

The Sabbath Sentinel

September–October 2013



"But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'"

Matthew 14:22-31
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BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel

September–October 2013 Volume 65, No. 5 Issue 563

FEATURES

- 4 **The Body Snatchers**
by Kenneth Westby
- 6 **Who are the Sons of God?**
by Kelly McDonald
- 8 **Lessons in Biblically Hebraic Parenting**
by Terril D. Littrell, Ph. D.
- 12 **Seventh Day Baptists**
The BSA's series on key parts of the Sabbath-keeping Community
- 16 **Living Letters**
by Donald Mansell
- 17 **Yeshua, Son of Nun**
by Chris DeWeese
- 18 **Creation, Flood, and Covenant — in the Bible and Before**
by R. Herbert, Ph.D.
- 21 **Stuck in a Box**
by Lenny Cacchio

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 Editorial: *"The Chaotic State of Modern Christianity"*
- 5 **Sabbath Keepers Pledge**
- 22 The Church in the World: *Kidnapping of Christians in Egypt*
- 23 Advertisements

Our Cover: (Source: eternalpath.com and saviorsite.com)
— Walking on Faith by Benjamin McPherson)

Jesus walks on water and rescues Peter.

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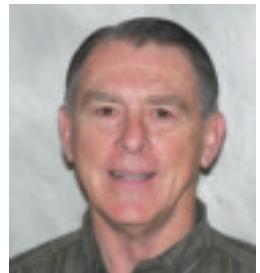
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Editorial

The Chaotic State of Modern Christianity



From the Assist News Service we read the following:

An extraordinary dispute has arisen over a lyric contained in one of the most beloved contemporary Christian hymns of the modern-day Church, "In Christ Alone."

According to Bob Smietana of *USA Today*, the committee putting together a new hymnal for the Presbyterian Church (USA) dropped the popular hymn because the song's authors refused to change a phrase about the wrath of God.

He said that the original lyrics say that "on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied." The Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song wanted to substitute the words, "the love of God was magnified."

The song's authors, Stuart Townend and Northern Ireland born and now a Nashville resident, Keith Getty, objected.

"So the committee voted to drop the song," said Smietana.

I just did a quick search for verses relating to the "wrath of God." Romans 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;..."

Romans 5:9: Having been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.

Colossians 3:6: "For because of these things the wrath of God is coming:..."

It is very clear from the Scriptures above that we are saved from the wrath of God by the atoning blood of Christ. The aforementioned verses are just a few of many that refer to the wrath of God. However, if you don't believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God, then none of the Scriptures mean anything to you.

I remember reading a few years ago that Francis Schaeffer, the author of many books including *The God Who Is there, and He Is there and He Is not Silent*, said that he had once been a faithful member of the Presbyterian Church, but that he did not leave the church. The Church left him. As an aside, I heartily recommend any of Schaeffer's books. Former president Ronald Reagan once said that he considered Schaeffer to be his mentor in the Faith.

When I look at the "Church" landscape, I see chaos. I do not see unity, which is an absolute essential for the body of Christ. I see sin, corruption, and apostasy. I don't see Sabbath-keeping churches in much better shape than Christianity as a whole in the Western

world. Very often Sabbath-keeping churches bicker and fight with each other "like a bunch of Baptists."

In our local area there is a pastor who often advertises his church on local television stations. He often says things like, "if you are homosexual, transgender, or of some other alternative life style [I can't imagine what that might be], you are welcome at our church." He doesn't say, "We will work with you to change." No, just that "you are welcome at our church" whatever your lifestyle. With this type of church leadership in our country, is it any wonder to anyone why we have the type of leadership in Washington that we have? Our nation has cast off all restraint because the Church has cast off restraint. The church in our country and most countries in the Western world have virtually no influence on the culture around us. Rather, we have joined in with the rest of the culture and accepted their formulas for growth and success. We preach a Bible verse here and there, yet with little or no impact on those around us.

Are we willing to do what the apostles did in the beginning of the Church? Acts 4:18–22: "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge all of you. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was performed."

Let's examine Romans 1 more completely.

Romans 1:18–32: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by unrighteousness; because that which may be known about God is evident to them; for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible nature, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly seen, being understood by the things that have been made; so that they are without excuse: because, though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, nor were they thankful; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Therefore

Continued on Page 11

The Body Snatchers

by Kenneth Westby



The great mysteries of the human body are still being discovered. In the early days of medical science and medical schools fresh dead bodies were in big demand. What lay behind the skin must be examined and understood. Providing bodies for dissection was a murky, ghastly, and illegal business. Early providers were called body snatchers and those who entered the field professionally were called "resurrectionists." The business is more sophisticated today and it is no longer just medical men who are obsessed with the working of the body. We now live in a culture that is body-obsessed.

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made," declared the psalmist.¹ A body full of wonder, for sure. But how does it work? How is it put together? How can it be fixed when it is sick or broken?

The inner workings of the human body have been in the past, and are to a large degree even now, a profound mystery. Early on the specific functions for many organs was not known. Medical pioneers struggled to understand the body parts and functions and what diseased organs looked like. Cures for most common ailments were centuries in coming—and some have yet to be discovered.

The Real Body Snatchers

One of the early challenges to developing a understanding of the human body was finding bodies to take apart and examine. They had to be relatively fresh, not decayed. To record findings and teach the expanding crop of doctors as medical schools proliferated in the 1800s the demand for cadavers surged. Many of the early body snatchers were doctors themselves aided by their students. They would secretly case cemeteries for recent burials or bribe ground-keepers for locations. Andrew Carroll describes their method of extracting bodies in his new historical work, *Here is Where*:²

Then they would return past midnight, dig a hole near the tombstone (where the head would be), break open the top half of the coffin with a crowbar, loop a rope around the corpse's neck or underarms, yank it out, and leave behind clothes, valuables, and whatever small tokens of affection had been tenderly placed with the departed. To ensure that no one recognized the body later, any scar or birthmark—sometimes an entire face—was cut off. Not all physicians, it should be noted, engaged in such deeds. Many

hired professional "resurrectionists" to handle their dirty work for them.

Low-life body snatchers would steal all they could from the dead before selling the corpse to their doctor buyers. Eventually there was so much body snatching going on that guards were placed at cemeteries and eventually laws were passed and fines imposed upon the practice. Yet, somewhere the medical men had to have fresh bodies. Some "resurrectionists" (in Scotland) were discovered to be killing people to provide a steady supply of fresh corpses.

Most states passed laws allowing medical schools to get the "friendless dead" from hospitals, prisons, almshouses, asylums and other public institutions. In the early 1900s with profits drying up the resurrectionist profession went out of business.

It may seem strange, but the founders of Harvard Medical School and the famous Mayo Clinic, and virtually all other early medical schools did business with body snatchers. In fact, in 1862 when thirty-eight Dakota Sioux Indians were condemned to hang in Mankato, Minnesota, a plan was already in place to steal their bodies. After the mass hanging, one of the largest in American history, the bodies were placed in sandy graves along the Minnesota River. At nightfall a squad of diggers disinterred the bodies and lots were drawn for the best cadavers to sell. Everyone wanted the body of chief "Cut Nose" as he was called. He was six feet four inches and considered a magnificent specimen. No records of where the bodies ended up, but it is known that Dr. William Worrall Mayo got Cut Nose. Carroll writes:

Today, medical schools rely primarily on plastic models and virtual cadavers instead of real ones. In 1993...within hours of dying, a thirty-eight-year-old man named Joseph Jernigan was flown to a Denver laboratory, where his still-warm corpse was dipped and frozen solid in a -100 degree Fahrenheit gel and then sliced into more than eighteen hundred sections. Each millimeter-thin sliver was photographed and scanned into a computer creating a seamless three-dimensional image.³

The lab was expecting him. Jernigan was a convicted murderer and had a scheduled execution date by lethal injection.

Continued on Page 14

Sabbath-Keepers Pledge

As a follower of Jesus Christ...

- * I pledge to give my first love and loyalty to the true God who reveals Himself best in Jesus. As Savior of men and Lord of the Sabbath, Christ does for me what no one else and no day of the week can do.
- * I pledge to be clear about salvation's source by confessing that my sins are forgiven and eternal life is promised me only by the grace of God through faith in Christ—not because I am a Sabbath-keeper.
- * I pledge to admit and agree that God's people may be in many religious organizations or in none of them. No longer will I judge people's faith based on the church group they do or do not belong to.
- * I pledge to emphasize that the seventh-day Sabbath is more than a law to be obeyed; it is also a unique gift of God to be enjoyed and celebrated with great benefit by all who receive it in faith.
- * I pledge to remember that the primary need of people is to know God's love and grace in the gospel, and that their need to know and observe His Sabbath is secondary to their need for Christ.
- * I pledge to recognize Sabbath-keeping Christians as a valued and respected family within God's household of faith, and to use what opportunities I have to encourage and support this diverse family.
- * I pledge to love my neighbors, my fellow-Christians, and my fellow Sabbath-keepers as myself, according to the second great commandment of the Lord.

