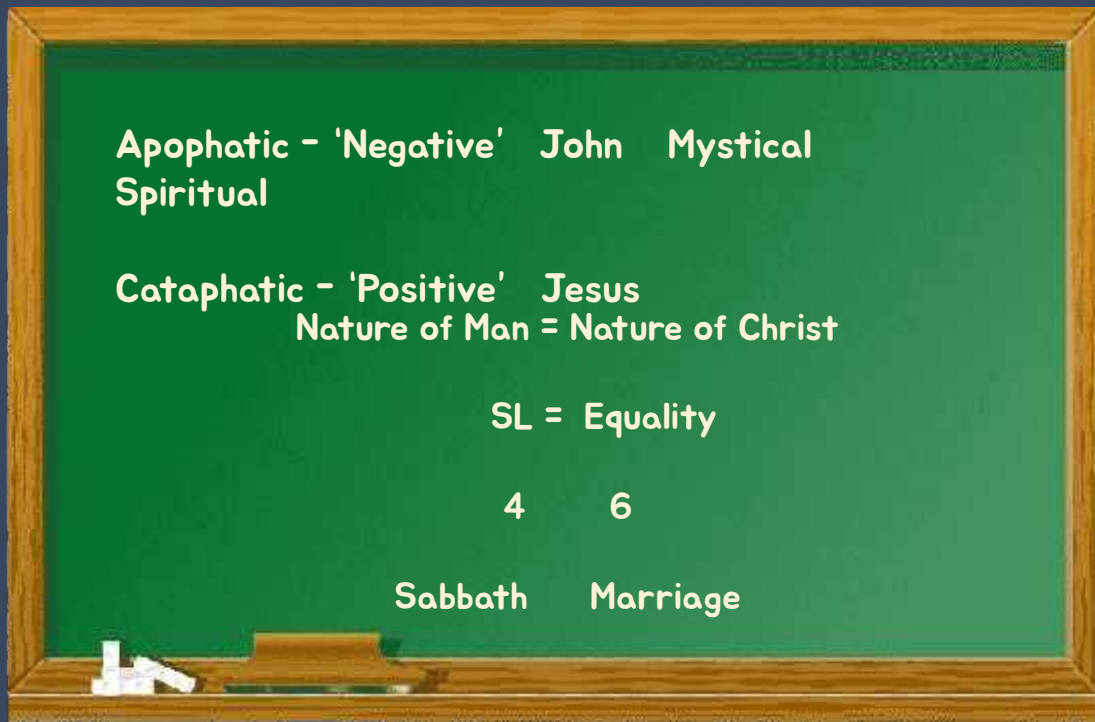


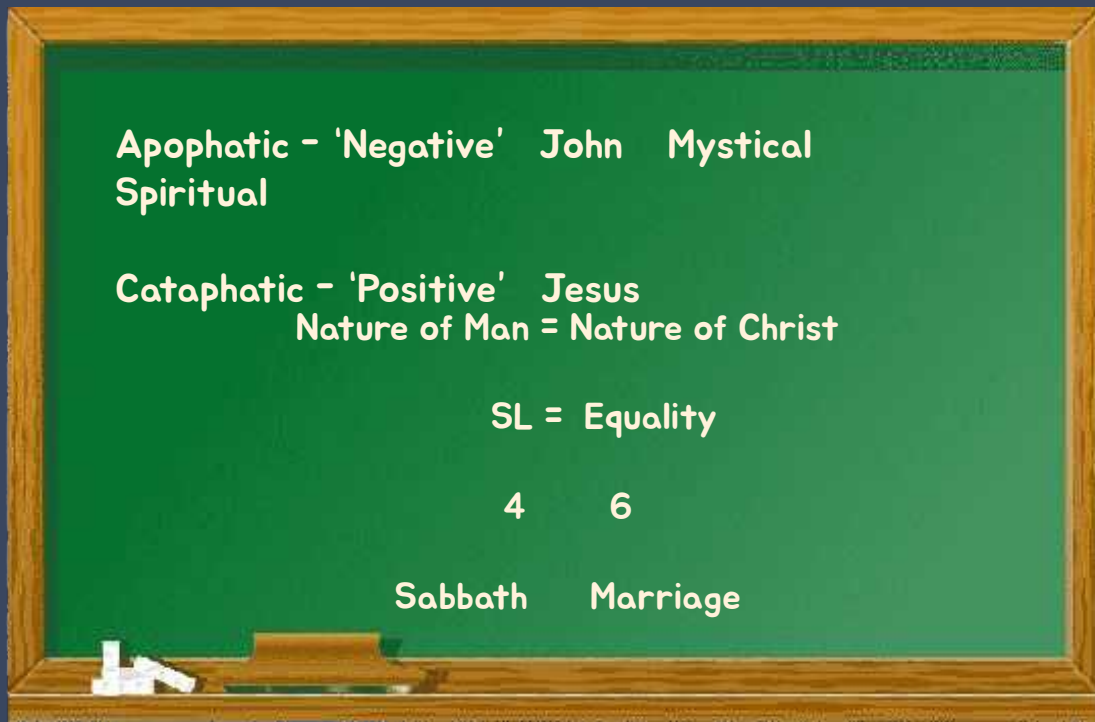


The Wisdom of Sophia

Parminder Biant February 2021

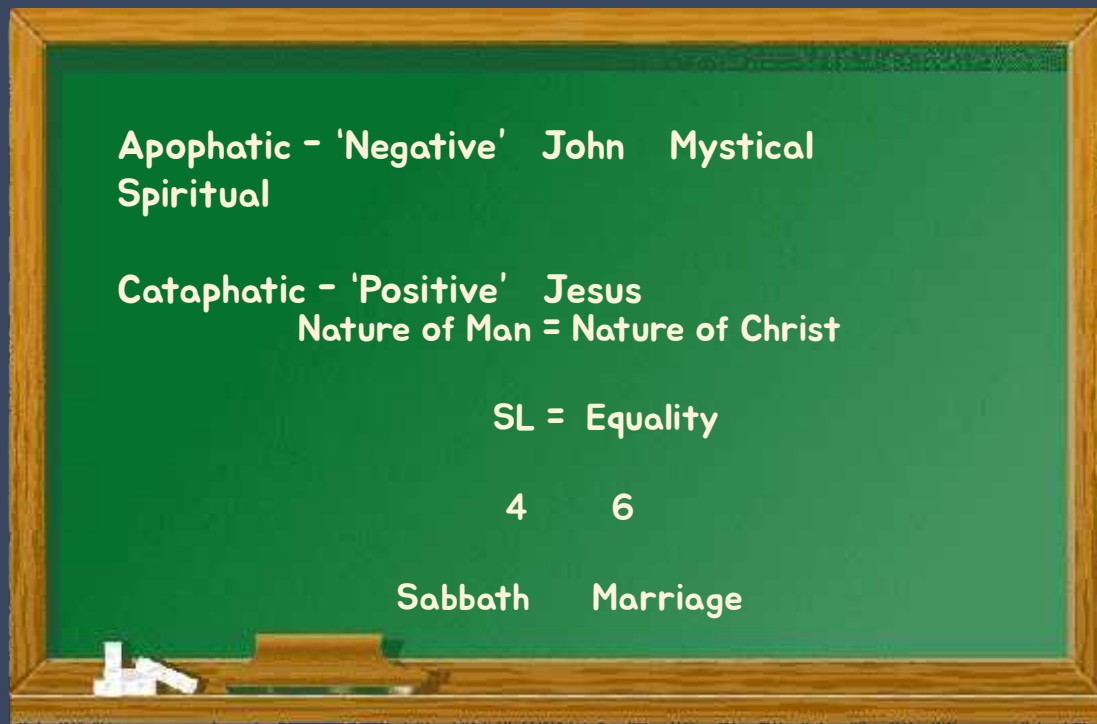


In our studies at this camp meeting we've been studying the transition from looking at things in the negative to looking at things in the positive and we've defined those two concepts as two schools of theological thought. We've gone over them a number of times but I'm hoping that we are now familiar and comfortable with these terms.



I had a number of reasons why I wanted to introduce these terms and speak about them from these perspectives. First of all, I wanted to show us that God has been leading us step by step. Secondly, I wanted to explain our history, the steps that we have taken, using a new term but integrating that into terms that we're all familiar with.





So, on the board you can see John and Jesus, you can see the Sabbath and Marriage, you can see the four Commandments and the six Commandments. These are all repeating themes and we should be able to look at our history from these different perspectives. The more we can see things in these three dimensions it's my hope that we will all have more confidence in the message and that there is nothing new under the sun.



Apophatic - 'Negative'

