look, though, will reveal how



truly weak a foundation the theory rests on.

If you were going to "simulate" in an experiment conditions of an early earth atmosphere or ocean, wouldn't it be reasonable to make them as realistic as possible?

Otherwise, how would you know that your experiment reflects what might have really happened on the early earth? Yet, in prebiotic simulation experiments this is *almost never done!* In the Foreword Dean H. Kenyon, Professor of Biology at San Francisco State University and a leading figure in origin of life research, remarks, "In most cases the experimental conditions in such studies have been so artificially simplified as to have virtually no bearing on any actual processes that might have taken place on the primitive earth" (p. vi).

For example, experimenters invariably select a few highly concentrated and purified reactants. These are isolated from any other possible reactants through the course of the experiment. Sometimes the products of the reactions are also quickly isolated as soon as they form to prevent further reactions which might destroy them. The authors point out, "This use of selected chemicals in simulation experiments is highly artificial, and creates a certain unrealism in our expectations of the early earth" (p. 106).

In a real environment many reactants would be present, setting up many competing cross-reactions. The net effect of all the reactants acting together would be destructive. The reactions would preclude the formation of most if not all complex macromolecules such as proteins and nucleic acids. And, the authors say, "If by some remote chance a true protein did develop in the ocean, its viability would be predictably of short duration" (p. 55). There are many reactions which would render the protein useless or destroy it altogether. For example, formaldehyde is used in all of the most significant experiments aiming at the formation of various sugars. But formaldehyde in the presence of protein would be disastrous for chemical evolution. It bonds permanently with protein and effectively prevents or retards it from entering into any further reactions. That's why morticians use it for embalming! The sea water itself would in relatively short time destroy any protein in it through hydrolysis (water molecules would combine with peptides and in so doing break them apart). Hydrolysis would destroy many amino acids as well.

Formaldehyde would also react with any nucleic acids managing to form, quickly inactivating them. "As with proteins, it is difficult to conceive of a viable nucleic acid existing in the primordial soup for more than a very brief period of time" (pp. 55-56). In a chapter entitled

"The Myth of the Prebiotic Soup," the authors discuss a number of other destructive reactions that would occur, as well as other problems with the scenario. One of those problems is that there isn't a trace of geologic evidence that the organic soup ever existed. The authors conclude, "It is becoming clear that... the usually conceived notion that life emerged from an oceanic soup of organic chemicals is a most implausible hypothesis" (p. 66).

The use of isolated reactants is only one way in which investigators go about guiding the experiments unrealistically. In the chapter "Plausibility and Investigator Interference" the authors discuss these. They have developed a scale of geochemical plausibility, complete with a "threshold of illegitimate interference" by the investigator. The authors point out that chemists regularly employ "a host of manipulative interventions... to guide natural processes down specific... pathways.... Such manipulations are the hallmark of intelligent... interference and *should not be employed in any prebiotic experiment*" (p. 109, emphasis in the original). Yet, they are, in virtually every case. For this reason the authors write, "...most of these experiments are probably invalid" (p. 184).

The authors devote four chapters to the crucial question of how the laws of thermodynamics relate to the chemical origin of life. The first law demands an accounting of energy exchanges. The total energy in the universe must always remain the same. If heat is gained at one particular place, it must be accompanied by a corresponding loss of heat (or energy) at some other place. According to the second law the universe is moving toward a state of greater randomness (or maximum entropy). The theory of evolution flies directly in the face of the second law of thermodynamics, in particular. Evolution requires a continual progression from randomness to a high order of specified complexity. The second law (sometimes called "time's arrow") points directly in the opposite direction, from complex to simple, from order to disorder.

A system "at equilibrium" is at a state of maximum entropy (or randomness). There is general agreement that under such condition chemical evolution could not occur. But many evolutionists assert that the sun (or volcanoes, or high energy chemicals) provided sufficient energy to drive reactions which finally produced life from simple chemical precursors. The authors explain why raw energy is not enough to build even the complex macromolecules of life, such as DNA and protein, much less construct a living cell. Work – a flow of energy – is required to build a house. But placing dynamite under a pile of building materials

would hardly suffice. The work must be *directed in a specific way* to achieve the desired result. The same is no less true when considering the construction of highly specific and complex molecules like DNA or protein.

DNA is an *information* carrying molecule. It carries the genetic code "engraved," you might say, in its structure. Its "alphabet" consists of the four bases that pair together forming rungs on a spiral ladder, as the molecule's shape might be likened to. The precise sequence of the bases as one ascends the ladder is what determines the information contained. The DNA in a human genome (separated into 23 chromosomes) contains about 3 billion rungs – or base pairs – and thus 3 billion coded instructions. That's enough information to fill 1000 encyclopedic volumes. Two genomes—one from each parent—make up the normal 46 chromosome complement of human somatic (body tissue) cells. So each somatic cell contains in its DNA two similar but not identical sets of coded information totaling about six billion instructions. Protein is another kind of highly specific information bearing molecule which has its code written in the sequence of 20 different amino acids.

