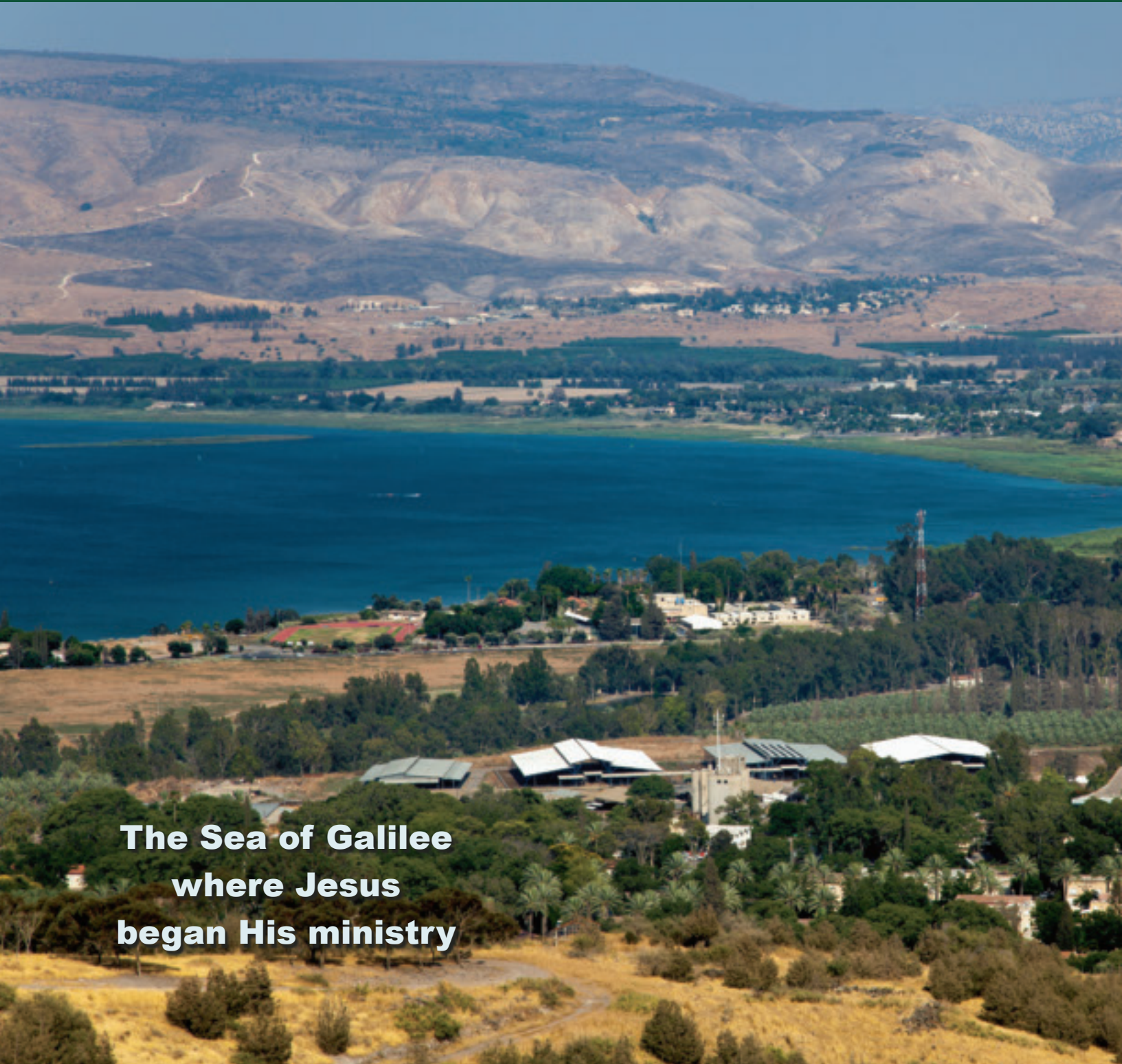


The Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2013



**The Sea of Galilee
where Jesus
began His ministry**

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2013 Volume 65, No. 2 Issue 560

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Our Cover: A modern look at the Sea of Galilee where the ministry of Jesus began.

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Abortion and its Fallout

Following is a story that appeared recently in *TheBlaze*, an online rundown of daily news items.

A pregnant teenager in Houston, Texas, is suing her parents, claiming that they are trying to coerce her to have an abortion. The 16-year-old, who is reportedly two months pregnant, is being represented by the Texas Center for Defense of Life (TCDL), a pro-life legal organization. For now, the girl and her unborn child are protected by a temporary restraining order, but the battle is far from over.

According to KPRC-TV, the eight-page lawsuit lists purported allegations waged by the girl, who is identified only by the initials R.E.K, as she's a minor. In addition to verbal abuse, the document claims that the girl's mother suggested potentially slipping her daughter an abortion pill.

The teen also alleges that her father threatened to take her to have an abortion, saying that the decision was final — one that the teen would have no say in.

ABC News has more about the troubling scenario:

Additionally, according to the lawsuit, R.E.K.'s parents took her phone and car as punishment for not having the procedure and kept her home from school. The father of the baby and the paternal grandmother have also purportedly been harassed by the teen's father, Fox News reports.

"We were asking the judge to stop them from physically forcing her to have an abortion. She is legally protected," said Stephen Casey, vice president of TCDL and an attorney on the case. "They cannot drag her to get an abortion or force an abortion on our client."

Even though she is a minor, the teen has the power to make that decision.

"What Roe established is minors have the choice. And when they do make the choice, folks are shocked that they want to carry the baby," said Casey.

One hardly knows where to start with this story. What kind of family environment exists in this 16-year-old girl's home so that she gets pregnant in the first place? Yes, it's fairly common these days for teen-aged girls to become pregnant, and for the baby's father to remain out of the picture. This kind of behavior has

been gaining steam since the Supreme Court's infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973. On January 22 of this year we marked the 40th anniversary of that horrible decision.

It seems that everything in our children's environment these days works against intact families and the sanctity of marriage. Does anyone even talk about the sanctity of marriage anymore? In a school district not far from where I live, the school superintendent has been having a very public affair, and the school board has not fired him. Why?, because the superintendent's wife is either an alcoholic or nuts or both. The superintendent's horrible behavior is being excused because people feel sorry for the poor boy who is making nearly \$150,000 per year. After all, he can't be expected to model time-honored family values to the students in the district because a lot of people, including the superintendent, no longer believe in honorable behavior.

But I digress. Let me continue with the discussion of abortion, of which broken marriages and affairs are just one more symptom of a society which has uprooted its moral anchors and liberated itself from all conventional mores. Since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 there have been over 55 million abortions in the United States. There are nations that do not have populations of 55 million. Think of how many Einsteins and Steve Jobs were aborted over that period of time.

The United States and many Western nations are losing population due to the widespread practice of abortion as a means of birth control. Combine abortion with the low birthrate of many Western European nations, and that amounts to a recipe for disaster for future generations. One nation in particular, Italy, is leading Europe in the practice of abortion, and their birthrate is declining the fastest.

One of the main problems in the U.S. is that there is a rapidly advancing older population which has now reached retirement age, and there are not enough young people to support the older population, which will be drawing pensions and the government benefits of Social Security and Medicare. Of course, if there never had been 55 million abortions, there would be

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Musings on the Tenth Commandment

By Brian Knowles



Of the ten commandments, the one we know least about may be the tenth. In the NIV it reads as follows: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor,” Exodus 20:17.

The word “covet” is *chamad* in Hebrew. It means “desire, take pleasure in — an ungoverned, selfish desire,” (*Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 326b). The word implies more than mere feeling or emotion — it is fulfilled in action. If we set our thoughts to desire what belongs to another, we are likely to begin scheming to acquire it. Coveting is the root from which many crimes spring. Illicit desire gives rise to sinful acts and those qualify us for the divine death penalty (James 1:13-15).

Coveting can take place at the national level or at an individual level. For example, nations may covet islands or waterways belonging to other sovereign nations because they offer some strategic or material advantage. Conflicts are now brewing between China, Japan and other Southeast nations over various islands and territories. Argentina is again casting covetous eyes on the Falkland Islands (which they refer to as the Malvinas).

God gave Israel the right to dwell in certain territories once belonging to the sinful Canaanites. He delineated the boundaries and set tribal limits (Deuteronomy 3:12-18). Today, the surrounding Arab peoples do not recognize Israel’s right to dwell in the lands God deeded to it. They seek to drive Israel into the sea and possess those lands for themselves. Their covetousness is creating a dangerous tension in the Middle East.

