

# THE SABBATH SCOOP

VOLUME 29

MARCH 2017

NUMBER 12

## Phileo & Agape in the Bible

These two basic Greek words for “love” in the New Testament teach us much about how to love.

### Part 3

By Gregory Dullum

To know what was intended in the New Testament when we read the word “love,” we must know which Greek word was used and what that Greek word means.

When is *agape* used and when is *phileo* used in the New Testament?

MOST OF THE TIME, when we read the word “love,” it is the Greek word *agape*. There are only a handful of times when *phileo* is the Greek word. When we read the scriptures with *phileo*, the love is a fondness for a person or object that is based upon the intrinsic value of that object. This love comes from the heart and not the head.

### Phileo in the New Testament

Because *phileo* is so seldom used, let’s examine these instances first. There are just a few verses that use this word, so let’s examine *every* one.

#### 1. Love of Things

In Mat. 6:5, hypocrites “love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corner of streets, that they may be seen by men.” Hypocrites have a fondness for this activity; it makes them feel important.

In Mat. 23:6, scribes and Pharisees “love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogue.” (See also Mark 12:38-39, Luke 20:46.) This, again, is *phileo*. They are fond of those seats. They really like them because those seats make them feel important.

#### 2. The World Loves Its Own

Christ told his followers in John 15:19, “If you were of the world, the world would love (*phileo*) its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I



photo by Gregory Dullum

When it comes to the brethren in the church, we are to both *phileo* them and *agapeo* them. We should also have a fondness for our ministers.

chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

The world *is fond* of its own. People who are unconverted can have tender affection for others who are also unconverted. But followers of Christ are treated differently. Those in the world do not share the same fondness for Christians. In fact, they may come to hate Christians because of their beliefs.

#### 3. Brotherly Love Among Christians

Christians are told to have brotherly love toward each other in Rom. 12:10: “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love.” This is an expanded form of the word *phileo*: *philadelphia*. It means brotherly love or love of the brethren.

Brotherly love—love for the brethren—is again commanded in 1 Thes. 4:9. The Thessalonians were told that they already had brotherly love for all the brethren in Macedonia, but that it “should

increase more and more” (v. 10).

Brotherly love is again commanded in Heb. 13:1.

Peter tells the brethren in 1 Peter 1:22, “Since you have [already] purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love (*philadelphion*, or “love of the brethren”), [go on to] love (*agapao*) one another with a fervent heart. They were told to add *agape* to their *phileo*!

#### 4. Love Toward the Ministry

Paul told Titus, “Greet those who love us in the faith” (Titus 3:15). Paul was writing as an apostle (Titus 1:1). This statement tells us there should be a fondness from the brethren toward the ministry; toward church leadership.

Loving the ministry with *philia* also

**LOVE**

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## Love

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means we love them for WHO THEY ARE; we see and *appreciate* their VALUE as teachers and guides, helping us to grow spiritually.

### 5. Love Christ

Paul warns in 1 Cor. 16:22, “If anyone does not *phileo* the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.” Peter three times claimed he had *phileo* for Christ. We, too, must come to that close relationship with Christ that Peter had. We must have that tender affection for Christ that Peter had.

Our friendship, our affection for Christ must be stronger than the affection we have toward family members. Christ tells us, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Mat. 10:37).

To love Christ in this manner, we must appreciate Him for who He is. We love Him as our Savior; we appreciate the sacrifice He made for us. We love Him as our older brother, showing us the way to eternal life. We love Him for the example He set when He walked the Earth. We love Him for being our intercessor in prayer. We love Him as our rescuer—the King of kings and Lord of lords who will save the whole earth from destruction. We appreciate Him for the many roles He plays in our salvation and in the salvation of the world.

### 6. Love of Money

A fondness for money is NOT a good thing (1 Tim. 6:10). It is the root of all kinds of evil. This love comes from *phileo* but has its own word: *philagura*. It means literally, “to be fond of silver.”

This fondness for money is loving money for *what it can do for us*. We appreciate its intrinsic buying power. It provides us with status, possessions, and friends. When money loses its value, this love fails. People will throw their silver in the streets when they no longer have *philagura* (Ezek. 7:19).

