

February 9, 1993

Dear Glynn,

Concerning our recent (Feb. 6, '93) conversation about the creation of mankind, please note the following:

In Gen. 1:26-28 God says that they (WE) created mankind, both male and female, in their own image. I believe "IMAGE" here indicates that the creatures had only a "POTENTIAL" to be like God, i.e., have an eternal spirit like God and therefore eternal. These creatures were created by God in the sixth day (period) of the creation process and could reproduce their kind. (They were told to multiply.) God's "LIKENESS" (did not become a fact for a man until after the sixth day was finished (1:31). God's process of making a creature (animal) eligible to receive his Spirit was from the earth (dust) just as were the lower animals (2:7,19). On the first Sabbath (the seventh day or period), God miraculously breathed his eternal Spirit into a male of the POTENTIAL eternal human being and made him, in fact, an eternal being like God himself (eternal spiritually 2:7). ** After the female, Eve, was created from Adam, permission was given by God for Adam and Eve to disobey Himself. Such disobedience automatically separated man from God spiritually, but did not cause physical death immediately. Satan knew this and used his knowledge to trick Eve into disobeying God regarding the eating of a certain fruit which God had forbidden. Eve told Adam what Satan had told her, and they both disobeyed God, 3:1-7. How Satan knew the difference between physical and spiritual death we are not told, but he lied to Eve. Eve believed Satan and Adam believed Eve. Satan is a liar personified, Matt. 4:1-11; John 8:41-47. After the Fall of Mankind, humans had to be reborn, John 3:3-8. During the Old Covenant spiritual rebirth was a special act of God, e.g., Noah, Gen. 6:5-9, and David, I Sam. 16:11-13.

** When it was demonstrated that the eternally-spirited Adam was not satisfied without a companion in his (God's) likeness also, God performed another creative act which is mysterious to me. The evidence from the Word (2:18-24) is that it was not possible, or God simply chose otherwise, to make a companion for the man who also had the eternal nature (soul, spirit), without involving the man in the process. Why did our God not do with a female the same act he did with the male, i.e., simply breathe his Holy Spirit into her being to make her eternal spiritually? This mystery is mentioned by Paul in Eph. 5:22-25, 32-33 - relate to Gen. 2:21-25. Was it possible for a man in his physical nature to mate and procreate a being without the eternal nature? Is that what was happening in Gen. 6:1-7 and why God insisted when he gave the Law (legal instructions) later, that bestiality not be practiced (Lev. 18:23)? Consider also in this regard, Gen. 3:15 and Isa. 7:14 and Matt. 1:18-25.

Fraternally (twice brothers),

Wendell

TERAH (from Ur to Mesopotamia)

| | | | | |
|-------|---------|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| SARAH | ABRAHAM | Hagar | NAHOR | HARAN (died in Ur) |
| | | Ishmael | | MILCAH (daughter) |
| | | Twelve Sons (Arabians) | BETHUEL | |
| ISAAC | | REBEKAH | | LABAN |
| | twins | ESAU | | LEAH |
| | | JACOB | | RACHEL |

(BY RACHEL)

JOSEPH

BENJAMIN

+

TEN OTHER SONS

PARTIAL GENEALOGY OF TERAH, FATHER OF ABRAHAM (Above)

MUHAMMAD AND ISHMAEL

Islam is a religion founded by Muhammad in the 600's AD. He was an Arab (therefore a son of Ishmael) born in Mecca about 570 AD. He taught a strong monotheism referring to God as Allah and asserting that he, Muhammad, was his messenger. Those who accept Muhammad and his teachings are called Muslims which is Arabic for "one who submits" (to God). Islam means in Arabic "submission." Muhammad died in 632 AD after having proclaimed his message for 22 years. The Muslim's holy book giving Muhammad's teachings is called the Koran which is the Arabic word meaning "recitation." Muslims consider the Koran to be the words of Allah himself, spoken to Muhammad by an angel. The Koran contains stories from both the Christian Old Testament and the New, including information about Jesus Christ whom it refers to as the Word of God and a prophet like the Old Testament prophets. Both Jesus and the Old Testament prophets were predecessors of Muhammad who was Allah's (God's) last prophet. There are today about 924,611,500 (1991) Muslims on earth. Their sacred places are Mecca (birthplace), Medina (burial place), and Jerusalem (from where he ascended to Heaven). That arrangement is also the order of importance for them. All must visit Mecca if at all possible during their life time. Probably their ethical teaching which contrasts most with Christianity is their belief in "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." They eat no pork nor drink alcohol if they follow the teachings of their Koran.