Covetousness can take place on an individual or a national level. James, the half brother of Jesus, wrote, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures...” (James 4:1-3).

Coveting is a universal, but largely unrecognized, issue. We can learn much from two biblical examples, the first of which is King David.

David’s Example

2 Samuel 11 provides us with an account of David’s covetousness and its consequences. “Late one afternoon, David rose from his couch and strolled on the roof of the royal palace; and from the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and the king sent someone to make inquiries about the woman. He reported, ‘She is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam [and] wife of Uriah the Hittite. David sent messengers to fetch her; she came to him and he lay with her — she had just purified herself after her period — and she went back home. The woman conceived, and she sent word to David, ‘I am pregnant’” (2 Samuel 11:2-5, *Tanakh*).

Was it just the woman’s beauty that aroused passion in David, or perhaps a sense of royal entitlement? Many people of wealth and power feel that they are entitled to the best of everything and they will go to great lengths to get it. Perhaps both factors were involved here, but the main emphasis seems to be on her physical appeal.

The account of these events is very sparse. It is interesting to note, however, that men tend to be visual when it comes to lust, while women are more attracted to men of prominence, power and wealth. Men find a “sexy” woman almost irresistible — especially if she projects availability. On the other hand, Bathsheba may have been dazzled by David’s power and status as king of Israel. We read nothing of her objecting to his advances.

When Bathsheba announced her pregnancy, David’s first instinct was to cover up the whole affair. To do so, he became malevolently creative. He arranged for her husband Uriah to be killed in battle (2 Samuel 11:14-15). In other words, the king resorted to murder to cover up his adultery and create the impression that the child was Uriah’s and not his. It would also free Bathsheba up to marry David.

Covetousness led to adultery — and that led to murder.

Divine Rebuke

God was watching from above. Nothing is hidden from his sight. He sent Nathan the prophet to rebuke

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Contemplating Calvary

by Aubrey L. Duncan

Easter is the time of the year that we hear a lot about the cross of Calvary, but what does it really mean?

To some, it is a good luck charm to be worn around the neck. Yet others display it as evidence that they are Christians. It has become a decorative piece to adorn church edifices. To too many, the cross is an object to be worshipped. None of this, however, embodies what God intended this emblem of supreme sacrifice to be. The cross of Calvary was not designed to be taken lightly as so many take it to be. God never desired that this act should be reduced to any of the above or to an annual festival of display and revelry that cheapens the cost of our salvation.

The cross of Calvary is God's object lesson illustrating to the world the cost of sin and the redemption of sinners. It is here that justice and mercy meet each other. At Calvary, love and hate confronted each other and praise God, love won. The apostle Paul illustrates it best. Says he: "For the wages of sin is death, but the Gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:23).

The prophet Isaiah talks of Calvary thus: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not... Surely He had borne our grief and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted ... but He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all... He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb; so He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:3-7).

And that was just the down payment. Jesus Christ is our all in all. This is what Calvary reveals.

The apostle John, with a sense of unexplainable curiosity, asks: "What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Then he declares: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for his friends" (John 15:13). The Man of Calvary teaches us: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on Him will not perish but have everlasting life...for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16,17).

On Calvary, we witness the greatest demonstration of love the world ever knew or will ever know. We beheld the supreme sacrifice of all eternity. The One who is infinite in power, rich in principalities and planets gave it all up to become one with us sinners; that we may one day become one with Him. The apostle Paul therefore declares: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who knew no sin, became sin for us that we may become righteous in Him. He took upon Him our transgressions in which He had no part, so that we may obtain salvation which we do not deserve. Paul continues: "For He had made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Man of Calvary subdued His power of divinity that He might suffer with humanity. This is a great mystery that our finite minds cannot comprehend. It is the enduring appeal of Calvary. Paul attempts to explain it to the young minister Timothy: "And without any controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit; seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Timothy 3:16).

He was slain from the foundations of the world that we may live with Him in eternity. He endured the pain and agony of an ignominious death on Calvary, that we may enjoy the bliss of eternal life. On Calvary, He cried so that we may rejoice. He became mortal that we may be made immortal. In the process, He traded His righteousness for our unrighteousness. He descended to earth that we may ascend to heaven. This is the true meaning of Calvary. Contemplate it today.

The Jesus of Calvary, not the sun of Easter, is the One we should worship, every day of our lives. Through His suffering, He became victorious that we may yet have an Advocate with the Father. The apostle John counsels us: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

As you contemplate Calvary, don't neglect to meditate on His life before the cross. The apostle Peter reminds us: "For even hereunto were we called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we may follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Paul agrees:

"...For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10).

As we go from the manger to the cross, let us ever remember that He is no longer a babe in Bethlehem. We cannot neglect or belittle His sacrifice on Calvary; but He is no longer suffering on the cross either. He is our risen High Priest sitting on the right hand of His father and our father interceding for us. So the apostle Paul lovingly implores us: "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin... Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in a time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

What is your trial today? Whatever you may be going through, contemplate Calvary. But don't stop there. Follow the slain Lamb as He becomes your risen Savior and faithful High Priest pleading on your behalf with His Father and your Father. Get ready for Him as He shall soon burst the clouds of heaven and come to take His faithful ones to spend the ceaseless ages of eternity with Him. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Whatever your temptation, whatever your challenge, your Savior has been there. As He has overcome, so with Him, you can also overcome. Ellen G. White, in her book, *Desire of Ages*, a classic on the life of Christ, tells us: "By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey" (E.G. White, *Desire of Ages*, pg. 23). So Paul assures us: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

That way of escape is through Calvary. Contemplate it today. Contemplate it not as a time of revelry, painted eggs or bunny rabbits, nor a time of worshipping the sun of Easter; but contemplate Calvary as the supreme sacrifice and great mystery that ennoble the character, tempers the passions, fortifies the mind and refines the taste. Contemplate it as the means to prepare you for service here below and equip you for residency in the mansions He has gone to prepare for you in the heavens above. Contemplate it as God's unfathomable love for us sinners. Contemplate Calvary as the only means that gives peace beyond understanding. There is no problem you are facing that Calvary cannot solve.

Contemplate it today.

Aubrey L. Duncan is the author of the book, *God's Sabbath Truth*, from which this article is excerpted. The book is available from the Bible Sabbath Association. Aubrey can be contacted at aduncan@thesabbathtruth.org.

How to Become a Winner

"Unto man belong the resolves of the heart; but from the Lord cometh the expression of the tongue" (Proverbs 16:1, Leeser).

One of the catchiest billboard advertisements I have ever seen pictured a young teenager leaning forward with his fists on a car battery, a cocky, chip-on-the-shoulder expression on his face, accompanied by a caption that read: "Want to start something?"

People who start arguments sometimes win them, because people who don't start them often allow them to. Generally those who lose do so because they show their hand from the beginning, giving their adversary, who perhaps did not show his hand, an advantage. So, if you want a better chance to win an argument, don't start it.

The second rule, when someone tries to provoke an argument, is: Don't say a word—not one word. This accomplishes two things: 1) it throws the challenger off balance, and, 2) it gives you time to think—and pray. Most people find this the hardest step to follow, but it can be done. The secret is to resolve before the argument that you are not going to allow yourself to be drawn into it, no matter what, and ask God to help you. He will, if you ask in faith and really mean it.

The third rule is: Let the other person run out of steam. When the other person realizes that you are not responding to his challenges, he will probably repeat them. Next time he pauses, just say, "I'm listening," and you are listening, not with an air of superiority, but humbly and respectfully. He may have something worth listening to.

After a while the challenger will begin to repeat himself, and eventually he will run out of things to say. At this point a few choice words could deliver a coup de grace. But as a Christian this is not your purpose. Your purpose is to win a friend, not an argument. So you say something like: "Well, that is certainly one way to look at it," then you go on calmly to present your point of view. Occasionally, at this juncture, the other person will concede that you have better reasons for believing as you do than he has for believing as he does. By saving his face you make it possible for him to accept gracefully another point of view.

This method of meeting arguments can be used effectively in soul winning. In some instances that I have heard of, whole congregations have been won to our message by this method—including the pastors.

