

CHRISTADELPHIAN

Advocate

A monthly magazine in defense of the "Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" as embraced in The Hope of Israel with a view to "Taking Out A People For Yahweh's Name"



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The front cover picture reflects "The Significance of Cardinal Directions in Scripture" article (p. 120); referencing Ezekiel's vision of the *four living creatures*, each with *four faces* pointing in the four cardinal directions.

He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.

Jeremiah 23:28

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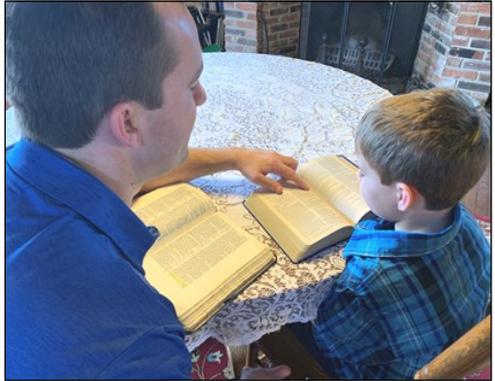
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EDITORIAL

Teaching Our Children to Study the Bible

In the June 2013 *Advocate*, Brother Josh Vest presented an editorial titled, “The Spiritual Education of Our Children.” His opening paragraph and salient points from the body of the article include the following:

“The young and the very young in our ecclesias and our community are a great blessing and a source of joy. The young are *an heritage of the LORD* to be acknowledged as a gift from God (Psalm 127:3), and we have the responsibility to ensure they are “trained up” in the ways of the Lord. Should we, however, fail to heed this instruction, the world will be all too eager to see to their training. Unfortunately, we all know the ways of man and of the world are not the ways of God. The education system, popular culture, and society at large all pose deadly challenges to the spiritual well-being of our young people.



- If we do not guide our children’s learning, the relentless indoctrination of society, schools and the broader culture will permeate their learning and influence their values and morality.
- Reading is a good and recommended alternative. Unfortunately, reading is becoming more and more uncommon among youth.
- Secular education is not necessarily a good thing, nor is it necessarily an evil thing. But the subjects and values taught in many educational settings can run contrary to all that we hope to instill in our young people.
- We must equip our youth with the faith, knowledge, and confidence in God necessary to resist the world and overcome the challenges to faith that it presents.

- The phrase *teach them diligently* is also translated “sharpen” – like as with a “whet” stone – meaning the lessons must be repeatedly rubbed into the minds of our youth by talking of them *when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up* (Deuteronomy 6:7).

Remember that individuals – young and old – respond to those that speak and conduct themselves with conviction and sincerity.

In this editorial we would like to build upon Brother Vest’s focus on “The Spiritual Education of Our Children” by considering how we might teach our children to study the Bible, that they may become passionate students of the Word, and by baptism, devoted servants of our Heavenly Father, and heirs of the Kingdom. There’s no single answer as to the best way to teach others how to study the Bible. Different approaches may be more effective for some more so than for others, though there is no replacement for Bible reading, the foundation of Bible literacy and belief.

It is not uncommon to come across individuals who profess belief in God and the Bible, some expressing sincere convictions. Yet, in talking to those individuals it often becomes apparent (if not openly confessed) that they are not familiar with their Bibles and have no idea as to what the Bible teaches concerning their convictions. Having little or no firsthand knowledge of the Scriptures, they cannot distinguish between someone’s interpretation and what the Bible actually says. Being satisfied with the apparent approval and complacency of their families and fellow church members as to what they are taught, it may never occur to them to challenge or question their “spiritual leaders.” Sadly, popular Christianity has come to rely upon the teachings of church leaders, celebrity speakers, and best-selling books rather than the Bible itself.

So, where does one start to teach their children (as well as interested individuals) how to go about studying the Bible? In this matter, our children should have a leg up, so to speak, as they have the personal examples of their parents and other believers with whom they have contact. Brothers / Sisters: the examples we set for our children have an impact for better or for worse. Will those that observe us witness devotion to reading, speaking, and referencing the Bible, or a sporadic association that is “neither cold nor hot”? (Revelation 3:15)

Opportunities to engage our children present themselves through questions and comments spoken within our hearing. Remember that individuals – young and old – respond to those that speak and conduct themselves with

conviction and sincerity, *nothing wavering* (James 1:6). Also, situations occasionally arise that give one an opportunity to express their experience with, and love for, the Truth, offering examples as to the value and comfort of prophecy and the promises given us in the Bible (as well as its history, consistent themes, and contexts). It would be wise to give thought to, if not prepare oneself through self-rehearsal, how one might offer *a word in due season* (Proverbs 15:23) in response to commonly encountered questions, statements, or negative remarks. Most important: answer with Scripture! The Bible does not contradict itself.

Teaching children, young people, or interested adults to study the Bible is a progressive process. It is best when planned ahead, so take time to prepare, initially addressing the interests / questions of the student(s), followed by a program of study utilizing a Bible study plan of some nature. Concentrate on the milk of the Word, moving on to the meat as they mature in their understanding. Generally the process involves steps such as:

- **Familiarize them with the organization of the Bible:** Old Testament / New Testament; books of the Bible in their categories (Law, History, Prophets, Epistles, etc); margins / cross references; footnotes; etc.
- **Study Aids:** Our Statement of Faith, Concordances, Septuagint / Diaglott, pioneer writings, Bible Dictionaries, etc.
- **Read the subject under consideration from the Bible:** Encourage the student to ask questions and take notes. Help them answer their questions from the text and the text's margins (i.e., teach them to answer their questions from the Scriptures).
- **Interpretation:** Ask the student to interpret and summarize the reading. Time spent interacting with the Bible is time accumulating familiarity and firsthand knowledge of what it says. (Tougher questions that the student has trouble with may be addressed succinctly and put off until the student has a fuller understanding of the subject.)
- **Personalization:** Ask the student what lessons he or she received from the scriptural reading: its relevance and its importance.