The authors differentiate two distinct kinds of work that must be done in constructing a macromolecule like DNA or protein. There is the *chemical and thermal entropy work* which can be calculated on the basis of the laws of thermodynamics. The other kind of work is the work of arranging the molecule's constituents into a *specific sequence*. This the authors call the *configurational entropy work*. Doing the configurational entropy work requires not only a specific quantity of work—which can be calculated—but it also requires a *mechanism to couple the energy flow to the specific work required*. As the authors write, "It is one thing to get molecules to react; it is quite another to get them to link up in the right arrangement" (p. 163).

The authors analyze the various energy sources used in the experiments in terms of the laws of thermodynamics and what is produced. At best the forces are sufficient to form random polypeptides and oligonucleotides. "In no case, though, has anyone been successful [in prebiotic simulation experiments] in doing the additional configurational entropy work of coding necessary to convert random polypeptides into proteins" (p. 162). The authors 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). Some theorists have alleged that complex macromolecules were "self-ordered" through

"preferential bonding" of components (such as amino acids). There are a couple of problems with such a concept. First, if such "preferential bonds" were the rule one would get a single sequence or no more than a few sequences, as in crystals. Crystals are highly ordered structures but carry little or no information because of their redundancy. If preferential bonding played a significant role in the formation of proteins or nucleic acids they would be incapable of carrying significant amounts of information.

Secondly, experimental evidence indicates that if there are bonding preferences between amino acids, they are not the ones found in natural organisms. There are three basic requirements for a biologically functional protein. One: It must have a specific sequence of amino acids. At best prebiotic experiments have produced only random polymers. And many of the amino acids included are not found in living organisms. Second: An amino acid with a given chemical formula may in its structure be either "right-handed" (D-amino acids) or "left-handed" (L-amino acids). Living organisms incorporate only L-amino acids. However, in prebiotic experiments where amino acids are formed approximately equal numbers of D- and L-amino acids are found. This is an "intractable problem" for chemical evolution (p. vi). Third: In some amino acids there are more positions than one on the molecule where the amino and carboxyl groups may join to form a peptide bond. In natural proteins only *alpha* peptide bonds (designating the location of the bond) are found. In proteinoids, however, *beta*, *gamma* and *epsilon* peptide bonds largely predominate. Just the opposite of what one would expect if bonding preferences played a role in prebiotic evolution.

Similar results are found in experiments involving nucleotides. In DNA the nucleosides (base plus sugar) are joined to the phosphate groups at the 3'-5' carbon atom locations of the pentoses (sugars). In prebiotic simulation experiments, however, 2'-5' links predominate. Again, just the opposite of what one would expect if bonding preferences played a role in chemical evolution. Also, in DNA only D-deoxyribose occurs. No such preference is found in prebiotic experiments.

The authors discuss other concepts of self-organization as well. The common weakness is that none provides a realistic means of coupling the energy flow to the configurational entropy work required. They note also the frequent reversion to chance for solutions, using Manfred Eigen's model (which they review) as an example. Hans Kuhn provides another, more graphic, example. He writes, "...we may recognize what time and again governs self-

organization: *the game of chance*... leads to the formation of increasingly organized structural and functional units" ("Self-Organization of Molecular Systems; Evolution of Genetic Apparatus," *Synthesis of Life*, Charles C. Price, Ed., p. 357, emphasis added). But by now we should be able to recognize this as a mere statement of faith in goddess Fortuna, a *belief* not supported by the evidence.

Other chapters examine additional issues relating to the origin of life, such as questions about the early earth atmosphere, and the relevance of "proto cells" produced in experiments to true living cells. In the epilogue the authors discuss various suggested alternatives to chemical evolution, including Special Creation.

The book's style is cautious and non-polemical, but tellingly effective in elucidating major problems with the chemical evolution theory. The untold story of prebiotic simulation experiments is not one of success but of failure! "The *uniform failure* in literally *thousands* of experimental attempts to synthesize protein or DNA under even questionable prebiotic conditions is a monument to the difficulty in achieving a high degree of information content, or specified complexity from the *undirected* flow of energy through a system" (p. 164). The experiments have exposed a boundary between "what can be expected from matter and energy left to themselves, and what can be accomplished only through what Michael Polanyi has called 'a profoundly informative intervention'" (p. 185). What science knows about biological development and function is minute compared to man's ignorance about it. But it's important to realize "that the sharp edge of this critique is not what we *do not* know, but what we *do* know" (p. 185). The authors conclude, "The advance of science itself is what is challenging the notion that life arose on earth by spontaneous... chemical reactions" (p. 185).

A number of researchers have concluded that the spontaneous origin of life cannot be explained by known laws of physics and chemistry. Many seek "new" laws which can account for life's origin. Why are so many unwilling to simply accept what the evidence points to: that the theory of evolution itself is fundamentally implausible? Dean Kenyon answers, "Perhaps these scientists fear that acceptance of this conclusion would leave open the possibility (or the necessity) of a supernatural origin of life" (p. viii).