During the course of this day you may meet individuals who will challenge you to an argument. Why not turn such challenges into opportunities for winning souls? Remember: "Unto man belong the resolves of the heart; but from the Lord cometh the expression of the tongue."

Donald Mansell, *New Every Morning*, page 94. Review & Herald Publishing Association. 1981.

The Purpose of Life

by Terrell Perkins

Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Those questions have been asked by thoughtful people in every generation, in every society on earth, as long as there have been humans on earth.

Christians the world over will tell you the answer can be found in the Bible, but most can't point to any one scripture that has the answer. The answer is found in the Bible. And it is, in fact, clearly stated in one scripture.

One of the wisest men who ever lived, King Solomon, asked those questions and went on to answer them in one of the shortest books in the Bible. The book of Ecclesiastes has only twelve chapters but contains some of the most profound questions, and profound truths ever sought by man.

It is fitting that the most philosophical of questions is answered in the most philosophical of books in the Bible. Solomon's conclusion of the matter is a part of God's revealed word to mankind.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 states the answer: **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."** It's that simple.

No one seems to talk much anymore about fearing God. That's because the kind of fear it refers to is widely misunderstood. To fear God is like fearing one's loving parent. A parent's duty is to correct and punish a child they love when necessary. Our Heavenly Father loves us. A healthy fear of Him, like a healthy fear of one's parents, serves to make us better people. God gave us His commandments as an act of love. He gave them to us for our own good. His word says to keep them as an act of our love for Him. To keep them, even when our own nature would have us act otherwise, is an act of worship.

The greatest irony is that most people calling themselves Christians have no interest in actually obeying God. Most of worldly Christendom reduces the message of the Bible into simply accepting Christ as one's Savior without really doing what He, or the rest of the Bible, says. The reason for that is also simple. To obey God is to act contrary to our own nature. The carnal mind is at odds with God's way.

Like modern-day lawyers many Christians know God's law but they construct elaborate arguments about why we don't have to obey God's law. The Gospel of Christ is much more simple and direct than that. His first word when He began His ministry was "Repent"...that is, to turn from sin and return to obedience toward God. That's the first step in the gospel of Christ. One cannot truly accept the person of Christ while rejecting His message.

Keeping God's law is about our obedience to Him. It is an acknowledgment that the God who gave us the commandments IS God and only He can determine what is good and what is evil. Only He can determine what is an acceptable act of worship. That's a lesson that goes back to Eden.

Christianity is not just a statement of a belief in Christ as one's personal savior. Christianity is a way of life. In fact, it was first called "the way." The Christian way of life is to obey God, not just in the letter, but also in the spirit. It's about obedience not just in our actions but also from our hearts.

Learning to obey God from our hearts is why we draw breath.

Terrell Perkins graduated from Ambassador College in 1981, and has been a Sabbath keeper for about 35 years. Terrell lives in Capitan, New Mexico, and works as an artist-blacksmith hand forging metal sculptures and architectural hardware and furniture. Terrell has been a freelance writer for over 20 years.

Knowles: "Tenth Commandment..." cont. from page 4.

the king on his behalf. (Read 2 Samuel 12 for the whole account and its result.) The child of adultery died.

David bitterly and deeply repented of his triple sin. His prayer of repentance is found in Psalm 51. Enough said. Let us now view another account of a covetous king.

The Case of Ahab

David was not an evil man; he was a good man (1 Samuel 13:14) who lapsed into evil behavior on one occasion because his covetousness got out of control. He repented and paid a price for his sins. King Ahab, on the other hand, was evil to the core.

"Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him," (1 Kings 16:30). One example of Ahab's evil takes place in the context of his coveting a neighbor's vineyard. "...there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. [Ahab was the seventh and worst king of the northern house of Israel, the capital of which was at Samaria. He reigned 22 horrific years — 875-854 B.C.] Ahab said to Naboth, 'Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth,'" (1 Kings 21:1-3).

Naboth did not give Ahab the response he wanted: "The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers," (verse 3).

Ahab became sullen and angry because he'd been refused what he coveted. He sulked like a spoiled child and hit the sheets in a hunger strike (verse 4b). His petulant demonstration drew the attention of the notorious Jezebel, his Baal-worshiping Sidonian wife (1 Kings 16:31-32; 21:6). She joined him in his coveting and vowed to get Ahab the vineyard he wanted (verse 7). They were not co-conspirators in a plot to practice an ancient equivalent to "eminent domain."

She began by "honoring" Naboth at a day of fasting and flanking him with false witnesses who would bear false witness (9th commandment) that he had cursed both God and the king (1 Kings 21:9, 10). Power was on the side of Naboth's oppressors and the hapless vineyard owner was stoned to death. Conscience-free, the wicked Jezebel flounced in and announced to the king that Naboth was dead and the vineyard was his.

Ahab's covetousness had led to the violation of four of the Ten Commandments. One sin leads to another (James 1:15). Covetousness led to false witness, then to murder and finally to theft.

Enter Elijah

Just as God had sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke David for his sin over Bathsheba, God now sends Elijah to rebuke Ahab. Unlike David, Ahab refused to repent and he viewed God's anointed prophet as an enemy. He said, "So you have found me my enemy" (verse 20).

Elijah pronounced a dire fate on both Ahab and his wife: "...because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel — slave or free. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin. And also concerning Jezebel the Lord says: 'Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country,'" (1 Kings 21:20-24).

Ahab left behind a legacy of wickedness. He was the very personification of evil during his 22-year reign. His worst sin was leading the nation into idolatry, urged on by Jezebel, who was herself a study in evil (verse 25).

Elijah's words of God's judgment put the fear into Ahab: "When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly," (1 Kings 21:27).

God noted this show of repentance and rewarded it by postponing the fall of the divine hammer until Ahab's son's reign (verse 29). Later, Ahab died an ignominious death in a battle with the king of Judah, the southern kingdom. "They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where prostitutes bathed) and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the Lord had declared," (1 Kings 37-38).

Lessons Learned

Covetousness is a slippery slope. It starts with desire and ends in sin that leads to death. One sin leads to another. It is when desire turns into plotting to get the desired object that the trouble begins. Two kings, David and Ahab, provide us with object lessons about the tenth commandment.

In the case of Ahab, he was overwhelmed with illicit desire but he didn't have the guts or the ingenuity to get what he wanted. Jezebel became his enabler. Ahab was a weak man; he lacked a backbone. Jezebel provided one.

David came up with his own action plan and then bitterly repented of his multiple sins when God's prophet rebuked him. His prayer of repentance is found in Psalm 51.

The Sin of Covetousness

The sin of covetousness is actualized when desire gives way to a scheme to acquire that which belongs to another. This is made clear in Deuteronomy 7:25: "The images of their gods you are to burn with fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves...."

The prohibition applies "...only to putting the desire into practice. It has thus been made clear ...that this Negative Commandment forbids us to scheme in order to acquire anything belonging to our brethren which we covet, even if we buy it and pay its full price," *The Commandments* by R. Dr. Charles B. Chavel, p.250.

As we noted earlier, Ahab offered to pay full price but was turned down.

It is one thing to admire the beauty of that which belongs to another; it is quite another to scheme to acquire it. Admiration can be supplanted by desire, and that can be the beginning of a slippery slope ending in sin. If David had seen Bathsheba, noted that she was beautiful, and then gone his way, he would not have sinned.

If Ahab had admired his neighbor's vineyard, and even offered to buy it, he would not have sinned. Unfortunately, he could not take no for an answer.

Both Uriah and Naboth paid with their lives for the covetousness of kings. In today's world, we can witness the sin of covetousness on a grand scale as nations seek to acquire and rule other sovereign nations that have said no to their advances. Wars of conquest often start in covetousness. The erosion of property rights often leads to governmental covetousness.

We see, and even experience, covetousness on a more personal scale in areas of eminent domain, unjustified foreclosures, kidnappings, sex slavery, adultery, seizure of property, and even in the play of children who seek to possess another child's toys. Covetousness is ubiquitous in the world. Godly people seek to understand and avoid it — including becoming its victims.

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If the Foundations be Destroyed ... Foundational Cornerstone

by David Rives

Psalms 11:1 warns us: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The first verse of the Bible is the foundation upon which all other scriptures are laid: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"

Yet, many do not stand on that foundation, claiming that in the beginning there was nothing but a giant explosion.

As Psalms 82:1 says: "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course."

The LORD himself tells us: Isaiah 48:13, "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens."

