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## Common Greetings — *The War to End Western Civilization*

2.

In the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE, Christianity brought to paganism the solution to its fundamental problem: how does a person know if he or she is good enough to go to heaven upon death? What criteria exists for entrance to heaven, with *going to heaven* being a concept that “evolved” in the Greco world after the poet Homer wrote *The Odyssey* at the beginning of Greek inscription [7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries BCE] ... the structure of *The Odyssey* reflects residual orality, but its structure isn't that of oral narration but of inscription, the only reliable means for dating the allegorical tale that has gods being the creation of human imaginations; *e.g.*, Odysseus living with a beautiful un-aging nymph who has offered him immortality, while continuing to live on an isle of abundance—all that a man can desire—but pining for his mortal wife and home and stony fields that belong to him. The juxtaposition of imagination versus reality and desire for what is real undergirds this early Greek allegory in which the greatest of Greek heroes tells Odysseus that it would be better to be the living slave of a poor farmer than king of the shades in the underworld ... heaven was for the ever-living gods, not for the dead. The underworld was for the dead.

Throughout *The Odyssey*, no one thinks about nor speaks of going to heaven, or of an afterlife in heaven. What follows death for all was the continuation of existence as a shade in the underworld, with Greek culture at this early age not yet having borrowed from ancient Egypt the concept of the dead being heavenly “stars” ... the Promise made to Abram was that his seed would be as the stars of heaven,

After these things the word of [YHWH] came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord [YHWH, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of [YHWH] came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed [YHWH, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:1–6)

*After what things?* Abram paying tithes to Melchizedek king of Salem (Gen 14:18–20), with the writer of Hebrews contending that Christ Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The Genesis account of Abraham, especially in relationship to Hagar, is problematic, and underlies the endtime basis for world war originating in Middle and Near East hostilities over who is the legitimate heir of Abraham ... in its second sura, the Qur'an lists as Abraham's descendants Ishmael as well as Isaac, with Ishmael listed first. Abraham's sons from Keturah—Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and

Shuah—are not listed though Isaac's son Jacob is. But the inclusion of Genesis content in the Qur'an's second sura is even more problematic than the Genesis account of Hagar and of Abraham sending off Hagar and her infant son Ishmael who was then probably nineteen years old; for the Genesis account of the creation of Adam forms the shadow and copy of the *creation* [spiritual birth] of the second or last Adam, Christ Jesus, whereas the Genesis account of Adam cannot be supported via physical evidence. The account exists and its existence is what's important, not the veracity of the account. The account need not be true to form the shadow and copy of the creation account of the last Adam. It only needs to have existed before the birth of Christ, and it did. It is of antiquity.

In the Genesis account, Abram sets out to recover his nephew Lot following the defeat of the five kings (the kings of Sodom and its surrounding cities) by the four kings. Abram takes, according to Genesis 14:14, 318 men born into his household and trained by him—who had left Ur of the Chaldeans, and who had journeyed to Haran, then down to Egypt and back, thereby having seen the arms of the known world—and Abram divides his forces and attacks by night and defeats the four kings, chasing them north of Damascus. He recovers Lot, his nephew, and Lot's goods as well as the women and people and goods of the five kings who had been defeated by the four. He returns to the oaks of Mamre, but not before paying tithes to Melchizedek, the high priest of the Lord, with Melchizedek giving credit to the Lord for Abram's victory, that was a demonstration of Abram's reasoned and informed faith ... Abram would not have pursued the four kings that had just defeated the five kings if he did not believe that he could recover his nephew with a lesser number of men than had made up the armies of the five kings. He needed the Lord to be on his side, and the Lord was. And for that, he gave thanks and praise to the Lord by paying a tithe of everything he recovered to Melchizedek.

For Abram to go after the four kings was an act of faith—a demonstration of belief of the Lord—that is somewhat analogous to a Christian convert believing God and keeping the Commandments when this convert was previously under no social or legal obligation to keep the Commandments.