### 7. Love Family Members

Wives are to love their own husbands (Titus. 2:4). Coming from the word *phileo*, this love has its own word: *philandros*. It means to be fond of a man; to be affectionate as a wife. Wives also are told to love their children (same verse). This word also comes from *phileo* but is *philoteknos* and means to be fond of one’s children; having a maternal love for children.

This affection for the husband and children is based upon the intrinsic value of



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Love of money has its own word, based upon *phileo*: *philagura*. It means, literally, “love of silver.” This is a fondness for money based upon what money can do for us.

who these people are: they are ours. We don’t have the same feeling toward other husbands or other children as we have toward our own.

### 8. God’s Love Toward Us

In Titus 3:4 we are told that God has *philia* for us. He has a kindness and affection toward us humans. The word used here is *philanthropia* and means “fondness of mankind” or “benevolence.”

When Christ walked the earth, He had people he considered to be his friends. One close friend was Lazarus. The people around Jesus described their relationship as one of *phileo* (John 11:2-3, 36). John, who is narrating this account, uses a different word to describe Jesus’ love for Lazarus. He uses *agape* (v. 5). John wrote that Jesus had *agape* for all three people in this account: Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It is likely Jesus had BOTH *agape* and *philia* toward Lazarus.

The Apostle John had an especially close relationship with Christ when Jesus was in human form. John is called “the other disciple, whom Jesus loved” (John 20:2). This, again, is *phileo*, which means to be a friend, or to have affection for someone.

Jesus spoke of his relationship with all his followers on his last Passover. He elevated them all to the level of “friends”: “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things I have heard from the Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Jesus’ friends obey his commands (v. 14).

Jesus expanded that friendship to include the Father. He told his disciples that same evening, “For the Father Himself *phileo* you” (John 16:27). The Father is fond of us, He likes us, He considers us to be his

friend. Why? Christ continued, “because you have *phileo* Me, and have believed that I came forth from God” (ibid.) Christ’s followers were fond of Christ. They recognized who He really was and appreciated Him for that. He was not just a man. He was more than a prophet or a teacher. He was the Son of God. Any friend of Christ was a friend of the Father!

### 9. Love & Correction Connected

Jesus cautions that *phileo* carries with it correction. “As many as I love (*phileo*), I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent” (Rev. 3:19).

All nine of these examples of *phileo* speak of fondness, friendship, a cherishing of something because of its intrinsic value.

### Examples of Agape in the Bible

Now, let’s examine *just a few* of the verses which discuss *agape* (there are too many to discuss them all). This is a *different* kind of love. *Agape* is NOT tender affection. It is NOT based upon *feelings*. It is an exercise of CHOICE; it is desiring only the best for the object of that love. It does not require love in return.

#### 1. Love Our Neighbor

We are to *agapao* our neighbor (Mat. 5:43). Who is our neighbor? As shown by the parable of the good Samaritan, ultimately he is ALL MANKIND.

It would be IMPOSSIBLE to *phileo* all mankind! We have not met everyone. We don’t know everyone. We couldn’t possibly develop this kind of fondness for people we don’t know or don’t like. But the word for love in this verse is *agapao*, not *phileo*. Because the word is *agapao*, we don’t have to be friends with all

## The SABBATH SCOOP

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PRINT CIRCULATION: 76 • COST PER ISSUE: FREE  
<http://sabbathscop.myfreesites.net>

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mankind; we don't need to feel a fondness for all mankind. However, we are to wish all mankind well; we should wish no ill upon anyone.

How do we put this form of love into action? How do we show love toward other humans—including people we have never met? We do it by keeping God's commandments. John wrote, "By this we know that we *agapao* the children of God, when we *agapao* God, and keep his commandments" (1 John 5:2 *KJV*). This should be obvious.

Consider the 10 Commandments. We show love to our parents by honoring them. We show love to our neighbors by not killing (or even hating) them. We show love by not committing fornication (or even lusting). We show love by not stealing (or even coveting). We show love by not lying. These are just some of the specific ways we *agapao* our neighbor.