Isaiah 28:16 "Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation."

So who are we? What is our foundation? And Who is the cornerstone?

The Apostle Paul sums it up: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" Ephesians 2:19-20.

Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said: "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other."

Yes, our foundations are crumbling as pseudo-intellectuals attempt to drive us away from God: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" 2 Timothy 2:19.

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enough young people filling the jobs left behind by the older population and adding to the rolls of wage earners supporting Social Security and other programs. Also, with the abortion decision taking place in 1973, those who were aborted would now have children of their own, adding to our youthful population.

Margaret Sanger, one of the people who started Planned Parenthood, believed in population control (Eugenics), which included forced sterilization as well as abortion. She specifically singled out the Black population for control and eventual extermination because she believed them to be an inferior species. She targeted Black neighborhoods for abortion clinics, and her work has paid off. Over 1/3 of all abortions performed in the U.S. are on Black babies. Her written works provided inspiration for Adolph Hitler and gave him the idea of eliminating Jews, Gypsies, and Slavs, which he considered to be "inferior races."

Even though the idea of exterminating whole populations has been around since Bible times, the theory of Eugenics, which opened the door to abortion, became popularized during the 1800s by Charles Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton. Darwin and Galton were very close, so much so that Galton often appeared as Darwin's spokesman. The ideas of Evolution and Eugenics worked very well together to advance a new creed where traditional Christian values were a thing of the past.

Fast forward to today. We have a population that is increasingly antagonistic to Christian values, including the Christian belief that abortion is the taking of a human life. Our children are taught in a school system that is basically atheistic, thanks to the founders of our modern public school system, Horace Mann and avowed atheist, John Dewey. What do we as Christians do to bring our people back to God and to the foundations of the Christian faith?

First, we don't give up. I don't know whether it is possible to get our entire population back to faith, or at least a majority of our people. We have to keep putting the message of God's salvation out there for people to hear and receive, and we have to pray that many will be touched by that message.

Second, do whatever it takes to pass the message of Christ to our children. They are our most precious resource. If possible, take your children out of the public schools and send them to a Christian school, or home school them. If that is not possible, make sure the children are involved in Christian activities in your local church. Do whatever it takes to teach them the Word of God.

Third, spend a lot of time on your knees for your children, and never give up on them. They may stray from the faith, but put your trust in the fact that God

loves them more than you do and will at some point knock some sense into them. If you have grandchildren, pray fervently that God will be a part of their lives. Remember, they have free will, but so does God — something that at times we tend to forget.

It is all too common today for Christians to be overcome by our secular culture. They want to "fit in," so they go along with all the current trends. Nonetheless, consider what Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had to go through. Their home country was invaded and destroyed. They were transported to Babylon, and wound up in the king's palace to be trained in all the ways and customs of the Chaldeans. What irony! Daniel asked that he and his friends not be given food that would "defile" him and his Hebrew friends (see Daniel, chapter 1). Daniel and his friends were rejecting the appetites of the culture around them. They chose to be true to God's laws no matter the cost. They were given ten days to prove their case that a diet of vegetables, grains, and water was better than the king's prescribed diet. The key word is "defile," which in Hebrew means just that, to "pollute or defile." Thus, for these young men, the issue was not just healthful living or a mere personal preference; it was a moral choice as well.

The issues today are different, but the pressures are the same. Well, there is one difference. Daniel and his friends faced a possible death sentence for rejecting the king's food. Being different from those around us is not a bad thing. Our difference becomes a light to draw others to Christ.

However, many Christians today are grossly ignorant of what the Bible actually says because they trust the people in the pulpit to tell them what they need to know about God. That's why there is a lot of confusion now about who Christ was and what He came to earth to do. Too many just don't know what is between the covers of *The Book*. In the past God's people were known as "People of *The Book*." That cannot be said of most Christians nowadays. They are too easily misled because they don't know the Scriptures. The concept of "the priesthood of believers" comes from the Bible, but if you don't know what's in the Bible, how would you ever know that God intends to make His people kings and priests to rein in His Kingdom throughout eternity.

As Christians we need to stretch ourselves toward to the mark of the high calling of God. We can't simply acquiesce in the culture around us. We need to be pursuing both grace and knowledge. Knowledge alone will not get us to where God wants us to be. It has to be accompanied by a Spirit of grace, not only to urge us forward, but to help our brothers and sisters in Christ attain to the high calling of God, and help others that God is calling to recognize His call and teach them to be "People of the Book."

—Kenneth Ryland

God Speaks to Ezekiel— A Message to Israel, Part 2

By Dr. Royce Mitchell, Jr.



Continuing from Part 1, we found there that Ezekiel was sent to Israel with a message from God. We also found that Israel had been made captive and removed from the land over 130 years earlier, and that there is no record that Ezekiel ever went to the House of Israel. We further learned that the Israel to which Ezekiel was sent would be heavily engaged in idolatry which would lead to the destruction of the land with bodies all around their altars. This does not present to us a pretty picture of the fate of Israel.

About a year later we find Ezekiel sitting in his house when God again appears before him (Ezekiel 8:1). It appears to be a meeting of the leaders in Judah because they were there with Ezekiel.

At that time, someone who looked like the transformed Jesus of Revelation, Chapter 1, appeared to Ezekiel (v. 2). In Verse 3 we see that the being grabbed a lock of Ezekiel's hair and, in vision, he was transported to Jerusalem to the inner gate, facing north. There he saw the "image of jealousy." From the context, it appears Ezekiel was at the south of the temple facing northward.

At this point it is important to remember that no prophecy is of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). We need to be careful to let the bible interpret itself.

Verse 4 of Ezekiel 8 shows us that it is going to be God who is giving Ezekiel the vision that follows. This is the same God who appeared to give Ezekiel the prophecy we read about in Part 1 of this article.

God then directs Ezekiel to look north where he saw a "disgusting idol" by the altar, near the gate (v. 5). The King James Version (KJV) calls this idol the "image of jealousy." At this point I would recommend getting a drawing showing Solomon's temple and referring to it as we continue.

Whatever this image or idol is, in v. 6 God proclaims that the presence of the idol is a terrible sin and makes His Holy Temple unfit as a place of worship. The problem with this prophecy at this point, as far as understanding it, is that the physical temple in Jerusalem does not exist today. Is God hinting that the temple would be rebuilt? Maybe, but consider the following.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, we find Paul making the statement that we are the temple of God if His Spirit dwells in us. He goes on to say that anyone defiling that temple will be destroyed because God's temple is holy—which we are.

Was God using the temple in Jerusalem as a symbol of the temple of people, the Church of God, His called out ones, extant within Israel at the end of days? I leave that question for the reader to consider while continuing.

Next, in verses 7 to 10, we find that Ezekiel is taken to the entrance to the courtyard and shown a hole in that wall. God has Ezekiel enlarge the hole where he finds a hidden door. Then Ezekiel is told to go in and see the evil that people are doing in the temple. Once again, we find images of unclean animals and idols being worshipped by Israel.

If one subscribes to the idea that the Church is the modern day temple of God, then it is clear that there would exist some form of idolatry within that Church at the end. If not, then we are faced with the interesting contradiction of the House of Israel, to whom Ezekiel was sent, being intimately involved with a physical temple in Israel.

Next, notice v. 11 where we find seventy Israelite leaders, among which was one named Jaazaniah, which means "heard by God." All of the leaders were burning incense causing the room to be filled with the scent.

There's no record of this particular Jaazaniah other than in this verse. He is listed as the son of Shaphan the scribe. There are many sons of Shaphan listed in the scriptures. He seems to have been quite active in politics as were his sons. But Jaazaniah isn't anywhere else. We could ponder who this Jaazaniah, the son of a scribe might be in the last days but we have nothing God-breathed on which to rely. Whoever he is or will be, he leads a council of elders in the temple to idolatry.

As we move to v. 12, God mentions to Ezekiel that those same Israelite leaders think that God has deserted Israel. Even then, they are doing the idol worship in secret. But that's not the worse thing, says God in v. 13.

Next Ezekiel is directed (v. 14) to the north gate of the temple where women are mourning for Tammuz. Tammuz is the husband of the goddess Ishtar. At the festival where there is weeping for Tammuz, worshippers weep for Tammuz for six days. What is notable is that this is happening inside the temple!

But that's not bad enough! God tells Ezekiel he's going to see even worse (v. 15).