CHURCH PROVISIONS FOR SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

NOW TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE TO ATTEND CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY, WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A SPECIAL "NO EXCUSE SUNDAY!" COTS WILL BE PLACED IN THE FOYER FOR THOSE WHO SAY, "SUNDAY IS MY ONLY DAY TO SLEEP." WE WILL HAVE STEEL HELMETS FOR THOSE WHO SAY, "THE ROOF WILL CAVE IN IF I EVER GO TO CHURCH." BLANKETS WILL BE FURNISHED FOR THOSE WHO THINK THE CHURCH IS TOO COLD AND FANS FOR THOSE WHO THINK IT IS TOO HOT. WE WILL HAVE HEARING AIDS FOR THOSE WHO THINK THE MINISTER TALKS TOO SOFTLY AND COTTON FOR THOSE WHO THINK HE TALKS TOO LOUDLY. SCORECARDS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO LIST ALL THE HYPOCRITES PRESENT. SOME RELATIVES WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO VISIT ON SUNDAY. THERE WILL BE TV DINNERS FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT GO TO CHURCH AND COOK ALSO. ONE SECTION WILL BE DEVOTED TO TREES AND GRASS FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO SEE GOD IN NATURE. FINALLY, THE SANCTUARY WILL BE DECORATED WITH BOTH CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS AND EASTER LILIES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER SEEN THE CHURCH WITHOUT THEM.

ALTHOUGH THIS IS COPIED FROM THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, SEE HEBREWS 10:25.

REMARKS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUP

2-3-02

How many of you complete the Cryptoquip in Sunday's Democrat? I do. Last Sunday's was good, and I quote: "Medicine is mentioned as far back as the Bible, where Moses himself took two tablets."

On December 15, 1942 on a Pan American airliner headed for the first leg to Pandaveswar, India, I left with a nine-member B-24 Air Corps bomber crew to do combat missions over Burma. We landed in the Caribbean; Belem, Brazil; the Ascension Island; Accra in what is now Ghana, and in Khartoum in what is now Sudan. On Christmas Eve night we stopped over in Aden in what is now Democratic Yemen, and there our crew had an experience which I have remembered as the most awesome on our flight to India. Yemen is on the Gulf of Aden off the Indian Ocean. We were told that the beach there was one of the most beautiful in the world, and we had landed nearby. We made arrangements to take jeeps to visit the beach. The arrangements included the necessity of having two jeeps (eight men) to escort us through the local citizens who could provide harm for Americans. The escorts were my first and only association with persons of the Muslim faith. I will never forget the sinister appearance of those eight Muslims with full facial beards, long hair, dark complexions, black eyes, and very serious attitudes. We had caliber 45 side arms, and they were armed with knives of various sizes and shapes, very impressive! The evening was pleasant otherwise, with a beautiful moon which had been full on the 22 nd of that December, 1942. My brag to the group was that Destin and Fort Walton beaches were much nicer!

After September 11, 2001 my thoughts went back to that event and, further, I realized how little I really knew about Islam doctrine. In an attempt to correct the deficiency to some degree, I went to Books-A-Million to purchase a copy of the Koran. They were out and noted that people were having to wait for back-orders to arrive. About four weeks later I purchased a copy and have had it for several weeks. My chief concern is how does our Lord Jesus relate to the Islam faith? I beg the pardon of the members of the Couples Class who have heard selected passages from the Koran from me already.

