



The *ENJOY THE BIBLE*

Quarterly

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Questions and Answers

Our annual issue devoted to questions and answers. The following selections have been edited for inclusion in *The ETB Quarterly*, and to remove any personal information.

Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, and Revelation 20

I know that Satan's coming destruction is described in Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:16-19, and in Revelation 20:1-10. I also see that both the Isaiah and Revelation passages speak of him being cast into "the pit," and that the Revelation passage also describes how he will finally be cast into the lake of fire. However what is Ezekiel describing when he says that God will "bring forth a fire from the midst" of Satan and that it will "devour" him, and that God will "bring him to ashes upon the earth"? What is this all about, when does it take place, and where does it fit into Satan's overall destruction?

18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. (Ezekiel 28:18)

When God speaks to Satan about 'bringing forth a fire from the midst of him, and it devouring him,' and in so doing 'bringing him to ashes upon the earth,' it is important to understand that He is using terminology and phraseology that describes *complete self-destruction, plus the complete destruction and ruin of all that one has worked so hard to produce and/or accomplish.*

We still use similar terminology and phraseology today when we describe how someone has destroyed himself by pursuing a course that results in him destroying and ruining all that he stands for, and works for, and lives for. We do this especially when the person's self-destruction is the result of something like his jealousy, or envy, or rage; or when it comes about because of the powerful working of some other strong emotion or obsession.

Hence we often speak of someone being 'consumed with jealousy, or anger, or rage,' or of such emotions 'eating him up on the inside,' and of them 'driving him to destruction,' or of them being 'the ruin of him.'

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Likewise we often speak of some overwhelming passion or desire or pursuit being 'a fire that burns within,' which consumes a person. For it causes him to rashly do things that put him on a path of self-destruction or complete waste, as he madly pursues his passion at all cost.

Hence just as when a destroying fire physically reduces something to ashes, or leaves it 'laying in ashes,' so also when someone and his endeavors are 'brought to ashes' this means that he and all that he has worked to produce and achieve are completely or utterly destroyed. He therefore is ruined, having been 'brought to ashes.'

Now this is precisely what will happen to Satan during the time of the final installment in God's program with Israel, which will come to pass after the conclusion of this present dispensation of God's grace.

To describe it very simply: When God resumes His program with Israel He will do certain things and will allow certain things to happen which will not only fill Satan with an overwhelming drive to achieve his objectives, but which will also fill him with a raging anger. When this happens a 'fire will be brought forth from the midst' of Satan which will burn within him causing him to become consumed with achieving his objectives, but also be blinded by his hatred and raging anger.

This burning fire within will then devour him, eating away at him from the inside, as he madly goes about pursuing his objectives, while at the same time trying to deal with the Lord's own avenging and purging wrath during that time.


• IMPORTANT NOTICE •

For 20 years now we have been able to publish *The ETB Quarterly* in one form or another. However over time this has become increasingly difficult to do. For printing and mailing costs have become more expensive, and now they are just too expensive, despite our attempts at reducing them.

Therefore the Directors of *Enjoy The Bible Ministries*® regretfully have decided that we can no longer afford to publish printed editions of *The ETB Quarterly*. So this is the last printed edition that you will receive.

However we intend to continue to publish it on our website, so you can still receive it online.

If you are unable to use our website, yet would still like to read *The ETB Quarterly*, we ask you to let us know.

 You will find a 'bit of a twist' to a couple of the Questions and Answers in this issue. For after answering the question at hand, we then pose a few questions of our own for you to answer.

We hope you will enjoy searching out the answers in order to enhance your understanding of the issues being addressed.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who support this ministry through your prayers and kind gifts.

Now in connection with this 'fire of madness' operating within him, Satan will actually pursue a course that will bring about his own destruction, along with the destruction of all that he has worked for, has implemented, and has accomplished on the earth. Hence all that he and his plan of evil have worked to accomplish on the earth will be 'brought to ashes' at the conclusion of the Lord's day of wrath.

Then at this time God will execute upon him the *culminating judgments* that have been pronounced against him, which will begin with him being incarcerated in "the sides of the pit" during the time when the Lord fulfills the remaining mandates of the Davidic covenant in His kingdom on this earth. Following this Satan will be released from his imprisonment to receive his final judgment, which will see him consigned to "the everlasting fire" of "the lake of fire," wherein he will 'never be any more.'