Ezekiel is then taken to the opening of the temple, right in front of the Holy of Holies, where he sees twenty-five men with their backs to the Holy of Holies and worshipping the rising sun.

But then something completely out of context happens. In v. 17, God asks Ezekiel if what was happening at the temple was something which the House of Judah ought to be doing! But, the House of Judah was in captivity in Babylon at that time! What is the explanation for this? Could it be that God was using a past event at the temple, or series of them, to warn Israel about how God feels about their future idolatry?

At any rate, God says that He will deal with Judah and He won't spare them even though they cry out to Him (v. 18). But, that's not the end of the prophecy.

In the next and final part of this article, we will see the conclusion of the prophecy and how it is that we can avoid being caught up in what is coming to Israel.

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Jesus the Investment Banker



The economy has a way of commanding our attention, and it should. While it's tempting to ask what Jesus might do in times like these, it's a tough question to answer without asking more questions. Do you mean what would he do as a carpenter from Nazareth? That would elicit an entirely different answer from what he would do as the King of Kings.

Just for the fun of it, let's try to figure out what Jesus the Investment Banker might do. In fact, Jesus spoke a couple of parables that give us a strong indication of how he would approach a few challenges our economy faces.

In Luke 19 Jesus pictures himself as an investor who has a few bucks (or pounds) to put to work. He chooses ten people, gives them each the same amount of capital to invest, and tells them to do business with it while he's out of town.

Some time later, he calls his ten entrepreneurs together to assess how they have done. Note that he gave capital to ten entrepreneurs, but in the parable he only interviewed three of them. Two of the three made good returns, and the third did nothing more than turn the original investment back over. Is it possible that the remaining seven lost everything? If so, are we permitted to contemplate that maybe those seven were not condemned for losing it all because at least they were willing to take a few risks, while the fellow who simply sat on his capital did receive a condemnation?

In any case, the investment banker makes a decision. He takes the money away from the guy who has just the one pound that he was given and gives it to the guy who has ten. That sounds callous to our ears today. In fact the disciples themselves questioned the fairness of this: "But Lord! He already has ten pounds!" (Luke 19:25)

That is what Jesus the Investment Banker would do. Instead of subsidizing ventures that are destined to fail, he would direct his capital to the ventures that would be the most productive. That's as it should be. The banker began with ten pounds, and after his entrepreneurs went to work, his wealth had grown to sixteen (10+5+1). If he had tried to subsidize the non-productive enterprises via capital injection taken from the successful, he would eventually erode all his capital on the not so successful entrepreneurs, who would have been better served finding another line of work.

I suspect Ronald Reagan might have had this parable in mind when he said, "The government's view of the

economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

Jesus might have had in mind the proverb from Ecclesiastes: "Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well" (11:6). The main actor in this parable clearly diversified his investments.

So Jesus the Investment Banker would not be doing to the financial system what some are doing today. Instead of injecting capital into failing institutions, he would be investing in those that have a proven ability to succeed. What would Jesus do? Something radically different from what is being done. And that should be no surprise to anyone.

—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.

Iceland considering banning porn because of negative impact on women, children

by Hilary White

REYKJAVIK, February 15, 2013, (LifeSiteNews.com) — The tiny state of Iceland, known for going its own way among European nations, is looking at possible ways to ban internet pornography.

The law is being drafted by Interior Minister Ogmundur Jonasson of the Green Party, who wants to block access to pornographic images and videos on all internet-capable devices, including smartphones, computers, and game consoles, the *Daily Telegraph* reports.

Jonasson, Iceland's interior minister, is drafting legislation to stop the access of online pornographic images and videos by young people through computers, games consoles, and smartphones. He is looking at methods that would include making it illegal to use Icelandic credit cards for porn and filtering out pornographic IP addresses.

"We have to be able to discuss a ban on violent pornography, which we all agree has a very harmful effects on young people and can have a clear link to incidences of violent crime," Jonasson said.

THE ARCH OF TITUS IN ROME

Symbol of Opposition between Rome and the People of God

by Paulo Jorge Coelho

The Arch of Titus, fully executed in marble, is a triumphal arch, currently the most celebrated in Rome. It was erected in commemoration of the conquest of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple by the Emperor Titus Flavius, son of Vespasian. Titus led the Roman legions which occupied the capital of Judea in 67 AD and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

We can see carved on the Arch of Titus, the following symbols of Judaism: the table of unleavened bread, the trumpets of silver and the menorah, with its 7 arms.

It contains the following inscription in Latin:

SENATVS POPVLVSQVE•ROMANVS

DIVO•TITO•DIVI•VESPASIANI•F(ILIO)VESPASIANO•
AVGVSTO

(Translation: "The Senate and the Roman people [dedicated] to the divine Titus Vespasian Augustus, son of the divine Vespasian").

This arch is a proof of the fulfilment of the prophetic words of Jesus Christ concerning the fate of Jerusalem and its Temple (Matthew 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2, Luke 21:5-6).

However, the existence of this monument in Rome and that it has stayed intact for nearly 2000 years has a special prophetic symbolism that should not be ignored. In fact, to our knowledge, there is no similar memorial in all the world that celebrates the defeat of Israel, the people of God, by the hands of the Gentiles.

Symbolically, but striking and significant, the Arch of Titus marks the exaltation of Rome above Jerusalem. The apparent and transcendent victory of pagan blasphemy over the truth of the people of the Scriptures, Israel.

It is interesting to meditate: Why the long life of the Arch of Titus when the papacy for centuries dominated the city where it is displayed?

Why has the Church of Rome destroyed, directly or indirectly, so many historical evidences of various peoples, and they have let the memorial of the destruction of Jerusalem remain as a perpetual pagan monument in the Arch of Titus?

The answer is simple for those who understand the Word of God: the Roman Church, in its degradation to the paganism, took as its own the victory of Rome over Jerusalem.



Inscription at the top of the Arch of Titus



We know how the story is pregnant with meaning after the establishment of the supreme power of the Bishop of Rome in many examples of hostility against the true followers of Scripture or the descendants of Israel.

The survival of the Arch of Titus in Rome only reflects this mood of the apostate church, surrendered to the ways of paganism.

Rome is set in the Word of God as the capital of apostasy, blasphemy, and opposition to the People of



The soldiers of Titus as they carry away the Menorah from the Temple in Jerusalem.

God. Despite her apparent triumph, represented by the Arch of Titus, one day in the future the God of the Bible will avenge all evil and injustice that Rome and its followers have executed against the people of Yahweh throughout history.

“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!” Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore” (Revelation 18:20-21 NKJV).

Rome will not remain, but Jerusalem will be rebuilt and will be the capital of the whole Earth when Jesus rules as King and Lord of all nations.

“And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. In that day ‘HOLINESS TO THE LORD’ shall be engraved on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar” (Zechariah 14:16-20 NKJV).

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Judge Ye Not What is Right?

by Richard Rives

Each week I provide a video commentary entitled Biblical Christianity — “Just the Facts.” By way of my commentaries I provide indisputable evidence that while many aspects of contemporary Christianity are found among the traditions of paganism, they cannot be found in the Bible.

I tell people that we should keep the Ten Commandments, and that the combination of pagan precepts with the worship of the biblical Creator is in violation of the first four commandments which tell us how to love the LORD.

I tell people that while we are saved by grace through faith, sin is still defined as the transgression of the law — that the wages of willful and unrepentant sin is still death — and that we must not practice sin.

Some people just don’t like the idea of having rules by which we must abide; and, as you can imagine, I receive a great deal of criticism. Why am I criticized? Not for presenting information that is false, but for presenting factual evidence that they do not like.

Most often what I hear is excuse after excuse as to why it is permissible for Christians to adopt pagan precepts — excuses as to how God knows our hearts and that He really does not care.

Some take it so far as to say that I am being legalistic and that I am going to be in big trouble on judgment day. The bottom line is that either I am right and we should keep our Creator’s commandments or my critics are right and we really do not have to do so. Both views cannot be right. Someone is wrong!

For the sake of discussion let’s just say that I am wrong. Come judgment day what will be my penalty for telling people we should keep the Ten Commandments — commandments that were kept by Jesus, his disciples and by believers of the first century and onward?

What will be my penalty for refusing to accept pagan traditions described as abominations by the God of the Bible. What will be my penalty?