The word apophatic means a negative theology. It says let's try to look at God in a negative way or with a negative mindset. This doesn't mean that you look at God in a bad way. What it means is that when you look at God you cannot understand Him. This is a very conservative mindset and it borders on mysticism.

I mentioned briefly about prayer earlier because too many of you are mysticist. You follow ideas and you don't have any idea why. This is a very pagan way of looking at God. It says that we have to appease him and make him happy in order to find favor with him. It's like saying, if you return a faithful tithe the gates of heaven will open and if **you** don't, it wont.

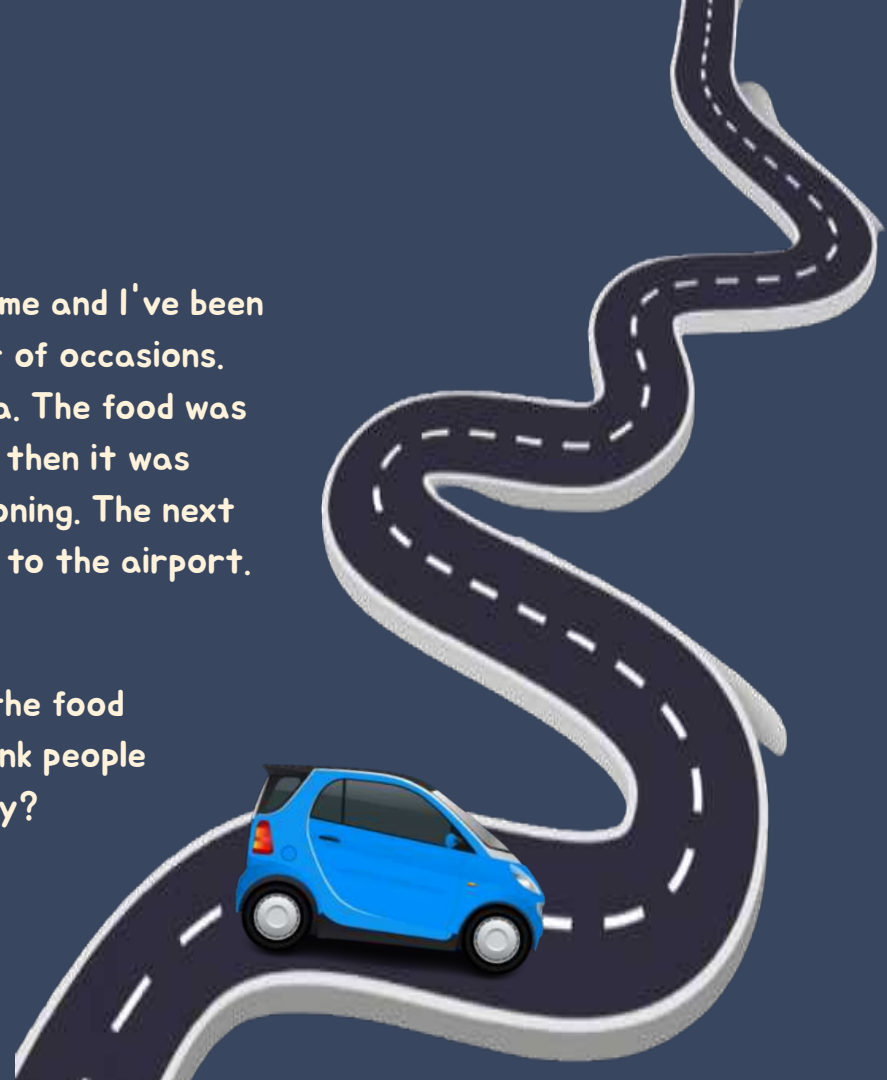


Apophatic - 'Negative'

I've been an Adventist for a very long time and I've been made ill from Adventist food on a number of occasions. My worst experience was in South Africa. The food was made on Friday, it was not refrigerated, then it was reheated on Sabbath and I got food poisoning. The next day I was on a 7 hour car journey to go to the airport. And let me tell you, it was utter misery.

However, they prayed many times over the food but it didn't do any good. Why do you think people don't like this Apophatic type of theology?

It limits God



Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'

There's also an opposite theology to this, it's called Cataphatic. This means positive. So we have a negative and a positive theology. With this cataphatic type of theology we look at things in a positive way and it's the opposite of everything we just spoke about.