Therefore what God describes in Ezekiel 28:18 is not the issue of Satan's ultimate destruction. In other words it is not his final or ultimate destruction in the lake of fire. Instead it is the start of the process of his complete destruction, beginning as it will with his own personal self-destruction as the natural result of his sin of both formulating and implementing his plan of evil on this earth.

Now to briefly amplify upon the culminating judgments that result in Satan's final destruction, as mentioned these involve what is spoken about in Isaiah 14 and Revelation 20 where God describes him being 'brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.' This is where he will remain for the duration of the 1000 years in which the Lord fulfills the remaining mandates of the Davidic Covenant pertaining to the establishment and session of God's kingdom on the earth.

Then once the fulness of all of the mandates of the Davidic Covenant have been fulfilled, and the last enemy — death — is set to be destroyed, Satan and his cohorts will be released from their holding place of incarceration in the earth to receive the final and everlasting aspect of their sentence, which is to be cast into the "lake of fire." For this is what it was created for in the first place, just as the Lord said to His disciples in Matthew 25:41.

Wherefore Satan will be released from the pit upon the conclusion of the Lord reigning for 1000 years, just as Revelation 20 describes.

But as Revelation 20 also describes he is not only released to face the final aspect of his ultimate judgment, but also to be 'taken in his own craftiness,' so to speak, one last time.

For during the time of the Lord's reign on this earth and the fulfilling of the final mandates of the Davidic covenant there will be ones who do not respond positively to God, even with Him residing on the earth. In general these will be allowed to remain until the end of the Lord's reign, when the Lord will then deal with them by gathering them out of all of the regions of the earth in order for them to receive their appropriate judgment.

However instead of gathering them out by some other means, in a manner of speaking God will 'let Satan do it for Him.' For upon his release God will allow Satan to amass these together in a 'doomed to fail' attempt to overthrow His kingdom on the earth.

Whereupon God will judge them as Revelation 20 describes, and in connection with the destruction of the last enemy to complete the fulfilling of all of the mandates of the Davidic Covenant God will then execute upon Satan the final and permanent aspect of his judgment by having him too cast into the "lake of fire."

So 'in a nutshell' this is the process of Satan's coming destruction, beginning with the personal self-destruction that Ezekiel 28 speaks of, and ending with the judicial and permanent aspect of his destruction in the "lake of fire."

I Corinthians 15:20-26

In the order of the resurrections given in I Corinthians 15:20-26 I do not seem to see a clear reference to our resurrection that will take place at the Lord's coming for us at the end of this present dispensation of God's grace. Am I just not seeing it? Or if Paul does not make reference to it, why not?

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they

that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. (I Corinthians 15:20–26)

What Paul sets forth in I Corinthians 15:20–26 about the order of the resurrection of the dead can indeed be puzzling if we expect him to include the issue of the Lord's coming for us and our rapture/resurrection at the end of this present dispensation. For as you say, there does not seem to be a clear reference to it.

And even if we think that it might be included in verse 23 where Paul says "afterward they that are Christ's at his coming," then this would only seem to confuse things. For if Paul is including our rapture/resurrection in verse 23, then he is putting the Lord's coming for us and our resurrection at the same time as that of redeemed Israel's resurrection when the Lord comes to establish His kingdom at the end of the final installment in Israel's program. For it is clear that there is only one 'coming of Christ' spoken about by Paul in verse 23. And it is evident from what he says that it has to be His coming to establish His kingdom on the earth.

But we need not be puzzled or confused by the order of the resurrections in I Corinthians 15:20–26. For the fact of the matter is that Paul has no need to make reference to the Lord's coming for us and our rapture/resurrection in this particular passage. This is because it does not belong with what he is describing.

For what Paul is saying in verses 20–26 *only* pertains to what God has *prophesied about the resurrection of the dead*. Or in other words, Paul is only referring to what God has said about overcoming death by resurrec-

tion in connection with how He has prophesied that He would destroy death through Christ's ministry of fulfilling the Davidic Covenant.

So then even though Paul is dealing with the subject of the resurrection of the dead in I Corinthians 15; and even though the truth of the resurrection of the dead and the receiving of a changed body in connection with it is something that we are going to partake of when the Lord comes for us at the end of this present dispensation; because of what Paul is specifically dealing with in verses 20–26 he has no reason to refer to or include the issue of our rapture/resurrection in these verses.