(Composed by Calvin Burrell, this pledge was first published in *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine
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Who Are the Sons of God?

by Kelly McDonald



In Genesis 6:1-4, the Bible says, "When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown." (NIV) An increasing number of Christians are starting to believe that the Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4 are angels that came down and married women. Is this perspective the correct one, or is there an alternative viewpoint? The answer to this question is important because it influences how we interpret many different Bible verses.

Those who uphold this viewpoint first cite the use of the Hebrew phrase *b'nai elohim*. This phrase is translated as "Sons of God" in Genesis 6:4. It is used in Job 1 and 2 when the angels were called up to the throne of God. In Job 38, it was used when the angels shouted for joy at the creation of earth. Second, they use some New Testament verses which seem to agree with their position. Jude verse 6 reads, "And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day." This perspective claims that the original home of the angels was heaven, and that some of the angels came to earth to marry women. Another New Testament verse quoted by this position is 1 Corinthians 11:10, where Paul wrote, "For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head." They use this verse to say that Paul warns women to wear head coverings because of the story in Genesis. Third, the pro-angel perspective uses extra-canonical sources such as the book of Enoch. The book of Enoch is a document written by the Essenes sometime between Malachi and the time of Christ. It is said to expound upon the story of Enoch and the flood. This document even purports that the giants produced by these angels and women were 3,000 ells tall. An ancient ell is 18 inches. This would make these giants about 4,500 feet tall. That is almost one mile!

Does this increasingly popular view correctly account for Genesis 6:1-4? The more traditional view on these verses is that the Sons of God are the righteous line of

Seth intermarrying with the unrighteous line of Cain. The first point to examine is the use of the Hebrew phrase *b'nai elohim*, meaning the Sons of God. This phrase does not have to refer to angels. In the Book of Job, the Hebrew phrase *b'nai elohim* is a clear reference to angels. Jesus is called the Son of God in the New Testament. Believers in Messiah are also called the Sons of God. Although the New Testament was written in Greek, the Hebrew equivalent for these phrases would be *b'nai elohim*. Neither Jesus nor humans are angels, but we are called the Sons of God. The angels are called the Sons of God in Job because, like sons in the family business, they assist in God the Father's plan for the Universe.

As for the verses in the New Testament from Jude and 2 Peter, some further reading would clarify the meaning. The angels shouted for joy when the earth was created because earth was their home. God originally gave earth to the angels to tend and keep it. Many times in the Old Testament God uses physical figures to serve as a picture and type to convey a spiritual truth. In Isaiah 14:3-23, God describes the King of Babylon and uses him as a picture and type of Satan. In Isaiah 14, we learn about the Son of the Morning, sometimes called Lucifer. He tried to lead a rebellion against God and lift his throne above the clouds and the stars. If Lucifer tried to exalt his throne above the stars and clouds, then his throne must have been below them! That means his throne was on earth. When Jude discusses the angels that left their first habitation to sin, he is referring to the angels that left earth to try and take over the heavens. This also applies to the verses in 2 Peter.

The other New Testament verse that the first perspective uses is 1 Corinthians 11:10. It is a verse referring to a woman having authority on her head because of the angels. The context of this passage clarifies its meaning. In ancient times, women served as temple prostitutes. Often they would shave their heads to keep from getting lice. Female prostitutes were coming to church and being converted. These recently converted women still did not have much hair. They were participating in church services by praying and prophesying. Because they did not have much hair, this caused confusion. People started to think that there were temple prostitutes in the church, which was not true! To this end, Paul tells women to wear a covering over their head until their

hair grew back out. One of the reasons why a woman should do this is because of the angels.

One of the functions of an angel is to report to Him the events occurring on planet earth. In 1 Kings 22:19-23, angels are seen making suggestions to God. God chose one of their suggestions as the best course of action. A person does not want an angel to report to God that they have been disobedient. Another interesting point is that the Greek word for angel can also be translated as messenger or minister. Paul could be giving this instruction so that a messenger or minister from another congregation would not be lead to believe immoral practices had infiltrated the church.

The first perspective relies upon works of literature such as the book of Enoch. It is important to note that works such as this are not found in the Bible. The Bible informs us that Enoch prophesied (Jude 14-15), but it does not say that he wrote a book. There were many books written between the time of Malachi and the time of Christ. These works were called intertestamental literature. This literature typically took a story or character in the Bible and expounded upon it. This was done to prove some doctrine or idea that a particular Jewish sect believed. The book of Enoch emphasizes the heavenly bodies. The Jewish sect called the Essenes was trying to prove that their reckoning of the Calendar was correct. They simply expanded on the story of Enoch. They used him as the authority by which they received their understanding of the Calendar.

Jesus had to contend with the intertestamental literature in His time. In Matthew 5:3, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'" This phrase is not found in the Old Testament. Nowhere does the Old Testament say that you should hate your neighbor. The Law says to take your enemies donkey back to him if you find it (Exodus 23:24). An intertestamental work, "The Community Rule," said that you should hate your enemy. Christ had to correct one of these works in his time. These works are not inspired, and their authorship and dates of completion are questionable.

Whenever we examine Scripture, it is important to remember that the Word of God is written in cycles. There are themes initiated in Genesis that continue throughout the Bible. One theme found in the Bible is the deception of Satan. Satan appears as a serpent to deceive Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. He appears in various forms throughout the Bible to deceive people and lead them astray. In the book of Revelation, he appears as a dragon that deceives the entire world. If angels actually came down from heaven to procreate with women, then this event will occur throughout the Bible. It would be especially prevalent in the book of Revelation. There would be other historical documents regarding such a monumental event. Since angels marrying women is not mentioned again in the Bible, it jeopardizes the claims of this first view point.

In the first thirteen verses of Genesis 6, the word man, mankind, or people are used 10 times. Genesis 6:3 clearly points out that God would not contend with man forever. In Genesis 6:6, the Bible records that the "...Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain." God was angry with man and his actions. Clearly, the issue of that time originated with man, not with angels. If angels had been the source of the problem, God would have said that He was upset chiefly with them. They are far more powerful than humans in knowledge, thought, and strength. They could impose their will on humanity at any time if God so allowed them.

Another factor to consider is the vast differences between angels and humans. The first is that angels are made of spirit (Psalm 104:4) and humans are made from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7). This means angels cannot die whereas humans can die. Because we are mortal and fleshly, we have hormones like testosterone and estrogen. Moreover, we have the organs that allow for procreation. Since angels are made of pure spirit material, they neither have hormones nor the organs necessary for procreation. Jesus said it this way: "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven" (Matthew 22:30). Angels do not have the ability to procreate. God only gave the ability to reproduce to fleshly, mortal creatures. Furthermore, a woman's womb is not big enough to handle a creature that might grow to 4,500 feet.

A holistic view of the Bible reveals that the Sons of God in Genesis 6:1-4 are indeed the righteous line of Seth. One of the cycles in the Bible is the righteous people of God intermarrying or having unlawful relations with unbelievers. In Genesis, we find the sons of Jacob marrying Canaanite women, which their forefathers forbade. In the time of Moses the people of God intermarried with the other nations. Solomon took wives from many peoples for himself. In Nehemiah and Ezra's time the Jewish people intermarried with the nations around them. Even Paul had to give instructions about not being unequally yoked in the New Testament. In the book of Revelation, Christ rebukes churches for sexual immorality. The theme of the righteous intermingling with the unrighteous is found throughout the Bible. The entire Bible is about the people of God staying pure spiritually and physically from the temptations of this world. The Sons of God are His right-living, holy people.

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Lessons in Biblically Hebraic Parenting

By Terril D. Littrell, Ph.D.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).



Biblical Judaism saw well-trained children as symbols of a strong future for the chosen people of God. The patriarchs believed that the perpetuation of their values—their belief in the one God of Scripture and their belief in the inestimable importance of family and community—depended upon their commitment to train their children and their grandchildren by equipping them with the knowledge of God's Word and, will.

In ancient Jewish culture, it was expected that a newly married couple would move in with their parents into an addition on the family home. Adulthood was not necessarily about launching oneself into self-sufficiency but about becoming a responsible member in the Hebraic community,

Children were subjects to be sculpted, stimulated, instructed and groomed for a lifetime, spending instructive time with children was a rewarding experience for the whole family. The act of nurturing and forming another human being both then and now transforms one's character.

