

# The Sabbath Sentinel

November–December 2012



**“Junk” DNA no longer considered “junk”**

**BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association**

Jesus said, “the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.”

# The Sabbath Sentinel

November–December 2012 Volume 64, No. 6 Issue 558

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**Our Cover:** *“Junk” (noncoding) DNA was thought to have no purpose. However, over 70 recent scientific studies have shown that “Junk” DNA has essential functions in the body. Moreover, this “junk” is irreducibly complex and must have had a “Designer.” (source: iStockPhoto)*

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# Darwin's Colossal Fraud



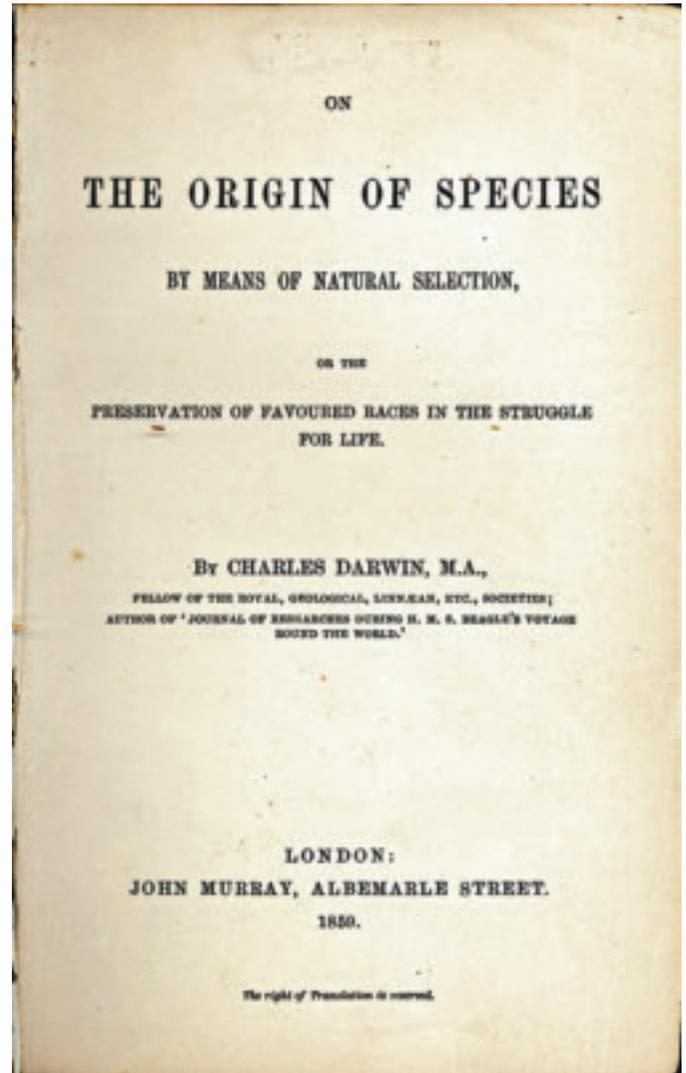
Most people believe that Charles Darwin was making an honest effort to advance scientific discovery when he wrote his *Origin of Species* in 1859. However, a look at the actual title of his work reveals a much more sinister motive for his work. The fact that the full title of his book is lacking in most discussions of his "scientific" work is in itself revealing. Let me give you the complete title of his book, and you will begin to see the motivation behind it: *On The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. That's right. The purpose of Darwin's book was to preserve the "Favoured Races" in their struggle for life.

Few people understand what Charles Darwin meant by "Favoured Races" because few have read his writings on the subject and the writings of those he closely associated with. Darwin's "Favoured Race" was the race of white Europeans of which he believed that the British were the cream, the epitome. And you (like most of us) thought that his writings were all about "science." In actuality his writings were all about eugenics, that is, the right of those at the top of the food chain to eliminate those races that stood in the way of the advancement of the British Empire. It needs to be remembered that at the time of Darwin's writing, the British Empire ruled the seas and controlled vast amounts of territory in Africa, Asia, and North America. One of the major aims of Darwin and his associates was to find a way to secure the preeminence of Britain from his time forward.

## Eugenics, Darwin's Justification for Mass Murder

The originator of Eugenics was Darwin's first cousin and contemporary, Francis Galton. Galton advanced the idea of "controlled selection," which advocates the increase of desirable characteristics in a human population. Extreme applications of this principle, however, have resulted in forced sterilization and culling of the "less fit."

This philosophy was popular among intellectuals prior to World War 2. In the United States it led to the widespread practice of forcibly sterilizing "undesirables." Many in the U.S. even lauded the Nazi government's public promotion of such principles as "progressive." Margaret Sanger, the person who started Planned Parenthood, believed in promoting abortion in order to control the increase of undesirables within the



*The cover page from Darwin's first edition. (Source: Wikipedia)*

American population. She particularly wanted to control the growth of the Black population. She considered Blacks to be an "inferior race." Many Planned Parenthood clinics were located near black neighborhoods in the inner cities for the express purpose of encouraging Blacks to have abortions.

However, lest you think that the popularity of Eugenics died out with the Nazis, let's see what militant atheist and evolutionist Richard Dawkins has to say about the idea of culling out certain traits from among the

*Continued on Page 12*

# The Humor of Jesus

by *Kenneth Westby*



**A gambler died. The funeral was well attended by his professional friends. In the eulogy, the minister said: “Spike is not dead; he only sleeps.” From the rear of the chapel a man shouted: “I got a hundred that says he’s dead.”**

Religion is a rich target for humor and provides grist for the best of jokes. Yet we don’t often associate humor with the Bible, the source of our religion.

Because humor is such a fundamental aspect of the good in human nature, there can be little doubt that Jesus had a healthy dose of it. Humor can be a powerful vehicle for making important points and the Gospels show Jesus used it liberally. Some humor or wit is, of course, lost in language, age, or cultural translation—especially puns and plays on words. But most of Christ’s humor translates well if we look at it with fresh eyes.

A little four-year old was being read to by his dad from the seventh chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. Dad was reading along quite seriously when his son began to snicker and then broke out laughing. The boy laughed because he saw in his mind the preposterous picture of a man with a big beam in his eye trying to find a speck in another person’s eye. The little fellow understood perfectly that the human eye is not large enough to have a beam in it, and the idea struck him as ludicrously funny. His dad, so familiar with the passage, failed to respond to humor in an unexpected place.

Is it because we’ve become so familiar with Jesus’ teaching illustrations that they fail to bring a smile? We have all read about putting a camel through the eye of a needle, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, men being whitewashed tombs full of rot, washing the outside of a cup and leaving the crud inside, Pharisees screwing up their faces to look painfully religious. People who heard them for the first time probably smiled. Picture a guy greedily chomping down a smelly camel, hoofs, humps and all—with the camels’ big fat lips and yellow teeth hanging from the idiots’ mouth!

If we could have been in the crowd listening to Jesus’ colorful, outrageously incongruous, and humorous word pictures powering home his message, I think we would have laughed. But these are now quiet words on a worn, marked-up Bible page and have become like street signs we pass every day on the way to work, no longer noticed or read; they become so extremely familiar that the words become like old coins in which the edges have been worn smooth and the engravings have become almost indistinguishable.

Perhaps we need to reset our minds to approach Scripture with fresh eyes, a lightness of spirit, a new alertness to detail, and a savvy of human nature on display in all the settings of real people that Scripture presents. I think we would catch more of what we have previously missed.

The Bible is full of irony, wit, double entendre, paradox, epigrams, incongruity, hyperbole, absurdity, verbal subtleties, indirection, clever turns of phrases, and pungency of speech. The Bible says God laughs (Psalm 59:8) and we can be sure that the Son in his image did as well. Many have bought into the false stereotype of a Jesus who was always sorrowful, pious appearing, mild in manner, endlessly patient, grave in speech and serious almost to the point of dourness. In fact, he lost his patience when put past his limit when tolerance ceased to be a virtue (Matthew 17:17; Luke 13:6-9); and there was nothing mild about his teaching which at times excited listeners to want to kill him.

While his last weeks of ministry reflected his sorrowful anticipation of suffering and leaving his friends and family, the rest of his ministry is characterized by his joyful interaction with people. The pious Pharisees accused him and his disciples of being party animals—lots of banqueting, laughing, eating and drinking. His first miracle at a wedding wasn’t turning the party into a wake, but pouring kegs of new wine into it to keep it going. Do we suppose Jesus and his fellows were invited because they were wet blankets sure to dampen or sour the festivities?

Jesus lets Levi throw him a huge banquet with all Levi’s tax-collector buddies invited (Luke 5:27-39). The happy party causes the Pharisees to criticize, posture and talk of fasting and prayer. Jesus responds with humor, sarcasm, a parable, and then a sigh that despite his presentation of truth they, like fools, will stick with their old ways.

Jesus’ humor could be sharp and earthy at times like when he said, and this is a Westby paraphrase, “the lawyers and Pharisees are full of crap!” Check out the setting in Mark 7. Jesus is speaking openly of the fact of evacuation and that what come out of the body after eating is what is unclean. Unrepentant men are

full of spiritually unclean stuff that comes out of them like bowel movements. Jesus taught in figures and parables nearly all the time and approaching them with a prosy literalism misses his sly or wry humor.