Muhammad: b. 570 AD; Allah called him 610 AD; Some military battles fought by: 624 AD, Badr; 625 AD, Ohod; 627 AD, Medina; 630 AD, Mecca; d. 6-8-632 AD. AD30 AD.
Koran quotes: PP. 12, 13, 14, 17, 102, 103, 104.
Dawood, N. J.; Trans. with notes and parallel Arabic text.

Wendell Alford, Teacher
The Couples Class

Halley r. 769

Antiochus IV., Epiphanes (the Madman) The son of the preceding, who had been sent as a hostage to Rome. In B.C. 175 he seized the Syrian throne, and began a series of conquests which bade fair to rival his father's. While in Egypt, however, he was ordered by the Romans to leave that country, and thus found himself forced to limit his energies to Syria. In the course of his conflict with Egypt he had become suspicious of Judea, to force that country into complete subjection to his will. His motives were probably more political than religious, but as a part of his programme he undertook to compel the Jews to worship heathen gods as well as, if not in place of, Jehovah. His plans were first put into active operation probably towards the end of B.C. 170, when he returned from Egypt, although the chronology at this point is very obscure and it may have been a couple of years later. He plundered the Temple of some of its treasures, including the seven-branch candlestick, the altar of incense, and table of shewbread. He also placed a garrison in the citadel of Jerusalem, and set about the complete Hellenizing of Judaea. Circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath were forbidden under penalty of death. Pagan sacrifices were ordered in every town in Judaea, and every month a search was made to discover whether a Jew possessed a copy of the Law or had circumcised his children. In December 168 B.C. a pagan altar, probably to Olympian Zeus, was erected on the altar of burnt-offering, and the entire Jewish worship seemed threatened with extinction. This probability was increased by the apostasy of the high priest.

[Last paragraph relates Antiochus IV's actions defeated by the House of Mattathias, and the death of Antiochus IV's in B.C. 164 by the Parthians.]

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Aug. 24, 2005

Dear Couples Class,

When the Explore the Bible Adult Learner Guide came to students in May, 2005, I was especially interested in the author's studies of Ezekial and Daniel. I recalled our consideration of Daniel in the Couples Class at First Church during the 1990s. However, after carefully searching our files I could not locate the picture of Nebuchadnezzar's statue representing world history from his day until the end time by the feet of iron mixed with clay.

I took the "rubber finger" searcher and went through every lesson outline in the our massive file (boxes full). Nowhere could the likeness of Nebuchadnezzar's statue be found. As a former teacher of your class my source of information was to turn to the position most likely to solve the problem, the Class President as Pete had been before him. Sure enough, shortly after calling Harvey on 8-9-05, he called back to say that he had a copy in hand and would have three copies available on 8-24-05. I am most grateful.

When Adileen and I were preparing to move to Birmingham, we were in a "tizzy" for about two or three weeks, selling the home place, collecting medical records, moving the household goods, and getting them installed in the new place "up north". Lastly, but not least, was saying farewell to the Couples Class which was the saddest portion of our leaving Tallahassee. The "going away" social at Garland and Dot's was very precious for us.

In looking again through the medical records I found something that sickened our spirits and indicated our desperate need to apologize for an error I had made: a beautiful "Good Bye" card with your signatures expressing your love for Adileen and me - UNOPENED! We felt faint and disparate to apologize for our error. We hope and trust that you loved ones will accept our humble apologies and thanks, even though we acted like the Octogenaians we are.