Jewish table meals that involved coordination and cooperation from all members of the family (such as the Sabbath evening meal and the annual Passover meal) helped to shape the Jewish identity of children as the covenant people of God. It also shaped the liturgy of the community when it engaged in corporate worship as the congregation of God. Sitting down at the family table together was one of the ways of training children to share their good with the larger family of faith (Psalm 128:3).

Transgenerational Community

Jewish children grew into adulthood with knowledge that they were the special people of God who lived not merely to satisfy their own wants or needs but who found meaning and purpose in the larger story of their mission in life as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were also responsible for transmitting the knowledge of God from generation to generation through the instructions that they gave their children. "One generation shall praise your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts" (Psalm 145:4).

By connecting children to an intergenerational community of believers, Jewish parents had access to ba-

bysitters, support groups, and mentors. By being involved in an extended community, both children and parents learned the importance of a larger community.

Parents as Teachers

Jewish parents were the primary teachers of their children. Regardless as to what other educational systems were employed, it was always understood that parents were the first and foremost teachers of their children. Parents, therefore, were expected to nurture children by supporting their family unit as caregivers. By doing so, they acknowledged that children were fully human beings in their own right, but beings for whom adults and the community had special obligations.

The impact of Jewish parents upon their children, especially in rearing them to honor and respect the Commandments of Yahweh and to respect and honor their parents and community leaders can hardly be overlooked. Certain basic divine principles for childrearing in Judaism serve as a model for all the human family of God, both Jews and Gentiles, on the earth to preserve God's eternal standard of "holiness" in the lives of his people in each generation.

The Heritage of the Lord

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Children are the heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of their youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with the enemies in the gates" (Psalm 127:1, 3-5).

Each child that is born into a Jewish family is joyfully accepted as a special gift from God through a covenantal relationship. God has established as clear a connection between faithful parenthood and the salvation of their children as he has between seed time and harvest, diligence and riches, education and knowledge.

The divinely appointed link between the means and the end is obvious. Children belong to God and are God's gifts to parents. The fruit of the womb is God's reward. Children come *through* their parents, but they come *from* God. Children are placed by God in the

trust and care of parents for enjoyment, blessing, and benefit of the parents as well as for the provision and protection of the children. Jewish tradition says, "Every child has three parents: God, Father, and Mother."

Teach through Love

One of the earliest statements outlining principles for child rearing appears in Deuteronomy 6:7-8:

"You shall teach [the commandments] diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

The Torah expression *to teach them diligently* is the same Hebrew phrase *shanan* that is used regarding surgery. Parents are to apply basic life principles in the same way that a surgeon applies the scalpel—precisely when and where the need exists in the life of the child, physically, morally, and spiritually. Parents are to teach their children holiness by precept as well as by godly example. They manifest obedience to God through simple generous acts of thoughtfulness and love to "God for his everlasting covenant with them.

It is necessary, therefore, for parents to have a right relationship with God. They must be everything they expect their children to be. Parents must not only *know* the way and *show* the way. They must also go the way that children should go—the way that God says to go and not just the way they want the children to go.

The whole system of Judaism points to the fatherhood of God as the rule of behavior toward children. In all the virtues God shows to his children, the love of the father is the underlying quality. Love is the heart of the relationship between God and his covenant people according to Deuteronomy 7:8. Children build their first impression of their heavenly Father upon, the experiences that they have with their earthly father. If children are to accept God as trustworthy, dependable, forgiving, and understanding they learn these qualities most easily if they experience them in their father.

The Jewish father, then, is the head of the family, the person to whom the family looks for strength, even as the father looks to God, for strength. The father serves as priest at the daily family devotions, prayer, Torah study, mediations, and contemplation, asking spiritual, questions of the children and, arriving at answers together as a family.

Transmitting Holiness

Since all children are born with a sinful nature or inclination toward evil (Psalm 51:5), they need holiness from a holy God. Parents are used by God to transmit this "holiness" to their children through love. As children grow in their understanding of a God of love, they are thereby freed from the shame-based code of sinful

human nature and from obstacles that might prevent them from receiving and giving love. God imparts the necessary love to the hearts of parents and gives them the astounding ability to reflect the love that he has for his children and to live in, the power of that love. Loving, submissive children obey their parents as their loving submissive parents obey their heavenly Father.

Children are not meant to be the center of the family. The rightful center is the relationship between God, husband, and wife. A loving relationship affects a child's ability to love. Knowing that parents love each other provides the child with security, stability, and sacredness about life that can be gained from no other means. Nothing, therefore, is more central to the child's happiness and sense of worth than seeing the love of father and mother for each other through visible acts of kindness and service.

Discipline

In order for a child to be trained to live a life of holiness, discipline is necessary. The word *discipline* comes from the root word *disciple*. Both words come from the Latin word for "pupil," which implies being instructed, educated, or trained.

Discipline involves the total molding of the child's character by encouraging good behavior and correcting unacceptable behavior. Punishment to bring about obedience is part of the discipline that provides a short-term deterrent. "For whom the Lord loves he corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights" (Proverbs 3:12). "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15). "Foolishness is bound in the heart of the child; but the rod of correction shall drive it from him" (Proverbs 22:15).

The goal of parental discipline in love is to teach self-discipline, to help development of self-controlled independence. Lack of proper discipline robs children of the ability to discipline themselves and choose for themselves the way they should go.

Effective discipline requires knowledge, wisdom, patience, and persistence, and it must be administered out of love, understanding, compassion and mercy (Psalm 103:13). Discipline that is severe and over-extended can cause rebellion and lack of self-confidence, and it can destroy any desire for independence that is self-controlled. The Ten Commandments were given as God's guide to true self-discipline.

Direction

In Judaism, children are to be thought of as arrows in the hand of a mighty archer. In ancient times arrows were necessary for defense and attack. An arrow is made to be pointed in the right direction toward a goal. Consider God as an archer who sees the mark upon the path

of the infinite. He bends the stable bow—the parents—with all his might so that the arrows—the children—may go swiftly from the parents to their destination. The parents hold in their hands the destiny of the children. They determine largely whether their children succeed or fail. The parents aim them in the way they should go! Nothing is more rewarding than parents observing children going in the right direction.

Affirmation

All children have basic human needs that must be met in order for them to grow into physical, emotional, and spiritual maturity. Meeting these needs through affirmation is of paramount importance in the early years when attitudes and approaches in life are molded. If these needs are not met early in life, the child may seek fulfillment in ways that are harmful and, hurtful as they try new adventures and make independent choices.

All children need to be noticed and appreciated if they are to develop a healthy sense of significance. Parents must take time for their children; otherwise, their children will take time from their parents. Children thrive on praise! When efforts to learn are praised, they are encouraged to move closer toward the goal that their parents have marked for them.

The Parenting Task

Childrearing is one of the most important duties and responsibilities that are given to parents by God. Building lives has never been an easy assignment. It takes love, tolerance, patience, faith, self-sacrifice, and just plain hard work to accomplish this task with success.

With the passing of time over thousands of years, changes in lifestyles, techniques, and trends have altered the ways parents and children interact and have moved both away from the scriptural Jewish model, replacing them with three basic styles in postmodern times: 1) Authoritarianism (unreasonably strict, harsh, and abusive domination, telling children exactly what to do and offering them no choices); 2) Permissiveness (indulgence, allowing children to do as they please with no restraint); and 3) Negligence (disregarding the needs of children with parents focusing on other interests outside the family). All three of these are the opposite of the Jewish model of parenting in which there is responsibility and accountability of each member of the family.

As we observe the Jewish model for child rearing, we quickly realize how far modern parents have been removed from God's master plan and divine blueprint for parenting as outlined in the Torah. In our broken, torn, and fractured family structure, where 50% of marriages fail and many children grow up without responsible fathers in the home, having their self-respect wounded

and feeling unloved and robbed of a God-given quality that should be one of the greatest forces of their personality, what are we to do?

A child needs love and wants to know about love more than anything else. Children feel security and stability when they experience unconditional love in a strong, loving, caring family-love modeled by their parents. Love is a learned response. As a baby receives love, it responds to that love and learns to give love in return. That love keeps growing through adulthood. Love also requires verbal expression. Children need to hear their parents say, "I love you." Love also requires action. Parents must show their children that they love them by thoughtful and kind deeds.