Cataphatic theology says that you can understand God and that you're supposed to understand God. An example of the cataphatic way is to say that God is love and we all know what love is. We know how to do good to people. When we say God is love we use cataphatic theology because we understand it and we can explain it.





Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'

All human relationships are a parable but what if you don't understand the parable? Can you get any benefit in having human relationships? Of course you can. I'll just call it the mystery of God.



Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'



So, when we say that God is love, this is limiting him because we know what love means. So, there are these two different ways of looking at God. One says, we cannot understand God and the other says that we can understand him. Let me ask a question. The incarnation of Jesus when he comes to earth as a man and becomes the Christ, is that Apophatic or Cataphatic?

Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'



It's Cataphatic because now we can understand God. At the same time his disciples say to him that they want to understand God. We have to consider both concepts at the same time. If we only use the apophatic model there's no point in studying any more because God's ways are past finding out.

Romans 11:33



O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'



If you look at the cataphatic model now you can understand the love of God. Now you can begin to think about why Jesus came to earth. That's what we attempted to do four years ago in the studies of the Nature of Man. I read the Great Controversy statement Ellen White said, if you go to a cataphatic model you're going to be in trouble, stick to the apophatic model.

Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'



In other words, stay on the negative. But we could have gone to another book and she will tell you that the first duty of a human being is to know what?

Our first duty is to understand our humanity or our own nature, The Nature of Mankind. The study of the Nature of Mankind is a synonym of what subject?

Apophatic - 'Negative'

Cataphatic - 'Positive'



The Nature of Christ or his human nature. You cannot separate these two. This is one of the most important vows that we have, its vow number 12. **Why** is it so critical?

If you want to understand the nature of Christ it means you're going to begin to delve into the Nature of God. Just like the health reform or medical missionary work it's the entering wedge of the Gospel.



**Nature of Man =
Nature of Christ
or
His Human Nature**

Apophatic - 'Negative' John Mystical Spiritual

Cataphatic - 'Positive' Jesus

Nature of Man = Nature of Christ

SL = Equality

4 6

Sabbath Marriage



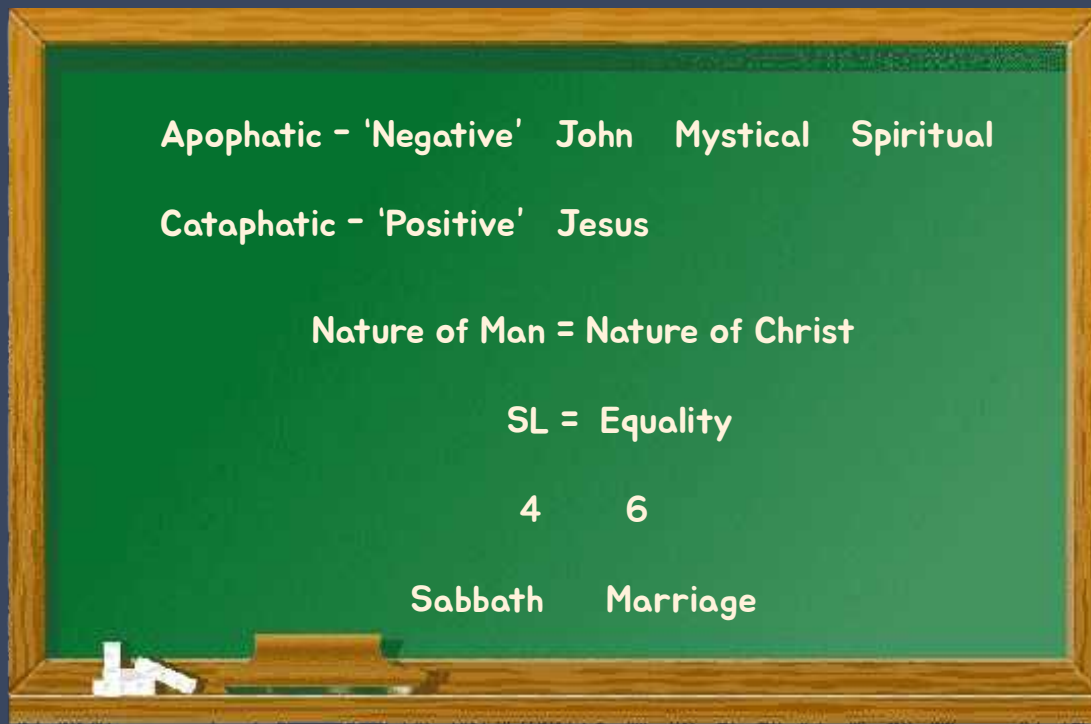
When we first began this study you probably thought,

'Why talk about these issues?'

'Why introduce Latin and Greek terms?'

'What purpose do they serve?'





At least one of the reasons why I have introduced these terms is to try to show you that what we are doing is reviewing standard theological ideas. Ideas that Christians have been grappling with for millenia. These are not just crazy random ideas that we are just coming up with today.



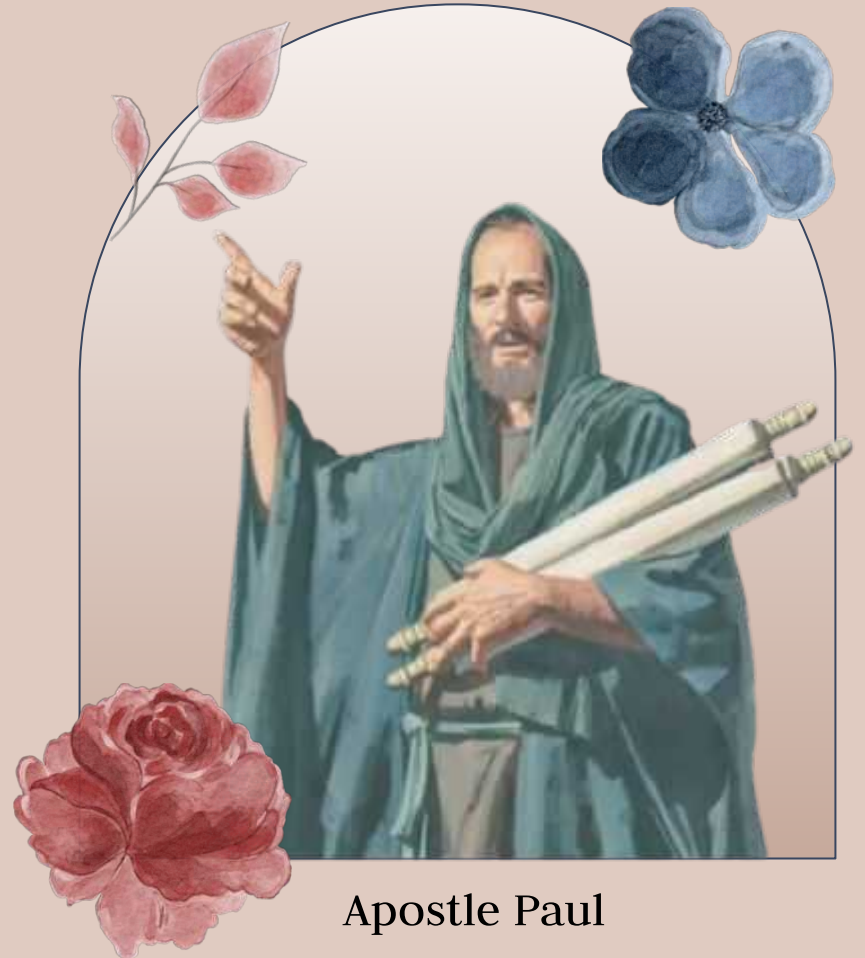
When we are challenging existing thoughts and ideas, it looks like we are in a headlong collision with the Spirit of Prophecy. But in fact what is happening is that we are following a tradition of Christianity.



