

# ONE-EYED RELIGIONS

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After Saul was anointed by the Prophet Samuel to be Israel's first king, Saul "went home to Gibeah" (1 Sam. 10:26). Without a royal palace to house all the lords and ladies, courtiers, musicians and jesters, there's not much for a new king to do. So Saul just went back to his farm. He was soon to find out, though, that the Lord had a job for him to do. When the Lord had earlier told Samuel to anoint Saul, He said that the purpose of the anointing was so "that he may save My people out of the hand of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 9:16).

One of the blessings of the new covenant is that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is not just for prophets, priests, and kings. Yeshua told His disciples to "wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). When the promise came on the day of Shavuot (Pentecost), "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Peter told the onlookers that this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, a prophecy about a time when God would pour out His Spirit on *all* flesh: sons and daughters, young and old, servants and handmaids. The anointing of God's Spirit is now available to all of God's children. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

When the Father anoints us with the Spirit, He does so for a reason, just as He did with Saul. The purpose of the anointing is not just so you can get your emotions all a-twitter, speak in tongues, and feel the glory-bumps running up and down your spine. These external manifestations are normal, and should certainly be expected and experienced. But if that is all that the anointing means to you, you have not yet really fulfilled the purpose for which God has anointed you. King Saul was anointed so that he could save God's people out of the

hand of the enemy. We are anointed for the same purpose, to save people out of the hand of the enemy. Our Messiah said that He was anointed for the same purpose: The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18f).

When the anointing of the Spirit is poured out in an especially powerful way, whether on an individual, on a local congregation, or on a large segment of the Body, it is often in preparation for spiritual battle. The anointing stirs up the enemy. The demons were never so astir as they were when Yeshua walked this earth in the anointing of the Spirit.

Even imperfect people can scare the enemy if they get the anointing. King Saul, even with his moral weaknesses and character flaws, stirred up the enemy. Immediately after Saul was anointed and went home, the very next thing we read is that the Ammonites came up to make war against Jabesh-gilead, an Israelite town. The people of Jabesh-gilead knew they were outnumbered and outmatched, so they told the Ammonites that they didn't want to fight. What would they have to do to avoid a battle? "On this condition will I make a covenant with you," the Ammonite leader said, "that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel" (1 Sam. 11:2).

Satan uses this same tactic in the spiritual realm. He sees that you have been anointed, so he comes up against you. You feel weak and

inadequate. The only solution you see is to make some sort of compromise and thereby avoid a spiritual battle. But by taking this defensive attitude, you give Satan the upper hand. Now he gets to set the conditions for peace. And what are his conditions? The same as the Ammonites': "Let me thrust out one of your spiritual eyes. Let me rob you of just half your vision, then I'll leave you alone. I won't make you totally blind. You can still be saved and go to church; you'll just be half blind."

When Saul, the Lord's anointed, heard the enemy's proposal, the Holy Spirit came upon him "and his anger was kindled greatly" (1 Sam. 11:6). He gathered an army and defeated the enemy.

The anointing is not for those who are willing to compromise with the Enemy and let him take away half of their spiritual vision. It is not for those who take a defensive attitude toward the Devil. The anointing is for those who are willing to go on the offensive, defeat the Enemy, and deliver God's people. If you are a sinner and just now in the process of being saved, a defensive attitude is acceptable. But if you are saved, get the anointing, go on the offensive, and refuse to accept any eye-gouging proposal that the Enemy offers you as a compromise.

Unfortunately, the history of Christianity has been marked by many compromises. Early in its history, the Church let the Enemy take away one of its eyes, leaving the Church half blind. John 1:17 says that the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This verse does *not* say that the Grace and Truth of Jesus *replaced* the Law of Moses. (The contrasting word "but" which appears in the KJV is not in the Greek text; it was added by translators who imagined a contrast between New Testament Grace and Old Testament Law.) Grace and Truth do not replace the Law; Grace and Truth inspire and

enable us to "walk orderly, and keep the law," like Paul did (Acts 21:24). The Law of Moses and the Grace and Truth of Jesus Christ are the two spiritual eyes we need to give us a balanced vision and a balanced walk.