Share quality and quantity time with your children. Listen to their stories and play, sing and pray with them. Read to them, and have them read back to you. Teach them by example how to solve real problems and serve in family and community. Share responsibilities and chores with them. Encourage them to do everything they can for themselves, thereby developing their independence. Give them help when necessary. Show them how to work alongside of you. Allow them to make choices with consequences for those choices. Children develop their own separate identities as they enjoy responsibilities and challenges that they can manage. Do not, however, practice indulgence to a child's every whim because it will produce narcissistic behavior.

While the Torah teaches that we are to train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it, we dare not accept a predetermined idea that excludes the choice of the child. Our sovereign God does all things perfectly. He makes no mistakes, but he does not rob his children of the power of choice. Even those who experience his best blessings may turn away for a time, and some may never return.

Still, the promise concerning the influence of godly parents is a strong one. We accept this scriptural promise with the prediction of the prophet Malachi to whom God promised that he would, "turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents" (Malachi 4:6). Even at times when parents and children fail to be perfect, love and grace will still work together and heal broken relationships.

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God gave them up, through the lusts of their own hearts, to sexual impurity, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves: Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their women exchanged natural relations for that which is against nature: and likewise the men, leaving their natural relations with woman, burned in their lust toward one another; men with men doing that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper. They were filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malevolence; whisperers, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, without natural affection, unmerciful: who knowing the just decree of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do these things, but applaud those who practice them.

Romans chapter one is a record of the lostness of mankind. It is the apostle Paul's version of Genesis chapters 1 through 3. Paul was helping the Christians in Rome, both Jews and Gentiles, to understand how Adam and Eve, because of the choice they made in the Garden, turned their lives and our lives over to sin. Make no mistake; Adam and Eve made a willful choice not to follow God's directive, like the petulant child who tells his parents, "I'll decide for myself."

Paul was explaining how Adam and Eve and every generation since then had rejected God's pattern for life. From the beginning God desired a personal relationship with human beings, and God's laws were instituted to enable that relationship. Without adherence to God's laws, there could be no relationship. With Adam and Eve's rejection of God's command to eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, sin entered the world, and death through sin. Sin involved the entire race of humanity. Guilt followed on the heels of sin. Adam and Eve were so ashamed at what they had done, they hid from God. Sin became universal to all human beings. However, sin did not destroy anyone's personal responsibility for the errant decisions that individuals make. It only increases their guilt.

Starting with mankind's rejection of God's way, there comes alienation. We become alienated from each other. Even family members become alienated from each other as happened with Cain and Abel. Families break down; husbands and wives divorce, and children are the victims of this process of alienation. People often fill their lives with pleasure thinking that somehow that will bring them satisfaction, but it never does. They are only more empty than ever.

One of the worst things about our alienation from each other is that society has become more violent. Spiritually we are empty and don't know why because we don't know how to find our way to God to fill that emptiness. I am reminded of a once popular gospel song by Steve Green called "People Need the Lord." There's a line in the song that goes, "At the end of broken dreams, He's the open door."

One of the results of our alienation from God is that we are often dominated by the sensual desires of lust, greed, and pride. As the apostle Paul states in the first chapter of Romans: "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections...."

We feel condemned, but we hate that feeling and desire to rid ourselves of it. Yet, how many of us want to live in a society in which there is no justice? We want to see the guilty punished; we just don't want to see ourselves punished even though we know that we deserve it. We are alienated from God and know that the punishment is the "wrath of God."

The apostle Paul in chapter one of Romans was giving a lead-up to his main theme in the book: We are saved from the wrath of God by the blood of Christ. "Having been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him" (Romans 5:9).

The apostle John gives us some of Jesus' last words: "Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more; but you shall see me: because I live, you also shall live" (John 14:19).

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, God immediately laid out a plan for the redemption of mankind in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." God knew what was coming once he offered Adam and Eve a choice. Anytime someone is offered a choice, there is always the possibility that the person will make the wrong choice, but God also supplied a remedy from the very beginning of mankind — the sacrifice of His only begotten Son.

I remember being moved when president Reagan repeated this verse of Scripture at his inauguration: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). If Christianity in the Western world is ever to recover from its self-inflicted fatal wound, we must humble ourselves and live God's way, abiding by His law. The choice is ours. It's not up to the society around us. We are the ones who are lost and can't find our way back home. We can't expect society to know the way when we ourselves have no idea which way to go.

Kenneth Ryland

With this article *The Sabbath Sentinel* continues our series on the various movements within the Sabbath-keeping community

History The Seventh Day Baptists

The oldest Sabbath-keeping Church in the U. S.

from the Seventh Day Baptist Historical Society

A Thumbnail Sketch of Seventh Day Baptists from 1650 to the Present

Seventh Day Baptists are a covenant people based on the concept of regenerate membership, believer's baptism, congregational polity, and scriptural basis for belief and practice. Seventh Day Baptists have presented the Sabbath as a sign of obedience in a covenant relationship with God and not as a condition of salvation. They have not condemned those who do not accept the Sabbath but are curious at the apparent inconsistency of those who claim to accept the Bible as their source of faith and practice, yet have followed traditions of the church instead.

Seventh Day Baptists date their origin with the mid-17th century separatist movement in England. With the renewed emphasis on the Scriptures for Free Church doctrine and practice, men such as James Ockford, William Saller, Peter Chamberlain, Francis Bampfield, Edward and Joseph Stennett concluded that the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath was an inescapable requirement of biblical Christianity. Some maintained membership within the Baptist fellowship and simply added the private Sabbath observance to their other shared convictions. As the power of the state was used to enforce conformity to a common day of worship, separation became necessary. The first separate church of record was the Mill Yard church founded about 1650 in London.

The study of the Scriptures in America brought Samuel and Tacy Hubbard to the Baptist principle of believer's baptism in 1647, and membership in the First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island. Beginning in 1665, their family and several others became convinced of the seventh-day Sabbath and joined in fellowship with Stephen Mumford and his wife who had held Sabbath convictions while members of a Baptist church in Tewksbury, England. When two couples gave up their Sabbath convictions, the others found it difficult

to share communion with them within First Baptist. Thus five members joined with the Mumfords in a covenant relationship, establishing the first Seventh Day Baptist Church in America in December, 1671. Even after this separation, close fellowship with other Baptists remained.

A similar separation occurred in 1705 in Piscataway, New Jersey, when a deacon of the Baptist Church, Edmund Dunham, became convinced of the biblical basis for Sabbath observance. Dunham and sixteen others withdrew to form their own church. A third group of churches came out of the Keithian split from Quakerism in the Philadelphia area about 1700. A pietistic movement among German immigrants was influenced by this third group. This led to the formation of a sister conference known as German Seventh Day Baptists which founded the cloisters of Ephrata, Pennsylvania about 1728. From these beginnings, Seventh Day Baptists followed the westward migration, arriving on the Pacific Coast by 1900.

Seventh Day Baptists have been characterized by their participation in missionary activity, educational endeavors, ecumenicity and civic responsibility. The missionary spirit led to the formation of a General Conference in 1802. In preserving the autonomy of the local church, the Conference has relied upon societies for implementing a range of missions, publications, and education. Beginning in 1821 the denomination has had an almost continuous publication, with the current house organ, *The Sabbath Recorder*, unbroken since 1844.

Several early missionary societies encouraged pastors to make extended journeys in the home field. The current Missionary Society was formed in 1843 and four years later missionaries began an effective mission in China, embracing both medical and educational phases until the Communist takeover in 1950. Most of the foreign missions of the twentieth century have been of the "Macedonian call" in response to

Sabbath-keeping groups who have cried out, "Come over and help us." This led to missions in such places as Jamaica and Guyana in the Caribbean region; Malawi and Ghana in Africa; India, Burma (Myanmar) and the Philippines in Asia; Australia and New Zealand in Oceania, and scattered responses in other areas. In 1965 a World Federation of Seventh Day Baptist Conferences was formed which has grown to nearly twenty conferences.

Seventh Day Baptists' insistence on an enlightened conscience for beliefs and practice led to the formation of an Education Society and the establishment of schools or academies as they migrated into the frontiers. These schools were never limited to members of the denomination but served the areas where public education had not become readily available. Three of these schools later became colleges at Alfred, New York; Milton, Wisconsin; and Salem, West Virginia. The desire for an educated clergy led to the establishment of a seminary at Alfred University in 1871. These schools were among the pioneers in women's education at the college and seminary level. What the academies and colleges did for higher education was duplicated for both children and adults in the local church through the Sabbath Schools and material prepared for them.