We don't do him harm. "Agape does no harm to a neighbor; therefore *agape* is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

*Agape* is intricately connected with LAW-KEEPING. Agape is the RESULT of law-keeping. When people obey God's commandments, they are practicing *agape*. When people STOP keeping God's laws, "*agape* will grow cold" (Mat. 24:12). This is NOT just a coincidence! Lawlessness abounding CAUSES *agape* to grow cold.

## 2. Love Our Enemies

We should not wish ill to ANYONE. This includes our enemies.

"But I say to you, *agapao* your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" (Mat. 5:44).

God's desire is that everyone should repent, live God's way and receive eternal life in his kingdom (1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9). He expects us to have that same desire (Mat. 5:45). We can desire that our enemies repent, change from their wicked

ways, and live God's way. This is truly loving our enemies.

How do we put this *agape* into action? Christ tells us how: "bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you." What should our prayer be? That they be successful in harming us? Of course not. That God crush them and punish them? No. That they come to repentance and change their ways!

It is IMPOSSIBLE to *phileo* our enemies. How can we be fond of our enemies? How can we appreciate evil for its intrinsic value? If we are obeying God, we can't be friends with evil. God does not command us to *phileo* our enemies. But we are commanded to *agapao* our enemies!

## 3. Love Our Friends

It is obvious that we should have a mind-set of wishing the best for our friends. The Bible tells us that even the unconverted have this type of love (*agape*) toward each other.

Christ said, "If you *agapao* those who *agapao* you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" (Mat. 5:46). Tax collectors, who were looked down upon in Jesus' society, loved with *agape* those people who loved them in the same manner.

This is not a matter of showing affection, but a mind-set of not wishing harm to others. It's the attitude of "live and let live" or "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."

## 4. Love Our Wife

Husbands are commanded to *agapao* their wives (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Col. 3:19). This is NOT *eros* (sexual love) or *phileo* (tender affection). This is *agapao*.

This love means setting our will to provide the best to can for our wives. Jesus set the bar high by giving his all—He lived a life of service and died for the church (Eph. 5:25).

*Agapao* means the husband commits himself to a faithful relationship with his wife and doesn't go looking for satisfaction elsewhere. He dedicates himself to taking care of ALL her needs—physical, financial and emotional. He even provides proper spiritual leadership and guidance. He provides for his wife what Christ provides for the church.

## 5. Love the Brethren

Christians are to love their brethren in the church: "Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God, Honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17). We have already seen a command to have *brotherly love*, but in

this verse, the word for love is NOT *phileo* (brotherly love). It is *agapao*.

This is a COMMITTED way of life to SERVE the needs of others in the church, much in the same way as husbands *agapao* their wives, or Christ *agapao* the church. This is a mind-set of desiring the best for others, even if we don't like them as friends!

It is almost certain that there will be personality clashes among people in the church. Not everyone will be close friends. But we all share a way of life; a love for the truth; a common bond of unity in purpose and calling that is emphasized at Passover when we all eat of the same bread and drink of the same wine. We should wish no ill to any of our brethren; we should serve each other with a desire to build up each other and help each other to make it into the kingdom of God!

## 6. Love One Master

A man cannot serve two masters. If there are conflicting orders, who will the man follow? He will *agape* one master and hate the other (Mat. 5:24). He will choose to obey one over the other.

It is possible to *phileo* two masters. We can be fond of two likeable bosses equally well. However, if they give us conflicting orders, we must submit to one and not the other. That mind-set of obedience to the one master is *agape*.

## 7. Love Ourselves

*Agape* includes an outgoing concern for ourself.

This is not wallowing in self pity. It is setting our will to do what is right for ourself. It is making the right choices for ourself to make sure we are successful and build our character.

Christ tells us we should "Agapao your neighbor as yourself" (Mat. 19:19). We should not *agapao* him MORE than ourselves or LESS than ourselves. It stands to reason that we must *agapao* ourselves if we are to *agapao* our neighbor AS ourselves.

## 8. Love God

We are commanded to *agapao* the Father. "You shall *agapao* the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Mat. 22:37). This does not mean have fuzzy, warm feelings toward God. It is COMMITTING THE WILL TO OBEY God in every possible way.