Try an experiment sometime. Walk around for 15 or 20 minutes with one of your eyes closed or covered for the entire time. Then open your closed eye and see what a difference it makes in your vision. What a panoramic view! *That* is what it is like when a Christian opens his eye to the Law of Moses. He sees that the Law, when properly understood, does not oppose or threaten the Grace and Truth that came by Jesus Christ; he sees that the Law was the matrix from which the Grace and Truth of Jesus emerged. And that is also what it is like when a Jew opens his eye to the Grace and Truth of Jesus Christ. He sees that the Grace and Truth of Jesus, when properly understood, does not cancel the Law of Moses; he sees that the Grace and Truth of Jesus complements and completes the Torah, for "Christ is the end [*telos*, 'goal'] of the law" (Rom. 10:4). Or, as Stern's Jewish New Testament translates it, "For the goal at which the *Torah* aims is the Messiah."

Christianity without Torah is incomplete and imbalanced. It's a one-eyed religion. So is Judaism without the Messiah Yeshua, because He is the only true Messiah anyone is going to get.

King Saul, a man with moral weaknesses and character flaws, had his anger kindled greatly when he heard about the enemy's proposal that God's people surrender one of their two eyes. What about us? Are we going to accept the half-blind condition of Jews without Yeshua, and Christians without the Torah, as normal? This dichotomous arrangement of Judaism without Yeshua and Christianity without Torah is *not* "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The original Messianic faith had two eyes: the Law of Moses and the Grace and Truth that came by Yeshua the Messiah. That original Messianic faith is re-emerging as we approach the end times. The end-time faithful "remnant" in Revelation 12:17 is described as a people who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 14:12 describes end-time "saints" as "they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." After it's all over, those who get the victory over the beast "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (Rev. 15:3).

The first-century disciples had two spiritual eyes, the Law of Moses and the Grace and Truth that came by the Messiah Yeshua. And that first generation of disciples kept both of their eyes open. We would do well to follow their example. Q

# The Red Dragon

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"Behold, a great, fiery red dragon" (Revelation 12:3). Why is this dragon, whose intent is to devour the Christ child, colored red?

Sin is also associated with red. It would seem that to speak about the color of sin would have as much sense as speaking about the melody of a fruit, but God says, "Let us reason together... Though [your sins] are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). So sin is red and righteousness is white. It was no accident that Communism and Nazism, the two great anti-Christian movements of our age, both chose red flags. Not only did they fulfill a prophecy, but the choice also derived from a source deep within the experience of mankind.

The French psychologist Alfred Binet related an experiment with a hysterical woman whose body was paralyzed on one side. When a dynamometer was placed in her right hand, she could squeeze it to register only 12 kg. If she was shown a red disk, the pressure of her squeeze was immediately doubled ("Researches about the alterations of conscience with hysterical persons," *Philosophical Magazine*, vol. 17, 1889, France).

Goethe, who developed a theory of light, also attributed dynamic character to the color red, which he distinguished as being an active color.

Every color is a suffering of light, because colors are produced by light breaking through a prism. Red is its greatest suffering.

Animals can be driven mad by showing them a piece of red cloth. Toreadors make use of this fact in bullfighting. All primitive people have a predilection for red, and so do little children.

White is not actually a color, but the fullness of light, light which has not passed through a prism. The righteous will stand before Christ, the Lamb of God, clothed in white (Revelation 7:9). In contrast to the color of the dragon, white is the color of quietness, of contemplation, the good part chosen by Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:42).

The servants of the red dragon delight in the sight of blood. Persecutors have shed rivers of martyrs' blood. The righteous, on the other hand, are givers of life.

In a world dominated or terrorized by the red dragon, in a world where love is scarce and relationships are icy, the righteous bring the warmth of love.

No scientist can explain how it is that a stream of warm water, the Gulf Stream, flows between the cold waters of the ocean, which form its walls - how that moving hot stream exists within the motionless cold. So the righteous, clothed in white, journey toward heaven through a world inhabited by passionate red monsters, a world which, in contrast with the radiant love of the righteous, is icy and cold. Q