The relationship of Abram's receipt of the Promise that his heir would come from his loins to the pre-occurring paying tithes to Melchizedek has demonstrated faith preceding having one's belief of God [faith] counted as righteousness ... Abram pursues the four kings, an act of faith, defeats the four kings (the continuation of his act of faith), then returns to pay a tithe of all he recovered to Melchizedek (the completion of his act of faith) before the Lord appears to him in a vision and delivers to him the Promise that his heir would come from his loins. This order of faith preceding promise is analogous to King Solomon dedicating the temple (1 Kings chap 8) then the Lord appearing to Solomon a second time,

And [YHWH] said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. And *as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'* But if you turn aside

from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, 'Why has [YHWH] done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned [YHWH] their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore [YHWH] has brought all this disaster on them.'" (1 Kings 9:3–9 emphasis added)

The promise made to David, Solomon's father, was unconditional, but was made after demonstrated obedience and faith; thus, the promise made to David was akin to the Promise made to Abram/Abraham. It was a promise made to David that he would always have an heir sitting on his throne and was made to David late in his life. Continuing the promise made to David through Solomon was, however, conditional; was subject to Solomon and his children and grandchildren for as many generations of Israel as there would be walking uprightly before the Lord.

Those Sabbatarian Christians who hold that the unconditional promise made to King David has been continued through physical succession from David through the kings of England [the basis for British Israelism] are exceedingly dishonest with Scripture. The author of Matthew's Gospel, writing late enough that war clouds had already gathered over Jerusalem, heard arguments being made by Pharisees about the Lord promising David that he would always have a physical successor sitting on his throne. This author understood that Christ Jesus was the promised successor, but not a successor by blood but by spirit, with the spirit of Christ (without the indwelling of the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] in the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*]) was the spirit that King David asked not to be taken from him:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.

(Ps 51:10–13 indented lines are spiritual portion of thought-couplets)

The man Jesus of Nazareth was not a biological son of King David despite the genealogy of Matthew chapter 1, or of the genealogy of Luke chapter 3 ... if Mary, mother of Jesus, was a cousin of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, then Mary was of the tribe of Levi, with the Father of the man Jesus being the Logos; *Yah*; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God of living ones. It was the spirit [breath or life force] of *Yah*, the God of Abraham that King David had. So Jesus' descent from David is through "spirit," not flesh. Likewise, Melchizedek, king of Salem [the Hebraic root of *Solomon*], was without recorded descent, with the Psalmist writing,

[YHWH] says to my Lord [Adoni]:  
"Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool."

[YHWH] sends forth from Zion  
 your mighty scepter.  
 Rule in the midst of your enemies!  
 Your people will offer themselves freely  
 on the day of your power,  
 in holy garments;  
 from the womb of the morning,  
 the dew of your youth will be yours.  
 [YHWH] has sworn  
 and will not change His mind,  
 "You are a priest forever  
 after the order of Melchizedek."  
 The Lord [Adonai] is at your right hand;  
 He will shatter kings on the day of His wrath.  
 He will execute judgment among the nations  
 filling them with corpses;  
 He will shatter chiefs [the head]  
 over the wide earth.  
 He will drink from the brook by the way;  
 therefore He will lift up His head.

(Ps 110:1–7 indented lines are spiritual portions of couplets)

Note the shift between <Adoni> in verse one and <Adonai> in verse five, with *Adonai* only used for deity, but *Adoni* used for any *Lord*, a shift that isn't obvious in the partially alphabetized inscribed text—a shift that only exists in utterance, or the vocalization of inscription that is without any vocalization.