He's not the only person but he's the one who does it often, the champion of challenging existing dogma. Does anyone know who I am talking about?

I'm hoping that you have listened to studies that I've done in the past where Paul has gone into the Old Testament and turned things upside down.

He takes Old testament scriptures and manipulates them for his own use and what you have to ask yourself, is why do you find those things acceptable?



Apostle Paul

Then we come to Ellen White

She's not as bad as Paul but she does the same thing. She'll take bible verses and apply them in a literal way or she'll apply them in a way that suits herself. What is your response to this?

If you're a protestant today, you would say that it's evidence that she's a false prophet. If you're an Adventist, you'll say that it's evidence that she is a prophet because she's clarifying the Word of God for us, she's simplifying it.



Ellen White

Here we are today,

Turning things upside down
because when Ellen White says
you can't time-set, we say you can.

When she says it's good that
women don't vote, we say that's
wrong.

When she says that mixed
marriages are not good, we say
that's crazy.

We could go on and on.



Ellen White

If you start considering some of her ideas about sexuality which were all based upon false science, we would say that it was based upon craziness and we would reject it.

We've already discussed the subject of masturbation as an example. Where Ellen White is just repeating the advice of the crazy doctors of her time, not just doctors but Christian doctors. Who themselves had a warped understanding of inspiration because they said that masturbation will make you go mad or blind or weak. They said that it destroys this spiritual idea of vitality.

We know all of those things are wrong and it scares people to confront inspiration in this manner.



Ellen White

The dilemma that we are faced with today is how do we walk this fine line?

Do we completely reject Ellen White and portions of inspiration, because they don't fit in with our current understanding of truth.

Or, do we try to understand these statements in their proper context?

This difficulty is causing this movement a lot of pain and heartache. They are what I would call the 'Old God' still remaining amongst us.



Ellen White

There are those who are still trying to protect inspiration from people like myself, who seem to want to go in and attack. But what I want you to see is that this is not some random fight between myself and the 'Old God.' This is a theological discussion on two lines of thinking. I've tried to lay this out in our presentations in this Camp Meeting because I think those people don't see it. Because we have been taking progressive steps over the past 5-10 years and those first steps were gentle, people were not troubled by them because they didn't see what was going on.



However, there's one more fearful thing which you have to really come to terms with because it's not just that they were gentle steps. It's not just that those things took you by surprise and you didn't realize it. What we had in our movement was what we call in the English **the Elephant in the room**. What was that elephant in the room?



The expression 'The elephant in the room' is a metaphorical idiom in English for an important or enormous topic, question, or controversial issue that is obvious or that everyone knows about but no one mentions or wants to discuss because it makes at least some of them uncomfortable and is personally, socially, or politically embarrassing, controversial, inflammatory, or dangerous.



It was Elder Jeff, he had a cult of personality. When he spoke, it was law, no one questioned him. Since he's left we no longer have a leader of that stature in this movement. A person with a cult of personality that people will just listen to because of who they are.



Now, every step has to be won by aggressive warfare. Everything has to be checked, everything has to be justified and that means that our message progresses slower. I'm just stating things as fact, there's no complaint. So, that's just a short summary of what we've been discussing so far and the reason why I've introduced these topics.



Creature



Human Wise
Homo - Sapien

= Latin



Human



Human Wise

Homo - Sapien = Latin

Homo - Sexual

Greek & Latin

Same - Sex

Creature



Human



Anthropomorphism

Since we're talking about funny words, I'm going to give you another one. It's Anthropomorphism. This word has to do with the personification of things. You can take an object and then you can give it human characteristics.



If you watch cartoons, you have these animals that can talk or you may think about the sun or the moon having human characteristics. All of these are Anthropomorphic concepts or ideas. The reason why I introduced this word is because the bible does.



Anthropomorphism

Is God a male or a female? In the bible it speaks almost exclusively about God being male or a man. Is that factually correct? Is God male or is he's female? What I want to suggest is that what is happening here is an anthropomorphic concept.



What humans have done is taken a human construct and projected it onto God. Or, depending on how you want to see it, God created male and female and he projected onto us these biblical models explaining himself as male.



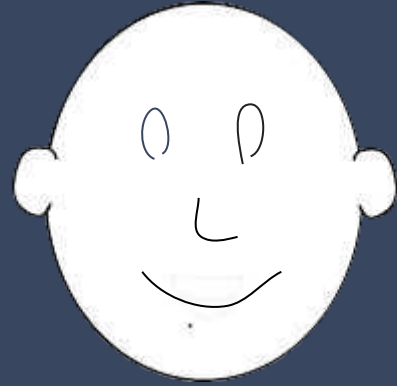
Anthropomorphism

If he wants to talk to us he has to come down to our level so that we can understand who He is. Some people said that God is both male and female. For those people who think that, I wonder if they could send me a picture of what He looks like, like below the waist. I don't mean to be disrespectful or crude to God. I just think it's crazy to think that God is both male and female. At least amusing if not crazy, because I thought God was Spirit. I thought He created humans.