Nathanael liked to rib Phillip over his being taken in by Jesus saying, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" When Jesus finally meets Nathanael he has a come-back for him: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Of course, Jacob was the father of the Israelites and his name meant "full of guile" or "deceiver." With a touch of sarcasm Jesus is saying, "Well, I declare, we've found the first guileless son of Jacob!"

Picture the setting for Jesus' quick repartee with the Syrophenician woman who interrupted his meal (Mark 7 24-30). He blends ethnic humor and a playful challenge to this gentile kneeling at his feet. She rolls with his humor (yes, humor can be present amid serious matters), and as we say today, "she flipped it back at him." Jesus must have smiled as he immediately granted her request.

Nearing the end of his ministry, Jesus renamed Simon with a nickname which would translate today to "Rocky." At the time it was like nicknaming a fat guy, "slim." You could see the disciples smiling. The event took place at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13-20) and Peter was then anything but a "Rock." Just moments after Peter's profound insight that Jesus is "the Christ" he proceeds to rebuke Jesus on another matter forcing Jesus to now call "Rocky" "Satan" for becoming an adversary. Peter would, in spite of his bravado, later prove himself both a coward and a liar—a flip-flopper and anything but a steady "Rock." Nevertheless, what seemed a humorous, incongruous nickname, became for Peter in the days following, a renaming to live up to and a critical role to assume in the nascent church. With God's help he did live up to his name and became the rock Jesus knew he could be. There was purpose to Jesus' wit.

In his book, *The Humor of Christ*, Dr. Elton Trueblood examines in detail thirty humorous passages in the Synoptic Gospels. I had looked for this old book for years finally finding a copy and giving two messages on the topic over the Virtual Church network. There are several other books and scholarly articles on biblical humor, but his focuses just on Christ.

You and I know that the speakers we most like to listen to are those who have weighty things to say and can say them in ways that rivet our attention, reach both our intellect and emotion, and can season their words with appropriate humor. Jesus must have been a very effective, captivating speaker yet we have nothing that he actually wrote. Nevertheless, his disciples could recall his stories, parables, and teachings with such vivid clarity they could reconstruct his message from memory. Amazing. And I think his various uses of humor helped imbed his teachings in their minds. Good preaching is memorable.

Even the morose and peevish John Calvin (known for burning opponents at the stake) had to admit in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (III: 19:9): "We are nowhere forbidden to laugh, or to be satisfied with food, ... or to be delighted with music, or to drink wine." Thanks Calvin; we needed your permission.

Humor celebrates the goodness of God, the world God created, and the life God gives. It is an accepted fact of medicine that humor is good for our physical health and is usually the best way of coping with the trials and disasters that come our way. A guy feeling frustrated over his family's financial troubles joked that "it seems the only ones who can make a deposit on a new car are the pigeons." If we aren't careful we can let circumstances suck the joy right out of us. Humor can lighten the load.

Too many religious folk are so sober and sour they repel people rather than draw them. Legalists have a great eye for criticism, but a dull ear for wit. Because humor requires a somewhat "playful" disposition and a willingness (at least temporarily) to suspend all seriousness, many people—especially those with strong and well-defined religious beliefs—may be reluctant to give up their trademark seriousness.

The New Jerusalem Bible translates Colossians 4:6: "Talk to them agreeably and with a flavor of wit ("seasoned with salt," RSV), and try to fit your answers to the needs of each one." Greek comic writers used the verb *artyo*, meaning "to season," as seasoning with the salt of wit. Of course humor can get too "salty" and like other good things become degenerated. Funny need not be filthy.

When times are tough, Paul says stand firm and "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil 4:4). Humor is a key component of joy. Jesus said to stop dwelling on the evils all around and borrowing potential troubles from tomorrow (the normal daily dose is quite enough, he wryly observed), rather borrow hope and joy from seeking the Kingdom of God (see Matthew 6:33-34). The Christian walk should be a joyful one.

There is plenty in life to smile and laugh about. A forgiven man walks lightly upon the earth and with childlike freshness is quick to smile, quick to see and think the best of others, and easily brought to laughter. He is hopeful of the future, confident of who he is, and able to lift up and bear the burdens of others.

Our lives are made better by genuine religion and genuine humor. In the teaching of the great Rabbi from Nazareth, the two forms are conjoined.

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# The “Us” Factor

by Brian Knowles



All of the teachings of our Lord Yeshua (Jesus) were important, but none more so than his instructions on prayer. Prayer is at the heart of godly living. First, he taught us that we should not pray ostentatious prayers — prayers “to be seen of men” (Matthew 6:5).

Prayer is “intimate communication” between God and one’s self. As I have written elsewhere, we should not be “spiritual exhibitionists,” putting on a show of piety for our neighbors. If we pray that way, there is no reward from God — only the empty honor of men (Matthew 6:5b).

Instead, Yeshua instructed, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you,” (Matthew 6:6). It is from this statement that the idea of Christian “prayer closets” arose. Actually there may be more to this than our English translations let on. This may be a reference to the Jewish custom of pulling the prayer shawl (*tallit*) over one’s head in order to pray anonymously. Of course this instruction does not rule out communal prayer.

## Give us this day...

Sometimes the smallest words are the most important. In what might be better called “the disciple’s prayer,” Jesus taught his followers to pray, “Our Father...give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts...” etc., etc. (Matthew 6:9 ff.). Here Jesus was teaching his disciples to think as part of a believing community, not as an assortment of isolated individuals. The reference to “daily bread” may harken back to the Exodus when God gave the whole migrating populace a daily supply of manna.

If you read closely the writings of Paul, you will see that he too encouraged the group mentality. He wanted us to think and function as a body. He wrote to the Corinthians: “...there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffer, all members suffer with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members individually,” (1 Corinthians 12:25-27).

What, today, is the “body of Christ”? My working definition is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

The “body of Christ” is made up of anyone who has God’s Spirit and who seeks to follow its leading.

Who has God’s Spirit? Those who produce the fruit of it (Galatians 5:22–25); those who display the gifting of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-11); those who seek to obey God (Acts 5:32); those who are evidently converted and undergoing the transformation of their minds in a godly direction (Romans 12:1-3); those for whom God and Christ are at the center of their lives (Philippians 1:21).

Now here’s the rub: Many well-meaning Christians will screen out others because they don’t share identical doctrinal beliefs with them. They insist that the “true” church holds to a certain rigid set of non-negotiable doctrines and dogmas that distinguish true Christians from false. From the time of the so-called “Church fathers” countless thousands of believers have suffered and died in the name of this mentality. An “us versus them” approach has resulted in a house divided against itself. It has resulted in Christians murdering other Christians in the name of Christ! Something is terribly wrong with this picture.

Helen Ellerbe has written, “The Church, throughout much of its history, has demonstrated a disregard for human freedom, dignity and self-determination. It has attempted to control, constrain and confine spirituality, the relationship between an individual and God,” *The Dark Side of Christian History*, p. 1, Introduction. Of course in context Ellerbe is referring to the Catholic Church, but the same factors may be seen throughout the whole of the Church down through its history. We see them in many manifestations of the Church, even down into small, aberrant cults and denominations like Jim Jones’ People’s Temple. The issue is control: control of tithes, doctrine, people and even human logistics.

The point is, as Christians, we are all in this together. And while there is such a thing as doctrinal truth, we can’t all claim to have fully apprehended it. Collectively, doctrinally, we are a work in progress. Hopefully we are all moving in a godly direction — albeit at different rates of speed. Meanwhile, I can’t think of a single denomination with which I can agree 100% doctrinally speaking. Does that mean I reject them as Christians? Not at all!

While we learn, those who persecute the Church from the outside couldn’t care less about our internal doctrinal distinctions. They see us all as “Christians” and therefore as “infidels” to be persecuted out of existence. Whether they are Leftists, communists, Islamists, Hindus, Buddhists or humanists, they want us *gone*. They oppose any manifestation of Christianity or Judaism.

As believers in the God of the Bible, we need to support, actively help, pray for, rescue and encourage each other. And, no, I am not here writing of “unity of error” (as some would see it), but of Christian solidarity. I am not speaking of the kind of “syncretism” being advanced by some today. Real Christianity is incompatible with religions that seek to undermine it, or water it down. We don’t need a universal world religion that blends together all the religions of the world in one incongruous pot. And we don’t need false gospels.

Christians and Jews need to stand together in the face of an increasingly hostile world. We don’t have to agree on all points of doctrine to do that. Even in the apostle’s days, there existed no complete unity of doctrine — even among the truest of true believers. Even today, we find variances of belief and practice *within* denominations — from the smallest to the largest. Perfect unity of doctrine and practice is unlikely to appear before Messiah comes. In the meantime, we are all Christians of one sort or another. As such, we ought to pray for each other. We ought to defend one another when we are in trouble.

During World War II, there were Christians like Corrie Ten Boom who protected God’s Jewish people from the demonic horrors of Hitler’s Nazis. Today, these noble souls are memorialized in Israel as “righteous gentiles.”

Virtually every day, one can read of Christians and their pastors who are being persecuted and murdered for their faith. According to an article on *ChristianPost.com* (June 8, 2011), “An interfaith conference has revealed that 105,000 Christians are being killed every year simply because of their faith.” Put another way, a Christian is murdered every five minutes on planet Earth. Who is to say we should not pray for and help these people because they believe differently than we do about some point of doctrine? “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” (Galatians 3:26-27).