Once again, for the sake of discussion let’s just say that I am right and that sin is the transgression of the law and that the wages of unrepentant sin is still death. The Book of Acts speaks of a time of ignorance that God winked at. With the facts at hand, regarding the pagan nature of major components of contemporary Christianity, ignorance is no excuse. Come judgment day what penalty will be required of those who knowingly and purposefully break our Creator’s commandments?

What penalty will be required for those who have willingly participated in activities well known to have been in honor of pagan gods? What will be the penalty for those who have taught unsuspecting believers to do so?

Earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints; I’m Richard Rives with Just the Facts.

You can watch Richard’s videos weekly at WorldNetDaily (WND.com). Richard’s Web site is www.toolong.com.

Following the Rules or Not

by Roger Day



My earliest firsthand experience with the frustrating behavior of human beings took place at school when I was in first grade. It had snowed, and it was time for recess. The teacher divided the class into two groups, and chose me to be one of the group leaders. My assignment was to lead my group in a single file through the snow to first make a circle, and then divide it into pie slices. It started out well.

I made a large circle, with the long line of my fellow students trudging behind me. This was great — they were all following me! So next, it was to be divided into pie slices. I turned and headed for the center of the circle. At this point, the group broke up. They started making their own pie slices. I was aghast — my leadership had been abandoned! My classmates were all out of order and clearly having great fun making their own pie slices. I yelled, but no one cared.

Because of my impressionable age, this experience had a lasting effect upon me. It was certainly like having a bucket of cold water thrown on one's trust in the behavior of others. It wasn't but a couple years later that I overheard talk of a policeman who had been arrested for a crime. This was staggering news to me at my young age. Policemen were supposed to catch criminals, not be criminals — another bucket of cold water! And as time went by, I learned very well that folks like to go their own way, not following any rules that would crimp their style. And I became guilty of this same behavior. Fancy that — just as human as everyone else!

Most human beings don't really want to change for the better, and don't really want to put out that much effort to be good. They tend to do only what they think they really must do. They don't want to face their weaknesses, really bare their soul to God, or really care all that much about others. Most would rather keep God at arm's length, if not entirely out of the picture. Human beings seek their own comfort level, and follow their own spirits, instead of God's spirit.

The activity of this world starkly contrasts with the attitudes and behavior encouraged by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7). Folks scurry around, storing up treasure on the earth instead of in Heaven — just opposite of what Jesus preached. Few seek to be pure in heart, merciful, peacemakers, charitable, the salt of the earth, or a light in the world. They are hardly thinking about anything Jesus said, should they have ever read it, and it bears rereading from time to time. Meditating on Bible teachings is important, but most folks are simply too busy, filling any available time with selfish endeavors.

In Matthew 7:12, Jesus laid down the principal that has been termed The Golden Rule, usually phrased as "Do unto

others as you would have them do unto you." What Christ actually spoke was, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." In Matthew 22:39, Christ affirmed, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The Golden Rule is often forwarded as a chief guide for how human relations are to be conducted. Responsible parents repeat it to their children. By putting ourselves in the place of the other person, we can more justly determine how to act in relation to them. One would not commit a crime against someone if they put themselves in the position of their victim — were they to follow the Golden Rule — were they to love their neighbor.

Ignoring good rules, our carnal nature has its own rule to put self first, even if it is at the expense of others. Ironically, that self-interest often turns out to be personally destructive, as well as bad for the other party. Everyone loses. You could say that our carnal nature just isn't very bright. In this world, the Golden Rule gets some lip service, but not near enough application. It's said that folks want their neighbors to follow the Golden Rule, while they prefer to be exempt from it. To the degree that everyone follows particular rules, everyone benefits. Most rules of civil society provide benefit, and many of them are based on rules and principles found in the Bible. And of course our prisons are full of rule breakers.

God created the human race, set that race in motion to multiply into the billions, and saw to it that an instruction book, the Bible, was provided to tell folks how they could live beneficially with one another. It doesn't seem that too many folks pour through the Bible to learn its guidance and rules for successful living. Yet it deserves the greatest respect, considering that our Creator inspired it to be written. It's the most important instruction book that lots of folks own, but too few read and study.

The Bible contains direct instructions, explanations of what could go wrong, and examples of what various parties either learned or didn't learn from experience. But just because all that guidance is there in writing, this does not keep human beings from breaking out of line and choosing their own paths. Some ignore or abandon the instructions. Others create desired comfort zones by making their own interpretations. Many want no more than one slice of that Bible pie, thank you. Some don't want any. Besides failing to consider the position of other folks before they act, humans likewise hardly think about how their actions are viewed by God. They seem unaware that God could know their thoughts.

It turns out that we can also apply the principal of the Golden Rule to our relations with God. Jesus stated in Mat-

threw 22:37-38 that the greatest rule was, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” We need only ask a few questions. How does God want to be treated by us? Does God want to hear from us, or be ignored? Does God deserve worship and honor? What could we do to please God? Surely these are reasonable questions to ask. And in fact, there is plenty we can do to honor and serve God in our prayers and in our actions. In Matthew 25:34-40, Jesus said that if we helped those in need, He would consider that we did it to Him.

The rules found in the Bible are certainly specific, and the principal of love behind them should not be difficult to grasp. The rules are there for our benefit, not to annoy us and make our lives difficult. Yet a number of folks claim that the rules are mostly done away. Why? This selfish view allows folks to be free of constraints on how they want to live. At first blush, claiming that the rules are done away seems pretty gutsy to me. But it is only gutsy if someone making that claim also really believes the following points to be both true and important.

- 1) *God exists.*
- 2) *God is all powerful.*
- 3) *It matters what God thinks.*
- 4) *Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess before God.*
- 5) *Your neighbor, created to be in the image of God, should also matter.*

I doubt that the above points find their way into the conscious thought of many persons. Yet in their time, they will become well known to every human being. In order to avoid explaining one’s selfish choices, I recommend repenting prior to facing the Lord. In fact, the sooner the better. Further, partner with God to be transforming from a carnal selfish person to one more in harmony with God.

Men cannot truly change or cancel the rules which God has ordained and put in force. Of course any number of religious entities have justified such changes. For example, men have chosen other days for worship as a part of their religions. Yet the Sabbath remains the only day that is actually sanctified, and with which blessings are associated for its keeping. Men also invent different scenarios of future events, and some will continue to scheme to create some type of world government. But still the prophetic meaning of the Sabbath will come to pass — the Millennial reign of the Lord on this earth — what I term “the final world order.”

So the rules are in force every day. The Golden Rule is a real rule, as are many others. When one does good, there are positive results (though sometimes it is not appreciated). When one tramples on others, there are negative results. Being in harmony with the rules leads us to be in harmony with God. While not a Christian, Ghandi observed, “Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.” Indeed, we really need the rules to be a part of who we are, having them in our minds and hearts. And that just happens to be the essence

of the New Covenant, found in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:6-13.

Sadly, too few human beings seem to have internalized many virtues, rules, and principles. It seems that few have thought all that deeply about life, God, and eternity. This doesn't make sense, since it is pretty clear that all humans die. Every day, we become tired and go to sleep. This reminds us that we have limited strength, and need renewal. Crawling under the covers can be a reminder that we will die. In fact, death is likened to sleep in many scriptures. Then each morning that we wake up we experience is a type of resurrection. This daily cycle should alert us to our need for God.

If God has anything to do with living beyond death, then serious investigation and effort should be in order. Determine which God is the true God, what is the nature of that God, and exactly what beneficial rules that God may have provided that should be studied and taken to heart. Indeed, God hopes we will identify with the rules and their benefits, and follow them because we want to, not because we have to. God judges the heart. And the rules simply point us toward how our heart should be motivated.

The good news is that every man, each in their own time and circumstance, will have a full opportunity to be saved. Each will be faced with the undeniable existence of God; will have their apparent blindness to God’s rules removed; be given the spirit of God to aid their understanding; and be provided time to determine if they want to live accordingly. How merciful is that? If you were God, would you be this fair? God is!

God can’t be happy with how most human beings are presently behaving. God wasn’t happy with men in the days of Noah, and it is prophesied to be just as bad before Christ returns. The world certainly appears to be in a serious moral and spiritual crisis at this time, not to mention looming political and economic crises.

Yet God has a plan to reach everyone in order to fulfill His selfless vision of a glorious family of billions. Eternity will support the growth of countless relationships and activities in that loving family. I believe most will repent, God will forgive, and they will live life as life was meant to be lived. Someday all human beings will be on the same page and follow the same rules, or they will be toast. Don’t be toast— love the rules, love God, love your fellow man!