Now the reason that what Paul says in verses 20–26 *only* pertains to and *only* includes what God has prophesied about the resurrection of the dead is because what Paul is doing in these verses is proving from the prophesied doctrine of the Christ that the resurrection of the dead has to take place.

Keep in mind that from verse 1 all the way to verse 34 Paul is proving the validity of, and the reality of, and the necessity of, the resurrection of the dead. And he is doing this in view of the fact that it was being flatly denied, as well as being ridiculed as preposterous.

Wherefore as Paul sets forth his various proofs that God will raise the dead, his main proof is in verses 20–26. For the destruction of death by the resurrection of the dead is something that God has promised all along. And as such it is an integral part of the 'doctrine of the Christ.'

Moreover in connection with fulfilling the prophesied mandates of the Davidic Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ not only must raise the dead in accordance with those mandates, but He will also resurrect the dead in perfect accordance with the timing of those mandates. And this is what Paul sets forth and teaches in verses 20–26.

But as we know the Lord's coming for us at the end of this present dis-

persation and our rapture/resurrection at that time *is not part of the prophesied order of the resurrections of the dead*. Therefore Paul does not mention it or include it in what he sets forth in verses 20–26.

Instead since the Lord's coming for us and our rapture/resurrection is part of "the revelation of the mystery of Christ," Paul deals with it separately later on in verses 50 and following, and only after he has first undeniably proven from the prophetic Scriptures that the resurrection of the dead is both true and necessary.

Therefore we should not expect to find the Lord's coming for us and our rapture/resurrection at the end of this present dispensation in what Paul says in verses 20–26. For by necessity Paul must deliberately exclude it from the listing of the prophesied order of the resurrections of the dead.

"The Fear of God"

In verses such as II Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 5:21, Ephesians 6:5, Philippians 2:12, and Colossians 3:22 the apostle Paul makes reference to "the fear of God," or to "fearing God," or to "fear and trembling." It is also apparent in these verses that he is speaking to us about being motivated by such "fear." How is it that we are motivated by "the fear of God"? Is this the issue of us being afraid of God?

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1)

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. (Ephesians 5:21)

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; (Ephesians 6:5)

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12)

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: (Colossians 3:22)

As you have correctly noticed, “fear” is spoken about as a real and legitimate motivating factor with us in this present dispensation of God’s grace. In fact, it is spoken of both in a positive sense, (i.e. a good and/or appropriate sense), and in a negative sense, (i.e. a bad and/or inappropriate sense.)

Hence we find ‘positive fear’ in such places as you have cited, and we can find ‘negative fear’ in such places as II Corinthians 7:5 and II Timothy 1:7.

Now of these two kinds of fear it is the negative one that most folks have a tendency to think of first, or some times it is the only kind they think of. And this is simply because ‘negative fear’ is the kind of fear with which they are the most familiar, as well as being the kind that is most often spoken about these days.

However most any comprehensive English dictionary will define and describe both kinds of fear. Plus they will show that ‘positive fear’ is still frequently spoken about today, even though it was more common to speak of it a generation or so ago, and still more common in previous centuries.

So both kinds of fear are real and legitimate, and both kinds are clearly spoken about in our epistles.

Wherefore we not only encounter both kinds of fear in our epistles, but we are also expected to deal with both kinds at various points in our sonship lives as we proceed through our Father’s curriculum for our “godly edifying.”

In fact the truth of the matter is that we must deal with both kinds of fear in our sonship lives. Because our Father has designed that we deal with both kinds of fear as His curriculum for our “godly edifying” effectually works within us to increasingly conform us to the image of Christ in our daily lives.

Therefore we need to understand both kinds of fear, and learn to respond to each as our Father has designed.

Hence in the outworking of our sonship lives we especially need to be properly and appropriately *motivated* by ‘positive fear.’ Yet at the same time we need to avail ourselves of the things that we are taught in our “godly edify-

...‘positive fear’ actually causes us to want to move towards someone or something. It causes us to want to take a stand for something or with someone.

ing” which are designed to make it so that we can overcome the detrimental effects of ‘negative fear’ and not be motivated by it.

Now since ‘positive fear’ is specifically the kind that you asked about, we’ll briefly focus upon it.

First off it is important to understand that fear, (regardless of which kind it is), involves the issue of us being both mentally and emotionally overwhelmed and impressed by something to the point that it powerfully motivates us.