Christ is our common denominator. He is the Head of the Church — not any man. He is the unifying factor. His people are “us” — Jews and Christians alike. It is he who will eventually straighten out our doctrine and our practice. It is *Yeshua ha Mashiach* (Jesus the Anointed One) who will rule as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). God’s *Torah* (instruction or direction) shall usher forth from Zion (Isaiah 2:3).

In the meantime, “Can’t we all get along?” (Rodney King.) Can’t we learn to think “us” instead of “me”? Can’t we show some sense of solidarity with our persecuted brethren?

*Brian Knowles is a professional artist and writer and is a former magazine editor. Brian is an avid student of the Bible and a frequent contributor to the Association for Christian Development website (www.godward.org).*

## Wise Men

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(Answers on Page 10)

## Hints

### ACROSS

- Tree
- Convict status
- Lamech’s son (alt. spelling)
- Exchange
- Prof. league
- Davenport denizen
- Jim Bowie’s death place
- Old Testament wise son
- \_\_\_\_\_ big deal
- Famous Biblical Hittite
- Slinky, for example
- Impudent
- Sugar suffix
- Med. Prof.
- Write

### DOWN

- Actress \_\_\_-Margret
- Davenport
- Nice to see you
- Order companion
- Dental group acronym
- 14 Across and 8 Down, for example
- New Testament wise disciple
- Bed or bath follower
- Clark Kent, for example
- What a CEO is
- There was one in Hang Em High
- Expend
- Page or part precede
- Suffix meaning adherent
- Craving

# The Power of Attitudes

by Kelly McDonald



Webster's Dictionary defines the word attitude as "a mental position with regard to a fact or state; a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state; an organismic state of readiness to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus (as an object, concept, or situation)." In the Greek, a word translated as attitude in the Bible is *phroneo*, and one of its definitions according to Strong's Concordance is to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain way. In other words, an attitude determines what actions you are likely to either take or not take. For an example, consider a laid-back attitude. If you are operating in a laid-back attitude, then you are less likely to be easily angered or overreact to a situation. Your attitude determined your action. Understanding attitudes is extremely important and can help us overcome the attacks of the evil one.

In the Garden of Eden, the serpent spoke to Eve and tempted her. The Bible records, "Now the serpent was craftier than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?"' The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:1-5). We have a tendency to think from the text that the serpent only spoke to Eve. While Satan did speak to her with words, he actually was conveying an **attitude** to her. This same attitude was then conveyed to Adam. The attitude or mindset that Satan conveyed to them was a mindset which believes that you do not have to do what God wants you to do. You can do whatever you want. You can become your own god and choose for yourself. You can do things your way and still have God's blessing at the same time.

This example in Genesis shows us the way that Satan attacks us. He attacks us by speaking attitudes into our hearts, minds, and spirits. In Ephesians 2:1-2, Paul wrote, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are

disobedient." Some translations say in verse 2 that Satan is the "Prince and the Power" of the air. What we have to realize is that Satan the devil is not just the prince and power of the air, but he is also the prince and power of the *air waves*. Satan is constantly broadcasting attitudes into your mind like a radio station broadcasts radio waves into the air. How do these attitudes begin to manifest in our lives, and how can we recognize them? Paul says in these verses that Satan is the spirit at work in those who are disobedient. The Greek word translated as disobedient literally means a lack of faith. Satan begins by broadcasting into your mind disbelief about what God has said. Satan may put things into your mind, such as: "Is the Sabbath really true?"; "Does God really care what day of the week we worship on?"; "Is the Bible really true?"; "Do the Ten Commandments still apply today?" Each of these is designed to do the same thing that Satan did in the Garden — doubt God's words.

The serpent started by making Eve question whether God's spoken word was true! He was also questioning whether God's word was necessary for their lives! The whole purpose of these attitudes that Satan broadcasts into your mind is simply an attempt to get you to step backwards. When you give up one vital truth of the Bible, you will give up another, then another, and others until you have given up all of them. Your actions will follow and then you will start to disobey. This is why the Greek word for disobedience can mean disbelief. If you doubt God's word, then you will start to break the Sabbath, stop reading your Bible, etc. The attitudes that Satan broadcasts into your mind cause you to lose faith in God's word, and they lead to disobedience.

The Spirit of Disobedience begins with an attitude! The same attitude Satan put forth to Adam and Eve still exists today! We still want to disobey God. We want to do the things that **look wise to us but not to God**. This attitude puts forth that God does not really mean what he says. You can still do things your way and His way. Practically apply this to your life. When the Federal Government tells you that you owe 15% in income taxes, you do not pay 10%, do you? Of course not! You will pay 15%. Why? There is a certain penalty involved with breaking this man-made law. We all obey this man-made rule (or we go to jail). When the IRS says that your taxes should be paid by April 15<sup>th</sup>, do

people say to themselves — “Well, the IRS really means November 15<sup>th</sup>”. No, people generally pay their taxes in a timely fashion. However, when God says to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day, we like to say “Well, He did not really mean that way” or “Well, God changed it” (when clearly He has not). This is an attitude of disobedience! Satan wants to cause doubt concerning the God-made rules in the Bible! It all starts with questioning whether God said what He clearly said. The Bible says that God does not change (Malachi 3:6). People even get very emotional when they talk about a truth of the Bible like the Sabbath. Why? Because they have been influenced by an attitude! Our attitudes make us very emotional even when we are presented with a very easy decision logically. If someone asked us if we were hungry, we could easily answer by saying “Yes” or “No.” When someone shows us that God never changed the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, people want to argue that it really does not mean what it clearly states. An ungodly attitude can rob you of logic and lead you into grievous sins.

King David is an example of this. If you look at David’s life, he was very focused on God and God’s Kingdom work. After all, he was a man after God’s own heart. Part of his Kingdom work was subduing other nations. You have to understand that in the Old Testament going to war was part of doing God’s Kingdom work. The events in the Old Testament were for our learning today, so David’s warfare in the natural is a picture and type of how we should fight spiritual warfare. David had an incident where he allowed an attitude to creep in and lead him into disobedience. In 2 Samuel 11:1, David sends the men to go to war and fight against the Ammonites. David, however, stayed behind. While everyone else was fighting, he got out of bed one day around sunset and decided to go up on his roof. He then saw Bathsheba and sent for her. He committed adultery with her and later had her husband, Uriah, killed. All of David’s sins in this example came from his decision not to go to war with his men. He did not pursue God’s Kingdom work! His decision not to go with his men came from an attitude. It is not clear what specific attitude made David stay behind, but it could have been an attitude of laziness. Whatever attitude it was, it led him into disobedience. David knew the Torah just as Adam and Eve knew God’s command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. David’s attitude made him forget easy, logical decisions and pursue emotional, fleshly interests. The devil then used his flesh and his emotions against him and he committed several sins. It all began with an attitude.

Another example in the Bible would be King Saul. He was an individual who constantly operated in a Spirit of disobedience. Most people do not realize this, but Saul actually received the Holy Spirit and displayed the power of a changed life (1 Samuel 10:5-13). The problem is

that King Saul allowed attitudes to overtake him and continually lead him into sin. Saul began by rescuing the people of Jabesh Gilead. Later, King Saul thought that he could do whatever he wanted and still say that he was doing God’s will. He erected a statute of himself and even brought back plunder after God told him to completely destroy the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). His attitude was always one which was focused on pleasing people and pleasing himself, but he did not please God. He had attitudes of fear, doubt, and pride. He was so overcome by these attitudes that the Holy Spirit actually departed from him (1 Samuel 16:14).

The problem is that we want to see things our way and still have God’s Blessing. Saul sinned against God and still wanted Samuel to honor him in front of the people. This is one aspect of what I call the Pharaoh Spirit. First of all, understand that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by God so that God’s mighty power would be displayed in Egypt. At the same time, we can see his attitude as an example for us today. Pharaoh disobeyed the word of the Lord through Moses many times, resulting in ten plagues. After the tenth plague, he decided to finally let them go. The strange thing is that *he asked for a blessing on the way out*. Exodus 12:31-32, “During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the Lord as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. **And also bless me.**” This is the way most of us act. We want to do things our way, like Adam and Eve, and still enjoy God’s blessing (the tree of life). The problem is that sin blocks the way to the tree of life. If God had allowed Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of life after partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would have been like Satan the devil who lives forever in a state of sin. Satan cannot repent. We are purposefully blocked from the tree of life so that we are not condemned to a permanent destruction.

The attitudes in your life are a powerful concept to realize. You need to recognize the attitude you have at any given time and ask yourself: “Is this an attitude from Satan?” If you are losing focus of your Kingdom Assignments, disobeying the written word of God, and not taking care of your personal business, you can rest assured that the attitude you have is from Satan the devil! Two typical attitudes are laziness and pride. Satan loves to use these against us! When you have an attitude of laziness, you fail to recognize the things that are important in your life such as paying the bills on time, taking care of your family, and reading your Bible. This attitude can lead you into sins such as sexual immorality, stealing, and lying because you are operating in your flesh. When you have an attitude of pride you see the entire world as centered on yourself and how you can gain and acquire for yourself irrespective of others’ wants and needs. Anything you might do for others that ap-

pears positive is only coincidental. When a person has an attitude of pride, he says things to please people that he really does not mean. It is only an attempt to get his way. Even a person's repentance can be faked when he has an attitude of pride. Saul shows us this. After failing to destroy the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15, Saul told Samuel that he repented. The problem is that the very next words he spoke did not coincide with repentance: "Saul replied, 'I have sinned. *But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God*'" (1 Samuel 15:30). Saul seems to admit his guilt, but he then asks Samuel to come with him so that he can be honored in the sight of the people. When the wicked King Ahab repented and the righteous King Hezekiah repented, God forgave them and relented judgment. Even David was told by the prophet Gad that he was forgiven. God did not relent judgment on Saul because it appears that he did not genuinely repent. It is as simple as looking at his words. In context, it appears the whole purpose of his confession was so that Samuel would honor him and he could still look important to other people. He was still focused on what he wanted even after he committed a grievous sin against the Lord. Laziness and pride are two of the most destructive and dangerous attitudes, which led David into sin and Saul towards losing the kingship.

When Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Bible says that their eyes were opened. Their eyes became open to attitudes which lead to disobedience. By listening to the serpent, all of humanity was now vulnerable to the attitudes that Satan might broadcast into their heart and mind. When you look at the lives of Saul and David, they were polar opposites. Saul sinned much and obeyed a little whereas David obeyed much. The one thing they have in common is that they were swayed by attitudes. If an attitude can sway a man after God's own heart to sin, then how much more are you and I vulnerable to this today! The key to overcoming these attitudes is found in what David confessed once he had sinned. When David sinned, he said, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5, King James Version). The word translated iniquity in these verses is the Hebrew word *ávoñ*, and it means perversity. David asks the Lord to forgive the iniquity of his sin. In other words, he asks God to forgive the perverseness inside of him that led him into sin. Iniquity is in us when we twist or pervert a situation in our mind to justify why it is permissible for us to sin. Attitudes cause us to pervert situations in this way. Our eyes then become open and we eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The only way back to turn from attitudes that lead to disobedience and gain access to the tree of life is to be transformed by the renewing of your mind and change your attitude (Romans 12:1)! You must repent

and turn back to God! The word repentance means a change in your mind. We have to change our minds from attitudes of disobedience to attitudes of trust and faith. Now is the time to examine your attitudes and weed Satan's attitudes out of your life so that he no longer has a foothold.

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**Answers to Crossword Puzzle on Page 7.**

A	S	H				L	A	M
N	O	E		T	R	A	D	E
N	F	L		I	O	W	A	N
	A	L	A	M	O			
	S	O	L	O	M	O	N	
			I	T	S	N	O	
U	R	I	A	H		T	O	Y
S	A	S	S	Y		O	S	E
E	M	T				P	E	N

# Wide and Deep

by Whaid Cuscott Rose



"Today's evangelical church is a mile wide, but only an inch deep," says Howard Hendricks. In other words, much of what goes on in today's churches reflects more fluff than substance. Determined to be relevant, churches succumb to the trendy and trite. Commitment to attract a certain cultural demographic has resulted in the selling out of the gospel. Information is exchanged for inspiration; entertainment for spiritual engagement; and a warm, fuzzy feeling for the manifest presence of God.

Don't misunderstand. When it comes to ministry, the church must think outside the box, be willing to create new wineskins to accommodate the new wine of the Spirit, and be radically committed to soul-winning.

The account of the early church in Acts illustrates that such ministry ideals are possible without selling out the gospel. Consider the early church. It was unlike anything the religious crowd had ever witnessed. The religious regulations that stemmed from the Mosaic law necessitated new wineskins. Souls were added to this church at a rate unsurpassed since. This was not the average church in decline. It was the most exciting phenomenon in town.

"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women" (Acts 5:12-14, NKJV).

The observations "none of the rest dared join them" and "the people esteemed them highly" indicate that the curious and uncommitted didn't enjoy a comfortable coexistence in the congregation. No catering to the culture or making church comfortable for the unchurched. Yet the surrounding culture took the church seriously and held it in high regard. Witnessing the power of God at work in the church, the surrounding culture was both afraid of it and attracted to it.

The character traits of the church in Acts describe a church that is formed by the Spirit, and they should describe the church in our day as well. As church our Sabbath-keeping churches of today strive to be Spirit-formed, may they find themselves being cutting-edge, turning the world upside down, and as deep as they are wide.

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Whaid Rose is the current president of the Church of God, 7<sup>th</sup> Day.

## Go Tell Thy Friends

*"Jesus saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee," Mark 5:19.*

Some years ago Fritz Kreisler, the famous violinist, was strolling down a back street in London, when he happened by an antique shop and heard someone playing a violin in a back room. Entering the shop, he told the dealer he would like to buy the instrument, but the dealer informed him that it had already been sold to a wealthy Englishman who collected antiques. Thwarted but determined not to give up without at least seeing it, he asked if he might at least look at it. The dealer agreed.

After examining the instrument and playing on it, Kreisler exclaimed, "I must have this violin!"

"But that is impossible," expostulated the dealer. "I have already sold it to someone else."

"What does the antique collector intend to do with it?"

"I understand he plans to put it on exhibit in a glass case." "Impossible!" protested Kreisler. "Doesn't he know that this is not an antique to be kept locked up in a glass case? This is a violin intended to make music to bless the world."

Frustrated in his attempt to buy the violin from the antique dealer, Kreisler determined to buy it from its new owner. After it passed into the collector's hands, Kreisler called on him and made a generous offer. The new owner, however, politely but firmly refused to sell.

Instead of giving up, Kreisler determined more than ever to buy the violin. He struck up a friendship with the wealthy Englishman. He visited him from time to time and talked to him about the things he was interested in — antiques. One day the new owner carefully removed the violin from its glass case and asked Kreisler to play it. This was the moment for which Kreisler had been hoping. Telling about the incident later, he said, "I played on that violin as a man condemned would have played for a ransom."

The music was sublime. Touched by its pathos, the antique dealer exclaimed, "I have no right to that violin! Kreisler, it is yours. Take it. Go into the world and let it be heard."

God has entrusted you with a message of hope for a sin-sick world.

You have no right to keep it locked up in a "glass case." Go into the world and let it be heard. Perhaps Kreisler's experience will suggest ways in which you can witness winsomely to others.

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Donald Mansell, *New Every Morning*, page 19. Review & Herald Publishing Association. 1981.

population. Dawkins writes: "I wonder whether, some 60 years after Hitler's death, we might at least venture to ask what the moral difference is between breeding for musical ability and forcing a child to take music lessons. Or why it is acceptable to train fast runners and high jumpers but not to breed them. I can think of some answers, and they are good ones, which would probably end up persuading me."

One of Darwin's heroes was the ungodly parson Thomas Malthus (1766 to 1834). Darwin knew that Malthus had put forth the idea of mass murder as a solution to his falsely perceived problem of overpopulation. His "solution" sounds eerily like the Nazi's "Final Solution." Malthus stated: "All the children born beyond what would be required to keep up the population to this level, must necessarily perish, unless room be made for them by the deaths of grown persons ... therefore, we should facilitate, instead of foolishly and vainly endeavoring to impede, the operations of nature in producing this mortality; and if we dread the too frequent visitation of the horrid form of famine, we should sedulously encourage the other forms of destruction, which we compel nature to use.... But above all, we should reprobate [disapprove of] specific remedies for ravaging diseases; and those benevolent, but much mistaken men, who have thought they were doing a service to mankind by projecting schemes for the total extirpation [elimination] of particular disorders."

### **Social Darwinism: A Kinder, Gentler Eugenics**

Darwin was in complete agreement with Malthus' ideas. Darwin was in fact the first "Social Darwinist." In tribute to Malthus, Darwin wrote in his *Origin of Species*, "[T]he Struggle for Existence amongst all organic beings throughout the world ... inevitably follows from their high geometrical powers of increase .... This is the doctrine of Malthus, applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms. As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself ... will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*." This Malthusian process, Darwin claimed, was the "origin of species."

Darwin's mouthpiece was the famous atheist and anti-Christian, Thomas Huxley, was often referred to as "Darwin's bulldog." Huxley vocalized to the world the things that Darwin believed. Huxley was also the mentor of the famous author, H. G. Wells. Wells' most notable science fiction works include *The War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, and *The Invisible Man*. Wells parroted the beliefs of both Huxley and Darwin that the world was in danger of overpopulation and

that "undesirables" should be eliminated. Wells was staunchly anti-Christian and believed that a new ethical standard was needed to replace Christianity — one that allowed for the forceable sterilization or outright killing of those who were overproducing children, especially those in Black Africa as well as in places like India and China.

Wells believed that the idea that man was made in the image of God was just a myth. Man was merely another animal whose population needed to be controlled. Wells wrote: "And as effectually has the mass of criticism that centres about Darwin destroyed the dogma of the Fall [of mankind in the Garden of Eden] upon which the whole intellectual fabric of Christianity rests. For without a Fall there is no redemption, and the whole theory and meaning of the Pauline system [i.e. salvation through the blood of Christ] is vain."

Wells not only sought the destruction of Christianity and its influence, but desired to replace it with what he called an "ethical reconstruction." Wells, Darwin, Malthus, and Huxley aspired to replace Christian values with a "values-free" system. Of course, the values that they wanted were those that they desired to impose on society. They certainly were not willing to be "imposed upon."

### **Why Is Any of This Important to You?**

I could go on, but I think you get the point. Darwinism was never intended to compete with the ideas put forth in Genesis. It was designed specifically to destroy and replace our trust in the Bible. Charles Darwin and his gang were looking to undermine the faith of Christians, Christian institutions, and our whole legal system which is based on the Bible.