The sense of ecumenicity present in the earliest churches was continued as Seventh Day Baptists were charter members of such organizations as the Federal, the National and the World Councils of Churches. The denomination withdrew from these ties in the 1970s when the direction of these bodies appeared to violate the autonomy of the local church and other principles of Baptist thought and practice. The withdrawal strengthened their relationship with other Baptists in such organizations as the Baptist World Alliance, the North American Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and related kindred groups involving women and societal interests.

Throughout their history, Seventh Day Baptists have had a strong sense of civic responsibility. Several leaders of the first churches in England held responsible positions in the government. In America both Richard and Samuel Ward were governors of Rhode Island in the eighteenth century, the latter serving in the Continental Congress in 1775-1776. Others served in government at various levels, including Congress where Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia represented his state for forty years in either the House or the Senate beginning in

1933. Many have served in the armed forces, including chaplains in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and more recently in World War 2. The General Conference has taken strong stands on social issues such as temperance and sexual immorality and has urged its members to implement those principles and practices which would make for a more Christian society.

Due to an emphasis on freedom of thought and conscience, Seventh Day Baptists have represented a wide diversity of theological thought. Their common bond of the Sabbath enabled them to avoid a split during the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920s. For most of its history, the denomination has been rural-oriented but has found in more recent years its greatest growth in developing urban ministries.

The Seventh Day Baptist General Conference is organized as a conference of churches. Voting on most issues brought before the annual sessions is done by delegates from member churches. A General Council is empowered to act for the Conference between sessions and prepare budget and program emphases. The Council is composed of elected members at large and *ex officio* members representing the Missionary Society, the Board of Christian Education, the Tract and Communication Council, the Council on Ministry, the Women's Society and the Memorial Fund Trustees.

The General Conference offices are located at 3120 Kennedy Road in Janesville, WI. The Missionary Society and the Board of Christian Education have offices in Westerly, Rhode Island, and Alfred Station, New York, respectively. Geographical associations help strengthen local fellowship, youth activities and witness.

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Westby: "Body Snatchers..." cont. from page 4.

After centuries of investigation, the human body still holds mysteries. The more we learn the more complex and intricate it reveals itself to be. Modern medical science can only hope to discover how the body works and then to learn laws or properties or forces that can keep it healthy for its optimal life span. Over all, it is doing a good job at that, but, alas, all patients die.

Years ago my wife, JoAn, and I took our grandson Lucas to see the traveling exhibit "The Body." Maybe you've seen it. A truly marvelous insight into what lies behind the skin. A real plasticized body of a Chinese person was displayed in various cut-aways—revealing, shocking, and totally amazing to think of creating such a living creature that could then reproduce itself.

Body Obsessed Culture

God loves bodies—he made them! Yet he cautions us that we are more than our bodies and Jesus said we don't live by bread alone. The flesh withers and dies. It is here like a flower today and tomorrow fades, blown away in the wind, falling to the ground, forgotten. Knowing the temporality of the human condition we would expect people to be very concerned about life after death—to be motivated by the prospect of living forever. We would expect people to be genuinely concerned about their spiritual health as much or more so than their physical health. Yet it appears the culture is all about the all-powerful and all-important NOW—the body now.

Watching TV commercials one could conclude the target audience is preoccupied with body beauty and body health. Ads for every sort of a bodily ailment's relief or cure. Take XYZ drug (see your doctor of course) and the ad pictures happy smiling healthy people doing interesting activities in bucolic settings of country roads, fields of green grass, pristine streams all the while a long list of horrible possible side effects and warning are quickly read but this message is muted out by the happy people we see who are apparently using XYZ to no ill effect.

Then there are the ambulance chasing lawyers posting their ads for people who used another XYZ drug and got sick or died—"let us get you a cash settlement" (and enrich ourselves). Some troll for victims while others troll for customers who, in some cases, will later become victims.

Then there are the never-ending sex enhancement ads. You know the cheesy ads for older guys who want to be young stallions again. Is sexual "performance" the measure of it all? Would we ever have had such ads even 25 years ago? There is a coarsening of culture, a "defining deviancy downward," as the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan put it.

Diets of every sort to get the better more perfect you have great appeal. Beauty products will wipe wrinkles

away so you can look young and sexy again. Presumably this will also make you happy. Exercise programs and devices promise another route to the healthy, beautiful, sexy you. Just think how attractive you will be with abs that actually show. The opposite sex will flock to you. Your time in front of the mirror will also be glorious. Presumably this too will make you happy. It is all about being happy now, looking young and fit now. Don't think about getting lame and old and dying. That's too depressing. Let others worry about that. I'm going to keep my body going. It is as if we humans live in a fantasy of immortality when every reality around us tells us otherwise.

Bodies, bodies, bodies: it is as if they are the center of all things. The health food industry feeds this notion and medical grant writers are always looking for a study of what food is going to kill you and what will keep you healthy. The various studies flow out like Old Faithful proclaiming coffee bad until another grant study reveals how good coffee is for the body. Same with eggs, oils, salt, water, and about every food in the supermarket. People are drawn to food gurus like flies to fruit, to the latest cure-all nonsense. (American fruit, the newest vitamin-mineral combination, etc.) The human quest for living longer and healthier provides a market for products generating hundreds of billions of dollars in sales every year. Do they work? Maybe some might be helpful, but in the end everyone dies.

No Pill for Immortality

All these appeals to bodily health and beauty come forth from an inward yearning for immortality. It may not be even realized in most, but inward in us is a force pushing for life and more of it while dreading its ultimate loss through death. Exercise, health foods, pills, diets and therapies of all sorts are short term attempts to slake the thirst for immortality, for life. Like the famed Ponce de Leon's quest for the Fountain of Youth in the rivers of Florida, we seek life and as much of it as we can get. The cruel reality is that all our attempts will fail and down deep we know it. Only God has the key to eternal life.

The fundamental promise of God concerns this yearning for life everlasting and how it can be truly satisfied. Not with temporary palliatives like an aspirin for a mortal wound, but eternal life and a new body fit for eternity.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁴

That passage echoes the words of God from the Garden of Eden when choices about sin or the Tree of Life were being discussed. We know the direction Adam and Eve took.

Paul advises the Corinthian believers to take care of their bodies but his emphasis is spiritual—and for good reason. Speaking of sexuality immorality he writes:

...He who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.⁵

The analogy of the body as temple is instructive toward understanding its basic function. Life is precious and we should fear losing it. Jesus said that if God could provide food for little birds he would take care of our bodily needs for clothing and food, so put your trust in God and seek his kingdom first and foremost in your life's passion. The Temple of God was the place where the presence of God himself was represented and at times his glory even descended upon it. The Holy Spirit is simply God's Spirit. It is how God dwells in us. Our greatest calling is to be a living vessel of honor, a temple fit for God.

We, as we fulfill the First and Greatest commandment, "offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."⁶ The prime care for the body needs to be spiritual, not physical. Now, the two are not opposites. There is no dualism in the Bible regarding the body as can be found in paganized religions: the body is evil, the spirit is good. But the priority for concern and care should be our spiritual "body" our spiritual being.

The writer of Hebrews puts the matter in such a clear context:

Let us draw near to God [move Godward] with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience, and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.⁷

That hope was the resurrection to eternal life. Our job now is the ongoing process of washing and cleaning our lives, perfecting our character after the example of Jesus to be the fit temple for God's Spirit. You are not only your body. You, as a sentient being with the creative image of God impressed upon you, are designed, potentially, to live forever. It is a matter of our choices and the mercy and power of God whether we will realize our designed destiny.

Souls, Bodies, and Resurrection

Jesus said don't fear men that can only kill your body. That is where their power ends. Rather fear God who can destroy, annihilate, both body and soul in the fires of the second death.⁸ Your "soul" as Jesus used it means the "you of your life," all your character, virtues, personality, memories, everything about you. That is not lost when the body dies. I'm not suggesting the doctrine of immortal souls which is non-biblical and pagan. For Jesus said souls can die, not at the hand of man, but, if necessary, at the hand of God. Waiting judgment, whether reward or punishment (see John 5:28-29), our lives are hidden in God,

in his heavenly vaults in a death-like sleep until He issues the call to life:

For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in Glory.⁹

The biblical doctrine of Resurrection requires "souls" to come to conscious life again in new bodies. The emphasis is upon the First and Greatest Resurrection which is in the immediate future in God's timeline. This is the event accompanied by the return of Jesus and God setting up his Kingdom on earth for a thousand years. People naturally want to know what kind of bodies we Christians will have in that resurrection. Paul in chapter 15 of 1st Corinthians attempts to answer, but I'm afraid that his answer is almost too fantastically other-worldly to be digested by us. To capture the mystery of our future bodies we need to take this in slowly.

