



# The Sabbath Sentinel

Mar.-Apr.  
2018

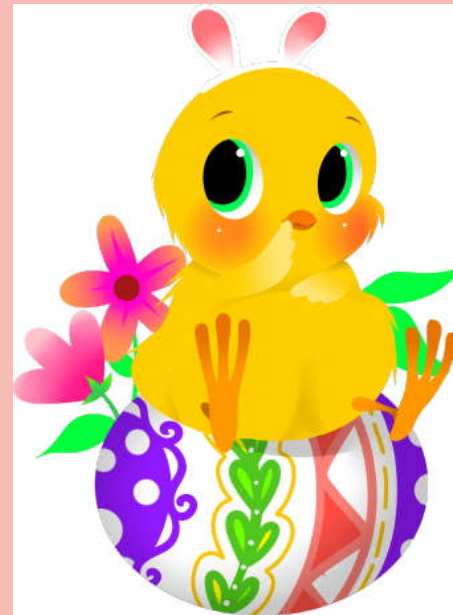


Passover

or

Easter?

**WHICH?**



BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

*Jesus said, "In vain they worship me teaching doctrines and commandments of men."*

# The Sabbath Sentinel March-April 2018

Volume 72, No. 2, Issue 589

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# Are Easter Celebrations OK?

We are rapidly approaching that time of the year known to many as “Easter” but to those of us in the Church as Passover season. Many professing Christ believe that God is pleased with the keeping of Easter. Indeed, some of us in the Church see no harm in keeping it. But, is that really what God expects from His people? And, a better question might be whether or not we care enough about what God thinks to conform our acts of worship to His will?

To answer these questions we must first learn exactly where the Easter traditions come from. The word “Easter” comes down to us from the celebration honoring the goddess of Spring, Eastr. However, many scholars recognize that the rites and ceremonies adopted in today’s Easter celebrations have descended to us from ancient times where the celebration was to honor pagan gods Tammuz and Ishtar.

Another tradition is the painted eggs and chocolate left in a basket filled with fake grass by an alleged “Easter bunny.” Eggs have long been symbols of fertility in pagan religions. Rabbits are well known for their own penchant for reproduction.

Another tradition is the Easter sunrise service. This tradition also is derived from the ancient pagan custom of worshipping the sun god rising. It is not the commanded worship of Abraham’s God.

Passover, on the other hand, is a reminder that our Lord and Savior suffered torture and death to remove the veil that separated us from God through the forgiveness of our sins. Although the word “Easter” does appear in the King James version of the bible, it is a mistranslation of the Hebrew “Pascha,” or Passover. Otherwise, like Christmas in the winter, there is no support for engaging in any of the activities surrounding Easter for the bible believing Christian.

Many find the practice harmless. In truth, eggs, bunnies, hot cross buns and the other silliness sur-

rounding Easter can’t harm anyone. But, the real question is whether God wants us to be involved in these things.

Some say, “I use Easter as a reminder of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.” Or, “That day is a day of worship for what Jesus did for us.” And, let’s face it, watching little ones scramble around seeking treats can be great fun to watch. But is this reasoning acceptable to God? If we care about what God thinks then we ought to be concerned about things as to whether they are acceptable to God, shouldn’t we?

What, then, *DOES* God have to say about using pagan practices to worship Him? Some would say that God does not care as long as we worship Him. That same “some” would be ignoring the truth of the bible in saying such.

Notice what God has to say, “*take heed to yourself that you do not become snared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods, that I too may do likewise? You shall not do so to Jehovah your God. For every abomination to Jehovah, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods.*” Deu 12:30-31.

There are many rationalizations one can use to come up with “permission” to engage in Easter celebrations. In truth, God lets us choose what we will do. But that is not the same thing as saying doing such is right in God’s eyes. The simple truth of the matter is that God wants us focusing on our Savior’s sacrifice and resurrection using the days He prescribed for His people, not days that were used to honor pagan gods in antiquity.

As Christians, we came up out of the watery grave of baptism saying to God that we wanted to do what He wants us to do. Justifying doing something otherwise isn’t responsive to our promise to God, and I think that must sadden Him deeply.



# 2017: Breakthrough Year for the BSA

*Kelly McDonald, BSA President*

In 2015, the BSA membership elected a new board of directors for the years 2016-2019. After this election, the board chose officers. The conclusion of 2017 marks two full years of work as a team to promote the BSA vision and purpose. In this article, I will review some breakthroughs we experienced in 2017 that reflect our work during this time.

1. In 2017, our public outreach on Facebook now has 1,230 followers. We reached an average of 1,000 people a week. This is an increase from the previous year. At the end of 2016, we had 660 followers with 500-700 weekly out reach.

2. Our online blog, [www.sabbathsentinel.org](http://www.sabbathsentinel.org), continued to reach Sabbath observers as well as the general public. We posted 186 insightful articles over the course of the year. It had a variety of different subjects, including Sabbath History, Practical Sabbath Application, and even previous articles from the Sabbath Sentinel. We mainly use this blog to promote the BSA on social media. In 2017, we had 3,330 visitors and a total of 5,434 views. This was up from last year. In 2016, the first year we had this blog, we had 92 posts with 1,000 visitors and 1,976 total views.

3. On Facebook, we also have a private forum. In 2017, it reached 1,577 members (up from 1,477 members for 2016). In this forum, believers are free to post upcoming events for their local church, encouraging articles, and even prayer requests. This past year we had participation from a variety of Sabbath groups.

4. Our main website [www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org) had tremendous growth beyond our expectations! In 2017, we had 62,910 unique visitors. This was an average

of 5,234 per month. We also had the highest visits for one month ever for this website: We had 6,700 visitors in December.