The real targets of Darwinian thinking are not the current "older" generation. The bullseye is on the backs of our children and grandchildren. If a single generation of young people can be captured and made the slaves of values-free thinking (or as we call it in our generation, "the New Morality"), then the people can be controlled because they will be ruled by their passions, not by a divine moral power higher than their own human will. Survival of the fittest to our rulers means that the strong rule the weak. Remember that Jesus said we were not to be "like the Gentiles" who love to rule over each other by force. There is no place for Christian compassion in a world governed by "Social Darwinism." There is only force and compulsion.

What are our children and grandchildren learning in school? They are learning that science has replaced faith, that the world was really not created in six days by God, but by processes that occurred over a period of millions of years. They are learning: Do not trust the Bible.

## Evolution's False Claims

Let's look at several false claims made by proponents of the religion of Darwinism.

- The fossils in the rock layers can be dated by the layers, that is, where they lie in relation to each other. On the other hand, it is also assumed that the layers of sedimentary rock can be dated by the fossils in them. To evolutionists the thought that this is circular reasoning completely escapes them. You can't make an assumption and then take the leap of faith that another assumption is valid because it is based on the first assumption. In any other field of study outside of modern evolutionary science you could not get away with such an absurdity. Any lawyer making such arguments would be laughed out of court.

- Rock layers are millions of years old; radiometric dating proves it. Unfortunately for evolutionists, this is another false assumption. For example, the formations of fossilized rock layers from the 1986 eruption of Mount St. Helens were dated with potassium-argon at around 350,000 years old. Whoops! In New Zealand the rock formations from several 20<sup>th</sup> century lava flows from Mt. Ngauruhoe were dated with potassium-argon to be around 3.5 million years old. An even bigger whoops!

- Where are all the intermediate species? Theoretically we should find more intermediate species in the fossil layers than fully formed, modern-looking species. That is certainly not the case. Instead we find fully formed species in the fossil layers, but no intermediate species. Many of these species, such as the saber-toothed tiger and the dinosaurs, have since vanished from the landscape, but all of those fossils show that these species were fully functional before they were destroyed and deposited in layers giving us an extensive fossil record, but there are no intermediate species in that fossil record. And, the fact that they were destroyed and preserved in layers also gives us proof of Noah's Flood just as the Bible says.

## Conclusion

Our calling is to pass on our faith in Christ to the next generation. There is a concerted, deliberate effort to subvert our attempt to do that, but God calls us to fight against the tide of the world and to teach our children and grandchildren the ways of God. The devil is very much alive and is constantly seeking to deceive us into thinking we are powerless to change the world. Yet, that is exactly what we are called to do — change the world. One of our biggest problems is to make ourselves aware of the devil's devices. In this case we have to make ourselves aware of what our children and grandchildren are being taught in public school.

The famous French existentialist and atheist, Jean-Paul Sartre, once stated, "If God is dead, all things are

permitted." Modern scientific thought excludes God from the picture and seeks to eliminate God from the classroom. Whether it's through homeschooling or private schooling, we need to find a way to teach our children the ways of God so that when they are old, they will not depart from that path.

John Dewey, an atheist and founder of the modern public school system, once stated: "You can't make Socialists out of individualists — children who know how to think for themselves spoil the harmony of the collective society which is coming, where everyone is interdependent."

One of the problems that many Christians have — especially Sabbath-keeping Christians — is that they believe we are in the "end times" and that it really doesn't make much difference what we do. Christ is coming soon, so we shouldn't worry about what's going on in the world. First, Jesus made it very clear that we can make all the predictions we want, but only the Father in Heaven knows when Jesus is returning. Second, those who like to rely on Matthew 24 for their timetable of future events need to heed our Lord's words in verses 44 to 47: "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions."

It's up to us to find ways to teach our children to follow God. Since they all have free will, some may choose a path away from God. At that point all we can do is stay on our knees before God pleading for our children, and often they will come back later in life.

Deuteronomy 6:5-8, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates."

—Kenneth Ryland

*The following sources were used for this article:*

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# Primitive Apostolic Christianity

by *Terrell Perkins*



What has been called "Primitive Apostolic Christianity" is the result of an effort to understand and obey the will of God by following, as closely as possible, the doctrines and practices of the early, New Testament, church. The logic is that modern "Christianity" has lost its way by adopting doctrines that were originally considered heretical because of their pagan, or otherwise non-biblical, origins. Many in the the early church were taught by Christ Himself and later by His disciples. It can therefore be argued that the early church practiced true Christianity. That's something a serious Christian should carefully consider.

It has often been claimed by its detractors that Primitive Apostolic Christianity is an attempt to "Judaize" Christianity by attempting to combine Christianity with "Jewish" law. This is a misunderstanding on several levels. First, the Law of God isn't "Jewish." The Ten Commandments were spoken by God directly to the children of Israel. Additionally they were written by the very finger of God in stone. They are, in fact, the only part of Holy Scripture actually written by the hand of God. They were given to the children of Israel, but they are intended for all of mankind.

The word "Jew" was first used in the Bible to refer to members of the tribe of Judah. There were twelve tribes of Israel originally. The tribe of Judah was the largest. Judah and Israel became separate nations after the reign of King Solomon. They were even recorded to have made war against each other on occasion. The tribe of Judah remained in the Middle East after the Assyrian captivity in which the ten, so called, "lost tribes" were carried off. Throughout the Old Testament the word Jew referred to members of the tribe of Judah. In the New Testament, the word Jew has several meanings, and each must be seen in the context in which it is used. It often still refers to a member of the tribe of Judah, but it can also refer to anyone born in the land of Judah or any member of the religion that the tribe of Judah practiced. It is even used by the apostle Paul to mean anyone with a personal relationship with God.

The first covenant that God made with the nation of Israel involved the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. It did NOT include the sacrificial and priesthood laws given to Moses. These latter laws and ordinances became known as the Mosaic law...for lack of a better term. The Mosaic law was added to the Ten Com-

mandments because of the sins of the people. To refer to any of the Ten Commandments as "Jewish" law is to misunderstand the Scriptures. That includes the Sabbath Day. Christ himself said the Sabbath was made for man; He did not say it was made "for the Jews."

There are not two religions in the Scriptures. There is only one. The religion that God revealed to mankind was progressively revealed over the centuries. God's prophets explained God's religion to the people. That religion was expounded on by Christ because it had gotten "off track" over the centuries. That "off track" religion became known as Judaism because it was the religion practiced in the land of Judah. Christ attempted to correct the errors in it by His teachings.

What the early religious system in the Bible pointed to was Christ. The animal sacrifices, for example, all pointed to some aspect of Christ's sacrifice. After His life, death, and resurrection those practices were no longer necessary. It was those laws, the Mosaic legal system, that was done away with Christ...not God's law for mankind. Again, God's law was never "Jewish." True Primitive Apostolic Christians don't advocate bringing back circumcision or any part of the Mosaic, sacrificial system with its priesthood and temple ordinances. They advocate keeping God's Laws, including the literal seventh-day Sabbath, because obedience to God's Law is what God expects of those who love Him; disobedience to God's Law is what defines sin.

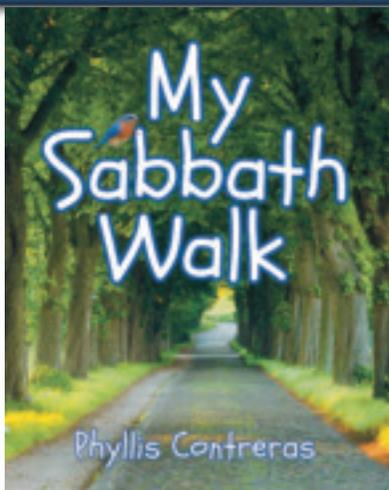
Many modern Christians sense something is missing in the practice of their faith and have begun, what many call a "Hebrew Roots" movement. Some Christians look to modern Judaism for what they sense is missing in Christianity. Modern Judaism, however, is the offspring of the Pharisees of Christ's time. While there is a great deal of wisdom in Judaism, there is also a great deal of error. As mentioned above, a part of what Christ did in His first appearance was to correct where Judaism had gone "off track." While most of the early Christians were Jews, most Jews rejected Christ and His message.

Since modern Judaism is the offspring of the Pharisees, modern Christians wanting to return to their Hebrew Roots should carefully scrutinize the practices in it. First and foremost a Christian should rely on the Scriptures, NOT on traditions or non-Christian philoso-

phies, many of which have crept into modern Christianity. Christ specifically condemned many of the practices of the Pharisees that are still practiced in Judaism. That being said, there is much to be gained from the insight of a people who have studied the Scriptures for centuries. The Jews rejected Christ in His first coming. They will recognize Him as their Messiah when He comes again. As "off track" as modern Christianity has become, the question is...will most Christians?

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed," (Galatians 1:8).

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## If the Foundations Be Destroyed

### Foundations of Science

by David Rives

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? While the Bible plays a much less central role in Science today, many of the greatest minds in Science had the solid foundation of belief in a Creator.

The astronomer Johannes Kepler spent most of his time in Austria, and in Prague, where he pioneered much of the work on planetary motion.

Kepler said that "Geometry, coeternal with God... gave God the pattern... by which he laid out the world so that it might be best and most beautiful and finally most like the Creator."