Also note the clause <*on the day of His wrath*>, with this day being again mentioned in Revelation 6:17, when kings [and the low] will hide in caves and among the rocks of the mountains (v. 15). So in this psalm of King David, the referent for *Adoni* and for *Adonai* are related-to but not identical-to the man Jesus who is not the Messiah before He is resurrected from death, but will become [became] the Messiah following Resurrection. Same man. Same deity. With Jesus the man being in the form of a servant whereas the glorified Christ has had the glory He had before the creation of the universe returned to Him. Jesus the man is framed through being the unique Son of the Logos who was God and who was with the God, and through being the First of the firstborn sons of the God, God the Father.

The Qur'an asks whether a person of the Book will not believe later revelation, implying that it is folly not to believe later revelation ... is it not then folly for a Muslim to disbelieve revelation that has come since Muhammad died; will the descendants of Ishmael be as ignorant as the descendants of Isaac? Perhaps the better question is, will Christians continue in their ignorance, assuming that revelation ceased with the vision of John, not understanding that visions are for those not born of spirit and therefore without the indwelling spirit of truth, the *Parakletos*. Will Christians be as Jews and Muslims, wedded to visions, rejecting revelation that comes through the Comforter/Advocate? Will Christians reject Paul because he doesn't relate the source of his revelation in Galatians 1:12; for he could not reveal what he saw or heard when he visited the third heaven:

And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—

and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. (2 Cor 12:3–4)

It is easy to believe what is comfortable; what parents and grandparents believed. But where is growth in grace and knowledge when the person continues to believe in part, seeing darkly what can be clearly seen if the Christian would open the eyes of the Christian's heart and unstop inner ears. ... Ignorance is not an admirable trait in any person, but is something to be overcome—a lifetime work that will remain uncompleted upon physical death.

The practice of shifting referents without signaling that a shift has occurred is not unique to Hebrew, but occurs throughout the Qur'an, also written in a Semitic language [Arabic]; so it would seem to be characteristic of partially alphabetized inscription. Plus the Qur'an uses the plural pronoun [translated as the royal *We*] for *Allah* in a manner similar to how the Torah three times uses the plural pronoun for *YHWH*, and Isaiah once, with the Torah consistently assigning singular verbs to the regular plural *Elohim* for allegedly the same reason that the Qur'an assigns singularity to the plural pronoun: for the regality or majesty of deity. But the plurality of deity will consistently have *two being one* as Adam and Eve, two individuals, were one flesh (Gen 2:24).

The plural pronoun for deity used throughout the Qur'an is for the plurality of the God of Abraham,  $Y^aH^{d-n}W^{ui}H$ , *Yah* and *another such*, with Jesus in Matthew's Gospel declaring that the God of Abraham was the God of living ones, not dead ones (Matt 22:32). *Allah* equates to *Yah [Eloah]*, and as such would be the God of living persons, not of martyrs who died in *jihad*.

Again, will a person of the Book reject revelation not today in the Book? That is what Jews do in rejecting the Gospels, the epistles, and Revelation. That is what Christians do in rejecting the Qur'an, and the Book of Mormon. That is what Muslims do in rejecting the Book of Mormon and all revelation that has come since. And I'm not an advocate of the Book of Mormon, nor of the Qur'an, and the argument I have consistently made for more than a decade is that there are problems in how Scripture is read, for it doesn't say what people claim; *e.g.*, the Genesis "P" creation account is not the account of the creation of the earth, but the abstract for the spiritual creation of the Most High God, with humankind presently living in the dark portion of the third day and with the resurrection of firstfruits being on the fourth day, and being of two part (again, two being one), the resurrection of the great to rule the day [the light, heaven] and the resurrection of the least to rule the night [the darkness, the creation] (see Matt 5:19).