To put these web statistics in perspective, let's compare them to the last two years: In 2016, we had 29,068 unique viewers (2,422 per month). In 2015, we had 20,849 unique viewers (1,734 per month). We have doubled our online outreach from 2016 and tripled it from 2015.

5. Another great breakthrough for this year is our financial state. In 2016, we lost \$10,371. For 2017, we came out \$1,897 in the positive! This \$12,268 turnaround is a wonderful move in the right direction. We made necessary cuts to our expenses. At the same time, we had an increase in donations. When this board first convened in 2016, we agreed that we had to do both to achieve financial stability. We will continue to make changes so that we can sustain this positive result for years to come.

6. We developed an online form where churches can update their church information as we move towards a new Sabbath directory. New churches can also submit their information. To access this online form, visit our main website ([www.biblesabbath.org](http://www.biblesabbath.org)). When you arrive, hover your mouse over the "Contact" menu (on the far right hand side of the page at the top). A drop down menu with the text "BSA Directory Form" will appear. Click that text. You can fill out the form and the BSA board can easily access it.

7. We made a great Kingdom connection to the Christian Fellowship Ministries of the Church of God. We look forward to working with them more in the future!

8. We revised our BSA introductory trifold to include updated information and new methods of outreach. It has not been updated for a number of years.

As you can see, the BSA has had breakthroughs in several areas in 2017. Some of them are record-breaking, especially in the areas of online outreach and finances. These are two areas board members have focused most of their time and energy.

On behalf of the board of directors, we want to give thanks. First of all, we want to honor God for giving us wisdom, revelation, and favor. He has opened doors and opportunities for us to connect with other Sabbath groups in the US. He has given us understanding to direct the financial state of the organization.

Secondly, we want to thank all of our BSA membership for their continued support to the work of God. We want to thank all of you who write for and read The Sabbath Sentinel magazine.

Since 1945, the BSA has encouraged, educated, and empowered people to believe in Jesus Christ as Messiah, the Ten Commandments as absolute truth, and honoring the Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

We still have much work to do. With God's help and your support, we will continue this work until Christ returns.



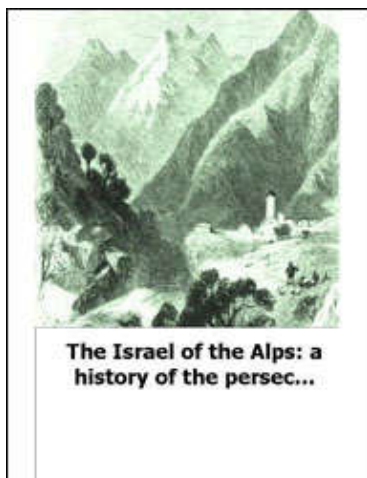
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*Michael Suned*

### **The Third Pillar of Wisdom—“Structure”**

When we look back in time there are things that took place in our lives that might not have greatly affected us, whereas the same things have devastated others. For instance, the crisis of 2008 (where a great many people lost their jobs, pensions, 401Ks, their investments, homes, cars, savings and other valuables) affected many greatly. We all know that the crisis was too much for some to handle; starting over was not an easy option. People had to either accept or ignore the facts and then go on with their lives. Some didn't recover. As we all may surmise, there are many untold stories of pain and suffering from that crisis.

However, that crisis was not much different from any other crisis in human history. Worldly authorities were able to provide us a “scapegoat” to blame. They led us to continue to abandon our habitual thought patterns through the blaming of another while causing many to be emotionally devastated and, in the case of some, with seemingly endless emptiness. Discussion about what might have been right is not the reason this was mentioned. Our intention is to dig out how victims were educated by the situation and how they received those precious lessons.

One particular man lost his job and, after serious consideration, decided to change his career. He was able to activate his “first pillar” (*November 2017 TSS*) under circumstances that caused him to realize that his professional field would not come back in the near future. He realized that, even if it came back some day, it would not have as many job opportunities available because of the global changes occurring. One of his hobbies was cooking, and he made delicious dishes. He decided to give up his professional position and to become a chef.

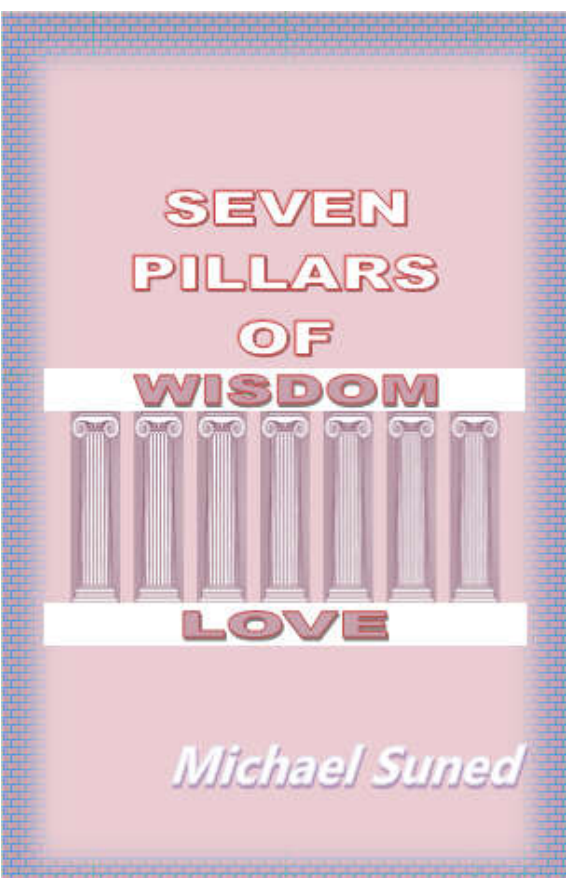
It wasn't difficult for him to make appointments with different restaurants. One by one his cooking made their lists. The job interviewers told him they loved his absolutely fantastic food. Some of them told him that their patrons would be amazed if they could taste the food he made. The restaurant owners gave him very positive responses during the interviews. They told him that he would receive a final answer within a few days. The answers he got were always: “no.”