Realizing that through his work with telescopes, he was witnessing things that had never before been seen, Kepler said: "God himself has waited six thousand years for his work to be seen." He is known to have prayed: "I thank thee my Creator and my Lord, that Thou hast given me this joy in thy Creation, this thrill in the works of Thy hand."

Galileo had great respect for Johannes Kepler, and told him: "I esteem myself happy to have as great an ally as you in my search for truth."

Galileo was born in Pisa, Italy, and was known as "The father of modern observational astronomy." He was one of the first to employ the now widely-used refracting telescope in astronomy, and he also discovered four of Jupiter's largest moons.

Stephen Hawking, a die-hard atheist, admits that "Galileo, perhaps more than any other single person, was responsible for the birth of modern science." So, let's look at what this brilliant scientist set as his foundation.

"It was well said that... the Holy Scripture cannot err, and that the decrees therein contained are absolutely true."

Galileo is said to have stated that "Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe."

While each had various scientific focuses and theological doctrines, their stand on one issue was clear: The universe didn't just happen.

I'm David Rives....

Truly, The Heavens Declare the Glory of God.

*David lectures around the country on Creation and biblical astronomy. He publishes a weekly video commentary on WorldNetDaily. For more information, visit [www.davidrives.com](http://www.davidrives.com).*

# Can There Be False Prophets Today?

*by Dr. Royce Mitchell*



Virtually from the beginning of the existence of man there have been those trying to deceive man with false doctrines and teachings. We are even told that one of the last enemies of God to be put away is the False Prophet. Whoever these people are, we need to be aware of their existence and to work steadfastly to keep our minds free from their false teachings. This author hopes to guide the brethren in their quest to be one of those whom it is impossible to deceive in the end.

We first need to understand that false statements about God have been the tool of Satan from the beginning. Even in the Garden of Eden, Satan, in the form of a snake, caused our first parents to doubt what God had said by phrasing the deception in a question, “Has God not said...?” Satan tried the same thing with Jesus (Matthew 4 and Luke 4).

We can read of people like Balaam who attempted to curse Israel, and to lead them astray. Jeremiah (23:16) showed that God knew who those false prophets were during Jeremiah’s day.

In Ezekiel, a prophet sent to the House of Israel who had been gone over 130 years at the time of that prophecy, we read that the false prophets were making misleading predictions and having false visions, saying all was well when all was not well (Ezekiel 13:9-10).

We know that a particularly evil False Prophet will show up at the very end of this age. We can read that an evil spirit like a frog would come from the mouth of that False Prophet and that he will end up in the lake of fire with Satan (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10). Is there any reason to believe that false prophets do not exist in this day and age?

The English words “false” and “prophet” derive from the Greek word, “pseudoprophētēs.” We derive our English word “pseudo” from the first part of that Greek word. Pseudo means not genuine or sincere, despite appearances. Anything labeled as “pseudo” is not the “real deal” no matter how much it may look like it.

The second half of the word is “prophētēs” from which our English word prophet is derived. It means a foreteller or by analogy an inspired speaker. From the combination of these two words we can derive that a false prophet is one that appears to be genuine but is not speaking according to the inspiration of God but by another spirit, a pseudo god.

In 2 Thessalonians, Chapter 2, we are warned that this particular False Prophet will put himself above every god or object of worship and will sit down in God’s Temple and claim to be God. We are also told that he will come with the power of Satan and will perform miracles and wonders. We are also told that Jesus will destroy this False Prophet at His coming. This is undoubtedly the same False Prophet we read about in Revelation.

But, we get something very interesting about this character in 2 Thessalonians 2. This enemy of God will sit down in God’s Temple and claim to be God! We know that Paul wrote that we are the Temple of God. If we can take a bit of license with the joining of texts, it is pretty easy to come to the conclusion that the False Prophet of Revelation will come from within a group of people alleging themselves to be a part of the Body of Christ, *i.e.*, the Temple of God. I certainly do not see any temple being rebuilt in the land known as Israel today and even if there were, would it really be “God’s Temple?” I think not, which leaves the only conclusion possible to this mortal’s thinking that this False Prophet will come from within those alleging to be the Body of Christ.

In Acts 13 we read of a false prophet who was confronted by Barnabas and Saul (Paul). This particular false prophet was a Jew named Elymas. But, he was calling himself “Bar-Jesus” or “son of Jesus.” This Elymas claimed he was a prophet. Indeed, he was apparently claiming he was the son of Jesus! The first century church certainly had its share of false prophets! But, what about today? Do they exist today?

Jesus warned us, through the apostles in Luke 6:26, that false prophets would be well spoken of. He issues a “woe” to those of whom men speak well. That happened in the past where kings had been deceived by false prophets while the true prophets of God were horribly abused and killed.

Further, in Matthew 7 Jesus tells us to be on guard against these false prophets who will come to us looking like sheep! They will come looking like one of Jesus’ own! But, Jesus with the warning also told us how we can recognize them—by their fruits. We may not recognize them by what they say, but by looking at what they are and do, we will see that their actions and attitudes are not of God.

It is in these verses that we find the statement that “Not everyone who calls me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven....” I’ve heard that verse used to denigrate people who don’t think the same thing as a particular group or denomination. But, the context is false prophets, not people who think differently! In the end Jesus will tell them to “Get away, wicked people!”

Can we be fooled by false prophets? Jesus said that MANY would be fooled (Matthew 24). He said there, also, that there would be many false prophets! These false prophets will cause many people’s love to grow cold! The only way this can happen is to distract the brethren with some “new” teaching or other idea designed to, like Satan, spoon-feed a dollop of truth wrapped around a bitter pill of hate that divides brethren.

False prophets will come in many forms! We could be told that the “church” needs to collect a “tithe” so that the “church” leaders can “preach the gospel,” which then tends toward a lavish lifestyle of jets, gifts and other extravagances while widows and orphans are told to go on government assistance. This has already happened in the past under the guise of “doing the work” when the work designed by men was never shown to be the Work of God except through a twisting of the Scriptures—the very thing that the Devil attempted with Jesus in the desert.

For instance, in Mark 13:10 we read that the gospel must first be “published” among all nations, breaking into the thought there. This verse was twisted to mean that magazines and radio or television shows were the work God wanted done. This author feels fairly comfortable in saying that the apostles of the first century never knew about a *Plain Truth* magazine or a “World Tomorrow” television show. Was it wrong to do those

things? Of course not! What was wrong was making that verse into a mandate to order impoverished brethren to collect more than a biblical tithe and send it in for that purpose! It was a False Teaching! The ends never justify the means!

That word “published” is derived from the Greek “kēruss” which means “to herald, such as a public crier.” That verse was telling everyone that in order for the prophecy to come to pass, the message would be taken by word of mouth to the world, and nothing more. The use of that verse to extract money from the brethren under the guise of it being “God’s tithe” was simply a false teaching! There are more false teachings yet to come if the past is any guide to the future.

Something to watch for, as seen in Matthew 24:23, etc., is that these false prophets and false christs will be able to deceive by great signs and wonders, just like the False Prophet of Revelation. But, we are told that if a prophet speaks against the Word of God that such a prophet is not of God and to ignore them no matter how convincing he may seem!

These false prophets will bring plausible-sounding “doctrines” with which to do their dirty deeds. As an example I point out the doctrines floating around, one of which proclaims that we must use the “sacred names” of God, and another of which proclaims differences in calendars. There are more but these two suffice to show how the false prophets will work.

We read in 2 Peter, Chapter 2, that the false prophets will bring in “destructive heresies.” That word “heresy” merely means “causes disunion.” It doesn’t mean that what is said is a lie so blatant that a biblical novice could spot it! The heresies brought in are those which may have a foundation in some truth, but which are used to divide.

Some proclaim that you cannot be worshipping the same God as they do if you don’t use those “Sacred Names.” This attitude drives a wedge between themselves and brethren who see that Jesus said to call God “the Father” and that Paul called Him “Abba.” There is no love between brethren when they divide over these kinds of things.

Finally, there are those who claim you are sinning because you keep a standard Holy Day calendar, as well as those who claim you are sinning if you don’t keep the calendar postponements. This attitude drives brethren apart.

Perhaps one or more of those insights could have some validity in the Scriptures. Where the False Proph-

ets or Teachers come into play is that they use those differences, which have nothing to do with what God wants from us, to cause division within the Body of Christ.

These attitudes of false prophets will cause the Way of Truth to be evil spoken of, and if this author may take a little license with 2 Peter 2, the Way will be trashed by those within and without the Church. Peter goes on to say that these false prophets use the brethren for gain! He says further that they despise dominion and speak evil of it. They promise the brethren liberty when all they bring is the slavery of corruption of the simplicity of the Word of God.

Paul dealt with False Prophets in Galatians 5. In that letter, Paul deals with the circumcision issue, about which we can read in Acts also. Paul proclaims that circumcision would take away the profit of Christ. But, was Paul saying circumcision was bad? Of course not, yet that is how some have twisted his words. It was the reason for circumcision that Paul was challenging, saying that relying on such for righteousness was tantamount to attempting to be justified by the Law, and nobody can be justified that way. Paul makes it clear when he says that “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any strength.”

Paul also gives us a hint at what we need to do to avoid the false doctrines in Galatians 5. He says that we should “let love make you serve one another.” Moreover, he says, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-21, that we should have joy always, pray, praise God, don’t put out the light of the Spirit, pay attention to the words of the prophets and to prove all things, holding onto what is good.