Ask the student to interpret and summarize the reading. Time spent interacting with the Bible is time accumulating familiarity and firsthand knowledge of what it says.

- **Application:** Encourage the student to consider the impact the Bible is having on him/her. Encourage memory verses which might stick with them for the rest of their lives, such as:
 - *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them* (John 13:17 ESV).
 - *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (2 Timothy 2:15).
 - *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Editor

FEATURE ARTICLE

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

(Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)

Jesus' fourth recorded utterance from the cross is arguably one of the most perplexing. It is said that Martin Luther, who famously sparked the 16th century Protestant Reformation, pondered the verse for hours before throwing up his hands and declaring, "who can understand it?"

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *E-lo'i, E-lo'i, la'ma sa-bach-tha'ni?* which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

While Luther's stupefaction is due largely to an incorrect understanding of atonement and the nature of Christ, members of our faith also struggle to articulate why our Lord quoted the Psalmist, and what his emotional state was (besides the obvious pain and suffering)? Did Jesus really feel abandoned by his Father? Was he abandoned or did our Lord and Savior use his precious few dying breaths to further glorify his Father, leaving for us another example of his self-sacrificing love?

Was Christ forsaken by his Father? There is no doubt that Christ was very much alone

on the cross. Like a common criminal, he had been isolated since his arrest. Although surrounded by crowds who taunted and mocked him, Jesus was the sheep, silent before his shearers, a master of mind and spirit. When he cries out on the cross, many interpret it as a plea of heartbreaking loneliness: a moment of fear and despair mixed with some manner of separation from his Father as he fulfilled his atoning sacrifice.

Brother Melva Purkis writes in the esteemed book *A Life of Jesus*: “For the first time he was alone: bearing in his body the sin of the world. We dare not probe into this mystery of his suffering. Suddenly a great cry burst from him, a cry harsh and unnatural, a cry of utter abandonment: *E-lo’i, E-lo’i, la’ma sa-bach-tha’ni?*” That sentiment partially aligns with many Christian writers, who see this as a moment when God pulled away, turned his back, hid his face, or, as one Internet theologian opined: “the furious wrath of the Father was poured out on his Son and his form was essentially punished.”

While Purkis’ writing is masterful in illuminating the humanity of Christ, mainstream Christianity struggles to reconcile this “abandonment” while maintaining their erroneous belief in the Trinity. This is why Luther was so perplexed. How, he wondered, could God abandon God? We join him in declaring the thought to be absurd in his logic – “who can understand it?” indeed!

So, did God forsake Christ on the cross?

The Greek word for “forsaken” is Strong’s #1459 – *enkataleipo*, which means “to forsake, leave, abandon.” One explanation common in Christadelphian circles is that this may have been the moment when God withdrew his Holy Spirit, leaving Jesus’ flesh further weakened, vulnerable, and exposed in a way unlike anything he had felt since his baptism. This, I fear, could be venturing onto a slippery slope, albeit unintentionally. While it does attempt to explain how Jesus may have felt forsaken, one might be tempted to deduce that the Holy Spirit given “without measure” somehow kept the everyday temptations we experience largely at bay. Or, as has also been said in Christadelphian circles, that his temptation in the wilderness early in his ministry was his most pronounced proving ground until his crucifixion. This, I believe, diminishes the fullness of his sacrifice, and speaks to our rational struggle in understanding that Jesus

really was just like us, yet without sin. As the writer to the Hebrews notes,

Jesus quoted the Old Testament seventy-eight times in the Gospels, and every instance had purpose... Jesus quoted the first line of Psalm 22 to make his learned audience consider all that was unfolding.

Jesus battled his flesh daily: he was like his brothers in every way, tempted in every way, and is thus able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

Additionally, the rationale that the Holy Spirit needed to be withdrawn for Jesus to experience death is not consistent with Scripture. Stephen was said to be “full of the Holy Spirit” as he looked upon Jesus standing at the right hand of God just minutes before he was murdered. Or consider Samson, whose renewed faith allowed God’s power to fall upon him facilitating his death in Gaza.

Bringing Glory to the Father

Stephen, Samson, and Jesus were all faithful men who died publicly under circumstances that glorified God. And this brings us to arguably the most defining clue to answering our questions about Jesus’ fourth utterance – Psalm 22:1. Why did Jesus quote the first part of the first verse of this particular psalm, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Judging from the first half of this article, most people think Jesus quoted this verse primarily to describe his current state. Why would he not just say it? Later, when he says simply, “I thirst” or “It is finished,” he doesn’t quote Scripture to convey his feelings. Jesus quoted the Old Testament seventy-eight times in the Gospels, and every instance had purpose. Whether it was to show prophetic fulfillment, ward off temptation, underscore God’s Divine laws, or illuminate the false teachings of secular Judaism, Jesus quoted from sources his audience knew, in order to teach and bear witness.

Psalm 22 is a Davidic psalm. More importantly, it was and still is considered by Jews to describe the afflictions of the Messiah. According to the *Pesikta Rabbati*, a medieval Midrash on the Jewish festivals of the year, Psalm 22 is cited as part of the Passover celebration. Some scholars have speculated that Psalm 22 was read publicly during the days leading up to Christ’s crucifixion. Whether or not that was the case, I believe that is exactly what Jesus did with this excruciating, precious breath. He quoted from Psalm 22 to teach and bear witness, just like he always did. He was the Messiah, quoting a psalm that described in detail what the Jews thought would happen to their Messiah, testifying that he was the Passover lamb: he was the Savior that they could not comprehend because of their unbelief. Although dying and forsaken by his friends, Jesus quoted the first line of Psalm 22 to make his learned audience consider all that was unfolding:

- *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Psalm 22:1).
- *(I am the) reproach of men, and despised of the people* (Psalm 22:6).
- *He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him* (Psalm 22:8).