He was so confused as to why the restaurants didn't hire him that he made up his mind to ask from the interviewer one day when he got exact same answer he had received before. “You are not planning to hire me, are you?” he politely asked. The interviewers were shocked by the question, but they honestly told him the reason why they would not hire him. They highly praised his ability to create delicious dishes again but then told him to check his work area. At first he didn't see any problem with his area until they pointed out to him that he needed to compare his area with others. Immediately, Joe was able to see how messy his own area was compared to other chefs. All of the moments of excitement, disappointment, blame, anger, justifying himself and wondering that he had emotionally experienced in the past were caused by his one small problem. His “neatness” was the only thing holding him from being hired in all of the interviews in which he had participated. He had been greatly confused until they had explained.

An organization or an operation can better achieve a higher level of success when completely united and operated exactly within its planned success strategy. We can see a beautiful illustration of this point from observing Jesus' disciples when they were spiritually united and structurally combined in one unit which brought about the significant result of baptizing thousands of souls in one day. It can be outlined

as the best model of success in human history. It was proven to be the perfect example for the rest of Christian followers to follow as a perfect organizational structure. Without a doubt it's been copied again and again.

An organization heading towards failure, or an operation ending with little success, is always closely associated with disorder in the operation. It starts with one or two individuals' breaking of the rules or not exactly following the requirements and guidelines that were established from the beginning. That's the reason our example chef was excited right after the interviews and disappointed when he received the final denial of employment. His messy work area wouldn't be a problem until it became busy in the kitchen where it would then start creating problems leading the entire kitchen team to chaos and bringing damage to the structure of the kitchen. The restaurant managers who interviewed him knew how important it was to have a functional structure in order to run their team effectively and to finish the day with success.



So why did those managers have to choose maintaining complete, functional kitchen structure rather than hiring an awesome chef who made great food? Maybe you are wondering, as did the chef, about this question. Does it really matter? Were they over-reacting? Why was it so important?

We know that a human being has over two hundred bones that are connected together to provide a structure to the muscles. This idea of structure upon which the body rests works in every other situation, too. It also makes it easy for us to have a logical basis for understanding how to solve the puzzle of this lesson, the learning of this pillar effectively. In order to put thousands of individual pieces of puzzles together to bring out the designed image, we need a visually structured display to get the idea of how the end product should appear.

There is another perfect illustration that helps us to see why the structural element should be considered one of the seven pillars of wisdom. That illustration is the military. Throughout history, armies uniquely stand out from most human organizations by their effective and powerful operation while responding to an event such as a disaster, humanitarian aid, regional conflict, defense for safety and bringing force to control the stability of a community. It takes great wisdom to build strong military units which always starts from recruiting, and extends through military training to create strong, structured soldiers, not just weapons.

The Mongolian Military in the thirteenth century is legendary in human history. Many Historians still have difficulty accepting the truth of what the Mongolians had accomplished during that period of history. One of the problems that experts don't see is that weapons are not the most important element for military achievement or subduing their enemies. Historical experts who believe the philosophy that weaponry is the most important element for winning a battle wonder why the Mongolians were able to conquer countries that had much more advanced weaponry than those the Mongolians possessed at the time. Some have even doubted the accuracy of history. It is easy for us to have the insight that weaponry is not the most important element for win-

ning a battle by observing the current chaos that United States has been struggling with over many decades. The U.S. has the best weapons on this planet. If weaponry was the clue, then the U.S. shouldn't have any problem keeping order on our planet. The truth tells us that the experts are wrong, however.

In order to have a strong military team, each soldier must meet certain physical and mental requirements to be recruited. They then have to pass boot camp training, advanced training, and even military specialty training in order to obtain all the required knowledge and ability to respond as a team member, thus creating a useful member for fulfilling the required task. Regardless of that, we all know and believe that a small leak can cause a big ship to sink. As the captain of our lives, we should not be naive enough to gamble by allowing that small leak in our ship. The strategist Solomon had written this principle as: "Train a child in the way he should go: when he is older he will not depart from it". Proverbs 22:6.

That is why all older people, teachers, leaders and organizations try to acknowledge and require a high standard of systematic training for their protégés or employees at first. Those who have had painful experiences from failing to adopt this pillar of wisdom know that to stray off course can only lead to disaster or results that will cause irreparable damage to the operation and most probably cause failure to accomplish the mission. Vince Lombardi thought: "Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all the time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do things right once in a while; you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing."

Having had illustrated to us the importance of structure, we can see that we constantly fail and end up with a mission not accomplished and loss of our vision because of our weak structure. We make plans, schedules, perform our works and assignments, in order to try to come out with a stronger structure. In order to have long-lasting wisdom, building your solid "structure" is considered the third pillar of wisdom.

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**Please join us by supporting our efforts to spread the message of God's Sabbath rest and mutual cooperation of the brethren to the rest of the world.**



# Confusion About Names

*Ray E. Daly*

Mat. 1:23. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. And THEY shall CALL his name Immanuel!"

I imagine all those who are of the title "Christians" are well aware of this verse. And in doing so, they believe that it is speaking of the son born to the virgin Mary. A son whom scripture says was a total "flesh, blood, and bone human, with a spirit of man in him." In that they are correct. And at the same time, take note that Joseph and Mary named the baby Jesus, just as they had been told to do.

Let's continue the story of the above verse. V.22: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of by the prophet, saying..." "All this," contains the words of said prophet, Isaiah. Isa. 9:6: "For to us a child is born, and a son is given. And the government shall be on his shoulder!" Obviously speaking of the same Jesus, known of as the "Son of Man" and upon who's shoulder the government will lie, at his return in the not too distant future. But, it's still some time away for there is much left to be done before He can return.