John tells us the same thing in 1 John 4 where he tells us to test the spirits to see if they are from God. He says this because even then many false prophets had gone out everywhere. John’s solution, like Peter’s and Paul’s, is to love the brethren. If we do, we won’t allow the divisiveness of the false prophets to affect our love for one another.

In Revelation 12:17 we read that the dragon will make war with the remnant of the seed of the woman, which remnant keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus. We know what the commandments of God are. But, what is the testimony of Jesus? I submit that we find it in John 13:34-35 where Jesus tells us

that He gives us a new commandment, that we love one another.

We see the same testimony in John 15 where Jesus calls us “friends” and not servants and then commands us to love one another!

The deception can be more subtle and perhaps not recognized by the brethren. A church “leader” may seem to be righteous but behind the scenes secretly hating some of the flock he is supposed to be serving. With that hatred comes the gossiping and maneuvering that drives wedges between brethren. This happens when a “leader” thinks he is over the flock instead of serving them. It has happened all too frequently by these false teachers who still exist today both in large corporate organizations and in smaller unaligned groups. When you find a leader like that fomenting unrest among the brethren, then hiding behind the “don’t level an accusation against an elder” scripture, you know you have found such a false prophet and should run from that one as fast as you can—unless, like Paul and Barnabas, you have the power from God to blind them as a sign of their deception!

The solution to surviving the deception of our modern day false prophets and The False Prophet is this: we must be obeying God, showing love for Him by obeying His commandments, and we must be loving our brothers and sisters. If we are doing this, then there is no way that any false prophet can bring any doctrine, true, somewhat true or even false, that will allow us to be distracted from the simplicity that is the Way of God. We will spot these false prophets by their fruits which invariably cause division in the Body. To answer the question posed by the article’s title, “Yes, there are false prophets working today.”

We don’t all have to believe exactly the same thing. None of us has all understanding or perfect knowledge of the mind of God. God can and will correct errors in understanding. What He can’t create in us is the love that He wants to see in His children. While the false prophets are continually fomenting division, we need to be overcoming that with love. Love overcomes all things. It is never the source of division.

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*Dr. Royce Mitchell, a lifetime member of the Bible Sabbath Association and former editor of **The Sabbath Sentinel**, serves in the Houston Church of God of Houston, Texas.*

# The Nature of the Truth

By *Bryant Buck*



In John 18:38 Pontius Pilate asked Jesus this question: "What is truth?" From Pilate's subsequent behavior we know that he was not seriously looking for an answer to his own question. But for those of us who are believers in Christ Jesus the question remains: "What is truth?" This is not so easy a question to answer as it might first appear because the Scriptures give us more than one answer to this query.

In the gospel of John we find Yeshua (Jesus) Himself giving three apparently different answers to the question "What is truth?" First, in John 14:6 (NAS) Yeshua declares: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." So from this verse we learn that Yeshua Himself is the truth. Second, in John 14:16-17 (NAS) Yeshua continues: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you." From these verses we further learn that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Third, in John 17:17 (NAS) Yeshua states: "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." Thus, the Word of God in the Scriptures is the truth.

Since Christ Jesus Himself is the truth, obviously the Holy Spirit that He sends to His followers must be the Spirit of truth. For many believers this is enough. Since they have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and have felt the witness of His Holy Spirit working in their hearts, they convince themselves that they have all the truth they need. So if they are presented with some Scriptural truth with which they disagree, they cavalierly reply that they have Jesus and that having Jesus is enough. Having Jesus is enough if our beliefs and our behavior line up with the Scriptures. However, if our beliefs or our behavior don't line up with the Scriptures, then we need to face the truth that we don't yet have as much of Jesus as He would like us to have.

Since every born-again Christian knows Yeshua as His Lord and Savior and has some witness of the Holy Spirit in his or her life, it will be our conviction of Yahweh's Word that distinguishes what degree of truth we have. Jesus tells us plainly: "Your word is truth." If we are to be full disciples of Yeshua, we cannot take Pilate's attitude that the truth is something not to be seriously pursued, nor can we take the attitude of many believ-

ers that having Yeshua and the Holy Spirit is all the truth we need. If just accepting Christ as Lord and Savior were enough, Jesus would not have told His closest disciples in John 17:17: "Your word is truth."

For many just believing what their denomination or church teaches is all the truth they feel they need. The Pharisees were a denomination of Judaism in Christ's day, yet Christ made it clear to them on more than one occasion that they came up way short in regard to the truth. Ever since Martin Luther various Christians have been trying to find the whole truth of the Scriptures. However, the tendency is that once they have found any more truth than they already believe, they usually stop the truth search there and camp out with the newfound truth they have just discovered. Martin Luther himself did this: he saw the truth of salvation by faith and the truth of the Scriptures being the final authority for faith and doctrine, but when the Anabaptists went on to the truth of water baptism by total immersion, Martin Luther stuck with the unscriptural sprinkling of the Roman Catholic Church. We could give other examples, but virtually all the denominations we have today camped out on some biblical truth that they found without going on to see and practice other biblical truths beyond where they stopped the search for truth.

We need to face what we really have if we have something less than the truth of the Bible in our faith or practice — our own traditions. Jesus addressed this problem with the Pharisees in Mark 7: "You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men" (Mark 7:8 NIV). This one verse sums up the problem with virtually all denominations of Christianity: they keep some of the word of God while also keeping some of their own traditions. Moreover, confront denominational believers with the truth of the Scriptures and they will generally vigorously defend their unscriptural traditions. The problem is simple: if they start keeping the truth of the Scriptures, they will usually be rejected by their fellow denominational believers. This is not a new problem in the church. In John 12:42-43 we read about some leaders who believed in Yeshua, but could not go on in their newfound faith. "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the approval of

men rather than the approval of God" (John 12:42-43 NAS).

"What is truth?" The truth is Jesus and His Holy Spirit, but the truth is also the Word of Yahweh. Putting this together, what we do in believing and obeying the Scriptures determines to what level we experience the presence of Jesus and His Spirit in our lives beyond simply knowing Christ as our Savior. Returning to our text in 1 Peter 1:22, when we obey the truth through the Spirit, we get biblical results. However, when we obey what we think is the truth, but in reality is not, the Holy Spirit does not show up to aid us in our unscriptural obedience. Face it: obedience to unscriptural traditions is indeed obedience; it's just not the obedience that Yahweh is looking for.

Men have developed more than one way to interpret Yahweh's Word in the Old Testament Scriptures; however, men's ways result in nothing but misinterpretations. If we follow the way that Yahweh has laid out for us in the Bible, we will find the truth much easier to see and obey.

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*Bryant, a BSA board member, is the founder and leader of Solid Rock Home Fellowship in Freeport, Illinois. After retiring from a career selling life and health insurance, Bryant has gone on to pursue his love of writing. He now has two published books: **The Prayer Warrior** and **My First Christian ABC Book**.*

### **Indian Law Bans Golden Rule**

(Christian Post) On August 30, an Indian state High Court struck down a law requiring people who want to convert to Christianity to give a civil magistrate 30 days advance notice. Just how one provides *advance notice* of a future intent to convert is anyone's guess, and was doubtlessly one of the reasons the Indian court struck this crazy law down.

The law was one of two anti-conversion laws challenged in the state of Himachal Pradesh that drastically restricted the religious freedom of Christians and those of other religions considering converting to Christianity.

It outlaws any conversions to Christianity that are the result of "force, fraud, or inducement," a seemingly sensible proposition. Unfortunately, in the hands of the local Hindu police officials assigned to enforce the law, the following have been deemed to be illegal "inducements" to Christian conversion: a promise of eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the building of a Christian school, hospital, or orphanage, the building or repair of damaged homes, and the feeding and caring for the poor.

See more details on this story at [Christianpost.com](http://Christianpost.com).

## **In Its Peace You Will Have Peace**

*"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).*

That verse in Jeremiah is often and correctly used to encourage people in times of trouble. Indeed the very people to whom it was originally written had just been forced off their land and into exile hundreds of miles away, sent to a strange land with a strange language, a land called Babylon. They were in need of encouragement.

But the paragraph preceding Jeremiah 29:11 is encouragement not just to take comfort, but an encouragement to take action.

"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (verses 5-7 NIV).

The prophet was telling them that they not only should have hope in the future, but that they needed to take a hand in turning hope into reality now. Even though these people were in Babylon, a name that has become a euphemism for a land cut off from God, they were to live their lives, raise their families, contribute to the common good, and, yes, even pray for its peace and prosperity, "because if it prospers, you too will prosper." No instructions here to retreat into a self-imposed ghetto.

It can seem odd that a place presented in such an unflattering light should be the object of prayer for peace and prosperity, but there it is. This might seem like a theological difficulty, but it shouldn't. The Apostle Paul addresses why we should be praying for the lands of our sojourn, even though those lands so often seem like lands of exile from our true citizenship held for us above. In his first letter to Timothy Paul tells us exactly what to pray for.

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (verses 1-2).

Jeremiah and Paul are teaching the Sermon on the Mount mandate. Be salt and light to the world. Pray and work for the peace of the city, even if that city is Babylon.

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*Commentary from Oct. 31, 2012. You can catch all of Lenny's latest commentaries on [morningcompanion.blogspot.com](http://morningcompanion.blogspot.com). Lenny is a member of the BSA board of directors.*

# Why Christians Should Know the Torah

by Daniel Botkin



"Why should I study the Old Testament Law?" some Christians ask. "I'd rather read the New Testament. I occasionally read in Psalms or Proverbs, maybe something from the Prophets once in a great while. But the Law? I don't see any point in studying that. I'll concentrate on studying the New Testament."