The creation of all this is physical was sudden, but wasn't six thousand years. Nor does Scripture make the claim that creation of what is physical occurred in recent history, which six thousand years ago would be. Rather, it dates the story of the creation of Adam to the dark portion of Day One, with this dark portion being of undefined and undefinable length:

*These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that [YHWH] God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for [YHWH] God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—then*

[YHWH] God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Gen 2:4–7 emphasis added)

The coming of Christ Jesus forms the light portion of Day One (see 2 Cor 4:6), which ends with the crucifixion, thus beginning the dark portion of the second day ... this is revelation given to the Apostle Paul that has been ignored by Jews and Christians, and certainly not understood by Muhammad or Joseph Smith. Perhaps Paul didn't explain his revelation as fully as he could have; or perhaps Paul didn't fully understand what had been revealed to him. Either way, what was once presented darkly as if still under a veil has been presented openly for a decade ... should a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim ignore revelation that has come from God to endtime peoples of the Book; or should the ignorant continue in their ignorance, doing good where they can, abstaining from doing evil, and thereby imbedding themselves in the great White Throne Judgment when people will be as sheep or goats (Matt 25:31–46), but not firstborn sons of God, who because they believe God through demonstrated faith and hear the words of Jesus, will pass from death to life without coming under judgment (John 5:24), being therefore the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ Jesus (Gal 3:29).

Descent from Abraham isn't through Ishmael or through the sons of Keturah, but through Isaac via Sarah as a type of spiritual descent from God being through Christ Jesus, a life-giving spirit—an Eve spirit. Decent is through the woman. A man's descent isn't through his father, but through his mother. For the father/Father of himself cannot produce offspring. The father/Father requires a giver of life to convey the life that the father/Father carries in his breath/spirit to his seed that doesn't come from his breath, but through the breath/spirit of the woman/Woman ... *Elohim*, singular in usage, breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of the first Adam, then carried this single breath of life (as if carrying a bucket of coals) from the body of the first Adam to Eve, also His creation, with Eve then carrying the life of Adam to her sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth. But Eve didn't carry the breath/spirit of Adam to Cain in a bucket or in flesh attached to a rib, but through her blood to the placenta that would be sloughed away when it was no longer needed and Cain could breathe on his own.

Should the Jew, the Christian, the Muslim ignore revelation that hasn't come from visions, but from the *Parakletos*; from the inner groaning of the spirit of truth? Will not God hold all people of the Book accountable for what He has revealed? Will the firstborn offspring of Jew, Christian, or Muslim be spared in the Second Passover liberation of Israel if the Passover sacrifice of the Lamb of God is ignored; is not eaten on the dark portion of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, the month beginning with the first sighted new moon crescent following the spring equinox wherever the person of the Book dwells? Who is so ignorant that he or she will mock God by ignoring revelation? Surely no Christian ...

But Christians more so than other peoples of the Book mock God, professing with mouths that Jesus is Lord, but not believing much of anything that Jesus allegedly said, and almost totally ignoring Moses.

For pagan Greek philosophers, Christianity offered the solution to the outstanding dilemma of paganism: how does a person know whether he or she is good enough to enter heaven? By Christ Jesus taking upon Himself the sins of humanity [actually, the sins of Israel], a person doesn't have to be good enough to enter heaven. The person only

has to accept Christ Jesus as the person's Savior. The person *immediately* becomes good enough to enter heaven through being covered by [cloaked in] Jesus' righteousness.

The person need not have lived a perfect life; for with the confession of sins, baptism, and acceptance of Jesus as the person's Savior, forgiveness was extended to the person—or so greater Christendom has taught its converts since the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century. And this, like most things widely held as beliefs, contains a kernel of truth ...

For the person who has been drawn from this world by the Father (John 6:44) and delivered to Christ [for the person foreknown and predestined by the Father to be glorified while still living in a perishable fleshly body]—for this person and others like this person, but for no one else—the foreknown person passes from death to life without coming under judgment because the person hears the words of Jesus and believes the One who sent Jesus into this world (again, John 5:24). This person comes under the covenant made with Abraham who had his belief of God counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6) after his demonstration of faith in pursuing and attacking the four kings; this person's belief of God is counted to the person as righteousness, with the person's demonstrated belief leading to obedience which in turn leads to righteousness and eternal life in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:16, 23).