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come? How foolish!"¹⁰

Paul explains how God has designed the various forms of life to follow the pattern built into their seed and how even degrees of splendor for celestial bodies follow their God-given design.

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body....As we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.¹¹

The "man from heaven" is Jesus and Paul says we will have bodies like onto his: imperishable, glorified, powerful, a truly spiritual eternal body. By "spiritual body" we should not think empty ghost-like sheets floating about. God is spirit and he is as real as can be.

We eagerly await a savior from there [heaven], the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.¹²

There is a lot of talk about future bodies in the New Testament. We are encouraged to lift our cares and dreams above the mundane to a higher plane of reality—the reality of the Kingdom of God. Rather than questing to squeeze eternal life out of our human bodies, we should raise our sights to what Paul contemplated.

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house [prepared] in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan [with steadily weakening fleshly bodies], longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling [body]....So that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.¹³

The details of our new bodies are hidden with God, but this much we know:

...When he appears we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.¹⁴

Imagine that, if you can! Seeing the reality of God in all his power and glory made possible by being given a spiritual, eternal body akin to his. As his children we will join Jesus and be able to fellowship with our creator as the plan of God fulfills its purpose. The doors of eternity swing open wide!

Heavenly Body Snatchers

If you are looking for a tie-in to my title, *The Body Snatchers*, how about this: The great harvest of lives called the resurrection of the dead will be the greatest display of God's love and faithfulness. It will be earth-shaking. How will it be done? Jesus said he would come with his angels at the end of the age. He called his angels "the harvesters" who would select the righteous to enter the kingdom so they may "shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."¹⁵

These angels are the true "resurrectionists," the heavenly body snatchers, carrying out the divine command that the dead be raised to meet Christ as he descends to earth. Notice how they know already who belong as children of the resurrection. These faithful are the ones who had been moving Godward when they lived their short years on earth purifying their spiritual body to be a temple for God's Spirit. They were yearning to be clothed with immortality, a new body from God. A new body is in your future. The only body that will last forever.

End Notes

1. Psalm 139:14
2. Carroll, Andrew, *Here is Where—Discovering America's Great Forgotten History*, Crown Archetype, 2013, pp 285-6.
3. Carroll, pp. 288-9.
4. Romans 6:23
5. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
6. Romans 12:1
7. Hebrews 10:22-23
8. See Matthew 10:28, Revelation 20:14
9. Colossians 3:3-4
10. v. 35
11. v. 49-50
12. Philippians 3:21
13. 2 Corinthians 5:1-5
14. 1 John 3:1-3
15. Matthew 13:39, 43

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Living Letters

by Donald Mansell

"*You yourselves are our letter ... known and read by all men*" (2 Corinthians 3:2, R.S.V.)

Saturday nights in a Japanese internment camp were not all boring, especially when Dr. Charles E. Wittschiebe was giving one of his lectures on graphology. Graphology is the art or science of discerning character and personality by analyzing handwriting. It is amazing what the shape, slant, and thickness of our penmanship reveal.

An important part of Dr. Wittschiebe's programs consisted of anonymous samples of handwriting submitted by volunteers who dropped them into boxes placed in our barracks. Dr. Wittschiebe would take these samples, analyze them during the week, and report on his findings the following Saturday night. No one was obliged to identify himself, but many who had their handwriting analyzed testified privately to the uncanny accuracy of the analysis.

Sometimes it seemed we could almost match the analyses with certain individuals. In other instances, however, people so concealed their true selves that this was virtually impossible to do. But this is not to say that the analysis of their script did not reveal their true character. I well remember one old, apparently hard-bitten gold miner who privately admitted his astonishment that he had been described accurately as a person who acted tough but who concealed beneath his tough exterior a sensitive nature.

Almost everything—perhaps everything—we do bears the impress of our individuality. If our powers of observation were sharpened and trained by practice, we would probably discern in others many clues to their true selves that normally go unnoticed. There are some things, however, that even a novice can sense. Who has not felt the selfless love that radiates from a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus?

A true Christian does not have to — in fact, does not—go around announcing to the world how good a person he is. If he is indeed a Christian, his life will reveal this fact without his saying so. Those with whom he comes in contact will notice his "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." As Henry Drummond once said, "Love hides even from itself." After it has gone out into the world and done its beautiful deed, it goes on, all unconscious that it has done anything unusual, and it hasn't, for all it has done is that which naturally springs from a heart of love.

Did you ever notice that in the day of judgment the righteous are surprised that they have done anything good? (See Matthew 25:35-39.)

*Donald Mansell, *New Every Morning*, page 22. Review & Herald Publishing Association. 1981.*

Yeshua Son of Nun



by Chris DeWeese

"The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him'" Deuteronomy 18:17-19.

This prophecy is almost always used to identify Yeshua the Messiah, who we think of as Jesus Christ. But the first person to fulfill this prophecy was indeed named Yeshua, but it was Yeshuah the son of Nun who we know as Joshua. Yehoshua, or Yeshua for short, is the same Hebrew name for both Jesus and Joshua. I have no idea why the translators have decided to translate their names differently, but they both have (or had in Joshua's case) the same mission as well as the same name!

Joshua's mission was to lead the people across the Jordan and into battle to claim their inheritance. Leading them across the Jordan wasn't all that difficult since God stopped the river for them! Stopping the river was just like parting the sea, only this time it was so Israel could be the aggressor instead of the prey. Stopping the river allowed the people to cross swiftly but it also let the people (and their enemies) know that Joshua was just as anointed for leadership as Moses.

Joshua's job was not just to be a wartime leader, he was also tasked with setting up God's government for God's people. He had to do this perfectly and the people had to obey perfectly or else they would lose their blessing. One guy broke a rule regarding the spoils of war and God removed His blessing from the entire nation (Joshua 7). After this, Joshua interceded for the people, just like Yeshua does for us now, and then Joshua had to execute judgment on the man who broke the rules. Yeshua will also execute judgment when He returns and, finally, at the end of the thousand years.

The parallels between Joshua and Yeshua are stark. Herod wanted to put all the kids under two years old to death because he thought the Messiah was going to come with fury and restore Israel violently, just like Joshua did. Herod, the Pharisees, and all who had a power base in the existing corrupt system did not want to lose their power so they resisted the Messiah. The disciples thought Jesus was going to restore all things in the first century, too, which helps to explain their behavior at times. The brothers whose mom asked if they could sit at Yeshua's right and left thought He was going to launch a military campaign and restore earthly Israel at that time and they would actually sit on earthly chairs to the right and left of Yeshua. Peter took the sword and chopped the guy's ear off because he was prepared to fight and restore the kingdom just like Joshua and his contemporaries set up the nation.

Yeshua is going to come with fury the second time. There will be much violence and suffering but God's remnant will be protected throughout. Remember how Rahab was saved when the wall of Jericho came down? She was a prostitute who lived on the wall of Jericho. She concealed the Israeli spies who had been sent to scout the land and they promised to save her from the destruction that was to come because of her actions. She had her whole family with her in her house (on the wall) when the wall (that her house was built upon) came down. Rahab and her family were not harmed. This is also how God's people will be saved from the tribulation — miraculously.

The end of this age is going to come much like the beginning of the country of Israel. Those who are faithful and obedient will be blessed and saved – these will be like the virgins who had plenty of oil for their lamps. Those who aren't will be outside with the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Yeshua will lead the battle and the kingdom will FINALLY be set up. And Deuteronomy 18:18 will be fulfilled for the last time!

You can find Chris' blog at <http://firstcenturychristianity.net>

Creation, Flood, and Covenant — in the Bible and Before

By R. Herbert, Ph.D.

Beginning in the 19th century, archaeologists excavating the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations of the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians, in what is modern day Iraq, and in other areas of the Near East, began to find libraries of clay tablets inscribed with the Mesopotamians' cuneiform writing. When some of these texts were later translated, they were found to be stories that were similar to biblical narratives such as those of the creation and flood, sometimes matching those stories in even their small details.¹ Many Victorian era churchmen hailed these discoveries as independent proof of the Bible stories, but atheists and agnostics soon began to stress that many of the Mesopotamian stories were far older than the oldest biblical books and that they were more likely the original stories on which the later biblical narratives were based. So what is the believer to make of these ancient stories, and what is their true relationship with the stories found in the Bible? In this article, examples from three categories of ancient texts will be briefly examined — focusing only on their similarities with biblical stories — before we try to answer these questions.