Anthropomorphism

I'm not very good at art work but I want to draw a picture of myself. Here I am. This was created in my image, it even looks like me but it's not me. It's nothing like me. For one thing I'm three dimensional and this drawing is two dimensional. The colors don't even match. I could get someone else to do a much better job drawing me and that would be a better creation of my image.



All I want to say in this silly example, is just because we were created in God's image doesn't mean God is either male or female. I'm not asking what science says, I'm dealing with inspiration. For those people who say, the bible says that Jesus is male and I'm not going to listen to any other version. You have not listened to the presentations that we've been doing in this Camp Meeting.



Your stuck in the dark ages under the ministry of John and you want to hold onto mystical ideas because you feel uncomfortable thinking about the truth. There's no denial that when Jesus was incarnated he came as a man but that doesn't mean that God is male. Such conclusions would be based on a false understanding of parabolic teaching.



Apophatic - 'Negative' **John** Mystical Spiritual

Cataphatic - 'Positive' Jesus

Nature of Man = Nature of Christ

SL = Equality

4 6

Sabbath Marriage



When God created humankind in Genesis 2, what was the message that he was sending? Was he trying to show us that male and females were different? So, when God creates Eve, is she portrayed different or is she the same? Let's turn to Genesis 2:20.



Apophatic - 'Negative' **John** Mystical Spiritual

Cataphatic - 'Positive' Jesus

Nature of Man = Nature of Christ

SL = Equality

4 6

Sabbath Marriage



20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.



When he looked at everything he couldn't find anything that was the same as him. I don't know how many of each animal was created but when he saw two dogs or two cows, they looked the same and they were friends with each other. When he looks around he only sees one of him, one of his kind. So, we know what happens. God puts him to sleep. He takes a rib out of Adam which is the same as his other ribs and he fashions a woman. Then what does Adam say? Oh, you look so different! Your body shape is different from mine.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

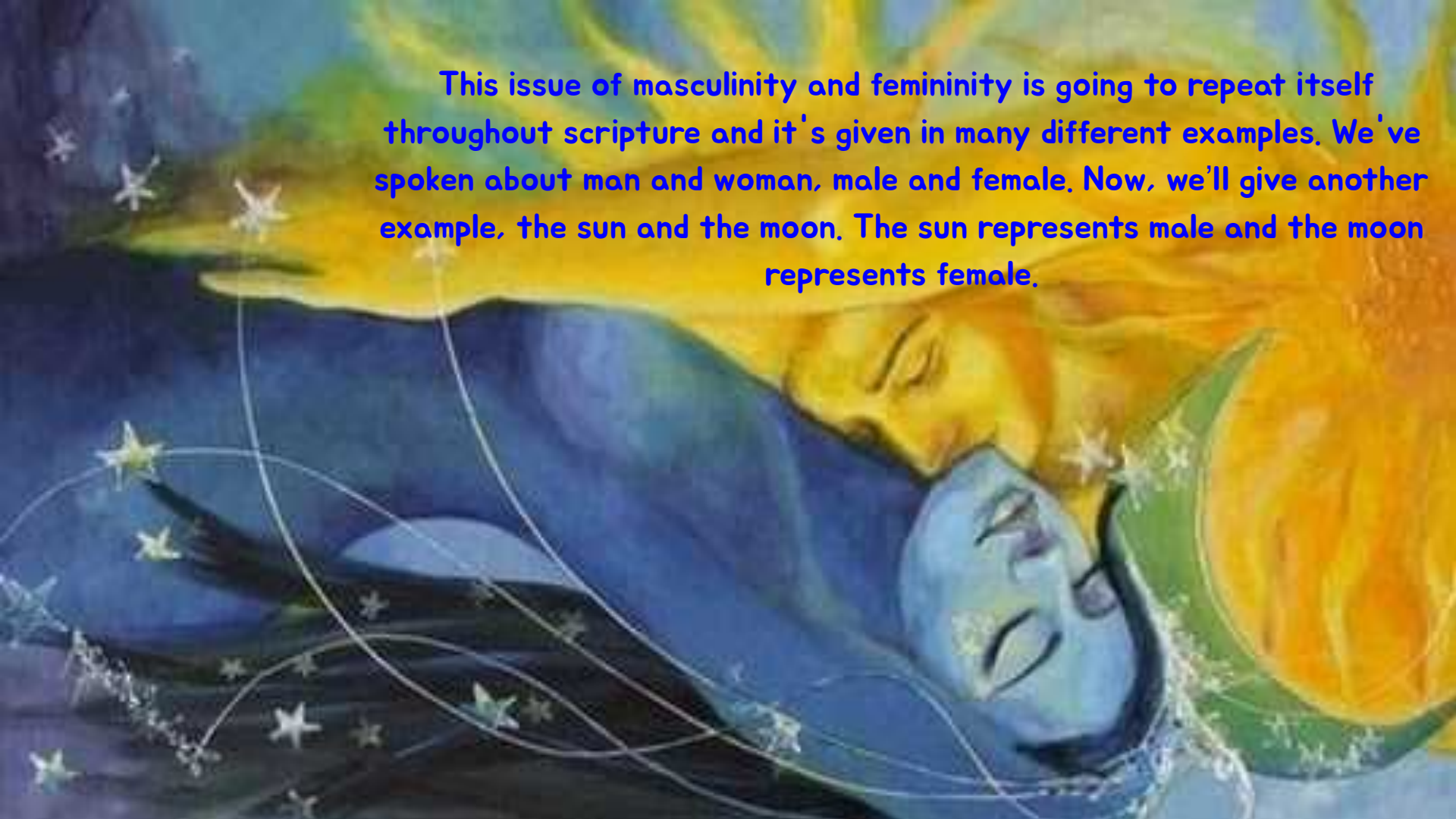
22 and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.



NO! You have a repeat and enlarge that Eve is exactly the same as Adam. They are not called Adam and Eve at this moment because Eve hasn't been given her name yet. So, what we see in the verses is not that they're different, it's that they're the same. She's identical to him. 'Bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh' They are identical, not different. That's the primary lesson that Genesis 2 is trying to teach us.

This issue of masculinity and femininity is going to repeat itself throughout scripture and it's given in many different examples. We've spoken about man and woman, male and female. Now, we'll give another example, the sun and the moon. The sun represents male and the moon represents female.



I'm going to give you three examples.
Man - Woman, Sun - Moon, God -
Creation. There are others but we'll just
go with these three. They're all parables.
What God is going to do is take these
three examples and in their own unique
way, they all have a repeating theme.
Either in their physical being or their
function. So, let's go with the sun and
the moon.