Accordingly, therefore, we are usually overwhelmed either by something that someone says to us or does to us, (if it is a person whom we fear), or we are overwhelmed by the consequences or ramifications that some situation or some circumstance might pose to us.

And so depending upon the nature of what it is that overwhelms and impresses us, our fear will either be of the ‘negative’ kind or of the ‘positive’ kind.

So ‘in a nutshell’ the essence of fear is that it involves us being overwhelmed and impressed by something to the point of being strongly moved to either shrink back from someone or some situation out of intimidation, or to take a stand with someone or in some situation out of strong respect for a cause.

Now in accordance with this, (and to put it very simply), ‘positive fear’ is the opposite of ‘negative fear.’ It is the opposite of ‘negative fear’ in the sense that it does not cause us to shrink back from someone or something, or be intimidated by them.

Hence ‘positive fear’ usually does not involve us being frightened, or afraid, or scared of someone or of something. It does not make it so that we move back from them because they have overwhelmed us by some sort of threat that they have made to us, or that they pose to us.

Instead ‘positive fear’ actually causes us to want to move towards someone or something. It causes us to want to take a stand for something or with someone.

As such ‘positive fear’ involves the issue of us being overwhelmed and impressed by something other than a threat. In fact it involves us being impressed by something that is viewed by us to be more powerful than a threat. And this actually causes us to want to move towards someone or something because we have greater respect and regard for them than for anything else.

Wherefore when it comes to ‘positive fear’ we are overwhelmed by, (and duly impressed with), such things as the correctness, or the righteousness, or the properness, or the propriety, or the excellence of something.

Or we are overwhelmed by and duly impressed with such things as the

honour, or the virtue, or the justice, or the value, or the nobility of something. Or when it comes to someone's person, we are overwhelmed and impressed by his greatness, or majesty, or august nature, and the like.

In short, therefore, with 'positive fear' we are mentally as well as emotionally overwhelmed by, (and duly impressed with), something about someone, or something about some matter, because we have great respect for it, and it means more to us than anything else.

Moreover because we are overwhelmed and impressed by such things as the correctness or excellence of something, or by the greatness or majesty of someone, this causes us to want to stand for, or be identified with, such correctness or excellence. Or it causes us to want to submit to someone's greatness or majesty and do things his way, in preference to following the course of others, or being identified with others, who are inappropriately impressed with other things.

Now this 'positive fear' is the kind of fear that Paul is talking about in such places as II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:21 and 6:5; Philippians 2:12; and Colossians 3:22. And as is evident from the immediate context of each of these places, (or from what has been set forth in the context leading up one or more of these places), specific information is given in each context about such things as correctness, or excellence, or virtue, or greatness, and the like, which God has designed to effectually overwhelm and impress us and therefore cause us to have 'positive fear.'

With this being so, verses such as these then exhort us to do what they say in response to having 'positive fear' for either the correctness, or excellence, or virtue, or greatness, etc., of what is being spoken about in the context.

Therefore when, for example, in II Corinthians 7:1 Paul says...

1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let

us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1)

...the "fear of God" that Paul says we should have is 'positive fear.' And it comes from the overwhelming and exceedingly impressive nature of the grandeur and glory of what our sonship status is all about, and of what it means for us to live as "the sons of God" that we are. Which is what Paul reminds us of, and reproves both the Corinthians and us about, in the preceding verses.

...they are also 'ordinance powers' of the firmament that are designed to have a direct influential effect upon the earth in the midst of the firmament.

Hence in view of this particular 'positive fear of God' we ought to be caused to want to 'perfect holiness' as the "sons" that we are by completely disassociating ourselves from the damaging effects of the ungodly enticements of this world, no matter how popular, attractive, persuasive, or pleasant they may be.

So once again it is 'positive fear' that Paul is talking about in such verses as you have cited. And 'positive fear' is not only legitimate for us to have, but especially in this present dispensation of God's grace it is fully appropriate for us to operate upon it.

For 'positive fear' is one of the main motivations for a "son" as he responds to his father and lives his sonship life according to the curriculum that his father has given him.

Therefore with us having received "the adoption of sons" in this present dispensation, 'positive fear' is naturally

a big issue between us and God our Father in His program and dealings with us, just as Paul's frequent references to it testify.

Job 38:31

What are the "sweet influences of Pleiades" and the "bands of Orion"? And why does God ask Job if he can "bind" the one or "loose" the other?