- *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint (Psalm 22:14).*
- *They pierced my hands and my feet (Psalm 22:16).*
- *They look and stare upon me (Psalm 22:17).*
- *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture (Psalm 22:18).*

Love is self-sacrifice. Jesus was a teacher throughout his life, even the Pharisees couldn't deny that. I don't believe it stopped on the cross, despite the excruciating pain of pushing himself up by pierced feet to even breathe. Jesus' fourth utterance from the cross was another attempt to make his countrymen (and we Gentiles afterwards) believe. He was a teacher until the end.

Brian Forbes, Littleton, CO

Q & A

Readers are asked to submit questions to be answered as well as comments on previously published answers in this section. Questions and comments may be sent to: Brother Ken Wood at question@christadelphianadvocate.org



Jesus' Baptism by John



Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Matthew 3:13-17).

Question: What did John’s baptism unto repentance do for Jesus? This has always been an interesting subject because we know that John’s baptism wasn’t unto salvation, and Jesus did not require repentance for past offenses. What was it about John’s baptism that finally allowed God to publicly proclaim, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”?

Answer: Yes, many have wondered, including the author, why Jesus should be baptized since this rite is associated with repentance and remission of sins, of which our Lord had none. This was not the case for all the others that had come to John, confessing their sins and being baptized of him in the Jordan (Matthew 3:6). “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee unto John.”(vs.13) To the multitude looking on from the banks of the Jordan, it was but another baptism by John. However, we know it was very different for the Messiah. So, indeed, we ask: why was he baptized and what did it accomplish?

Let us consider these points as we begin our attempt to answer the question:

1. Christ had to be obedient in many things, for he was ‘made under the law.’ It imposed many duties to which he had to conform in the process of his releasing the faithful from the dominion of the Law and into the liberty of Christ.
2. Although not part of the Law, John’s baptism was a matter of Divine command – an institution of direct Divine appointment. Consequently, submission to it was obligatory for every faithful Israelite.
3. There was a fitness to Christ’s submission to that ordinance, in view of the work that he had come to do. In fact, we can go further and say that there was a necessity for him to submit to the baptism of John.

The work our Master had come to do throughout his life was, first of all, a work of obedience in and of himself – *For as by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous* (Romans 5:19). And, *learned he obedience by [or in] the things which he suffered* (Hebrews 5:8), even unto death. His obedience in all things included that at the hands of John. Without this submission, the ‘righteousness’ he wrought for repentant sinners would have been incomplete. Hence, it is easy to understand his response to John’s

His baptism by the hands of John was the necessary preface to a greater baptism that had to be accomplished in the same spirit of humble submission to his Father’s will, and with the same end in view: to fulfill Yahweh’s righteousness.

reluctance to baptize him, *Suffer it to be so now: Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.* Whatever God appoints to be done is ‘righteousness’ in the doing of it. For this reason, Christ’s baptism in the Jordan was part of the righteousness he was to manifest.

His answer to John’s objection we recognize as the first evidence of Christ’s sinlessness. The multitudes had come confessing their sins and were baptized in repentance. Jesus also submitted to it. However, his baptism was not an acknowledgment of personal sin, but the demonstration of righteousness. His baptism by the hands of John was the necessary preface to a greater baptism that had to be accomplished in the same spirit of humble submission to his Father’s will, and with the same end in view: to fulfill Yahweh’s righteousness.

Now, let’s pay closer attention to three short words in Christ’s response to John and their relevance to the necessity of this baptism and what it accomplished:

Suffer it to be so now.

We see the word “now” as an acknowledgment of Christ’s status as that of a son of Adam. Although Jesus was not a transgressor by his own actions, he was a partaker of a sin-constitution in his being. He was born into a state that was condemned because of the sin-nature that he shared with all flesh. Being born of Mary, he partook of all the “evil” of that state, even unto death itself. He was *made of a woman, made under the law* (Galatians 4:4), that the way might be made open to escape from the corrupt state of mankind, and that way had to be opened in conformity with the Divine principles involved. A beginning had to be made with himself through perfect obedience, as the foundation upon which others could build.

By this act, Jesus associated himself openly with the sinners he came to save. By it, he proclaimed the essential oneness of his nature with theirs.

As the *son of David, the son of Abraham* (Matthew 1:1), he was as much subject to the reign of death as any of those he came to redeem. His mission was to overcome it through perfect obedience, along with his death and resurrection. It would illustrate and establish God’s righteousness in all of its facets. It was for his sake that mankind’s sins would be forgiven. In view of all this, it was not incongruous – on the contrary, it was in beautiful harmony with his work – that on the threshold of the public phase of it, he

should be called upon to submit to the ritual act of baptism that in its fullness symbolized the washing away of sin.

Thus, it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.

The word “us” in Christ’s response to John also provides a key to a better understanding of this need for baptism on his part. It does not refer to Jesus and John exclusively, but to Jesus and all the rest who were similarly being baptized. By this act, Jesus associated himself openly with the sinners he came to save. By it, he proclaimed the essential oneness of his nature with theirs. Christ needed to fulfill “all” righteousness for them as well as for himself, inasmuch as he also was a member of a fallen race needing redemption. It was an acknowledgment that the great truth taught by Peter: *all flesh is as grass* (1 Peter 1:24), applied to him as well, as he was *numbered with the transgressors* (Isaiah 53:12). By this act of baptism, Jesus indeed fulfilled *all* righteousness. It was an outward symbol of his own death and resurrection, summing up all his redeeming work – as does our baptism symbolize Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

Jesus was baptized not merely for his benefit but also for the benefit of others – as an example, to teach them what they must do. In this moment of surrender, he would arise from the waters of baptism as a pattern for us to follow. What he did in submitting to baptism, others must do if they are to be saved. Though we cannot manifest the complete obedience he accomplished throughout his life, we must strive to do so and seek forgiveness for our sins.