As mentioned, the above words of "all this was done" are only a part of the story. There is much more. For example, if Joseph and Mary were commanded to name their son "Jesus," then who are the "they" that will "call" him Immanuel? I ask this, for there is no record in the New Testament in which we can read that Jesus was ever "surnamed" Immanuel. In fact, there is no mention of anyone even calling him Immanuel in those writings. Which would seem to mean that he was "given said name" by others, after the records of the NT Canon were completed, meaning others who are called the "they."

Note the words "All this WAS DONE..." meaning,

all this was done, BEFORE the son of Mary was born. Including the "calling" of Jesus by the name Immanuel. And if we go back to Isaiah, and note the words of Mat. 1:23, we will see that the naming of a "son that was given" occurred, with the naming of a son "Immanuel," was done BEFORE the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Isa. 7:14: "Behold, a virgin [young woman] shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Now, who was it that named her son Immanuel? Yes, it says a virgin. But, again, what do we find the "virgin" Mary, along with her husband Joseph, naming HER son. "And [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and YOU [both] shall call his name Jesus," NOT Immanuel who was born long before the first century AD. In fact, "Immanuel" was born back in the days of king Ahaz of Judah. Note this in Isa. 7:16: "For BEFORE the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that you abhor shall be forsaken of BOTH her kings."

What lands did Ahaz "abhor?" He abhorred, Ephraim, whose ruler was named Pekah, and the king of Syria, whose name was Rezin. Syria, at this time, was settled by the same peoples from whom Abraham was born, the Aramites. They were later taken captive by the Assyrians, and settled in that land not to return. The point is that we are clearly told that Immanuel was born during Ahaz's reign which were the years 732-716 BC. Thus, Immanuel lived before the words of the promise of Jesus birth were put forth (Isa. 9:6).

Let's look at another Scripture from Isaiah, which most Christians of today do not understand, as well as the difference between the two "messiahs," Immanuel and Jesus, Isa. 9:6. "And his [Jesus-the Son of Man] name shall be CALLED: Wonderful. counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace." That is exactly what the son of

Mary, Jesus, is called by almost all of Christianity today. It goes on to describe in V.7, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom. To order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice. From [that time] even for ever."

For space, I will give a short comparison of being "named" something, with the difference of being "called" something. The reader can look up these verses for themselves. There was a man named Simon, whom Jesus surnamed Peter. Jesus also told this "Simon Peter" that he would be "CALLED" Cephas. There is no place in NT Scripture where it shows that Peter was also "surnamed" Cephas.

Actually, Cephas is shown to have been a part of the Gentile work within the Roman empire. The apostles, including "Simon Peter" were COMMANDED NOT to go to the gentiles, but ONLY to the children of Israel, each of the them having their own tribe to witness to. Of course, later, Cephas, an apostle to the gentile Jews, was given the name Peter by translators, on several occasions, one of which was when a "Peter" met with Paul, who was living with the "gentile" converts at Antioch. But again, if this had actually been Peter, then he would have been disobeying his master.

I guess the best thing to do, is to show just who it was that was "surnamed" Cephas. We find the answer in Acts 15. This was an assembly of ONLY those that were involved in the "gentile" work. It says that "Peter" got up and addressed the assembly. After he had ceased speaking, a James got up and addressed the assembly, regarding the words that "Peter" had spoken.

Now the answer as to whom Cephas really was, and it was not "Simon" surnamed Peter, Acts 15:13-14. "And after [the others] had held their peace, James answered, saying. Men and brethren. Hearken to me. SIMEON has declared...!" SIMEON, not SIMON.

Much can be expanded on this subject. But if this is not enough, I will add one other point. Prior to the mid 300's AD, the church of Rome, who had been worshipping as their savior/messiah an individual

by the name of Mithras, which name was the Persian for a savior/messiah of Babylon. This was carried throughout Persia by an apostle of a Babylonian named Zoraster. It was in the mid 300's AD, that Rome ceased using the name of their god, Mithras, and began to CALL HIM JESUS!

Is it possible that Rev. 9:12 could include the doctrine of just whom today's "Christian" Jesus really is?

## Did you know...

that you can aid the BSA effort to promote the Sabbath and a Spirit of brother-hood among all who keep God's Sabbath by becoming a BRIDGE BUILDER or a PILLAR with the BSA? Besides the monthly or annual membership dues which you can find inside the front cover, you can also help with various functions designed to help bring a fellowship of brethren across denominational lines. Some of the opportunities are: Advise and/or consult with the BSA Board of Directors; visiting and interacting with other Sabbatarian fellowships; speaking on behalf of the BSA; Promotion and/or distribution of BSA materials and services; and assisting with this magazine, the BSA Facebook page, Twitter and other social media on projects defined by the Board of Directors.

# *Believing Into the Son of God*

*Daniel Botkin*

If I say the words “For God so loved the world,” most of you reading this could probably finish the statement. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This is John 3:16, probably the most widely known verse of the Bible. If you look at a Gideon’s Bible in a motel room, you will learn that this verse has been translated into over 1100 languages. The introductory pages of a Gideon’s Bible includes the text of many of these translations of John 3:16.

John 3:16 is probably the most popular verse of the Bible because it succinctly expresses the basic gospel message in a single verse that consists of just twenty-five words in the English language. Of those twenty-five words, the word that I want to focus on here is the word in.

Why focus on a little two-letter preposition? Because even small, two-letter words are important to the meaning of a statement. Consider on and in, prepositions that differ by only one vowel. These words are very similar in spelling and in pronunciation and sometimes similar in meaning. There is not much difference between “He arrived on time” and “He arrived in time.” But there is a big difference between “The airplane pilot is on the ground” and “The airplane pilot is in the ground.” A pilot in the ground is probably dead, but a pilot on the ground is probably alive.