Creation Stories

There is no single story in Mesopotamian literature that exactly matches the Hebrew creation account, but the similarities that exist between a number of Sumerian and Babylonian stories and that of the Bible cannot be ignored.² In one early Sumerian story, "Enki and Ninhursag," for example, the gods become tired with the work of forming the earth's surface and complain to Namma, the primeval sea, who persuades her son Enki, the god of water, to create a substitute to free the gods from their labor. Enki instructs Namma to take some clay which she apparently places in her womb, eventually giving birth to the first humans.¹ Interestingly, both in this Mesopotamian story and in Atrahasis, as well as in Genesis 1–2, the creation of humans is told in two versions — first a general version, followed by a more specifically detailed retelling of the story.³ Other Sumerian stories show similar general parallels.

Later Babylonian literature makes more continuous points of contact with the Hebrew creation account. While Genesis outlines the creation story in six days, each with different aspects of the world being created, the Babylonian creation account Enuma Elish tells of the first six generations of gods who are created one

after the other — with each god being associated with some aspect of the cosmos. As the account progresses we see clear similarities at several points:

Hebrew Creation Account Enuma Elish Creation Account

First day – undivided waters

First generation gods Apsu,Tiamat – primeval waters

Third day – earth

Third generation Kishar – earth

Fourth Day – lights in sky

Fourth generation Anu – sky

Fifth Day – sea creatures

Fifth generation Enki – waters

Sixth day – animals, humans

Sixth generation Marduk – creates man

Seventh Day – god rests

[Marduk creates man to serve the gods so they can rest]

Many other Mesopotamian stories, while quite different from anything in the Bible, still include some of the same details found in the Bible's creation narrative. In one Sumerian story, the god Enki ate eight plants created by the goddess Ninhursag, so she cursed him and eight parts of his body became diseased. When he became direly ill, the other gods persuaded Ninhursag to help him, and so she relented and created eight healing goddesses to heal the stricken parts of his body. The goddess who healed Enki's rib was Ninti, whose name means "lady of the rib" or "lady of life" — evoking the story of Eve (Hebrew Hawwāh) whose name means "life" and who was created from the rib of Adam, as well as the role of the forbidden plant in the biblical Eden. The story of Enkidu in the Epic of Gilgamesh also contains this kind of vaguely biblical-similar narrative. Enkidu is created in the Edin (the Sumerian word for wilderness) and at first lives in harmony with the animals. He is eventually seduced by a female temple servant and after this sexual-based "fall" he is rejected by the wild things and must leave the Edin.

The Flood Story

Three ancient Mesopotamian stories in particular make reference to a great flood, the epics of Ziusudra (Sumerian) Atrahasis (Akkadian), and Gilgamesh (Babylonian). In the first, Ziusudra hears the gods' decision to destroy humanity and constructs a vessel which delivers

him from the flood brought on by the gods. Stories about Ziusudra are known to date from at least the middle of the 3rd millennium BC. In the Atrahasis epic, the gods become upset that humans are making too much noise. As a result, they take various measures to destroy humans, the last of which is to bring a great flood upon the Earth. The only person to survive is Atrahasis, who takes his family into a ship, closes the door behind them, and remains there until the flood subsides and the birds he sends out do not return.

The clearest parallels with the biblical account appear in the epic of Gilgamesh, in which, at the end of his quest for immortality, the hero meets a couple who survived the flood. The man, Utnapishtim, tells a story of the flood similar to that of Atrahasis, but with a number of interesting parallels to the biblical account. Utnapishtim was warned by the god Enki and told to prepare a ship into which he takes every kind of animal. The flood comes from heavy rain and because the ‘windows of heaven’ are opened. Eventually the ship comes to rest on top of Mt. Nisir and at this point Utnapishtim sends out a dove, a swallow and a raven. These details show obvious similarities with the Hebrew flood narrative, and some other details, while not so obvious, show further parallels. After the flood, Utnapishtim offers sacrifice and the goddess Ishtar comes and lifts her jeweled necklace above her head as a sign of remembrance of the flood. Lifting such a curved, pectoral style jeweled necklace above one’s head forms, of course, the shape of the rainbow’s arc, and the Akkadian term for rainbow is in fact, the “jewels of heaven.”

Yet further similarities exist with the Mesopotamian flood related narratives. In the Sumerian king list the kings listed as living before the flood are said to have had extremely long lifespans which shorten dramatically after the flood occurs. The parallel with the great ages of the antediluvial patriarchs in the Hebrew Bible is obvious, and some scholars have seen even more specific textual and mathematical connections between the various kings'/patriarchs' ages, though these patterns are complex and not as clearly demonstrable.

Stories of Covenant

While there are no ancient Near Eastern stories paralleling the stories of Abraham/Abram and the other Hebrew patriarchs, some of the events in the lives of these biblical characters are paralleled in terms of the social constructs and laws of the patriarchal age.⁴ In Genesis 15: 9-21, for example, we find the story of God ratifying his covenant with Abram by means of animal sacrifices. In response to Abram's request for a sign that God would fulfill his promise (v. 8), God instructed him to take various animals and sacrifice them in a particular manner. After killing the animals, Abram divided them into halves, placing them on the ground in such a way that someone could walk between the halves of

the carcasses. The narrative then states: “When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram ...” (Genesis 15:17-18a NIV).

Many biblical commentaries argue that this event was symbolic of such things as the “furnace of affliction” Israel would suffer in Egypt, but in ancient Near Eastern royal land grant treaties (a type of “suzerain-vassal treaty” in which an agreement is made between two unequal parties, one of higher status and one of lower status),⁴ this type of ritual was enacted to seal the agreement made by the participants. This legal procedure of the world in which Abram lived is clearly central to understanding the story itself. Another, much later (c. 590 BC), but clearly parallel example in the time of Zedekiah involves an animal being killed, cut into two pieces, and then individuals passing between the divided pieces (Jeremiah 34:8-22 and note vv. 15,19). In the Hebrew Bible a covenant was not “made” but “cut” (Hebrew *karat*), and the ancient sacrificial covenant cutting practice explains that usage.

It has long been recognized that a similar social-legal background may lie behind the form and manner in which the Decalogue Covenant was given to Israel (Exodus 20). The form of this covenant resembles the suzerainty treaty commonly found in the ancient Near East. First, the suzerain (dominant party) is identified in a covenant preamble with names and titles: “I am the Lord, your God....” This is followed by a historical prolog which states what the suzerain has done for the other covenant party: “who has brought you out of the land of Egypt” After these introductory sections the treaty lists the stipulations which will be enforced on the person/people making the covenant with the suzerain — including or followed by specified blessings and curses which will occur if the stipulations are kept or not kept: the ten commandments (vv. 3-17) with selected blessings and curses (5b-6; 7b; 12b). Finally, witnesses are usually named to the treaty. In the biblical account there is no immediate listing of witnesses, but in Deuteronomy 30:19 God calls upon heaven and earth to act as witnesses for the covenant he has made with Israel with its blessings and cursings. In Deuteronomy 31 God instructs Moses to compose a song for Israel to serve as a witness against the people (v. 19) and Moses commands the Levites to store the tablets with the 10 commandments in the ark, so that they may also serve as a witness against them (v. 26 and see Joshua 24:22). Space precludes mention of many of the further details of the Decalogue covenant that can be found to mesh with the ancient treaty form.

Ancient Echoes — but in which direction?

There are important differences between all the stories considered above and the parallel biblical accounts,

but the similarities are clearly great enough to deserve our close attention. In assessing the similarities between the biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts there are only three logical alternatives as to how the relationship occurred. To put it succinctly, either Israel was influenced by the surrounding cultures, those other ancient cultures were influenced by Israel, or both Israel and their neighbors were influenced by common traditions which they all shared.

Many people of faith — both Jewish and Christian — have argued that the other Near Eastern cultures were influenced by Israel, which originated the various creation and flood stories as well as the covenant forms found in the Bible. There is, however, no proof of this, and all the evidence available to us militates against this possibility. Many of the Sumerian texts involved are indeed far older than the oldest biblical writings.

The possibility that ancient Israel was influenced by the culture of its neighbors is very likely in some instances. It can be clearly seen, for example, in some of the language and literary structures used in Psalms and in the proverbs of Solomon. This is not the same as saying that the Israelites simply “copied” biblical texts or stories from their neighbors, but we can consider certain facts that probably apply. Not only was Abraham originally from Mesopotamia, but we find evidence of the patriarchs continuing to interact with that area in marriage (Genesis 24), and Mesopotamian culture was certainly wide spread and influenced many surrounding nations. It is perfectly possible then, that in some cases — each piece of evidence must be considered individually — that Mesopotamian and wider Near Eastern cultural material provided the origin of some of the literary forms and structures (such as the general then detailed accounts of creation) utilized in the Bible. This is no different from a modern non-Japanese author writing a poem in haiku form. It also appears that God was willing to use the legal forms and practices commonly accepted among the nations of the day in dealing with his servants and people.