*Roger Day consults on both construction and preparedness as his vocation, but his avocation is writing. He is author of the short ebook **Christmas, Constantine, and the Bible**, available on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. He is presently writing a full length book. Some of his shorter writings may be found at www.radwritings.com.*

The Sabbath and Professional Baseball

By Bill Lussenheide



Professional baseball historically has captured much interest in America, but also around the world. In fact baseball has become so ingrained in the American psyche that even movies that portray baseball have increasingly become “supernatural” or “spiritual” in their nature.

Movies like “Angels in The Outfield,” “The Natural,” or “Field of Dreams” all try to capture the idea of either an interest by God in baseball, or providing supernatural talent, or even creating a resurrection of dead baseball players to facilitate a father/son reconciliation.

Baseball itself has an interesting sabbatical element within it — the “Seventh Inning Stretch,” allowing a brief rest bit during the seventh frame, along with the singing of “God Bless America” at major league stadiums.

However, there also has been those that have become believers of the truth, especially in regards to the Seventh-day Sabbath truth, that have been involved in professional baseball. This article will outline several individuals who have been associated with professional baseball and who also were or became Sabbath Keepers.

The fact that many professional baseball games are played on Saturdays, creates an obvious conflict with a Sabbath observer. However there have been at least two players who, while still active in their baseball careers, attempted to work around the Sabbath.

Ed Correa, from Puerto Rico, is a Seventh-day Adventist. He played 3 seasons in the major leagues and was a starting pitcher. Starting pitchers do not play every day. In fact they usually pitch about once every fifth game. The Texas Rangers would adjust their rotation to accommodate Correa’s religious beliefs so that he would not have to pitch on the Sabbath. This was greatly helped by the fact that fellow teammate Charlie Hough was a knuckleball pitcher, a non physically taxing pitch which requires very limited rest between starts. Hough could change his spot in the rotation in order to cover for Correa if there was a Sabbath conflict.

Correa won 12 games in 1986 for the Rangers and struck out 189 in 202 innings. His best career start was a complete game shutout on May 2, 1986, against the

New York Yankees, as he gave up just 3 hits, walked 5 and struck out 9. His career ended early because of arm trouble, however. Today he runs a baseball academy and a High School on his home island.

Danny Thomas, played for the Milwaukee Brewers as a member of the Sabbath-keeping Worldwide Church of God in 1976 and 1977. During his brief major league career, he became known as the “Sundown Kid” because of his well-publicized refusal to play on seventh-day Sabbath.

He informed the Brewers that he would not play on the Sabbath, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. “The Sundown Kid,” as he came to be called, missed a night game on Saturday, April 23, 1977, when he was slated to be in the lineup as cleanup hitter and left fielder, after having been excused from pre-sundown batting practice earlier in the day. Thomas said he heard on the radio that he was scheduled to play in the game and apologized to Brewers manager Alex Grammas.

He told People magazine, “If I’m good at baseball, it’s only because God gave me the talent. I’ll give it all I’ve got, but I won’t play on the Sabbath.” Major league baseball would not adapt to a position player missing two games a week, and Thomas was demoted to the minor leagues. After playing one more season in the low minor leagues for an independent team that had a sympathetic Christian owner, Thomas was out of baseball. His career stats were excellent at all levels of play, and in just 175 career major league at bats he hit 6 home runs, had an excellent batting average of .274, and a superior “on base percentage” of .363.

A few Jewish players in major league history were faced with the issue of annual Sabbath-day observance in reference to Yom Kippur, also known as the “Day of Atonement.” **Sandy Koufax** is often remembered for not pitching the first game of the 1965 World Series in order to observe the Holy Day. As the Dodgers ace, he still pitched games two, five and seven in the series throwing completed game shutouts in games five and seven. Koufax also refused to pitch on the night when the Passover was observed. To this day, Koufax’s performance and religious decision is a source of pride to the Jewish community.

Shawn Green, also a Los Angeles Dodger sat out Yom Kippur in 2001 missing a critical game in a tight pennant race with the San Francisco Giants, despite being the number one power hitter for the team at that time. Hall of Fame first baseman **Hank Greenberg** received public scrutiny for sitting out the Day of Atonement in 1934 as well.

Several players who played both minor and major league baseball became Sabbatharians after their playing career. The following is not to be considered an exhaustive complete list, although I have done extensive research to ferret out as many as possible. This author would be interested to hear of any missed names from the following list by emailing me.

Felix Millan was a hard to strikeout second baseman who played in the big leagues from 1966 to 1977. He was a member of three all-star teams, and also won two gold gloves. After his career he became a member of the Seventh Day Adventist church.

John Kennedy was a baseball pioneer. Although Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball 10 years earlier, many teams waited many seasons to integrate their teams. Kennedy was the first black player ever for the Philadelphia Phillies in 1957. Although his major league career was short, he did have a distinguished minor league career being amongst league leaders in home runs one season in the highly touted Carolina League. After his career, Kennedy was a member of the Sabbath-observing Worldwide Church of God.

Don Ward is a minister, and currently serves on the 12 member governing board of the Sabbath-observing United Church of God, with headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio. Prior to his conversion, while age 18, he played four games for Ponca City, Oklahoma, in the Sooner State League in 1957. This was an affiliate team for the Chicago Cubs. One of his teammates, Billy Williams, went on to a very productive career and eventual membership in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Rico Cortes has served as a board member of the Bible Sabbath Association which publishes *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine. He has a ministry in which he travels to Europe, Latin America, Canada and the U.S. teaching the Hebrew Roots of his Faith.

Rico was born in Puerto Rico and raised in the U.S. He previously was a minor league baseball player with the Yankees and the Mets as well as a baseball Scout for 10 years with the Chicago White Sox. Over four minor league seasons, Rico hit .268 and hammered out 11 home runs.

Trevor Bullock played two years in the Philadelphia Phillies organization, having outstanding seasons. His win/loss record was 11-6, with a fantastic 1.81 ERA, along with 116 strikeouts in 134 innings pitched. Con-

victed by the Sabbath, he walked away from the game and a \$250k contract for the 2002 season.

In an article in the *Adventist Review* magazine, Bullock is quoted as saying the following in regards to leaving his lifelong dream and if he had any regrets... "No. Well at first I regretted that I didn't do it sooner. But then I look at the journey; it has made me stronger and made me trust God more. I am healthy, happy, and I'm getting married" said a glowing Trevor.

I certainly admire and am profited by everyone who has put God first in keeping his Sabbath commandment, whatever their profession may be, and the sacrifices that they have made to "Keep It Holy," even and including baseball players!

Bill Lussenheide played four seasons of Semi-Pro baseball as a catcher from 1975 to 1979 in Sunday leagues in the Los Angeles area. He is a contributing editor to the seventh edition of the popular landmark reference book "Total Baseball." Bill welcomes any notifications of other professional Sabbath players that he may have missed via email at socalifguy41@yahoo.com.

Bill Lussenheide has been a first generation Sabbath keeper for 38 years. He and his wife Terri reside in Menifee, CA. Bill is also a newly-elected member of the board of directors of the BSA.

"Gay marriage" advances in Illinois

Charlie Butts (OneNewsNow.com)

(Friday, February 15, 2013)

The future of the homosexual "marriage" bill now advancing from the Illinois Senate to the House will be decided later this month. One of the concerns is the protection of people of faith who oppose such unions.

In a Valentine's Day vote, the Illinois Senate approved and sent to the House a "gay marriage" bill. The 34-21 vote on Thursday came after emotional debate saying homosexuals deserve equality through marriage.

David E. Smith of the Illinois Family Institute tells OneNewsNow that homosexual marriage is not equal.

"That's not to say that homosexual *people* are not equal — I'm saying that the *relationship* is not equal; they are two different things," Smith shares. "God-ordained marriage between one man and one woman has the potential for procreation. Homosexual unions have none — zero."

If the House passes the bill, Governor Pat Quinn says he will sign it into law.

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

A Brief History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Organized in 1863, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has its doctrinal roots in the “Advent Awakening” movement of the 1840s. Hundreds of thousands of Christians became convinced from their study of Bible prophecy that Christ would soon return. This re-awakening of a neglected biblical belief occurred in many countries, with a major focus in North America.