A small preposition like “in” can make a big difference in the meaning of a statement. Therefore it is

important to consider the word translated “in” in John 3:16.

What does the Bible mean when it says “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”? I have heard unrepentant drunkards and fornicators assure me that they have eternal life because they “believed in Jesus” and “all you have to do is believe in Him.” Some of them could even quote John 3:16. But this understanding is seriously flawed, because there are other Bible verses that plainly state that unrepentant drunkards and fornicators will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9f; Gal. 5:19-21).

Sinners need to understand that the only kind of “believing” or “faith” that will bring eternal life is faith that produces good fruit.

A person’s good works do not purchase eternal life. The blood of Yeshua (Jesus) is the price that purchases eternal life for those who believe in Him. But if good works do not follow a person’s profession of faith, then that person’s faith is dead. This is what the Bible says in James chapter 2. Three times in this chapter, James says “faith without works is dead” (vss. 17, 20, 26).

If a person claims to believe in Jesus, yet continues living a sinful lifestyle, that person has the same kind of “faith” that the devils have: “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

“Daniel, it sounds like you are just giving a basic salvation message here. Don’t you think your readers already understand this?”

Yes, I suspect that most of my readers already understand these things. But even if you already understand these things, this information I am presenting might help you to better articulate the real gospel message to sinners who need to hear it. So please

read on.

Genuine Biblical faith is always accompanied by repentance. Repentance means more than merely feeling sorry and remorseful for your sins. It means being sorry enough to stop living a sinful life. To repent means to stop living a life of disobedience and start living a life of obedience to the will of God as expressed in His commandments. Your obedience is not the thing that purchases your pardon. Obedience is simply your response of gratitude for the pardon that you freely received, and the proof that your faith is genuine.

Repentance and faith can be thought of as two sides of the same coin, as illustrated by the following verses in which repentance and faith are paired together:

1 “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

1 “Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Yeshua” (Acts 20:21).

1 “Repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb. 6:1).

1 “You repented not that you might believe” (Matt. 21:32).

“But Daniel, what about John 3:16? That verse says nothing about needing to repent. It just says eternal life is given to ‘whosoever believeth in Him.’ Isn’t just believing in Jesus enough to guarantee eternal

life?”

Yes, believing in Jesus is enough to guarantee eternal life, but only if you understand what the Bible means when it says you must “believe in Him.” Let’s consider what it means to believe in someone or something.

If a man says that he believes in life on other planets, or in the existence of fairies or elves, or in the existence of Bigfoot or mermaids or something like that, this man’s belief will not necessarily affect his life in a major, dramatic way. But when the Bible speaks about believing in Yeshua, it means far more than just believing in His existence and believing that the stories written about Him in the New Testament are true. An unrepentant sinner can believe those things and still die in his sins and perish.

Believing in Yeshua could more accurately be called believing into Him. That sounds awkward in modern English, but it is a more accurate translation of what the original Greek text actually says. As a matter of fact, in the very first English translation of the New Testament (John Wyclif’s translation in 1380), John 3:16 was translated “whosoever believeth into Him.”

Why did Wyclif translate it that way? Because this is what the Greek text literally says. Like English, Greek has a preposition which means “in” (en) and

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another preposition which means “into” (eis). John 3:16 uses eis, not en. Therefore a person must do more than just believe “in” Jesus; he must believe into Him.

Consider the differences between in and into. The word “in” simply tells you the location of someone or something. “The man is in the house.” This is a static, motionless statement. No action is implied. But the word “into” has the idea of motion and movement embedded in it. With “into” we are required to use an action verb: “The man went into the house.” This statement tells us that the man was previously outside the house, and he moved toward the house, and he stepped into the house, thereby placing himself inside the house. That is how he got in the house.

A man is not in the house until after he crosses the threshold and steps into the house. In the same way, a man does not believe in the Messiah until after he crosses the threshold and believes into Him.

There are many people who think they “believe in Jesus” merely because they believe in His existence and believe that the stories written about Him in the Bible are true. But it is possible to believe true information about Him without ever having believed into Him.

Some people are like a man just outside the only house of safety. They might be at the threshold of the door, but they are on the wrong side of the threshold, because they have not yet taken that final step of repentance and faith to carry them over the threshold and into the house of salvation.

There are several Old Testament stories that illustrate this spiritual truth. To be saved from the wrath of God, Noah and his family had to do more than verbally proclaim their belief that the Ark was God’s provision for survival. They had to step into the Ark. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, even uses the word “eis” in Genesis 7:7,

where Noah and his family went “into the ark,” *eis ten kiboton*. If they had stayed on the loading ramp just outside the door of the Ark, they would have perished in the Flood.

Moses and the children of Israel had to do more than verbally proclaim that the blood of the Passover lambs would protect them from God’s judgment. They had to step into the houses which were marked with the blood of the Passover lambs. If they had sat outside the door, on the wrong side of the threshold, they would have died.

Rahab and her family had to do more than verbally proclaim their belief that the scarlet cord would protect them from death. They had to step into Rahab’s house.

An Israelite who accidentally killed someone had to do more than verbally proclaim that a city of refuge would protect him from the dead man’s family, the “avenger of blood.” He had to step into a city of refuge and stay there. If he stepped outside the city of refuge, the avenger could slay him. Abner killed Joab’s brother Asahel in self defense. Later, Joab killed Abner in revenge. Where did Joab kill Abner? Right outside the gate of Hebron, one of the cities of refuge.

You can be at the very doorway to salvation, yet be on the wrong side of the threshold. You can be close enough to the door to hear the music and singing coming from inside the city. You can be close enough to hear people talking about the Scriptures. You might even join in and sing along with the music and participate in the discussions. You might even talk to the Lord Himself, as several would-be disciples did in the Gospels. If you are at the very threshold of salvation but have not yet believed into the Messiah, it is easy to forget that you are still outside the house. It is easy to imagine that you are inside the house of the redeemed.