Studying the New Testament is certainly very important. No question about that. But it is for this very reason that studying the Old Testament Law is also very important, because much of the New Testament cannot be correctly understood without a knowledge of the Torah. One of several passages where this vital truth is revealed is in a parenthetical remark that Paul makes. In his letter to the Romans, Paul is explaining theological doctrine to his readers. In the midst of his explanation Paul makes a parenthetical remark: "(for I speak to them that know the law)" (Romans 7:1).

When words are enclosed in parentheses, it often means that the words are of minor importance. Not in this case, though. Think of the importance of Paul's parenthetical remark. If Paul is addressing his teachings to people who know the Law, what does that imply about people who do not know the Law? Paul's parenthetical remark is an "oh-by-the-way" remark: "Oh, and by the way, let me point out to you that this information I'm sharing is intended for people who are familiar with the Torah. If you don't know the Torah, I'm not speaking to you, because I speak to them that know the law."

We can conclude from Paul's remark that a person who does not know the Law is very likely to misunderstand Paul, because Paul's teachings, and indeed all of the New Testament writings, presuppose a familiarity with the contents of the Torah. The writers of the New Testament were writing to people who were very familiar with the Old Testament. This can be seen from the way that the New Testament writers quoted extensively from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms. It is quite obvious that they assumed their readers would be people who knew the Torah.

I have had Christian friends admit to me that they know very, very little about the content of the Old Testament Law. And these are not baby Christians; these are people who have been saved and in church for over

25 years. They admit that they do not know the Law, and yet they think they understand the New Testament, even though Paul and the other New Testament writers were addressing their teachings to them that know the Law.

Knowing the Law is a prerequisite to correctly understanding the New Testament Scriptures. Trying to understand the New Testament without a knowledge of the Old Testament Law is like trying to understand complex algebraic formulas without a knowledge of basic math. It is like trying to build a house without a knowledge of basic carpentry skills. It is like trying to farm a few hundred acres without a knowledge of basic agriculture. You do not need to understand the complexities of rabbinic and Talmudic law, but you do need to "know the [written] law." You must be familiar with the contents of the Torah and have a basic understanding of it if you want to correctly understand the New Testament.

The Bible consists of four parts: the Law, the Prophets, the Writings, and the New Testament. The first three parts make up the Old Testament; the fourth and final part is the New Testament. Suppose you had written a play consisting of four acts. You give a copy of the script to a friend. Your friend reads Act 4, but pretty much ignores Act 1, Act 2, and Act 3. He just flips through some of the pages of Acts 1 through 3 and skims over a few bits and pieces of the text that catch his attention. He gains only a very scant knowledge of that which is written in Act 1, Act 2, and Act 3. And yet your friend assures you that he understands the play you have written, because he has read the final act of the play. What would you think of your friend's assumption? What do you suppose the Lord thinks of Christians who claim to understand the New Testament even though they have only a very scant knowledge of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings of the Old Testament?

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*Reprinted from "Gates of Eden," March-April 2007, p. 5. "Gates of Eden" is a bimonthly newsletter produced by Gates of Eden, a messianic Jewish ministry. Write to Gates of Eden, P.O. Box 2257, East Peoria, IL, 61611-0257. Gates of Eden is on the Internet at [www.gatesofeden.org](http://www.gatesofeden.org).*

# The Church in the World

## Four Iranian Christian Leaders Each Sentenced to One Year in Prison

By *Jeremy Reynolds*  
Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

**Ahwaz, Iran (ANS)** — An Iranian Assembly of God pastor and three ministers have each been sentenced to a year in prison for preaching Christianity.

This was revealed to the ASSIST News Service ([www.assistnews.net](http://www.assistnews.net)) by the Iranian Christian News Agency, Mohabat News ([www.mohabatnews.com](http://www.mohabatnews.com)), who said that their trial was held on Oct. 15, 2012, at Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court in Ahwaz. The Presiding Judge was Seyyed Mohammad Bagher Mousavi.

The four Christians, who had been arrested on Dec. 23, 2011, are the pastor of the Assembly of God church of Ahwaz, Farhad Sabokrouh, and his wife Shahnaz Jeizan, together with two other church ministers, Naser Zamen Dezfuli and Davoud Alijani.

Mohabat News, whose website is banned inside of Iran, reported the Revolutionary Court said their charges were, "Converting to Christianity, inviting Muslims to convert, as well as propagating against the Islamic regime through promoting evangelical Christianity."

Mohabat News said when their homes were searched, security authorities confiscated a number of personal items including their computers, books, cell phones, and DVD's, as well as sound equipment and musical instruments used at the church.

Mohabat News said this was an initial sentencing, and there is an opportunity to appeal. The verdict issued by that court will be final.

The news agency said that according to reports received by the news service, Sabokrouh is not to hold any sort of church service or visit Christians in Ahwaz while free on bail. In addition, authorities have told him to leave his hometown of Ahwaz, and he and his family have been exiled to Tehran.

### Events Leading up to the Trial

Mohabat News said the church was raided on Dec. 23, 2011, as church members had gathered for worship. Everyone there was arrested and transported by two buses to an undisclosed location.

It stated that security authorities covered their faces during the raid and even arrested terrified Sunday school children.

According to Mohabat News, everyone with the exception of the pastor, his wife and two of the church ministers was eventually released after interrogation, threats and the recording of their personal information. Those four detainees were transferred to a detention center for further interrogation. They were released on bail of about \$165,000 between Jan. 1 and Feb. 21 of this year.

Mohabat News said the Assembly of God church is under the watchful eye of Iranian authorities, who are aware of every activity occurring at the church.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, sources told Mohabat News, "The reason behind this attack that interrupted Christmas celebration could be because church officials ignored warnings of the Ministry of Intelligence to the church."

The agency said there is some disagreement whether it is the Ministry of Intelligence or the Revolutionary Guard which oversees issues dealing with Iranian churches and Christians.

Mohabat News commented that harassment and discrimination against religious minorities have been major human rights violations in Iran during the last 30 years.

It added that harassment continues despite Article 13 of the Iranian Constitution which reads, "Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are the only recognized non-Islamic religions, and their followers are free to practice their faith and perform their ceremonies within the limits of the law and act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education."

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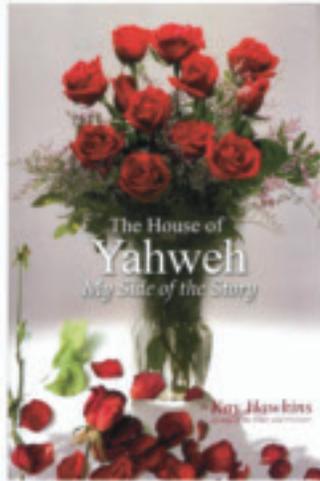
*Jeremy Reynolds is Senior Correspondent for the ASSIST News Service, a freelance writer and also the founder and CEO of Joy Junction, New Mexico's largest emergency homeless shelter, <http://www.joyjunction.org> He has a master's degree in communication from the University of New Mexico, and a Ph.D. in intercultural education from Biola University in Los Angeles. His newest book is **Homeless in the City**.*

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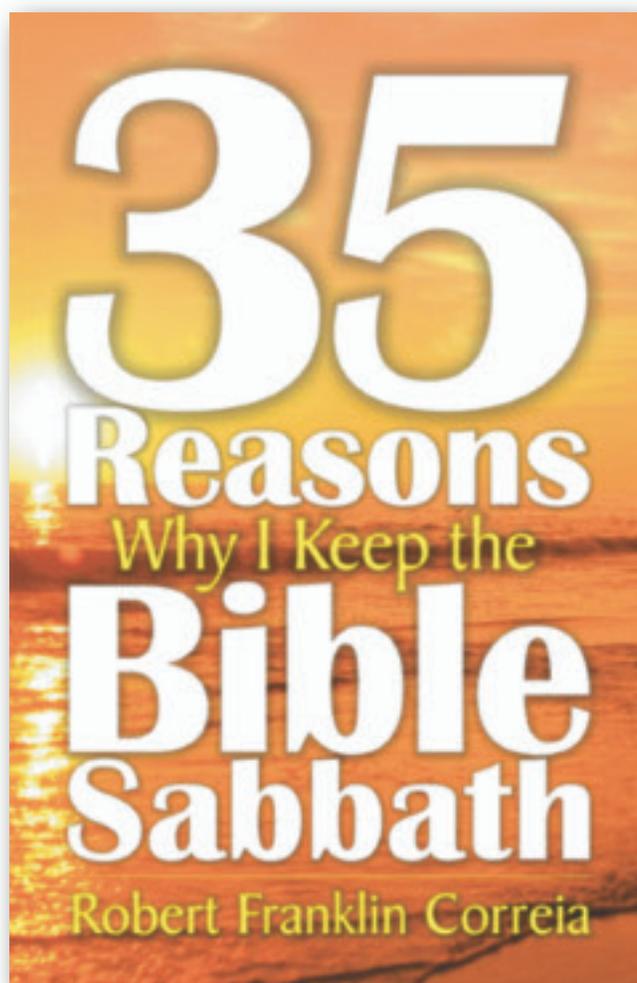
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