With our love and apologies,

Wendell Adileen

Wendell and Adileen Alford

Mailed
To Frank Buhler
2-22-96

Friday, April 5, 1996

John 19:1-16 "We Have No King But Caesar"

This year we elect a Chief Executive Officer (President) of our nation. That privilege God has granted us as a nation, a democracy. How seriously we should take this God-given responsibility! The voice of the people (vox populi) has ever given a direction to mankind's activities. That direction was never more significant than on the occasion when Jesus' physical life was endangered by the Jewish leadership who were appealing to the Roman authority to dispatch Jesus from their presence through death. Pilate had the Roman authority to have our Lord crucified, but Pilate was convinced that Jesus was not legally worthy of death. The gathered crowd watched as the Roman soldiers mockingly dressed Jesus as a "king" with a crown of thorns and a purple robe and said, "Hail, king of the Jews." Pilate announced publicly that he found no fault in Jesus. However, the chief priests whetted the people into a frenzied mob by crying out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" The priests threatened Pilate as a traitor if Jesus were released. The crowd yelled, "Away with him," and the chief priests echoed, "We have no king but Caesar!"

* to Caesar
↑
in final
sent copy

In this nation we elect presidents, but for eternity we must elect Jesus as our Savior and King if we would choose eternal life with the Heavenly Father.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to follow your Holy Spirit's encouragement to make Jesus Christ our personal Savior and Director of our every choice in life.

WA
Wendell Alford,
Teacher, Couples Class
First Baptist Church; Tallahassee, Florida

Sep. 30, 2001

Christian Tithing

Couples Class
Wendell Alford,
Teacher

In the New Testament neither Jesus our Savior and Lord, nor one of his apostles commanded any believer in Jesus to tithe as a basis for supporting the activities of members of the Ecclesia, called out ones by God's Holy Spirit to be the Bride of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament Law, tithing was the method instituted by God to support the priesthood and religious activities of Israel, Gen. 14:20; Lk 11:37-44; 18:9-14; Heb. 7:5-9. In the two Luke passages Jesus mentioned tithing in a negative way. The Jewish leaders were to have, in good faith, supported the spirit of God's Law in tithing their wealth. However, Jesus presented their tithing as a sham and for public view only. They purported to demonstrate what the widow's mite did in truth.

The writer of Hebrews (God's Word) gives an Old Covenant prospective, context, and purpose for the institution of Old Testament tithing. In that discussion Jesus becomes the High Priest to receive the monetary expression of believers' love for our Lord. Note in Paul's letter at 16:1-4 to the Corinthian believers, God's Word states that the collections, both in Galatia and there in Corinth, for Jerusalem believers, were to be proportionate to "as God had prospered them," "on the Lord's Day," and was to include "every one of you." At this point tithing would have been a very appropriate place in God's written Word to introduce tithing as a proper, proportionate factor. Giving out of a true love of the Lord for his grace and forgiveness would have been a tithe for some, more or less for others, for, as the widow's mite demonstrates, what is left after giving is more important to the Lord than what is given. A tithe of a millionaire leaves the tither in much better financial condition than the tithe of a believer with a twenty-five thousand dollar income.

A believer's financial support of the work of the Ecclesia today is, in my opinion, better related by the sentiments in the attached pamphlet than proposing legal tithing as a way "God has prospered a believer."

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9-30-01

must be lived in gratitude and response to God's sacrificial gift for our salvation. In matters of financial responsibility this will mean that we will use all of our resources in the manner of a faithful steward, be diligent about giving worshipfully, with a growing commitment to Christ.



ISBN 0-7673-2402-1

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127 Ninth Avenue, North
Nashville, Tennessee 37234-0182
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WHAT IS

Sacrificial Giving?

9-30-01

WHAT IS *Sacrificial Giving?*

Any definition of sacrificial giving must begin by looking at the acts of God, not those of humans. Sacrifice appears regularly throughout the Old Testament.

Sacrifice is God's provision for forgiving the wrongs in His creation due to destructive human actions. God's supreme act of sacrificial giving is seen in the cross of Jesus Christ, God's Son. The Old Testament concept of sacrifice is connected with the slaying of an animal thus releasing its life's blood as a kind of covering for human sin. The Book of Hebrews and the writings of Paul most especially use these ideas of sacrifice to interpret the death of Christ for all the world.