John tells us, "For this is the *agape* of God, that we keep his commandments,

## LOVE

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## Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. At what age did Jesus first teach in the Temple?
2. Who was the blind man who destroyed a temple by pushing down two pillars?
3. How long was Jonah in the belly of a great fish?
4. Who was Isaac's father?
5. Who said, "I'm going fishing" after the crucifixion?

(Answers on page 5)

# Washed in the **Blood** of the Lamb

How can blood, which normally stains, be used to make something white?

By Gregory Dullum

What brand of laundry detergent do we use? Tide? Ajax? Wisk? Does it get our whites truly white? Do we use a little bleach when we wash our whites to get them truly white?

Have we ever tried soy sauce? In the movie, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Millie is told that soy sauce will remove stains from a white carpet. (When she tries it later on someone else's white dress, it doesn't work, of course, and she is left with a big brown spot.)

## Washed With Blood

Have we tried washing in blood? Normally, we think of blood as something that stains clothes. It is one of the hardest stains to remove. But the Bible tells us that washing in blood can make us white and pure!

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' ...

"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb' " (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-14). How does being washed in blood make our clothes white?

Are we washed in Christ's blood? If so, when did it happen? WHAT DOES IT MEAN to be washed in Christ's blood?

Jesus Christ answers this question in the Revelation He gave to John. We break into the middle of a sentence: "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

To be washed in Christ's blood is to have our sins washed away.

## When Were We Washed?

In 1 Cor. 6:9-10, the Apostle Paul writes that this washing happened IN THE PAST. Paul writes, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom



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We would never think of using blood to get our clothes white. But the Bible speaks of robes that are washed in Christ's blood.

of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed..." This is past tense. It was something that had already happened. When were the Corinthian brethren washed? When were WE washed?

In Acts 22, Paul recounts the story of his conversion. In verse 16, the Lord said to him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Sins are washed away at baptism. That's one reason we go UNDER THE WATER at baptism. If we set the water level too low on our washing machine, and some clothes never go under the water during the wash and rinse cycles, they won't get clean. The dirt will remain.

When we go completely under the water at baptism (as in a burial), our sins are completely washed away (Rom. 6:4)!

## How Often Washed?

Once washed, can we get dirty again? Can we sin after we are baptized?

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10).

We are not washed once for all time! We must be washed again and again, just like our physical laundry. It is an ongoing process. When we sin, we must confess our sins to God—to repent of those sins, and they, too, will be washed away. We will be cleansed. How? What detergent does God use to wash away our sins? The blood of Christ.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission (or forgiveness) of sin (Heb. 9:22). Christ's blood must be shed for our sins. How often must it be shed? Every time we sin? Heb. 9:28 tells us, "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many." His sacrifice was one time. But it can be applied to our sins over and over.

## How Does Blood Clean Us?

How does the blood of Christ make us pure white, without spot or wrinkle? It does so in two ways.

**1. It pays the penalty for our sins.** The wages of sin is death. Christ died for us so that we don't have to die for our sins. He was sacrificed once for all. The death penalty is removed from us. If we picture the death penalty as a mark across our forehead saying, "death," the blood of Christ washes that mark away so it is no longer there.

**2. It changes us from the inside out.** "Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me' " (John 6:53-57).

## Washed at Passover

We must drink the blood of Christ. When

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## Love

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and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:2 KJV). We must keep God’s laws in the letter and in the spirit (Mat. 5:17-44). We must learn to walk as Christ walked; live our lives as He lived his (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Cor. 11:1, 1 Peter 2:21).

Jesus Christ told his followers, “If you *agapao* Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). He added, “If anyone *agapao* Me, he will keep my words” (v. 23). This brings us to our next point:

### 9. God Loves Us

Christ said if we obey God, He will *agapao* us. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone *agapao* Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will *agapao* him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him’” (John 14:23). This *agape* manifests itself in a CLOSER RELATIONSHIP than that of the *agape* God has for the whole world.

Because of this committed relationship, God and Christ can abide within us through the power of the holy spirit.

What action did God take to show his *agape* for us—and for all mankind?

In John 3:16, we are told, “For God so *agapao* the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”

The Father’s willingness to sacrifice his only Son and the Son’s willingness to be that sacrifice are the evidence of this *agape* that they have for us.