What's the purpose of the sun and the moon? We don't have to guess because it tells us in Genesis 1. **To** give light, they are both there to give light. One for the day and one for the night. However, there is a substantial difference between the two. When we get light from the sun it's **the** originator of that light or the giver of that light. But when it comes to the moon **it** receives light and then reflects it.



Day

The
Originator or
Giver of light

To give light

Receiver of
light or
Reflects light

Night

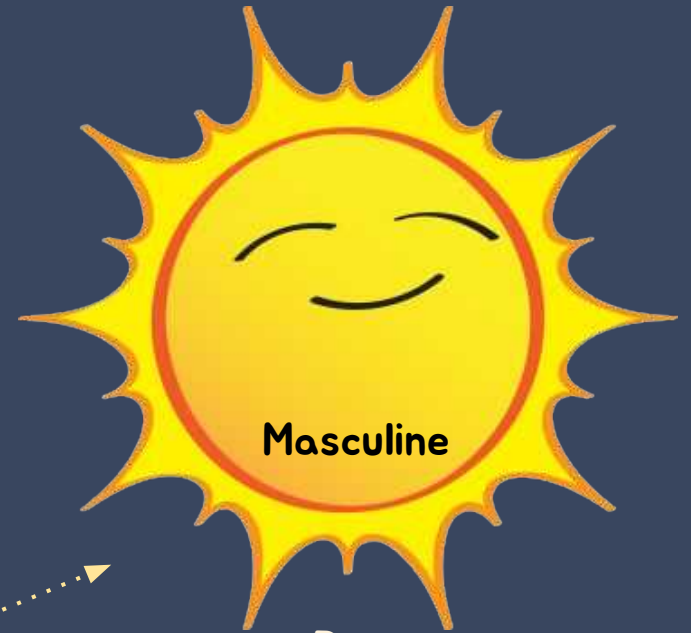


When you start looking at these two objects, you have the giver and you have the receiver. But they both have the same function which is light. They're identical, there's no difference between them just like Adam and Eve, *'Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.'* However, there are subtle differences that God wants to show us. He's going to portray one from a **feminine** perspective and one from a masculine perspective. Because he wants to show us the full spectrum of light.



To give light

Receiver of light or Reflects light



The Originator or Giver of light

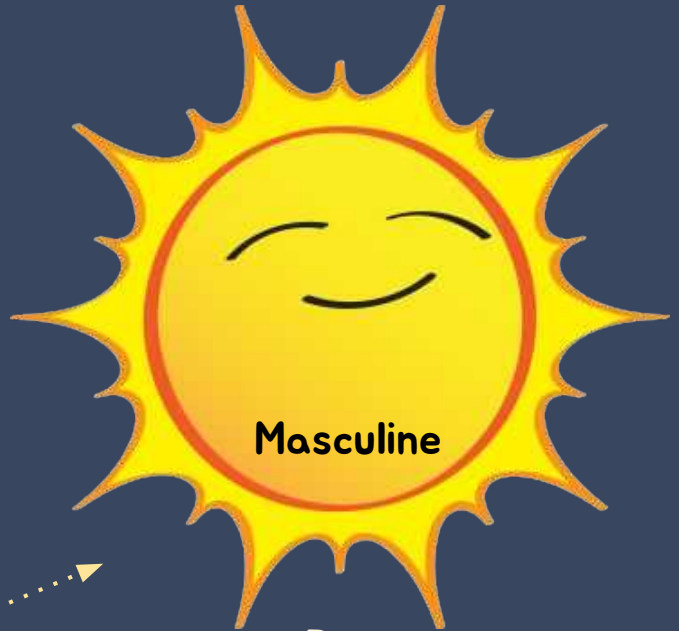
God gives us light and he gives that light in different ways. When it's direct it has this masculine concept connected to it. When it receives it has a feminine concept connected to it. What God is trying to teach us is that **He's** the giver of light and he will give that light in different ways to teach us his graciousness.

God is the giver of light



To give light

Receiver of light or Reflects light



Day

The Originator or Giver of light

I mentioned three examples: Sun - Moon, Man - Woman, and God - Creation. I'm going to do another one and I'm going to call it God and the Holy Spirit. It has the same modeling. So, now I've given you four. Let's go back to the story of Mount Sinai.

The slide features a dark blue background with watercolor-style floral illustrations in the corners. In the top right, there are several red roses and a single blue flower. In the bottom left, there are blue roses and red leaves. In the center, a dark red rounded rectangle contains the text.

GOD
&
Holy Spirit

God is hidden behind clouds and the people don't want to look at him. There's lightning and thunder and he's hidden behind all of this but God still gives light. Moses climbs up the mountain and he stays there for a while. What begins to happen to Moses when he stands in the presence of God?

It's like what happens to you when you stand in the presence of the Sun. You absorb that sunlight, you might even get a suntan. Moses absorbs this light. He comes back down the mountain and he's going to start giving off this light but it's not his light because it's a reflection of God.



Here's an example of these two models. Model 1 = Sun - Moon, Model 2 = God - His Created Being. We can see that there is consistency in this model. The object is light, God's people need light. They get it directly from God or from his creation and when it comes from his creation it's a reflection of God's light. What God is doing is teaching us about Himself. He's going to play games. He's going to show us about the giving and the receiving. When it's in the giving mode it's masculine. When it's in the receiving mode it's female.

Sun - Moon



God - His Created Being



Giving = Masculine
Receiving = Feminine



Let's look at man and woman. Without getting too graphic, you can see in their physical organs that one is the giver and one is the receiver. We all know what happens at intercourse, when a man penetrates a woman he gives and she receives. When he ejaculates, he gives and she receives. What we're seeing here is the creation of life and it's all a reflection or an explanation of God. How God gives and how he receives and it's all explained from the gender model, Male - Female.

Giving = Masculine
Receiving = Feminine

Sun - Moon



God - His Created Being



When we speak about God and creation and we see him doing things, it's him in the masculine. When you see Him explained through creation, it's him in the feminine. Like the mother hen, is it male or female? It's feminine. What you see when you start looking carefully, is that God is going to describe himself in masculine and feminine terms. When you see Godliness revealed in creation you'll see it in feministic terms. When you see God pouring out his goodness you'll see it in masculine terms.