When we speak of people giving sacrificially, we ordinarily assume that it is the giving of a gift (usually money) of such proportion that the give is hard pressed and suffers because of making the gift. It is unfortunate when we associate such gifts as involving large sums of money or property. The primary sacrificial gift of a person, as singled out in Jesus' teaching, is the "widows mite" (Mark 12:42, Luke 21:2). The secret of sacrificial giving is the motive, not the amount. Sacrificial giving is an attitude that opens all of life to

God and makes even life itself available to God, the giver of life. Without the necessary attitude of redemptive love sacrificial giving to God is not acceptable (Psalm 40:6; 51:17). The classic expression of the requirement that a right attitude must precede an acceptable gift is Hosea 6:6, "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." What God requires God gives. John 3:16 assures us that God's supreme sacrificial gift is based on God's love. Granted we humans cannot match God's sacrificial love, but we can respond to it and be imitators of it through His grace.

If sacrificial giving is an attitude of complete openness of our lives to God, then a sacrificial gift can be made by the way we spend our lives. Paul put it best: "I beseech you therefore brethren (believers) by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Paul also understood that his own ministry on behalf of others could be seen as a sacrifice (Phil. 2:17). Perhaps only those whose lives are given fully to God should speak of sacrificial giving. Certainly it can be said of Christian martyrs, ancient and modern, that they gave sacrificially. To those who have literally given their lives for the sake of their Christian faith we can only stand in awe and confirm that this sacrificial giving most clearly resembles that of God's own sacrificial giving.

Opportunities for sacrificial giving may arise when local congregations undertake visionary tasks or when institutions face special moments of opportunity or crisis.

Where does all of this over-and-above-sacrifice leave the ordinary life? The answer is: All our lives

REGARDING THE BIBLE AND SUICIDE:

In searching the Scriptures relating to taking ones own physical life, I find no direct admonition concerning suicide, per se. Obvious to recrimination against a person who so conducts himself or herself is the fact that such recrimination has to be meted in the post-physical existance. (The word suicide does not appear in our Bible.) All Scriptural references to a person desiring to end ones own physical life are in negative contexts. Therefore, I believe that certainly the Scripture gives no encouragement to anyone who feels so inclined. The human mind and emotional disposition can become irrational through different means. The whole range of possibilities is fathomable by God alone, I believe. The Bible is clear that final judgement for anyone, no matter the circumstances surrounding their physical demise, is the exclusive prerogative of Jesus, God's Son, Matt. 7:1; 28:18; John 5:22-30; II Tim. 4:1; I Pet. 4:5. The only sin that is unpardonable is to refuse to accept Jesus as personal Savior when God's Holy Spirit encourages one to do so. The Pharisees did so turn down the Holy Spirit's leading in Matt. 12:22-37; Mk 3:22,28-30 (said here of the scribes also), Lk 12:1-10 (here public confession of Jesus as the Christ [Savior] is contrasted with Jesus' divine nature, i.e., Jesus is human and divine). Jesus at Lk 23:34 asked God the Father to forgive those who were performing the mechanics of the crucifixion process, because they did not understand the significance of their actions. The scribes and pharisees in the incident noted above at Matt. 12, Mk 3, and Lk 12 accused Jesus of representing Beelzebub, a heathen god, in casting out demons (healing the mentally ill, blind, and deaf). This sin, accusing Jesus of being an idol collaborator, is unpardonable, because they were denying that Jesus is God, John 10:28-31.

Now, is terminating ones own physical life an unpardonable sin? It obviously does not involve accusing Jesus of being in league with Satan (Beelzebub). It does indicate that the individual who desires physical death rather than to continue in a fleshly state to be mentally and/or emotionally severely disturbed (incompetent), even as a child is maturely incompetent (innocent). The cause of such disturbance can have a myriad of bases. The God who knows the number of hairs on every person's head at every moment during everyone of their lives is the only one who can know the disposition and motivation of every suicidally disposed person. The Lord who went through the awesome misery of becoming burdened with every human who had lived, who was alive at the time he was sacrificed, and who will ever live is Love. I have no fear that he will exercise everlasting mercy on every person who did, is, and will terminate his or her own physical life. To the one who claims that at least such a person's final act is/was murder, I say that Moses was a murderer, and he appeared with Elias in Jesus' transfigured presence as alive and talking with Jesus, Peter, James, and John. David was a murderer. Were Moses and David forgiven? Yes, according to the Scriptural evidence.