How many people have died at the threshold of true

faith, but on the wrong side of the threshold because they never truly repented? How many have died at the threshold like Abner died at the gate of Hebron, just barely outside the place of safety?

“And the king [David] lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?” (2 Sam. 3:33). If Abner died as a fool for being on the wrong side of the threshold of the city of refuge, how much bigger a fool is a man who dies at the threshold of Messiah, the gate to our eternal City of Refuge?

“Daniel, do you think there are many people who think they are saved, but are not really saved? Or are there only a few such people?”

That’s not for me to say, but let’s consider those words many and few. Yeshua used these two words when He concluded the Sermon on the Mount.

When He spoke about the wide gate and the broad way that leadeth to destruction, He said “many there be which go in thereat.” When He spoke about the strait gate and the narrow way which leadeth unto life, He said “few there be that find it.”

After He talked about people being deceived by false prophets, He said, “Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”

To these “many” deceived people who had prophesied and cast out devils and done many wonderful works in the name of Jesus (or maybe even in the name of Yeshua), He says “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.” (See Matthew 7:13ff.)

“But Daniel, is it possible Yeshua was just using the words many and few as hyperbole, just using extreme exaggeration as a literary device to emphasize a point?”

Maybe. But I wouldn’t count on it. In the days of

Noah there were only eight people from the entire population of the world who were saved. Were the words many and few hyperbole in the days of Noah? No. And “as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37).

It is obvious that those people who say “Lord, Lord” to Jesus expected to inherit everlasting life from Him. They are stunned to hear Him say, “I never knew you. Depart from Me.” They thought they were saved, but they were deceived. Any conversion they had experienced was a counterfeit conversion, something born of their own wishful thinking and overactive imagination, perhaps solidified by strong delusion sent by God because of their refusal to love the knowledge of the truth. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12.)

As I and others have pointed out before, the Greek word translated “iniquity” in Matthew 7:23 (“depart from Me, ye that work iniquity”) is “*anomia*,” “without law; lawlessness.” Anyone who has any animosity or hostility toward God’s Law should tremble at this statement.

Many years ago I was talking to a Christian couple. I was calmly explaining, in a polite, non-judgmental way, the reasons I believe in keeping the seventh-day Sabbath and other Old Testament commandments which are generally ignored by most Christians. The woman became belligerent and began expressing animosity, not only toward me but also toward the Law of God.

I pointed out to her that she needed to be careful, because these commandments were God’s ideas, and if you think these commandments are ridiculous, what does that say about the God who gave them? I told her that when Jesus tells the deceived people to depart from Him on Judgment Day, it is because they were antinomians. They rejected God’s Law.

“How do you know that you will not be in this great multitude of deceived people who thought they were saved?” I asked her. “How do you know you are not deceived? If a person is deceived, he doesn’t realize he is deceived. How do you know you are not deceived?”

My question was met with silence.

But let’s not limit deception to Torah-hating Christians. Let’s consider the possibility that even Torah-loving Messianic people can be deceived. On that day, many professing Christians will say, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”

It is very possible that on that day many professing Messianic people will say, “Lord, Lord, did we not correctly pronounce thy name in Hebrew? And in thy name did we not cast out pork and shellfish from our diet? And in thy name did we not follow the Biblical calendar, and attach fringes to our garments, and follow many wonderful commandments?”

Obedying the Torah is important, but it is possible to live a strict, Torah-observant life and yet be lost. I know of two strict, Torah-observant Jews who were atheists, and there are probably more out there. There are probably even some strict, Torah-observant Messianic people who are atheists, or at least living their lives as if God does not exist.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,” John wrote (1 John 3:14). Yeshua said to the religious leaders of His day, “The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” And I say unto you that the Sunday Christians who excel in loving the brethren will enter the kingdom of God before Sabbath keepers who do not love the brethren.

“But Daniel, those Sunday Christians are blind to the

importance of the commandment to keep the Sabbath!”

True. And many Messianic people are blind to the importance of the commandment to love the brethren. So tell me: Which son is the greater disappointment to his Father, a son who keeps the Sabbath on the right day but treats his brothers with scorn and contempt because they differ with him about some non-essential doctrines, or a son who does not keep the Sabbath because he does not understand it, but he excels in brotherly love? Which of the twain is the greater disappointment to his Father? John gives us the answer:

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20).

This is a rhetorical question. The answer is obvious. A man cannot love the invisible God if he hates his visible brother. How deeply do you love God? No more deeply than you love the brethren. The depth or the shallowness of your love for the brethren reveals the depth or the shallowness of your love for God.

I am not anyone’s judge, but when I see the way that some mean-spirited Messianics mistreat one another and sow strife and contention and division, it makes me wonder if such people are really, truly saved.

“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,” Peter says (2 Pet. 1:10). If you are unsure of your salvation, seek the Lord until you have the inward witness, that “Blessed Assurance” that you have believed into the Son of God. Repent of any hostility toward God’s Law or toward the brethren. Repent and believe into the Messiah and enjoy the everlasting life He freely gives you.

# What is Paul's point in Romans 14?

*Lenny Cacchio*

If food makes my brother to stumble, I will never again eat meat. (I Corinthians 8:13).

The favorite indoor sport of Christians is to change each others' minds.

A thought occurred to me recently when I was reading Romans 14. In those days in Rome the brethren were having a disagreement over food, the point of disagreement centering around whether one should eat meat or should eat only vegetables (verse 2). But Paul sees the vegetarian vs. omnivore division as a side issue. The animosity over food was a symptom of a larger problem.

He hints at the problem in verse 1 ("Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things"), and expands on his concerns throughout the chapter (quoting from the New King James Version):

Verse 4: Who are you to judge another's servant?