31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? (Job 38:31)

In view of the context in which God asks Job this question, it is my understanding that they are two of the many 'ordinance powers' of the firmament of heaven. As such they are not only integral components of the very structural composition and function of the firmament of heaven itself, but they are also 'ordinance powers' of the firmament that are designed to have a direct influential effect upon the earth in the midst of the firmament.

So by being two of what I call the 'ordinance powers of the firmament of heaven,' and by being ones that also have a direct and purposed effect upon the earth within the firmament, they therefore exercise an 'ordinance power' upon the earth, especially with respect to its position in the firmament.

Wherefore with Pleiades having "sweet influences" and Orion having "bands" they exercise powers in the firmament that maintain orderliness and a balance and stability to the earth in its position within it, as well as also being involved in exercising powers that have a regulating effect upon the normality and progression of the earth's seasons.

Now though this is their normal function, the time is coming when they will not function as such.

For in the Lord's day God will use their 'ordinance powers' in an extraordinary way, especially when it comes

to executing a number of the celestial-based judgments that He will bring upon the earth during that time.

And it is for this reason that God brings up the issue of Pleiades and Orion in the series of questions that He asks Job, and by which He educates him in what He needs to realize.

Hence God speaks to Job about ‘binding the sweet influences of Pleiades,’ and about ‘loosing the bands of Orion.’ For when the present time ‘sweet influences’ are ‘bound,’ and when the present time ‘bands’ are ‘loosed,’ then the present time state of orderliness and balance and stability that the earth has in its position within the firmament will be greatly effected.

Moreover the very structural composition and integrity of the firmament of heaven itself will also be dramatically altered, and will even start to become unglued, so to speak.

Now these kind of drastic things will need to take place in the Lord’s day, especially when it comes to God successfully and thoroughly dismantling, demolishing, and destroying the implementation of Satan’s plan of evil in the earth, (both physically and spiritually), and also purging it of all of its effects.

Wherefore when God describes the catastrophic and horrific things that will take place during His day, they include terminology and phraseology, for example, that is descriptive of the firmament of heaven and its components, along with the earth and its position within the firmament, being repeatedly and exceedingly convulsed by “the powers of heaven” being “shaken.”

All of this, (along with the issue of much of the firmament’s physical makeup and integrity actually being caused to fall apart, collapse, and be dissolved), is what will progressively produce the successful judging, perishing, and passing away of this present evil world.

So then when the Lord has His day and these things take place, the issue of ‘binding the sweet influences of Pleiades’ and ‘loosing the bands of Orion’ will be very instrumental in bringing these things to pass.

Exodus 32:1-4

Besides being an idol, it seems that there must have been some special significance to the “molten calf” that Aaron made and fashioned. What was it? And why when it was a “calf” did the people say “These be thy gods, O Israel,” speaking of it in the plural?

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of

the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron.

4 And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. (Exodus 32:1-4)

What we need to know first about the “molten calf” is that it was actually an idol associated with Assyria’s god, and not so much an Egyptian idol as is some times thought.

We can see this in a few different ways, but for right now the easiest is to take note of what is said later on in Psalm 106.

19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. (Psalm 106:19-20)

The “calf” therefore was the calf of “an ox.” And the fact is that the image of Assyria’s god has been that of an ox right from the beginning. Hence the “molten calf” was an idol directly associated with Assyria.

Now this makes the “molten calf” to be highly significant, especially in view of what Assyria is to Satan. For Assyria is key to his plans for retaining possession of the earth, as well as key when it comes to him succeeding with the outworking of his plan of evil on this earth. Consequently this made Israel’s sin in connection with the “molten calf” to be “so great a sin” and the “great sin” that Moses said it was.

For very simply put the fact of the matter is this: Once Aaron had (1) received the gold from the people and “had made it a molten calf”; and (2) had “fashioned it with a graving tool” into “the similitude of an ox”; and (3) the people said, “These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt”; Israel actually began the process of becoming Satan’s spiritual captives all over again. But what’s more, they also began the process whereby Satan could work to lawfully take them captive as a nation, (along with their promised land), and in doing so work to neutralize God’s use of them to repossess the earth and establish His kingdom on it.