Yes, John’s baptism was not the same as ours. It was one of repentance and not the forgiveness of sins. He told the people to look forward to the baptism of the Lord (Matthew 3:11). Belief and obedience along with baptism into his Name is required for salvation.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Finally, we address the second part of our subject question: “What was it about John’s baptism that finally allowed God to publicly proclaim, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?*”

Brother Roberts responds to this question in Nazareth Revisited (p. 84): “There is no real occasion for quandary. **There was a need for some circumstance or situation as the occasion for Christ’s ‘manifestation’ to Israel as their Messiah, and John’s institution of baptism was provided for this purpose.**” Indeed, it was a public declaration of his Father, but it was also a declaration of the Son’s intentions for his ministry as well as a foreshadowing of his death upon the cross. By being baptized, Jesus was publicly revealing that he had already died to the dictates of the flesh and lived only to do the will of his Father. With this, Yahweh was “well

pleased.” If others are to please Him, they too must learn to die to sin, to deny the flesh, and to learn to do the will of God.

As he arose from the Jordan, his righteousness was confirmed from heaven with the anointing of the Holy Spirit for his life of dedication to His Father. Yahweh accepted him as His Son and illuminated his path with words which would bring exultation to his burdened heart during the dark days that lay before him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Thus, Jesus was baptized by water and by the Spirit. Henceforth, all who would come to the Father through him would enter the Kingdom through the obedience of baptism first, and then if judged righteous, through the Spirit.

Ken Wood, Richmond, VA

References:

R. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited*, 1968 ed., pp. 84-85

M. Purkis, *A Life of Jesus*, pp. 54-55

H. Whittaker, *Studies in the Gospels*, pp. 64-65

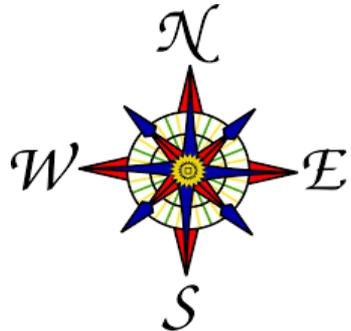
H.P. Mansfield, *Story of the Bible*, Vol. 5, pp. 180-81

EXPOSITION

The Significance of the Cardinal Directions in Scripture Series Overview

North

The North is associated with captivity and sacrifice. It is symbolized by the **Eagle**, which is a bird of prey as well as a scavenger. Common scriptural associations with the north include the King of the North; the great sacrifice the Lord will have at the return of Christ; Jesus' crucifixion in Golgotha located on the north side of Jerusalem; the slaying of the sacrifices on the north side of the altar; the Table of Shewbread on the north wall of the Holy Place in the Tabernacle; etc. The north symbolizes our bondage to sin.



South

The South signifies the area of our sojourn and is symbolized by the **Man**. Abraham sojourned in the South as a pilgrim and a stranger. The South reflects an area of sunlight: the Word of God; the Lampstand placed against the south wall of the Tabernacle; i.e., being in the world but not of it – *thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path* (Psalm 119:105).

Together the North and the South deal with things temporal.

East

East is the direction of origin: the direction from which we approach God. The entrance into the tabernacle was from the east, and the Garden was “eastward in Eden.” To walk eastward is to go away from God. The wicked cities of Babylon and Nineveh were eastward, founded by men who traveled to the east away from God. Esau established his country in the east: traveling away from God to do so. The East is the way of kings, symbolized by the **Lion**.

West

God’s dwelling place is in the West. The West is symbolized by the **Ox** – the patient and sure-footed servant who will dwell in the west with God. The sun rises in the beginning of the day in the east, and sets in the west at the end of the day. The journey of the righteous saints will end in the west. The “Most Holy place” where God dwelt with Israel was on the west side of the Tabernacle.

Together the East and the West symbolize things eternal.

Part 1: North

This article is the first in a four-part series addressing the meaning and Scriptural associations of the four cardinal directions – points of the compass. Before we begin, it is important to point out that cardinal directions in Scripture are not used strictly in the manner we typically associate with them, i.e., location; but are also given to provide a sense of orientation, association, as well as a point of reference.

In Ezekiel chapter 1, the *four living creatures* that bore the *likeness of a man*, each with *four faces* pointing in the four cardinal directions, provide clues as to how the faces associated with their direction were determined. In the vision, Ezekiel describes a *whirlwind coming out of the north* moving in a southerly direction, which enveloped the living creatures. From his perspective, the face that Ezekiel would see head on was the face of a *man*,

meaning that the man was the face associated with the south. He then mentions the *lion* on the right which would indicate that the lion was facing east. From there he describes the face of the *ox* on the left side orienting that face toward the west. Finally, the



face of the *eagle* is mentioned without orientation, but the context clearly indicates it was facing north. This vision's association with the points on the compass is consistent throughout the Bible, as we see referenced in such examples as the arrangement of the encampment of Israel in the wilderness.

Let us begin this series with an examination of the significance of "North" as associated with orientation, direction, and prophecy:

In Ezekiel's vision, North was represented by the face of an eagle. As we examine the associated meanings of the cardinal north, we find that this is an apt face for all that the North signifies in the Scriptures. We will begin our review of the North with a reference that says much in a few words.

And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar (Leviticus 1:11). In this reference, we establish an association of the North with sacrifice, and this too is a consistent association throughout the Bible. A dramatic example of this is found in Jeremiah 46:10 where it is said that God prepared a great sacrifice through delivery of Egypt's army to the Babylonians in the "north country," *For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries; and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.*

References addressing the King of the North present the King of the North as a tool of, as well as an adversary to God, establishing another association of north. We know that the great cities of Nineveh and Babylon were east of Israel, but directly between them was a howling wilderness which made a direct approach to Israel from the east difficult at best. The preferred approach was to follow the course of the rivers into the area of what is now Syria, and then descend into Israel from that northerly location.