As far as stories of Creation and Flood are concerned, it is possible that the Israelites and their neighbors shared similar cultural traditions which were passed down within their own areas and recorded in their own ways. It is also just as possible that some of the ancient Near Eastern stories were known and recast from a monotheistic perspective in Israel. To understand the latter possibility we might make the analogy of a modern religious writer taking a current history textbook and rewriting, from the perspective of creationism, the first chapter, which

described the evolution of human life. The author of Genesis may have retold the currently accepted “history” of that world in a manner that explained the One God’s purpose and development in creation. The question as to whether God would inspire such reuse of the ancient world’s understood history is perhaps answered in His apparent willingness to inspire the use of its literary and legal forms, as seen above, or later the building of a tabernacle and a temple clearly similar in many ways to the temples of other nations. Ultimately, there is no proof for either of the two possibilities — whether the biblical Creation and Flood accounts were based on Israelite traditions similar to other widely known stories, or taken by the biblical writers from those commonly known stories of surrounding cultures and recast for the theological purposes of scripture.

But, the person of faith need never feel that the ancient documents negate the biblical material in some way. At the very least, we can say with confidence that there is nothing about the ancient texts that indicates the biblical stories were directly copied from the older ones. The situation is far more complex than that, and suggests that while some non-Israelite cultural-legal practices may have been utilized by Israel, some biblical stories may also reflect widely known ancient traditions which were either borrowed or already part of Israelite culture.

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The Author:

R. Herbert (a pen name) earned a Ph.D. in ancient Near Eastern archaeology and cultures and was trained to read the stories discussed in this article in their original languages. His interest in this material and its relation to the Bible is longstanding.

Morning Companion

Stuck in a Box

Much of Jesus' ministry was about healing. Lepers, demoniacs, paraplegics, blind, speechless, and more received his healing touch. Sometimes he healed in private and other times among throngs of people.

Sometimes he healed out of sheer compassion. Other times he healed what seemed to be at random. At the pool of Bethesda he picked an infirm man out of a crowd while leaving the others in the condition in which they came. Once he even healed without meaning to, when an elderly woman touched the hem of his garment.

Not surprisingly, these acts of mercy and power garnered quite a buzz. Publicity makes both friends and enemies. It's an odd thing that cause for rejoicing should create controversy, but many of Jesus' miracles did just that.

Jesus had an interesting habit of defying the arbitrary regulations that the religious leaders of the day had imposed upon one of God's great gifts. God gave us a day of rest, the Sabbath, a time to stop, pause, and take a break from the toils of this world. What better day to heal the sick and wounded? But the religious types had turned it into a burden. No healing on that day, even though "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Healing on the Sabbath was Jesus' way of showing that this was to be a day of rejoicing and not of burden. "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:11-12 NIV).

The world of religion, both then and now, can become a series of rituals with no apparent relevancy to the other six days of the week. Jesus healed a man, and what should have been cause for great rejoicing instead became a cause of scandal, for we are told that "the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, how they might destroy him" (verse 14). Looking to destroy someone for doing good might be the sign of some people's religion, but it is surely not of mine.

These religious leaders had their religion neatly crammed into a ribbon-topped box. They had everything right where they thought it was supposed to be. But when Jesus came to their neighborhood and exposed the fundamental flaw in their system, the veil dropped, exposing their moral nakedness. In building a system of beliefs, they neglected the entire purpose of God. They somehow forgot that it is not about ritual, but about people.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this," wrote James, "to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Or, put differently, help people and obey God.

If your religion is more focused on ritual and narrow interpretation of the law, your religion is in vain. Your faith should inform your behavior away from yourself and toward the needs of others. If you can't do good on the Sabbath, then what good is the Sabbath?

—Lenny Cacchio

You can catch all of Lenny's latest commentaries on <http://morningcompanion.blogspot.com> and on the BSA Web site at <http://www.biblesabbath.org/>. Lenny is a member of the BSA board of directors. Also check out Lenny's Church's Web page at www.cogkc.org.

Wave of Kidnapping Plagues Egyptians

A Christian family tells its story of losing their daughter

She was an old woman, and her leg was in pain. She held out her hand. "Please help," she said.

Magda took the woman's hand, and led her to a waiting car. And that was the last Magda saw of her family for a week.

The 19-year-old student became, on June 2, another among the hundreds of Egyptian Christians caught up in a wave of kidnappings since the fall of the Mubarak government in 2011.

Nationwide, the ministry said the number of kidnappings grew by 145 per cent from 2011 to 2012. The Association of Victims of Abduction and Forced Disappearance claims to have registered 500 cases across Egypt since early 2011 in which Coptic Christian girls have been kidnapped.

Christians aren't the only victims. The wealthy — a group where Egypt's Coptic Christians have been well represented — are natural targets. Many of the kidnappings have occurred in the country's southern regions, where the concentration of Christians is higher.

Church leaders and human-rights activists say Egypt's government, which until recently had been dominated at the federal and regional levels by the Muslim Brotherhood, created room for criminals to prey on Christians with little fear of prosecution.

Whether the pace of kidnappings changes during the transition to a new government is anyone's guess. A week before the protests, World Watch Monitor spoke with two Christian families whose daughters were kidnapped. According to them, here is what happened:

Magda



Magda Adel Gameel, 19 and in her final year of secondary school in Assyut city in the southern province of the same name, had just finished an Arabic lesson with her friends. She asked them to wait for her at Anba Magar Church while she ran an errand to a nearby pharmacy. It was 7 p.m., still daylight.

Coming out of the store, she encountered a veiled old woman, who complained of leg pain and asked Magda to help her walk to her car. Magda walked with her to a car in an alley, and helped lower her into her seat.

As Magda leaned into the vehicle, she was sprayed with something that knocked her out. During the drive, she began to come out of it, and was sprayed again.

She awoke in an empty room. Her necklace, handbag and cell phone were gone.

A veiled woman entered the room with some food, and Magda spoke up in protest. The woman ordered her to remain silent. During trips to the bathroom, Magda's eyes were blindfolded.

A week went by. The veiled woman returned, and this time asked Magda to call her father and deliver a demand for ransom. The woman dialed the phone.

Magda took it. A man answered, in an unfamiliar voice.

"This is not my father," she told the veiled woman. The woman hit Magda, and ordered her to demand the ransom payment. Magda did as she was told, but the man said his daughter had not been kidnapped. She was with him now, he said.

On June 11, the veiled woman entered the room, and knocked out Magda with the spray.

She found herself near a road in the desert. She began to pray, then saw a taxi on the road. She waved it down, and told the driver the story.

"Where are we?" Magda asked the driver. They were on the Cairo-Alexandria Desert Road, near Alexandria, in northern Egypt. The cab took her into the city, where she called her father.

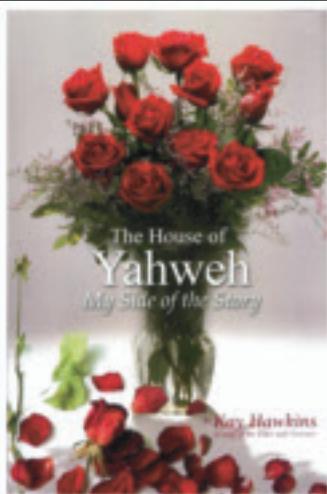
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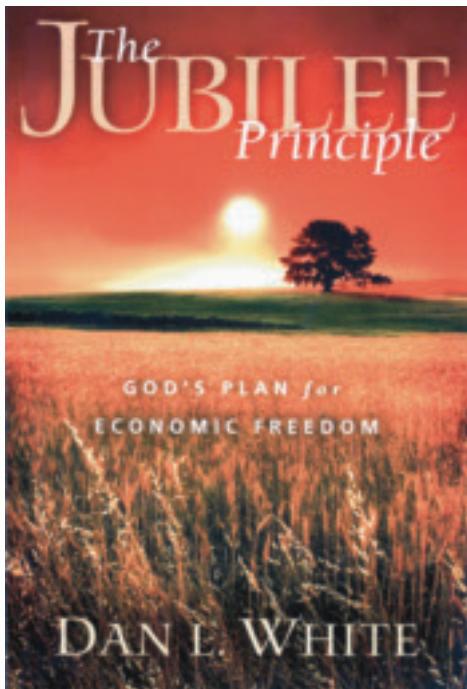
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