Demonstrated belief of God will have the Christian keeping the Commandments, especially the easiest of the Commandments [the Commandment that is least] to keep, the Sabbath Commandment.

Wait a minute: if a person's belief of God is counted to the person as righteousness, the person is already righteous without any inclusion of obedience ... is this not correct? It is according to pagan Greek philosophers who became Christian converts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries CE. But a person CANNOT come to believe God without the person striving to obey God, doing those things that are pleasing to God. In particular, the person who believes God will have outward love for neighbor and brother, which in turn reflects the person's love for God; thus, the person who willfully transgresses the Commandments simply doesn't believe God and is unwilling to obey God. This person is not of God regardless of whether the person claims to be a Christian, a claim that will be a lie.

A Catch-22? So it would seem; for with believing God, the person willingly keeps the Commandments. And the person without faith — *pisteos*, belief that leads to obedience, leads to keeping the Commandments — simply cannot please God.

Understand, perfectly keeping the Law isn't what God desires when there is a shortage of love for neighbor and brother in the person's keeping of the Commandments. And yes, the Commandments can be kept in a legalistic manner that neglects the outward manifestation of love—but is such keeping of the Commandments really keeping them? No, it is not! It is for this reason that Jesus in John's Gospel told Jews in the temple, “Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law” (John 7:19).

What God seeks is child-like belief/faith, not proving everything God says, with the person doing the proving not having the wisdom or experience to be able to ascertain the truth or falsity of what God has declared —

What God seeks is spiritual innocence like that which causes young children to believe parents without doubting the words of their parents; spiritual innocence

analogous to the innocence of children that causes them to do what they are told to do without questioning God, without challenging God, without judging God. It is in Christians proving all things where problems emerge; *for Abram didn't initially attempt to prove whether the promise made to him that his heir would come from his loins was true. Rather, Abram believed the Lord and had his belief counted to him as righteousness.* Later, Abram would wonder if what the Lord told him was true, and he would succumb to Sari's suggestion of having the promise fulfilled through Hagar, a failure of faith on Abram's part that today, thirty-five-plus centuries later, undergirds the conflicts of the Middle East.

What is behind the Israeli-Islam conflict that will take humanity to the brink of species extinction? Abram's failure of faith that caused an old man to enter a woman not his wife to father a son so that his heir would be of his seed. Today, we have in vitro fertilization, but Abram's seed would have been rejected because of his age and the seed of a sperm donor would be used; so even today, Abram's problem of having no heir who was of him would remain.

Ishmael, whom Abraham loved, is the personification of Abraham's failure of faith, with this failure leading to unbelief which in turn leads to death (again, Rom 6:16).

Islam, the great nation that has come from Ishmael because of he was of Abraham, represents Abraham's failure of faith, with endtime Islam's hostility against Jews and Christians bringing Abram's [Abraham's] sin to light so that is not hidden by soft words ... the Qur'an treats the Genesis narrative with child-like misquotation and misunderstanding, thereby introducing the question of whether the angel Gabriel truly delivered to Muhammad visions, or if an angelic imposter appeared in vision to Muhammad. This is not a question that can be answered; for revelation is challengeable only as to whether it occurred or didn't occur. The contents of the revelation are not really challengeable. So in the case of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon: did Smith reveal divine revelation, or was what he claimed to have received via revelation merely a parlor game he and his wife Emma created to pass away long winter nights in New York State? Certainly, the Book of Mormon does not stand up to critical query. Nor does Acts, the Gospel of Luke, or the Pastoral Epistles. So it would be no surprise if the Qur'an also fails to withstand critical query.

Hagar was to Abram a *guley*, the Hebrew idiom for the genitalia of a woman. She was not his wife. He apparently had no feelings for her although he loved his son by her. So while it was "legal" for Abram to father a child by her, it wasn't ethical. Hence, Sari said to Abram, "*May the wrong done to me be on you!* I gave my servant to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. *May the Lord judge between you and me*" (Gen 16:5 emphasis added).