Because those assaults came out of the north, we find the north associated not only with sacrifice, but with “oppression and captivity.” There are quite a number of references that can be listed reflecting this association, such as: Isaiah 41:25, *I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun [east] shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.*

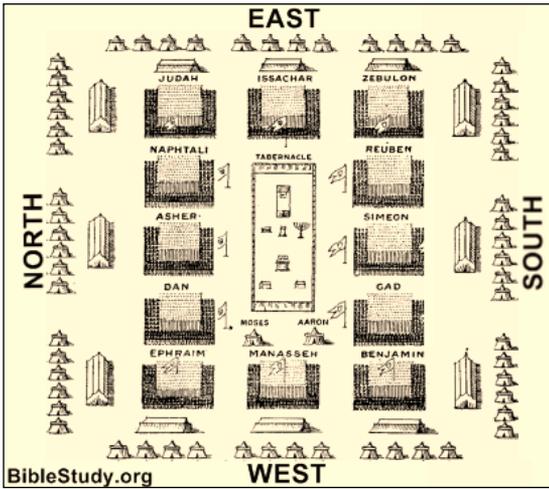
As Barnes Bible Commentary describes, the force of this argument is that the Jews in Babylon, near the close of their captivity, would remember that God by the prophets had distinctly foretold, some one hundred and fifty years before, that he would raise up Cyrus to be their deliverer. Thus, when Cyrus attacked and subdued Babylon, the people would then have abundant evidence, and that even the pagan should see that Yahweh was the true God. Regarding *From the rising of the sun* – Cyrus was born in Persia, in the country called in the Scriptures “the east,” but he early went to Media – situated on the north, and came from Media when he attacked and subdued Babylon. Thus “north” here plays a significant role in regard to “oppression and captivity.” (Additional references include: Isaiah 14:31 – *there shall come from the north a smoke*; Jeremiah 1:13-19 – *seething pot toward the north*; and 10:22 – *great commotion out of the north country.*)

There are also several references regarding the return of Israel from captivity that speak specifically of a return from the north where they were subjected to captivity by both Assyria and Babylon, as well as their latter day return from the Diaspora, *In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers*; and, *The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north* (Jeremiah 3:18; 16:14-15).

One of the more familiar references to oppression from the north is the prophecy regarding Gog in Ezekiel 38, *Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands* (vs. 6); and, *...thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee* (vs. 15).

The eagle associated with the North is also fitting when we consider what the North signifies. The eagle, being a predator, is always seeking its prey; and God uses the expression that he will make Israel a prey throughout the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (see also Isaiah 10:6; 49:25; Ezekiel 29:19; 34:22).

Another interesting observation regarding the significance of the direction north is found in the arrangement of the wilderness tabernacle. Within the Holy Place we find that the table of shewbread was situated against the north wall. We know that the shewbread was placed



upon the table, and we find Hebrew scholars purporting that wine was also placed upon that table. If this is true, then we find that the emblems of bread and wine, which we associate with the death of Christ, were placed there. When we examine the spiritual significance of the North it speaks to us of captivity to sin, and sacrifice associated with mortality. In like manner, many scholars place

Golgotha on the north side of Jerusalem. As the animal being sacrificed was killed on the north side of the altar, it would be prophetically fitting that Jesus would likewise be sacrificed in the North as well.

We have only scratched the surface of all the references that could be offered pertaining to the associations found in the Scripture’s use of the direction “north.” Again, the goal of this series on the four cardinal directions is to broaden our awareness of the scriptural and prophetic associations implied in their use. This understanding must be considered when the cardinal directions are referenced in our readings, that we might gain greater understanding and appreciation for the meaning and lessons the text contains.

Mike Washeck, Powhatan, VA

EXPOSITION

Abraham Lifted Up His Eyes and Saw a Ram

Genesis 22:1-19

When Abraham was called to offer his beloved son Isaac as a burnt offering, he had walked with God sufficiently long to be convinced that God was true to His Word. He believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead after he had obediently offered him up for a burnt offering, because God had said that all of His promises and covenants with Abraham would be fulfilled through Isaac (Hebrews 11:17-19).

But God did not require Abraham to experience the agony of seeing Isaac dead. *Abraham, Abraham, God's angel called out, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thine son, thine only son from me* (Genesis 22:11-12). Abraham then lifted up his eyes and saw a ram caught by his horns in a nearby thicket. Sensing provision by God, he took the ram and offered it for a burnt offering instead of Isaac.

God's angel spoke to Abraham a second time. *By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice* (vss. 16-18).

This article will attempt to show how the utilization of rams in the Law exposes the precious pearl of grace that was incorporated into God's oath to Abraham. In the Law, rams were among the prescribed animals for burnt offerings, peace offerings, and trespass offerings. Let's consider their role in each of these offerings:

Burnt Offerings – Burnt offerings were described as *a sweet savour to the LORD* (Leviticus 1:13). The entire animal was burned upon the altar after its blood had been poured out. Although burnt offerings offered by individuals could be bullocks, sheep, goats, turtledoves, or young pigeons (Leviticus 1), specific animals were prescribed for offerings for the nation. The burnt offerings each morning and evening, including Sabbath days, had to be lambs. However, the prescribed burnt offerings on Israel's many holy days (Numbers 28, 29) were a combination of bullocks, rams, and lambs. The rams were generally the fewest of the three animals offered, but it was the rams that were described as the "incense" of the burnt offerings (Psalm 66:15). Also, a ram was the prescribed burnt offering for the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests of Israel (Exodus 29:18). A bullock, often used for burnt offerings, was the prescribed sin offering on that occasion (Exodus 29:14).

Trespass (or Guilt) Offerings – Trespass offerings sound similar to sin offerings, but they were different from sin offerings in at least three ways:

God's provision of a ram for Abraham to offer as a burnt offering was a sign of His commitment to call sinful men to Him through His gracious provision for making that return possible.

1. A ram was almost always the prescribed animal for a trespass offering. The only exceptions were that a lamb was the prescribed animal for a trespass offering for a leper that was cleansed (Leviticus 14:12), as well as for a Nazarite whose vow had been involuntarily terminated by contact with a dead person (Numbers 6:11-12).
2. Sin offerings were generally for offenses done in ignorance. Trespass offerings were generally for offenses that were known, although they were also prescribed for offenses done in ignorance against the LORD's holy things. Trespass offerings were prescribed for the following known offenses:
 - Lying unto a neighbor about something which had been given him to temporarily keep
 - Fellowship (pledge)
 - Taking something away from someone by violence
 - Deceiving a neighbor
 - Finding something that was lost, and lying about it (Leviticus 6:1-6)
3. In these situations, a person had to make restitution of 20% more than the estimated value of the offense (Leviticus 5:15; 6:5).