At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (service), he was tempted to take his own life at Matt. 4:5-6 and Lk 4:9-11. He did not yield to the temptation by simply stating (from God's Word) that for him such an act would contradict God's will for him. But Jesus did not at that time or ever once grieve God's Holy Spirit, and following God's leadership completely is what made him perfect (complete, whole). However, not one other person has ever been completely yielded to God as Jesus, and that factor is what makes him the only Savior of the world. Every other human has grieved God's Spirit including those who have taken their own physical lives,

but can we say that, if they were God's children before such an act were committed, such an act severs their relationship with a just, holy, and loving Heavenly Father? (See Eph. 4:30.) Are not those committed to God through Jesus Christ not sealed forever? Yes, I believe they are, including those who take their own physical lives, John 10:28-30. Again, let me stress that there is no Scriptural encouragement to take one's own life. Saul, Israel's first king, took his own life according to I Sam. 31:4, and Acts 1:18 can be interpreted to indicate that Judas Iscariot committed suicide. The Bible at Rev. 9:6 states that a time is coming when certain individuals will seek to die, but cannot. Paul expressed a rather neutral attitude about living or undergoing physical termination at II Cor. 5:2,8; Phil. 1:20-24. Job in his miserable condition considered the current physical life worse than otherwise in Job 3; 6:8-11; 7:1-3,15,16; 10:1; 14:13. In Acts 16:27 the Philippian jailor was about to commit suicide to avoid Roman torture for permitting the release of Paul when Paul assured him that he had not escaped whereupon the jailor became a believer. Jonah in his most miserable condition (realizing that God had been merciful to the people of Nineveh whom Jonah despised) wanted to be physically dead rather than alive. Simeon at Lk 2:25-32 was ready to die physically after witnessing the presence of God's Messiah, Jesus, who was to bring God's revelation to the Gentiles and to bring glory to Israel. Moses, weary from the stresses of leading the rebellious Hebrews, asked God for physical termination at Numb. 11:15. Instead, God gave him permission to share the burden with seventy elders. Elijah at I Kings 19:4 asked God that his life cease, but God sent a messenger with food to restore his spirit.

Perhaps I should call to our attention that there are, among Christian leaders, those who have interpreted the Christian message so that only they (the group leaders) can forgive sins, i.e., a sin must be confessed to them or their representatives before God will forgive an individual through Jesus Christ. Under such an arrangement a person who has taken his or her own life could not make such a confession, i.e., after physical death. Therefore, suicide is unpardonable without calling upon the righteousness of someone else who has a surplus of righteousness. This interpretation of making people subject to that group of religious leaders means, in effect, that the Son of God, Jesus, did not, in fact, make individuals spiritually free indeed, John 8:36. Further, this is only a small portion of the wide range of teachings which have made that group of Christian leaders into a religious hierarchy, and most of its doctrines are interpretations to enhance the hierarchy into what amounts to a modern-day bureaucracy. Such an organization, and especially its leaders, is bringing into question religious authority which Jesus condemned in Matt. 20:25-28; Lk 22:24-27. This religious diversion is based upon a misinterpretation, I believe, of Matt. 16:13-19 which emphasizes confessing Jesus to be the Messiah (Savior) rather than anyone's taking Jesus' place on earth. True, Peter (although reluctantly) was used by God's Spirit to understand that Gentiles were to be included in the Kingdom of God (keys of the Kingdom), Acts 10:9-34; 11:1-18. His ministry (service) to the Gentiles was so nominal that God called and especially commissioned the Apostle Paul to serve them, Gal. 2:1-21.

Wendell Alford, Teacher; Couples Class; Tallahassee First Baptist Church; March 10, 1994.