Verse 10: But why do you judge your brother? Or

why do you show contempt for your brother?

Verses 12-13 : So then each of us shall give an account of himself before God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Verse 15: Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer working in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

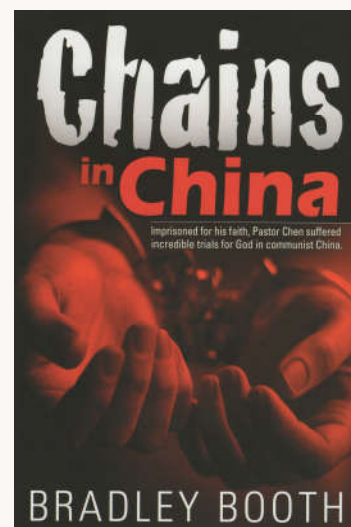
Verses 20-21 : Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

Chapter 15:1 : We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

## CHAINS IN CHINA

*by Bradley Booth*

In 1960, Chen, a faithful young Seventh-day Adventist, was imprisoned and thrown into "the cage" for refusing to work on the Sabbath. In spite of living in the worst kind of filth and subsisting on a starvation diet, Chen looked for every opportunity to tell his fellow prisoners and prison officials about the loving God he served. B246 \$15.00 + \$2.00 shipping





Paul is seeing beyond the dispute at hand. For Paul the heart of the matter was a concern over spiritual health and maturity. It wasn't about food at all. The food argument is merely a symptom of a spiritual deficiency.

As I thought about this, I wondered about a way to apply the principle in a modern context. If we make a few changes to Romans 14 to reflect a modern subject of dispute, would we understand the principle a little better and maybe prevent disputes over doubtful things? What follows is a modern application of Romans 14 through Romans 15:2, adapted from the New American Standard Bible. Note that it doesn't matter to me which side of the discussion you support. It does matter that we understand and apply the principle.

Romans 14: Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. 2 One person has faith that he may eat in a restaurant on the Sabbath, but he who is weak eats at home only. 3 The one who eats out is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat out, and the one who does not eat out is not to judge the one who does eat out, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike in this matter. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. 7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written,

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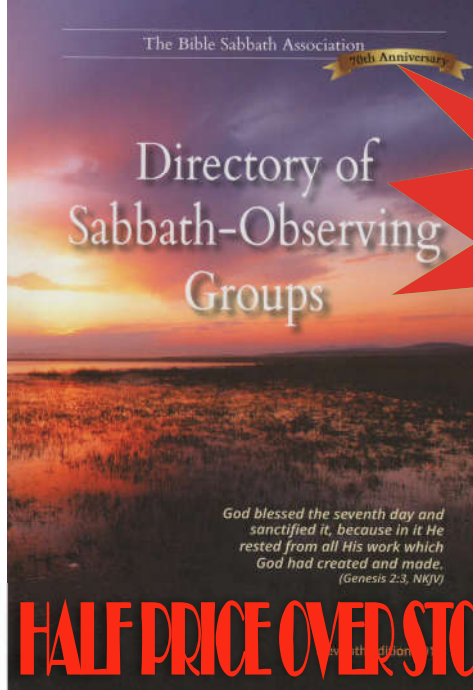
“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.”

12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way. 14 I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of your food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. 20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. 21 It is good not to eat out or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Romans 15: Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

As I mentioned earlier, Paul was more interested in matters of the heart than in matters of dispute. Rather than treating the symptoms, he was treating the underlying disease. More than that, he was encouraging the Romans themselves to treat the underlying disease, which he addressed in a similar way in Galatians 6:2. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."



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# THE PASSOVER

*Darl Arbogast*

Important questions concerning the Passover:  
"Why do we acknowledge it, what is the Passover and what is the Passover for? Is the Passover for everyone? Is the Passover a Jewish holiday?"

Our first exposure with the Passover is written in Exodus 12. Israel had been in Egypt 430 years when the Passover occurred. We need to explain how Israel came to live in Egypt so we will begin in Genesis.

In Genesis 12:4,7 NKJ - So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ... Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Genesis 15:6,7 NKJ - And he (Abram) believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

Genesis 17:5,6 NKJ - No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Genesis 15:13, 16 NKJ— Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ... But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

God changed Abram's name to Abraham which means 'Father of many nations'.

Genesis 21:3 NKJ - And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac.

Isaac married Rebekah, she bore him twins, Jacob and Esau. Genesis 25:22,23 NKJ - But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger."

Genesis 28:1 NKJ - Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan".

Jacob married Leah and had ten sons, and Jacob married Rachel and had two sons, Joseph and Benjamin; we will follow the life of Joseph.

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, took his family, 70 people in all, into Egypt because of a famine that had come on the land of Canaan. Genesis 46:27 NKJ - And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons, Ephraim and Manasseh. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

This was a happy reunion between Jacob and his son Joseph (Joseph lived in Egypt and Jacob thought he was dead).

Genesis 32:27,28 NKJ - So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel".

The King of Egypt gave the land of Goshen or Ramesses to Israel which is the northeastern section of the Egyptian Delta region and was very fertile land.

In Genesis 48:15,16 NKJ - And he (Israel) blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers

Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

In Genesis 49:1 NKJ - And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days".

As Jacob was about to die he called his sons to his bedside and pronounced to them what would befall their descendants. Genesis 49:33 tells us that Jacob died. All of his sons prospered and the Egyptians became afraid of them and put them under the yoke of slavery; they finished out their 430 years in slavery.

In Galatians we are told it was actually 430 years the children of Israel lived in slavery. Galatians 3:17 NKJ - And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

The next verse tells us the same thing, Exodus 12:40 NKJ - Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.