What it finally comes down to is a matter of faith. Those prepared to believe the gospel, repent and obey God find it easy to discover abundant evidence of God's power and intellect in His creation. But seemingly no amount of

evidence will dissuade those who have set out beforehand to reject the supernatural, and place all their faith in a totally materialistic "method" of approaching knowledge. They reject the testimony of an eyewitness to Creation - God. And they reject the physical evidence which corroborates the testimony of that eyewitness. Because to do otherwise would be to admit that man's methods of discovering knowledge have limits, that man cannot be a law unto himself, and that he is ultimately dependent on a greater power and a greater intellect.

Jesus said to Thomas, "...because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Believing God without having to see Him carries great rewards for all of His people. But the day is coming when "every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7), then even the most closed minded skeptics will be convinced.

Meanwhile, the book reviewed contains some very useful and enlightening information that has been deliberately suppressed by many of the popularizers of the theory of evolution (see Romans 1:18). The book can strengthen your understanding of some important details of chemistry and physics that make the theory of evolution an absurdity.



The Bible reveals that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten about 2000 years ago of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, a woman of the Jewish nation, was sent to bring salvation to mankind. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

But how is salvation for the world to be achieved? Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel [or good news] to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned [or judged]" (Mark 16:15-16). Yet vast numbers of people down through history have never heard the gospel, and most who have heard it have not believed and been baptized.

Peter, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, said of him, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Paul, another Apostle, characterized those who are unbelievers as, "...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

Nevertheless, God has a plan to bring salvation to the vast majority of mankind. Few people genuinely understand that plan, however.

But you can understand. A series of articles, of which this is the first, will clearly explain the plan of God for the salvation of humanity. The keys to unlocking your understanding are found in Scripture.

One of the keys is obedience. "A good understanding have all those who do His [God's] commandments" (Psalms 111:10). A second key is found in the festivals God commanded to be kept.

The festivals of God, including the weekly and annual Sabbaths, were given for two basic reasons: (1) To keep us continually reminded of God's grace extended through his plan of salvation for mankind, and (2) to keep us reminded as well of our obligation to obey his gracious laws.

Let's explore how the holy days and festivals of God reveal his plan of salvation.

Notice what God said concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread, why it was to be kept: "It shall be a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:9). The Hebrew word *'owth* (sign) can mean a token or "sign" as a reminder - in this case a reminder of God's grace as expressed in Israel's deliverance, and of their duty to be mindful of his law (see *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 229).

This twofold purpose for the feasts as a "sign" is carried through in the lessons taught by every one of them. God emphasized the importance of keeping his Sabbaths in his final remarks before sending Moses back down the mountain with the tablets on which were written the ten commandments. Here the word "sign" takes on the additional meaning of an **identifying mark** - a sign between God and His people that they are sanctified (separated to a holy purpose) and that it is God who sanctifies them.

"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: **'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.** You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. **It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever;** for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'" And when He had made an end of speaking with

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# GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION REVEALED

- Part 1 -

## THE HOLY DAYS

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Rod Reynolds

him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God." (Exodus 31:13-18).

It's important to understand that God's plan of salvation is one that unfolds through history, in successive stages. It is a step-by-step process that began with individuals like Noah, and Abraham, and eventually will encompass all mankind. **The annual festivals and Holy Days, or Sabbaths, reveal the plan in its historical and prophetic sequence.**

"Then do not let anyone judge you in eating, or in drinking, or in respect of a feast, or the new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of coming things, but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17, Green's Literal Translation).

The word "is" is in italics, because the Greek has no word for "is" in verse 17. It should read, "...which are a shadow of coming things [or things to come - KJV], but the body of Christ."

"Shadow," is from from the Greek, *skia*, shadow, sketch, outline. The Sabbaths **are** now (not were), and continue to be, a shadow **of things to come. The Sabbaths represent a prophetic and historical outline of God's plan of salvation!**

With this introduction, then, it's intended in future articles to review the highlights of how each feast reveals facets of God's grace extended to mankind through the plan of salvation.



## IN THIS ISSUE

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"Disputing Doctrine" – Disputes about God's teachings have been a constant for many generations, dating back even to Biblical times themselves. Is doctrine important enough to be worth disputing? If so, how should one go about it? Join us as we explore these questions.

"How Will the World Be Different When Christ Returns? (Part 3)" – God's word reveals the wonderful changes that will happen during Christ's coming reign! Join us as we continue the exploration of what the Bible shows about this exciting hope!

Book Review: "The Mystery of Life's Origin" – How life on Earth came to be is a question that humanity has attempted to answer for ages. Some have attempted to answer this question scientifically. How does evolutionary theory stand in science? See how the book reviewed in this article can provide some valuable insight into the subject.

"God's Plan of Salvation Revealed (Part 1): The Holy Days" - God created mankind for a reason. For that to be fulfilled, however, salvation must be provided. But what is this plan of salvation that God is working? Join us in an introduction to this vital topic, and see how the Biblical holy days relate!

### Looking for Answers?

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