### 10. Love Not the World

God loved [*agapao*] the world but we Christians are told not to. John wrote, “Love not the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (John 2:15). Why is it okay for God to love the world but we are told not to?

These scriptures use the same word for love (*agapao*) and the same word for world (*kosmos*) but there are different definitions for *kosmos*. It is obvious in John 3:16 that God loves the PEOPLE in this world. He does NOT love the *ways* of this world, the *sins* of this world, the *evil* of this world. He loves the *people*, because the verse goes on to say, “...that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16b). This is *agape*! This is wishing the best for people, even those who are unconverted. There is a burning desire that they turn from their wicked ways.

In 1 John 2:15, John is NOT talking about loving PEOPLE of this world. He is talking about loving a way of life in this world. He

goes on to describe that way of life, which is the OPPOSITE way of life from *agape*: “For all that is in this world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). Lust and pride are selfish. This verse is telling us not to love a way of life that is the opposite of *agape*.

We must *set our will* to LIVE LIKE GOD LIVES, and not live LIKE THE EVIL we see in this society. We must *agapao* God, not the evil world around us.

### 11. Love the Truth

Many will perish at the end time because they don’t *agapao* the truth (2 Thes. 2:10). Again, this is not a warm, fuzzy feeling toward truth. This is a committed desire to live the truth; to obey the commandments found in God’s Word of truth—The Holy Bible (John 17:17).

### 12. A Fruit of the Spirit

*Agape* is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). This does not mean one must have the spirit of God to experience *agape*. Christ said the tax collectors of his day had *agape* for those who showed *agape* to them.

Read the fruits of the spirit and think about our unconverted neighbors, friends and relatives. Do any of them have *agape*? Most likely we can think of examples of them wishing the best for someone else. Do any of them experience joy? Sure, at times. Do they have peace? To some extent. Are they longsuffering? Some may be. Are they kind? Sure, most probably are. As you can see, it does not require God’s spirit to have these fruits.

However, if we have God’s spirit in us, it produces these fruits. We will have them in more abundance. We will have fruits we did not have before. We will experience these things to a much greater degree.

For example, Christ’s peace is greater than the peace of the world. He said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Our understanding and experience of *agape* will grow with our use of God’s spirit. As we practice *agape*, being led by the spirit of God, our understanding of that love will deepen.

There is so much more that the Bible says about love. We will continue next month.

(To be continued.)

### Know Your Bible Answers

1) 12. 2) Samson. 3) Three days and three nights. 4) Abraham. 5) Peter.

## Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

In certain parts of northern Europe, it was believed the man in the moon carried a tar bucket, which accounted for different marks on the moon as seen from earth.

## Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

*Life Is a Gift* by Tony Bennett., Harper Luxe, 2012, p. 93.

### A Little Exercise

“I’m often asked how I’ve been able to continue evolving as a singer while keeping my voice in such great shape at the age of eighty-six. It’s like anything else; you’ve gotta take care of yourself in mind *and* in body. I make it a point to work out in the gym at least three times a week. I also avoid elevators and escalators, and insist on taking the stairs.

“You don’t need a strenuous regimen to stay fit. As long as you make it a daily habit, even a little exercise can be effective.”

1 Tim. 4:18

## Quotable Quotes

“Life teaches us to be less harsh with ourselves and with others.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

## Memory Scripture

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”

—1 Cor. 13:1

## Washed in Blood

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do we do this? On his last Passover on earth, Christ instituted the New Testament symbols of eating bread and drinking wine. Every Passover we read Christ's words in Mat. 26:27-28: "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'"

When we were baptized, we had our sins washed away by the blood of Christ. Each Passover, we who are baptized drink wine as a *symbol* of a renewing of the covenant we made with God at baptism.

The Passover wine does not *really* turn into blood. The wine only *represents* the blood of Christ. What does the blood of Christ represent? What does it mean to drink his blood? Are we pretending to be cannibals? What is the significance of drinking Christ's blood?

In Lev. 17:13-14, we are told that the life of all flesh is its blood. We are not to consume the blood of animals that we slaughter! "And whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is in the blood.' Whoever eats it shall be cut off." And yet we are commanded to drink the blood of Christ!