Sari [later *Sarah*] asked for a specific judgment: she asked for the Lord to determine whether she did wrong in giving Hagar to Abram, or whether Abram did wrong in going into Hagar. She recognized, through Hagar's look of contempt, that the relationship she previously had with her serving woman had changed ... in this endtime age, the middle aged corporate CEO will dump his middle aged wife for a younger and usually more attractive secretary or personal assistant, with the new trophy wife having contempt for the former wife who couldn't keep her husband from wandering. This, unfortunately, has become the way of Western civilization, with the Lord's judgment that Sari



demanded apparently having brought into existence Islam to be used against the descendants of Abraham as a result of Abraham's failure of faith.

Has the faith of greater Christendom failed? Certainly it has; for only a statistically insignificant percentage of greater Christendom keeps the Sabbaths (weekly and annual) of God. And where is the Christian who doesn't place importance on the surface of things, whether the surface is skin color or personal wealth, biological gender or the speech of the person?

To place importance on personal wealth is to become a respecter of persons, what James condemns. To place importance on skin color [regardless of the color] is racism of the worst sort. To place importance on gender is sexism when, with God, there is no male nor female (Gal 3:28). To put importance on utterance is witchcraft—and the Lord isn't fooled when witchcraft is employed by Israel:

When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of [YHWH], [YHWH] *did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets*. Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at En-dor." So Saul disguised himself and put on other garments and went, he and two men with him. And they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine for me by a spirit and bring up for me whomever I shall name to you." The woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the necromancers from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?" But Saul swore to her by [YHWH], "As [YHWH] lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me." *When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul."* The king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" *And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth."* He said to her, "What is his appearance?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped in a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and paid homage. Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and *God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams*. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do." And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since [YHWH] has turned from you and become your enemy? [YHWH] has done to you as he spoke by me, for [YHWH] has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of [YHWH] and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore [YHWH] has done this thing to you this day. Moreover, [YHWH] will give Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me. [YHWH] will give the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines." Then Saul fell at once full length on the ground, filled with fear because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night. And the woman came to Saul, and when she saw that he was terrified, she said to him, "Behold, your servant has obeyed you. I have taken my life in my hand and have listened to what you have said to me. Now therefore, you also obey your servant. Let me set a morsel of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on your way." He refused and said, "I will not eat." But his servants, together with the woman, urged him, and he listened to their words. So he arose from the earth and sat on the bed. Now the woman had a

fattened calf in the house, and she quickly killed it, and she took flour and kneaded it and baked unleavened bread of it, and she put it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night. (1 Sam 28:5–25 emphasis added)

There is considerable material in this passage that cannot be read at a literal level. The passage conveys a revealing of knowledge that has been largely overlooked ... how did Saul spend his last night on earth? Not in the arms of beautiful women, but for a while on the bed of a witch. Saul sought the Lord, sought knowledge that could only come from the Lord, sought knowledge through prayer and fasting, but his words went unanswered. He received neither a dream nor word from a prophet. Even the Urim and Thummim reflected no light. So what recourse did Saul have available to him? Either to do without knowledge being denied him, or consult a witch.

When Saul was first declared king, he exercised his unbelief of God by not obeying the words of Samuel, the man of God at the time. And from that act of disobedience came a last night on the bed of a witch, quite a comedown from when selected by the Lord to be the king of Israel.

And why did Samuel in the witch's vision appear as a god?

Saul never believed the Lord about anything, but required signs that came from the Lord. And even these signs he was reluctant to accept. He simply was without faith [*pisteos*]. And symbolically, Saul represents the endtime man of perdition, the lawless one who will declare himself god in the temple, with the *temple* being the greater Christian Church.

This subject needs to be continued—and will be.

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