Giving = Masculine
Receiving = Feminine



Sun - Moon

God - His Created Being



The Bible is a story book about God and his goodness, he's the God who gives. So, it's no wonder the vast majority of the time you see God portrayed in the masculine. What's the most important thing that we can get from God that we need, besides love?

Let's go to the book of Proverbs and what we need to do is search out Sophia. Hopefully, we all know Sophia, it's this beautiful woman. Lets go to Proverbs 1,

Giving = Masculine
Receiving = Feminine



Proverbs 1

20 Wisdom crieth without;

She uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates:

In the city she uttereth her words, saying,



22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?

And the scorers delight in their scorning,

And fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof:

Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel,

And would none of my reproof:

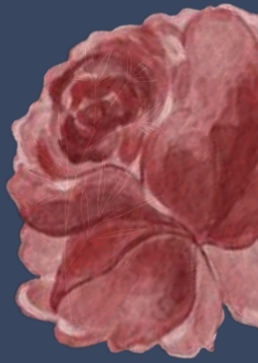


Then she starts laughing at you when you carry on through the verses. This is Sophia, you can go and study her if you like. She's obviously female. Who is she?

I would suggest she is information or words. You might call it Logos or The Word. You might call it Jesus. We don't have time to prove what I'm saying but wisdom are these words. It's what Sophia speaks to you. The words - the Word - the Logos. Who is the Word?

Jesus

Yet people tell me that Jesus is a man but it's clear from inspiration that Jesus is Female. We need to be very careful about how we read and not make rash judgements or statements. When the bible speaks about a masculine God it's not because God is male.

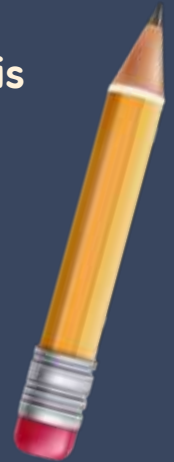


I'm going to change subjects for a bit. What's the problem with the Hebrew language?

The problem with Hebrew is that it's simple. What's the advantage with the Greek language, why is Greek good?

Because it's complicated. The problem with Hebrew is that it's too simple. If you want to describe something in Hebrew you've got two choices. Male or Female. You don't have anything in between. I can't say that this pencil (it) is non-living. In Greek I can because in Greek I can make this pencil non-gender.

However, in Hebrew because it's a basic language it doesn't let you do that. Like I said I'm not a Hebrew or Greek scholar so I'm only explaining things in a simple way but I think it's accurate.



In Hebrew if you talk about anything, you have to give it gender, either male or female, you don't have a choice. You can see how difficult it is for God, I don't know why he chose Hebrew. He's stuck because everything is going to have a gender to it. Remember that God is trying to teach us about himself. The giver is masculine, he's also a receiver or he has agents who receive to give. **J**ust like wheat. Wheat is going to receive sunlight, absorb it and give you something in return.



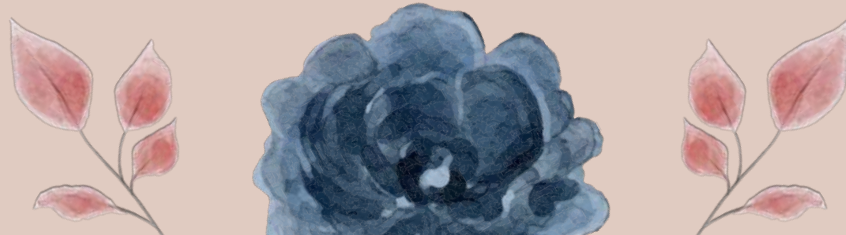
All of these concepts are going to be compartmentalized into masculine and feminine terms. It's not because God has gender, he's not male or female, he's neither. It's not because men are superior to women. What did Adam do in Genesis 2? He gave of himself so therefore he's going to be defined in masculine terms. Eve is going to receive the bone, so she's going to be man, the feminine version of man which is woman. It's not because there's some hierarchy between them, it's just to explain to us the two facets of God, how he thinks and how he operates. He gives and he receives and we see this over and over again.





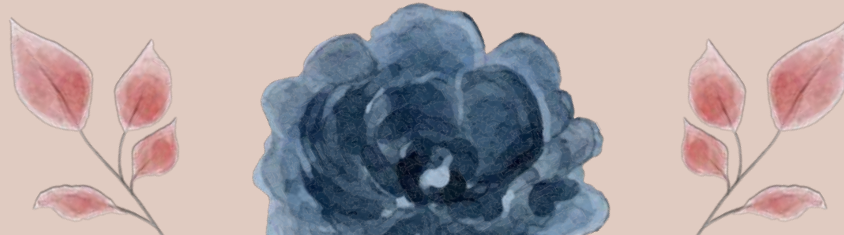
So, when we start thinking about God and we start thinking about the father and the son you can begin to see how incorrect it is to believe that God is a father and that Jesus is a son. In the book of Proverbs, Jesus isn't even born yet and he's the Logos, the Word and his name is Sophia, woman - feminine. Why? What was Jesus doing in heaven? Was he standing equal to God?

No, he stands as a servant





If you can remember Elder Tess in her first presentation she discussed this dynamic. We can really be thankful for the Spirit of Prophecy. As she explains the nature of Jesus. Not just that he's a man but that in heaven he's receiving from God and giving those blessings to people, like the angels. So, he has this feminine characteristic and that's why he's called Sophia in the book of Proverbs. It's an aspect of God, it's not a separate God.





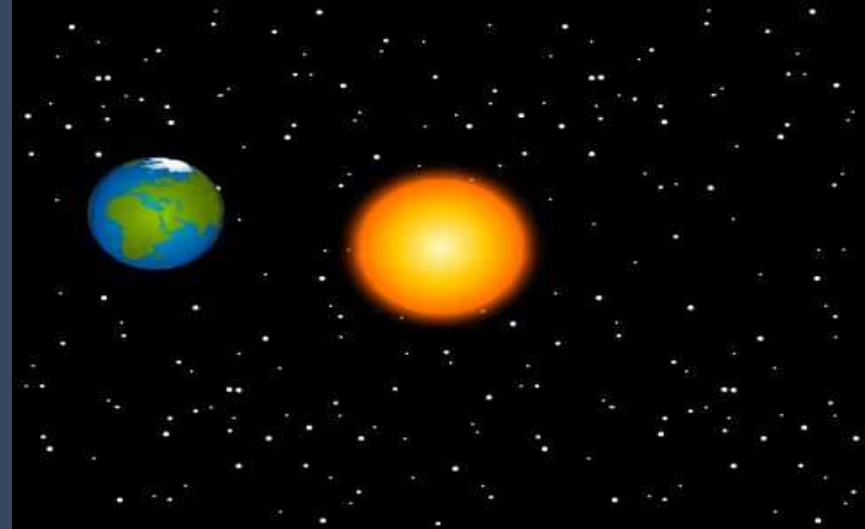
It's explained in a different way and when it's done that way it's given feminine characteristics so that we can learn better. What's so crazy about human beings is that almost every gift, every tool that God has given to us we have abused. The ceremonial system, human relationships, animals, plant life, anything and everything. All of those things are meant to teach us and yet we have destroyed those models.