Peace Offerings – Rams were prescribed as peace offerings for Aaron and his sons on the eighth day, after their seven-day consecration had been completed. Peace offerings, like burnt offerings, were described as *a sweet savor unto the LORD* (Leviticus 3:5). However, peace offerings were offered in a very different manner than burnt offerings. After the animal was killed, some of the blood was sprinkled round about the altar, and the rest of the blood was poured



out. Only the fat, the kidneys, and the caul above the liver were burned on the altar. The priest that offered the offering was to eat the flesh of the animal. Peace offerings could be thanksgiving offerings, vow offerings, or voluntary offerings.

The Coverings of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle had four coverings (Exodus 26:1-14). The innermost covering of the tabernacle was fine twined linen. On top of this lay a covering of curtains of goats' hair, then a covering of curtains of ram skins dyed red. The outermost covering was curtains of another kind of animal skins (badgers' skins – KJV; porpoise skins – NASV). It is noteworthy that the curtains of rams' skins had the symbolic red color of sacrifice.

Return Unto Me

“Return unto me” is the call of a concerned Father to his straying children. The first expression of this call was “Where art thou?” to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This was the message of all of God’s prophets to Israel and Judah. *If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove. And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory* (Jeremiah 4:1-2).

Through the preaching of the Gospel, God graciously called the Jews to return to Him even after they had crucified Jesus. Through the same means, He also called the Gentiles, who *sought me not* (Isaiah 65:1). This brings us back to Genesis 22, in that the call of “return unto me” is an integral part of the blessing promised to all the nations of the earth because of Abraham’s obedience in his willingness to offer his beloved son Isaac; God having provided a ram in his place: *in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice* (Genesis 22:18). The translation of the Holy Scriptures into almost every language in the world is evidence of the breadth of God’s call to “Return unto me.”

The Memorial Feast

God’s call to “Return unto me” is present in the preaching of the Gospel and the translation of the Holy Scriptures into many languages. The Memorial Feast also contains the call. The apostle Paul wrote, *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup* (1 Corinthians 11:28). Paul received this wise instruction from Christ, i.e., *for I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you* (1 Corinthians 11:23), who knew what is in man (John 2:25). Partaking of the Memorial Feast is in part a call to return to God from the ways that our self-examination reveals our having strayed from Him.

Summary and Conclusion

God’s provision of a ram for Abraham to offer as a burnt offering was a sign of His commitment to call sinful men to Him through His gracious provision

for making that return possible. In the Law, rams were utilized for burnt offerings, trespass offerings, and peace offerings. Burnt offerings represented the unblemished life necessary for Christ's sacrificial death to provide atonement for the sins of men without compromising God's righteousness. Trespass offerings represented atonement through Christ's sacrificial death for offenses deliberately committed. Peace offerings represented peace and fellowship with God that will occur after the "holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5, 9) is consecrated, by virtue of Christ's sacrificial death. The numerous ways that God has called to men throughout the ages to "return to me" confirms the truth of Peter's inspired statement, *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* (2 Peter 3:9).

Randy Morrissette, Richmond, Virginia

FROM OUR PAST

October 1919, The Christadelphian Advocate and Fellow-Laborer,
Vol. 35 – No. 10

Faith Shown by Works

James 2:1-26

Faith without works is dead. This fact is emphasized very strongly in the second chapter of James. James puts his chief stress on works and not on faith. He attempts to show the proper relation of the two, on account of those who emphasize faith to the detriment of both.

The first thirteen verses of the chapter seem to be introductory to the subject of faith and works. In them are shown certain tendencies in the ecclesia to fail regarding the proper attitude. He speaks of respect of persons: of favoring the rich and despising the poor. He says that this is the wrong attitude, in that God chose those that are poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He promised to those that love him. They dishonored the poor and elevated the rich who oppress them by dragging them before judgment seats. If one loves his neighbor as himself, he does well, but if he has respect of persons, he has committed sin and broken the whole law. James finishes this introductory part of the chapter by saying *so, speak ye and do so, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy; that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment* (vss. 12-13).

In verses 14-20, we find portrayed the condition of faith dwelling alone, or faith without works. It is a case either of faith and works not yet added

Faith is more than mere credulity. It is more than mere believing in that which has been told. It is belief founded upon absolute knowledge. When belief is backed up by knowledge it emanates in works.

or else divorced. In verse 14, the apostle asks if faith alone can save one, and his answer is in the negative. He is sure that faith alone is not sufficient. He refers to destitute brothers and sisters and asks if faith will fill their stomachs or cover their nakedness. Anyone could see this point. It took more than the mere saying: *depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled* (vs. 16) to satisfy the bodily wants. James criticizes his readers at this point. He says, *notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body*. Do we find this condition among the professors of Christianity today? I would think so; selfishness has not been eliminated from the world in the centuries since James wrote... The outgrowth of selfishness is the lack of works; in other

words, selfishness causes us to neglect the welfare of not only our neighbor, but those who have a closer claim to our sympathy.

When our actions are prompted by selfishness instead of love, we fail to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to love one another. So many Christians are false to their profession, living a life of faith divorced from works. This condition of faith, dwelling alone and separated from works, is clearly set forth in verse 17. The apostle says: *faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*. Without the doing of works, faith has no real existence.

James further says that faith is not only dependent upon works for existence, but that faith is shown by works: shown by that upon which it depends. Faith is more than mere credulity. It is more than mere believing in that which has been told. It is belief founded upon absolute knowledge. When belief is backed up by knowledge it emanates in works. One will certainly obey the command of him whom he knows to be infallible. Faith in Christ leads to the doing of his commands: the doing of works. Thus one can readily see why works is an indication of faith. In this regard the apostle uses the illustration of two men, one having faith and the other having works. The one with works says to the other: *Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works* (2:18). It is indicated that the one's faith would be self-evident on account of the works, while that of the other would be a doubtful quantity.