By drinking the wine at Passover, we are symbolically taking *INSIDE* of us the *life of Christ*. We are asking that *Christ live his life inside of us*. He lives inside of us by the power of the holy spirit. On his last Passover, Christ told us He would live inside us. He said in John 14:20: "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." He did not say "WITH you"—He said "IN you."

We are internalizing Jesus' teachings; his way of life. We are following the example He set. We are living life as He lived it, because we being led by the holy spirit.

So, the blood of Christ washes us completely. It washes us from the outside in, and from the inside out. It removes the stain of the death penalty from the outside, and it changes our hearts and mind on the inside. It is through the blood of Christ that sin and its penalty are removed and we are made pure white, a bride for Christ without spot and wrinkle (Eph. 5:27).



## Europe Could Be Reshaped in 2017

"Europe is facing multiple tribulations in 2017, engulfed in uncertainties over terrorism, borders, migration, economics and President Trump's new America First message booming from across the Atlantic.

"It's not the first time Europe has been challenged by crisis," said Anna-Lena Högenauer, a researcher at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Luxembourg, but "there's definitely a combination of crises."

"Here are some of the potentially disruptive issues and events looming for the year that could reshape—or at least deepen—the fractures in the European Union, a 28-nation bloc of more than a half-billion people and the world's largest single trade-free zone. ...

"Negotiations for Britain's exit from the European Union, known as 'Brexit,' the outcome of a referendum last June, could officially start by the end of March, a self-imposed deadline set by Prime Minister Theresa May. ...

"Turkey has been negotiating to become a European member for more than a decade, but that prospect has turned more doubtful, partly because of the authoritarian actions of the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, particularly since a failed coup attempt in July.

"Increasingly exasperated with the European Union, Mr. Erdogan has suggested that he may hold a referendum in Turkey this year on whether to withdraw its membership application. ...

"Greece's economy remains anemic and in need of more debt relief.

"Despite three bailouts in five years, poverty rates are increasing and the unemployment rate is Europe's highest.

"The chronically troubled economy of Italy, the European Union's fourth largest, has aroused growing concerns as possibly the next Greek-style debt crisis. ...

"The regional parliament of Spain's semiautonomous Catalonia region voted in November 2015 to begin a process to achieve independence in 2017—an outcome the Spanish government has vowed to block. But the se-

cessionists, buoyed by the Brexit referendum, say the momentum of nationalist movements in Europe is on their side. Whether they will succeed remains unclear at best. ...

"President Trump has injected uncertainty into Europe over a unified stand toward Russia, suggesting he wants to ease sanctions. Mr. Trump ... also has criticized NATO, asserting that the alliance is obsolete ...

"While Mr. Trump's subordinates have sought to reassure European Union leaders that the United States remains a reliable ally, doubts have been planted. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the foreign minister of Germany at the time Trump made those remarks, said they had 'caused astonishment.' ...

"Emboldened by the momentum of Brexit and Mr. Trump, nationalist politicians espousing hostility toward the European Union and Muslim immigrants have made strong gains in campaigns for coming elections in three European countries, including the two largest.

"In the Netherlands, where a national vote is set for March 15, the populist lawmaker Geert Wilders, who wants to slash immigration and follow Britain out of the European Union, is doing well in the polls. ...

"In France, where presidential elections are set for April 23 with a runoff between the two top candidates on May 7, the rise of the extreme right has been a dominant theme. ...

"Germany holds federal elections Sept. 24, which will determine the future of Chancellor Angela Merkel" ("The Questions That Could Reshape a Worried Europe in 2017" by Rick Gladstone, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 28, 2017, pp. 1-5).

Bible prophecy indicates there will be a 10-king union in Europe at the time Christ returns (Dan. 2:40-44, Rev. 17:12-14). It will be ruled by a strong leader called the beast (Rev. 17:12, Rev. 13:1-9). The union will not be very strong: "the kingdom shall be divided ... so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile ... but they will not adhere to one another" (Dan. 2:41-43). Some of these crises Europe is now facing could reshape the E.U. from its present form into a 10-king union led by the beast.