We've run out of time but I want to leave you with this closing thought. What happens every 24 hours? What marks a new day?

Some of you said sunrise and sunset. Of course, we know that is completely wrong. Because we are going back over a thousand years into the dark ages of Catholicism to say 'sunset.' We do know that the sun never sets, don't we. And we do know that the sun never rises, either. The sun stands still and we move around it. So, this is not a sunrise or a sunset. This is an earth rotation.

The last time someone mentioned this subject they did so at the peril of their own life. Does anyone know who that was?

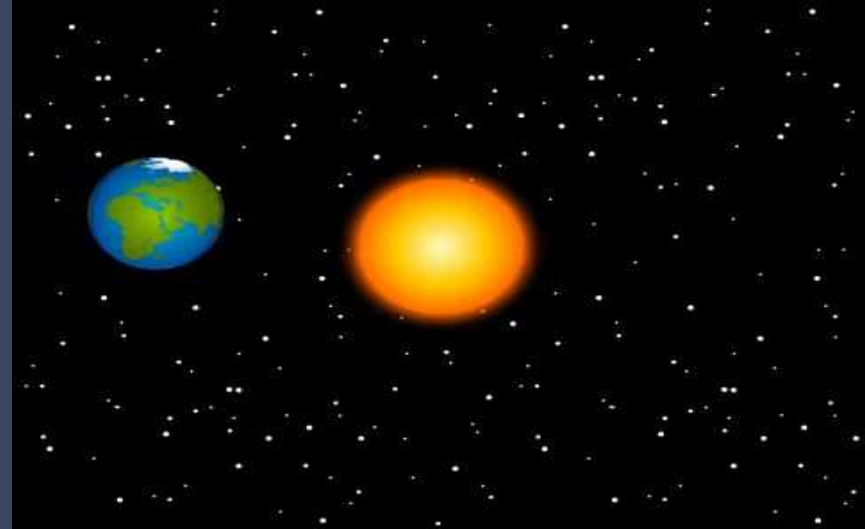
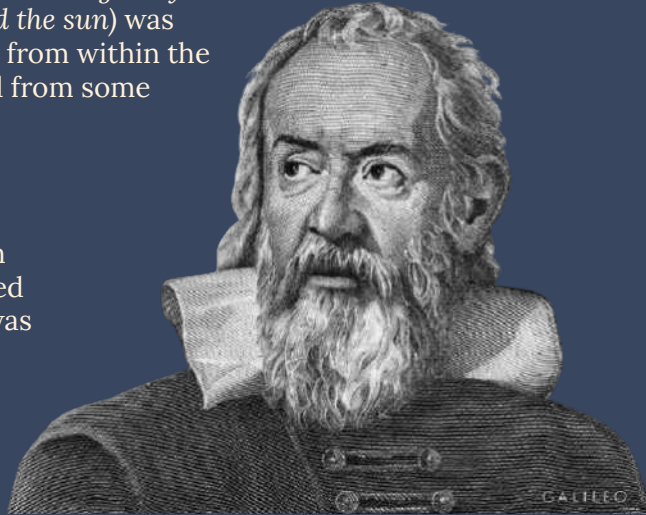


GALILEO

He risked his life to say there is no such thing as a sunset and I want us to think about that because even though it's just a random thought it relates directly to our subject. It's dogma that's been taught for a thousand years and time does not make it truth.

Galileo's championing of Copernican heliocentrism (*Earth rotating daily and revolving around the sun*) was met with opposition from within the Catholic Church and from some astronomers.

The matter was investigated by the Roman Inquisition in 1615, which concluded that heliocentrism was foolish, absurd, and heretical since it contradicted Holy Scripture.



I just want us to remember that as we move through our studies, not just at this camp meeting but also moving forward.

Remember this anthropomorphic concept that God has given to us. He portrays himself as masculine and feminine because he created us that way, to teach us about who he is and how he operates.

He's the Giver God and the Receiver God. When I say the Receiver God, I don't mean that he wants things from you, because he's all giving. He either gives directly or he gives indirectly and this is the masculine and feminine concept that inspiration wants to teach us.

Anthropomorphism

God? = Male
= Female

Giver God = gives directly - Masculine
Receiver God = gives indirectly - Feminine



I've answered the question that someone asked,

'from whom does God receive'

But that's not the concept.

Jesus said,

'I can do nothing of myself. I can only give you what I receive from the father'

Crazy people think that means that Jesus is a lesser being or a lesser God, that he doesn't have any power. That's why it's so crazy. The Great Controversy is all centered around the divinity of Jesus.

He is verily God and yet he says,

'I can do nothing unless I receive it'

Anthropomorphism

God? = Male
= Female

Giver God = gives directly - Masculine
Receiver God = gives indirectly - Feminine



He wants to teach us how God operates. He gives directly and he gives through his agents. It gets so involved that one of these agents actually is Jesus, who is God. Ezekiel would call this wheels within wheels.

The whole concept of man and woman, masculine and feminine, is not about headship or who is superior or who is inferior. It's about how God interacts with his creation. When you see these two ways that God deals with his creation, the best way that he could explain it is by making those two humans one that gave and one that received. In the example of human beings that modeling is done physically.

Anthropomorphism

God? = Male
= Female

Giver God = gives directly - Masculine
Receiver God = gives indirectly - Feminine



A night scene with a wooden stump on a wooden deck, surrounded by glowing green plants and a starry sky.

Let's pray,

Dear Lord, we thank you. We thank you for our humanity and we thank you for your divinity. As humanity and divinity combine, help us to understand the parables of the masculine and the feminine. Help us to see your Goodness and your wisdom and help us to embrace the wisdom that we find in the book of proverbs. She stands outside crying to be heard, may each of us be willing to open our hearts and receive her. Bless us to this end we pray in Jesus' s name.
Amen.