Regarding faith dwelling alone, he says: *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble* (vs. 19). These demoniacs, or sick people supposed to be possessed with demons, believed as strongly in the one God as did the ones who believed themselves to be in their right mind, and yet this belief in itself did not save them, or make them fit for the Kingdom of God. They shuddered in the presence of God's Son, but when they had been restored to physical and mental health, we see how their belief was turned to works. They believed in Christ as the Son of God and the Anointed of Israel, and they proclaimed their belief near and far.

In each line of argument, James seems to be leading up to one thought – the impossibility of faith apart from works. So again, he sums the matter

up by saying: *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* (vs. 20) Let us assume that we have a tree called the Tree of Faith; the fruit of that tree is the fruit of faith, i.e., works. When there are no works, the Tree of Faith becomes barren. The apostle plainly says that faith without works is dead. So far, the Apostle James has been writing regarding faith without works, but in verse 21 he introduces a different idea – faith and works united. Heretofore, the two have been separate, but now they are wedded: one and inseparable. **To emphasize the idea of faith augmented by works, he introduces two Old Testament characters as illustration:**

He speaks first of Abraham as one whose life-walk exemplified the ideal he wished to show. Abraham was justified by works, in the offering of Isaac, *And Abraham believed God,*

and it was imputed unto him for righteousness... We all know the circumstances, how God commanded Abraham to take his son Isaac, the son of his old age through whom the promised inheritance was to come, and offer him as a burnt offering to his Creator. He did not hesitate to obey the command, but with implicit faith in God, set out to do as he had been commanded. God did not permit the offering to culminate, but Abraham's faith was put to a thorough test before God stopped him. He was in the very act of offering his son and as far as his intention was concerned, he had as good as killed him. In this way God proved the great faith of Abraham, proven by works alone. Abraham's faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect. In Hebrews 11:17-18, we are shown how Abraham expected the promise to be fulfilled. *By faith Abraham, when he*

We humans are just only when justice is imputed to us; Abraham's righteousness was counted to him as an outcome of works. It takes a combination of faith and works in order that we may be justified.

was tried, offered up Isaac: Yea, he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God is able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. This great belief in God, we are told, was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was given the title, "Friend of God."

At this place the apostle again sums up the subject by these words: *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only* (James 2:24). We humans are just only when justice is imputed to us; Abraham's righteousness was counted to him as an outcome of works. It takes a combination of faith and works in order that we may be justified.

The character of the harlot Rahab is likewise brought before us as an example of faith combined with works. James says, *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?* (2:25). Joshua sent spies to Jericho and they stopped at the house of Rahab. When they were demanded, she did not follow the easy course and turn them over to their enemies. Instead, recognizing the true standing of Israel's God, she concealed them, until the pursuers had gone and then let them down the wall in a basket. She had faith in Yahweh, and that faith caused her works.

Here the apostle has reached the end of his discussion and in closing he summarizes, *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also* (vs. 26). That is, as the body with no sustaining breath is a dead thing, so faith without works to sustain it is dead also.

Have we faith? If so, our works must be in evidence. Have we works? If so, they are the things which reflect our faith. Faith and works are inseparable and cannot truly live apart; they go hand in hand. Shame to him who says he has faith and yet does nothing to show forth that faith in God. His words are but a mockery. John, in his first epistle, does not mince words when he says, *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar* (1 John 2:4). What he says of the man who claims love for God, and yet does not obey him, could just as applicably be said of him who claims faith without works.

Let him who claims faith remember that he who would be a follower of the Nazarene must be a servant of his fellows. We were redeemed from the wages of sin that we might not only love God with all our strength, but our neighbor even as ourselves. God requires works of love to show our faith in Him. Christ, when on earth, commanded us to love one another. If we do works of love toward all mankind in general, and to each other as brethren, we will not fall short in showing forth our faith.

Charles W. Howe

CURRENT EVENTS**In Times of Fear and Despair...**

...it is worth taking a moment to get our bearing. In Exodus 16:1-3, we note it was but a month after Moses, Miriam, and all of Israel sang and celebrated their deliverance from the Egyptians. Having safely crossed the Red Sea, the congregation found itself in the Wilderness of Sin between Elim and Sinai. Food rations had dwindled, and the people believed they were beginning to starve. Grumbling began among the people: more than grumbling – a loss of faith. The accusation went out that Moses *brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

God's response to Moses was that their deprivation was part of a larger test to prove and teach them to trust in and follow His commandments (by no means did God lead the people into the wilderness to starve). God had revealed His plans to call a people for His name since Abrahamic times (Genesis 15:13-14), and through Moses, God had told the elders of Israel that He was going to take His people to a *land flowing with milk and honey* (Exodus 3:17). Up to this point, Israel had followed God's instructions, preserving them from the fate of their neighbors in Egypt, but now the congregation itself was under duress. To whom would they turn? Had they not sung:

*The Lord is my strength and my defense
he has become my salvation.*

*He is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

*The Lord is a warrior;
the Lord is his name (Exodus 15:2-3 NIV).*

Now was time to put the principle into practice. God informed Moses that He would provide *bread from heaven* (Exodus 16:4), and Moses informed the people, saying, *At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt* (Exodus 16:6). It was important not only that the people knew that they would be cared for, but that there was a plan in place by their Deliverer. However, even after the provision of manna and quail in the desert, it was necessary that reminders of God's deliverance continue: *They shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God* (Exodus 29:46). This assurance and call to be faithful was repeated again and again through such passages as Exodus 20:2; Leviticus 11:45; 19:36; 22:33; 25:38; 25:42; and 26:13; each time reminding Israel to remember their obligation to God their Deliverer.

Why is God's deliverance of Israel so important for us to remember?