Years later, after Jacob and Joseph had died a new king eventually came to power in Egypt who had not known Joseph and how Joseph had saved Egypt from the great famine. The new king was afraid of Israel, he was afraid that possibly they would side with the enemies of Egypt in case of a war. His policy became to enslave Israel and kill off all of the male babies; this was akin to forced abortion.

Chapter 2 in Exodus relates the story of Moses. Let it be known that Moses was an Israelite baby saved from death by God to fulfill a special mission. When Moses was 40 he killed the Egyptian, Moses lived in the land of Midian 40 years in self-imposed exile; he walked with the people of Israel for 40 years in the desert until his death at the age of 120 years.

God sent Aaron (Moses brother) and Moses to tell

the Pharaoh of Egypt to release Israel and let them go where God would tell them to go. Each time Pharaoh said no, God would send a plague to Egypt. The last plague was the killing of Egypt's firstborn. Exodus 12:29,30 NKJ - And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

To set the stage so to speak God arranged the Passover, Josephus a noted Jewish historian writes that the Passover was named after the event of God passing over the houses of Israel and no one died, but the firstborn of man and firstborn of beasts of the Egyptians did die.

Exodus chapter 12 gives strict instructions the Israelites had to follow. According to God's way of keeping time, days were reckoned as beginning at sundown. This made the 15th of Abib (the month of green ears) begin at sundown the 14th; Exodus 12:1,2 NKJ - Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

On the 10th of the month of Abib, they took a lamb without blemish, killed it at dusk on the 14th day. Exodus 12:13 NKJ - Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. Written in the New Testament Matthew 21, Mark 11, and Luke 19 gives the account of Jesus the "Lamb of God" coming to His death as the original lamb had at Passover in Exodus 12:3 thru 6 NKJ - Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's

need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. (The original lamb had represented Jesus the Christ).

Another factor that enters into the equation is found in Exodus 12:18 thru 25 NKJ - In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.' " Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service.

One important point that should be stressed in all of this is that there was no death angel mentioned. The one who became Christ did the selective killing. He was the member of the Godhead who created man and breathed breath into him (Adam). All He had to do was draw the breath out of the firstborn of the Egyptians and their animals and they were all dead, there is no death angel mentioned. Exodus 12:29 NKJ - And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt,

from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.

This "Lord" was once co-equal with God; they worked in unison, when they were ready to create man one said "Let Us make man in our image". Genesis 1:26 NKJ - Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Later they, the Godhead, decided which one would divest Himself of His immortal status and be born as a mortal, born of a woman, to rescue and save humanity from extinction; this required Him to become the sacrificial Lamb.

The duality of Elohim (two at the Godhead) split and one became the Most High God and the other became the Son of God, and was born of flesh and dwelt among us, and became Jesus Christ our Savior.

Exodus 12 and Exodus 16 reveal the former things that point to what happened with Him in Matthew 21, Mark 11 and Luke 19. The first Old Testament Passover shows Him as our Savior in our flesh as descendants of Israel. The New Testament Passover shows our passing over from mortal to immortal as He did at His resurrection: 1 Timothy 1:17 NKJ - Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1 Corinthians 15:45 thru 47,51,53 NKJ - 45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ... Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- ... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Passover in the New Testament! Mark 14:12 thru 16 NKJ—Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples

said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?" And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us." So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

At the Passover in the New Testament two important things were occurring: #1 Jesus ate a meal with His disciples and allowed Judas to eat with them. This was literally the last official Passover of the Old Covenant. #2 Jesus washed the feet of all the disciples then He told Judas to leave; this began the New Testament Passover. When Judas departed Jesus served the broken bread and wine to the disciples. Judas was not allowed to participate in the broken bread and wine.

Over the years many things were changed by some church people and they have mocked the Passover by having a communion service or an eucharist to replace the Passover. This is a sin and a true Christian should not participate in this ceremony with friends or relatives.

Others have taken to calling this celebration of the Passover, the "Lord's Supper" which is another misnomer. 1 Corinthians 11:19,20 NKJ - For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

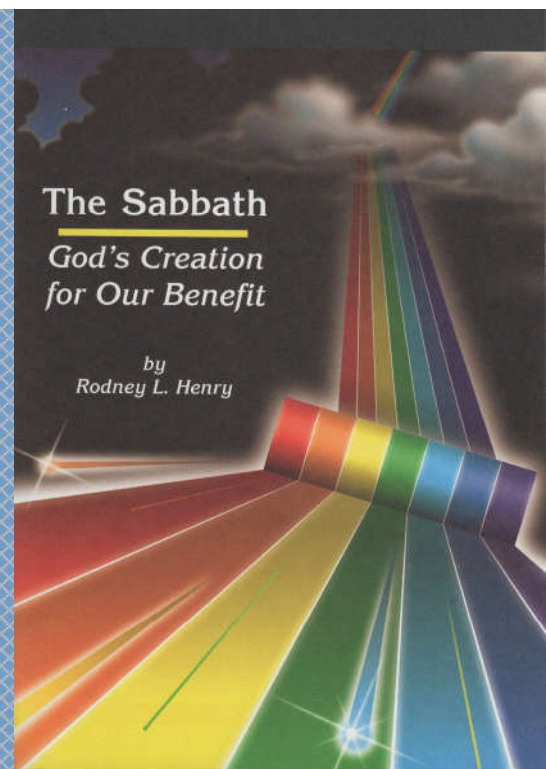
There is no supper at the Passover service.

We are told to keep the Passover throughout our generations.

Christians are to keep the Passover as Jesus and the disciples kept it. Passover means coming out of sin and Unleavened Bread pictures us keeping sin out of our lives and being like Christ. The wine represents Christ's spilled blood to forgive our sins.

Hebrews 9:22 NKJ - And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

The Passover is not a holiday for the Jews only, they keep the Passover excluding Christ as they celebrate by combining Passover and Unleavened Bread for seven days and call it Passover week.



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