Wherefore the “molten calf” was not just any old idol. But since it was directly associated with Assyria’s god, it was directly connected to the Adversary himself. And so when Israel assigned their deliverance from Egypt to it, they more or less extended their hand to the Adversary and entered into fellowship with him.

Now it is because “the molten image” was a “calf,” and it came forth from the fire, that the people said, “These *be* thy gods, O Israel,” speaking of it in the plural.

For being the “calf” of an ox it was deemed to have been given birth in their midst by its ‘parent ox,’ i.e. the god of Assyria. Hence in recognizing both the “calf” and its parent god, the people said “These *be* thy gods, O Israel.”

Moreover with it being a “calf” that the parent god had given birth to in their midst, it was deemed not only to have led Israel out from their servitude and sojourning in Egypt, but it was also deemed that it would now lead them to the land of the god of their fathers who had originally begat them.

Now in view of all of this, see if you can figure out some other things about the “molten calf.” For example: (1) Why did Moses destroy it in the manner described in Exodus 32:20? And (2) Why later on in Israel’s history did Jeroboam make “two calves of gold,” as is related in I Kings 12? (Hint: Take note of where he put them.) And (3) In Nehemiah 9:18 when the Levites recount the time when Israel originally made the “molten calf,” why do they change the word “gods” to “God” and say that the people said, “This *is* thy God (singular and capitalized) that brought thee up out of Egypt”?



Moses’ Shoes versus Joshua’s Shoe

The accounts of Moses encountering God at the burning bush and that of Joshua encountering “the captain of the LORD’s host” at Jericho have some similarities to them. But why is Moses told to “put off thy shoes (plural) from off thy feet (plural),” while Joshua is told to “Loose thy shoe (singular) from off thy foot (singular)”?

5 And he (God) said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground. (Exodus 3:5)

15 And the captain of the LORD’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:15)

With Moses having come “to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb,” and with Joshua having crossed the Jordan River and come to Jericho, the two incidents are similar in that both Moses and Joshua were standing on “holy ground.” That is, both of them were standing at places that God had previously sanctified as being set apart and significant to Him in the outworking of His program with Israel, and the times had then arrived in the program for each place’s sanctification to come to pass.

Wherefore as Moses and Joshua respectively were confronted with the reality of this, both of them were commanded to perform a gesture that indicated their acknowledgment of the sanctification, as well as their submission to it.

However there is a difference between the two gestures. For God commanded Moses to perform the more general or customary gesture of acknowledgment and respect, i.e. putting off *both shoes* from off his feet in honour of the sanctification.

But the “captain of the LORD’s host” commanded Joshua to perform a *specific kind of gesture of acknowledgment*. One that had some legal connotations to it, signifying as it did his acknowledgment of a *lawful and necessary change* that was taking place in the military aspect of the program.

For by commanding Joshua to “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot,” the “captain of the LORD’s host” commanded Joshua to perform the gesture that signified his acknowledgment of, and his submission to, *the prophesied change of command* that was now taking place in the program seeing that Israel had entered the land.

And indeed the prophesied change of command that God had spoken about in Exodus 32–34 was taking place.

For this reason when Joshua first saw the warrior and questioned his allegiance, he reproved Joshua saying “Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I NOW COME.” (Joshua 5:14a) For indeed he had “*now come*” in perfect accordance with the timing of the prophesied and anticipated *change of command*.

Accordingly therefore Joshua’s gesture of removing *one shoe* to signify his acknowledgment of the martial change that was taking place in the military aspect of the program was much the same sort of gesture spoken of in the Book of Ruth pertaining to the statutory custom of acknowledging and confirming a legal change.

7 Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming AND CONCERNING CHANGING, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbor: and this *was a testimony* in Israel. (Ruth 4:7)

Now in view of what Joshua signified by his gesture, do you know the full order and meaning to the military operations that God carried out from the time He brought Israel out of Egypt to the end of Joshua’s life? For they are truly fascinating, with the change to “the captain of the LORD’s host” being only one in a series of prescribed martial changes.

— K. R. Blades

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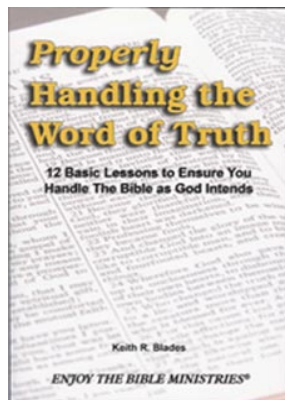
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