The answer lies in God's declaration to His people Israel, *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage* (Exodus 20:2). God offers freedom and life. He cares deeply for those who serve Him, and even our corruption and weakness in all of its forms is no match for His love and His mighty hand.

Let us therefore take stock in our circumstances! Are we dismayed or frightened by the pestilence and other prophetic signs consuming the world's attention? Are we fearful for our safety, our health, our daily needs? Has our fear given way to agitation, despair, loss of faith? None of what we are witnessing and experiencing should be a surprise, for have we not been watching for just these very signs as the assurance that our salvation is near? In our mortal state, health and comfort is temporary, all treasures are eventually reclaimed, all injustices are the way of the world which we are in but not of.

We must remember that while we abide in frightening and perilous times, we need not focus on that which we have to fear, but rather on that for which we live in hope. Yahweh is powerful and reliable: One who knows and has both pity and love for His children. God knows those that are His, He knows our needs, and He will perform that which He has promised to those that love him. Remember, God gave His only begotten Son to redeem all of His sons and daughters and to restore the world in righteousness.

In our frail mortal state we will not always be comfortable, but we should always remember that which Moses reminded the children of Israel in Exodus 16, that God is our salvation, and that in times of trouble we are to turn to and lay our cares and fears on Him. We must be careful to allow God His place and voice in our lives through the daily reading of Scripture, and through prayer and petition for wisdom and guidance when we are tried and uncertain. We must also be careful to conduct ourselves as His faithful children and not slaves to sin, digging deep within ourselves to do what we can for others within and without the brotherhood as our redemption draws near, *exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching* (Hebrews 10:25).

Andrew Johnson, Roselle, IL

Announcement: In response to the current COVID-19 crisis, the *Advocate* has begun offering short articles and related resources beginning with the April Newsletter, addressing the impact of social distancing, restrictions, fear, and the isolation that many may be experiencing. Providing these through the newsletters as well as on the *Advocate* website will be more timely than that appearing in the *Advocate* due to printing and mailing schedules.

ECCLESIAL NEWS

ST. LOUIS, MO / NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR – Our ecclesias are pleased to announce that Brother Tanner Hawkins and Sister Katie Bennett were married on March 7, 2020 in the North Little Rock, AR ecclesial hall, in the presence of their respective families and ecclesial members / friends from both the St. Louis and the North Little Rock Ecclesias. The celebration continued with a reception in the hall after the ceremony. The couple will reside in St. Peters, MO and attend the St. Louis Ecclesia. We ask Yahweh’s grace and blessing on the newlyweds as they begin their married life together in the Lord.

Sharon Washeck

AS THE DAY APPROACHES

Hitherto, with few intervals, the children of Israel have been a “prey and a spoil to all their enemies” ... for the last nineteen centuries, they have been “a nation scattered and peeled ... a nation meted out and trodden down” ... the Gentile lions have been permitted for hundreds of years to play sad havoc with “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” ... but when “the good shepherd” assumes charge over them... they will be permitted to assist in punishing the nations for so grievously afflicting Yahweh’s chosen people. (John James Andrew, The Real Christ, Part III – “Jesus Christ as King,” (p. 187)

Israel Foiled 560 “Significant” Terror Attacks in 2019: Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security agency, reported that it thwarted over 560 “significant” terror plots, including suicide attacks, in the past year. Shin Bet Director Nadav Argaman said the attacks were aimed against Israeli civilians and infrastructure. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu added, “Everyone wants cooperation with Israeli intelligence. We are in a time of unprecedented political, economic, operational and military prosperity.”

Bridges for Peace, January 24, 2020

COMMENT: Shin Bet is one of three principal organizations within the Israeli intelligence community: along with Aman (military intelligence) and the Mossad (foreign intelligence service). Since its inception, the reality of life in Israel has forced Israelis to defend themselves against constant terrorist threats. As a result, the Jewish state has become a leader in techniques and technologies in homeland security and counter-terrorism.

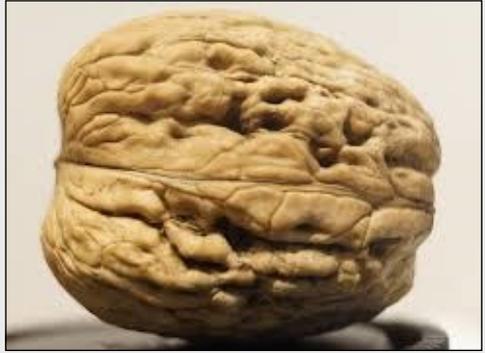


Walnuts: Intelligent Design in a Nutshell – Literally

Evolution News @ Discovery CSC, September 19, 2019

A paper in Advanced Science is both nutty and not nutty at the same time: nutty, because it concerns walnuts; not nutty, because there is nothing silly or unintelligent about the way walnut shells are designed.

“The outer protective shells of nuts can have remarkable toughness and strength.” Considering that walnuts are widespread and commercially important, they decided to look at the nuts in detail. They found a unique architecture in the shell called “interlocked packing” that resembles a 3-D puzzle.



The outer protective shells of nuts can have remarkable toughness and strength, which are typically achieved by a layered arrangement of sclerenchyma cells and fibers with a polygonal form. **Here, the tissue structure of walnut shells is analyzed in depth, revealing that the shells consist of a single, never reported cell type: the polylobate sclereid cells. These irregularly lobed cells with concave and convex parts are on average interlocked with 14 neighboring cells. The result is an intricate arrangement that cannot be disassembled when conceived as a 3D puzzle.**

This architecture yields a strong, lightweight material of interest to engineers. Mechanical testing reveals a **significantly higher ultimate**



tensile strength of the interlocked walnut cell tissue compared to the sclerenchyma tissue of a pine seed coat lacking the lobed cell structure. The **higher strength value** of the walnut shell is explained by the observation **that the crack cannot simply detach intact cells but has to cut through the lobes due to**

the interlocking. Understanding the identified nutshell structure and its development will **inspire biomimetic material design and packaging concepts.**