After the “great disappointment” of their hopes in 1844, these “advent believers” broke up into a number of different groups. One group, studying their Bibles for increased understanding, recognized the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) as the day of worship. This group, which included Ellen and James White and Joseph Bates, became the nucleus of the church congregations that chose the name “Seventh-day Adventist Church” and organized in Battle Creek, Michigan, with 125 churches and 3,500 members.

A small nucleus of “Adventists” began to grow — mainly in the New England states of America, where William Miller’s Advent movement had begun. Ellen G. White, a mere teenager at the time of the “Great Disappointment,” of 1844 grew into a gifted author, speaker, and administrator, who would become and remain the trusted spiritual counselor of the Adventist family for more than seventy years until her death in 1915. Her counsels and messages to believers and church leaders shaped the form and progress of the church, while its beliefs have remained totally Bible-based.

In 1860 at Battle Creek Michigan, the loosely knit congregations of Adventists chose the name Seventh-day Adventist and in 1863 formally organized a church body with a membership of 3,500. At first work was largely confined to North America until 1874 when the Church’s first missionary, J. N. Andrews, was sent to Switzerland. Africa was penetrated briefly in 1879 when Dr. H. P. Ribton, an early convert in Italy, moved to Egypt and opened a school, but the project ended when riots broke out in the vicinity.

The first non-Protestant Christian country entered was Russia, where an Adventist minister went in 1886. On October 20, 1890, the schooner *Pitcairn* was launched at San Francisco and was soon engaged in carrying missionaries to the Pacific Islands. Seventh-day Adventist workers first entered non-Christian countries in 1894 — Gold Coast (Ghana), West Africa, and Matabeleland, South Africa. The same year saw missionaries entering South America, and in 1896 there were representatives in Japan.

The Health Reform Institute, later known as the Battle Creek Sanitarium, opened its doors in 1866, and missionary society work was organized on a statewide basis in 1870. The first of the Church’s worldwide network of schools was established in 1872, and 1877 saw the formation of statewide Sabbath school associations. In 1903, the denominational headquarters was moved from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Washington, D.C., and in 1989 to Silver Spring, Maryland, where it continues to form the nerve center of ever-expanding work.

Other early Adventists of note include John Harvey Kellogg, inventor of the “cornflake” developed by his brother Will and pioneer of the Battle Creek Sanitarium; Joseph Bates, retired sea captain and first leader of an Adventist administration; Uriah Smith, prolific author and inventor, and editor of the church’s paper for almost 50 years.

Adventist missionaries began work outside of North America in 1864, and ten years later J. N. Andrews was sent to Switzerland as the denomination’s first official missionary. In 1894 church operations commenced in Africa (Ghana and South Africa). Missionaries also arrived in South America in 1894, and in Japan in 1896. The church now operates in 205 countries worldwide.

The publication and distribution of literature were also major factors in the growth of the Advent movement. The *Advent Review* and *Sabbath Herald* (now the *Adventist Review*), general church paper, was launched in Paris, Maine, in 1850; the *Youth’s Instructor* in Rochester, New York, in 1852; and the *Signs of the Times* in Oakland, California, in 1874. The first denominational publishing house at Battle Creek, Michigan, began operating in 1855 and was duly incorporated in 1861 under the name of Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association.

Adventists have a desire to reach people for Christ. One result of this desire to touch lives for God is that Adventists have built thousands of schools around the world. It also means that Seventh-day Adventist physicians and medical institutions serve individual needs in more than 98 countries, giving the highest possible quality of personal care whenever people hurt. These physicians, nurses, therapists, and other medical workers have dedicated their lives to providing physical healing so that each person can live the best possible life. Using modern medical knowledge and carefully developed skills, these workers touch thousands of

lives each day, bringing healing and hope into families around the world.

Schools, hospitals, clinics, and health food factories are just one small corner of the Seventh-day Adventist commitment to improving lives. There is much more:

1. Wherever disaster strikes, ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, joins hands with other organizations to provide clean water, food, clothing, housing, and care.
2. Adventist publishing houses produce inspirational books, textbooks, Bible commentaries, health books, and dozens of specialized magazines in scores of languages each month. These are then delivered to millions of homes around the world, providing quality reading and information that improves lives.
3. Local Adventist churches serve their communities by providing recreational and social activities for children and teenagers, vocational and evening education programs for adults, and spiritual programming and health clinics for all.
4. On a worldwide scale, the church's mission activities are exemplified in the Global Mission Initiative—to reach the unreached peoples of the world for Christ.
5. Summer camps offer all sorts of activities, from horseback riding and water skiing to crafts and dozens of other youth activities in country environments in which children feel safe and loved. These activities are combined with a witness for God's message to make people whole—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.
6. Use of modern technology also describes Adventist commitment to mission and presence in the society with messages of "Good News." Numerous radio studios dot the Adventist broadcasting map around the globe. The same goes for production of television and other media programs. The church's interest is best exemplified in a satellite broadcast system with more than 14,000 down-link sites, and the television 24/7 global broadcasting network for homes, the Hope Channel.

Too often it's easy to see all of this as just activities of the institutions and organizations of the church. But the Seventh-day Adventist Church is far more than its organizational structure and institutions. The Adventist Church is people, individual members who have caught a vision and who have chosen to live out that vision for Christ, as His hands of hope.

Growth from the early days has been dramatic. From the small group meeting in 1846 and the organization of the church with 3,500 believers, Seventh-day Adventists now number approximately 17 million worldwide.

This article on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was submitted to us by an Adventist pastor.

AARON'S ROD

by Daniel Botkin

In Numbers 16 Korah, Dathan, and Abiram challenged the authority of Moses and Aaron. As a result, Yahweh caused the earth to open its mouth and swallow the three rebels and their families, so that they all went down alive into the pit. Then the earth closed over them. This should have been enough to convince everyone that Aaron was indeed Yahweh's choice to be High Priest. Nonetheless, to further confirm the authority and priesthood of Aaron, God had all twelve heads of the twelve tribes bring their rods to Moses. Each rod, including Aaron's, had its owner's name written on it. All twelve rods were then laid together overnight in the tabernacle. The next morning all the rods still looked the same, except for Aaron's. Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed, and bore almonds. Yahweh told Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me, that they die not" (Numbers 17:10).

This story is a prophetic picture of the Resurrection of Yeshua. Just as twelve dead sticks were laid in the darkness of the Tabernacle, so every spiritual leader in history — including Yeshua — has died and been laid in the darkness of the tomb. God imparted new life into only one of the twelve dead sticks, namely Aaron's, and He imparted resurrection life into only one spiritual leader, Yeshua of Nazareth. The priesthood of Aaron was confirmed by the resurrection life in his staff. Yeshua's position as God's Anointed One and as our High Priest is confirmed by His Resurrection. Aaron's resurrected rod became a token against the rebels, to silence their murmurings. Yeshua's Resurrection is likewise a token against rebels. When Yeshua is revealed to the world on Judgment Day as the resurrected Son of God, every mouth will be stopped. No rebel will be able to murmur a word against Him or against His authority.

The story of Aaron's rod also teaches us something about our own personal spiritual experience. We are called to undergo the same experience that Aaron's rod went through. The stick that served as Aaron's rod had to be cut from its tree. It could no longer receive the life-giving sap from which it had always drawn its life. The stick had to die to become the rod of Aaron. In a similar way, a disciple of Yeshua has to be "cut off" from the flow of life that he formerly knew as an unregenerate sinner. A disciple can no longer live according to his old nature. The carnal, selfish desires for sinful pleasures must be cut off and cease their

flow into the disciple's mind and heart. A disciple must die to the world, the flesh, and the self. Just as Aaron's rod had to pass the night in the darkness of the Tabernacle, so a disciple has to pass through "the dark night of the soul."

Aaron's rod waited through the darkness of the night for God to impart life into it. When Aaron's rod emerged from the darkness of the night, the light of day revealed the life and the fruit which God had imparted to the dead stick. If you wait for God to impart spiritual life into you, you will emerge from the dark night of the soul, and the light of Yeshua will reveal God's resurrection life and the fruit of the Spirit. The life of our Risen Lord will flow into you. It will revitalize you, energize you, and produce a harvest of spiritual fruit.

This is what the world needs to see — a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, that fruit which is described by the Apostle Paul as "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22f). It is significant that these qualities are not called "works," but rather "the fruit of the Spirit." These qualities are not achieved by the works of our own fleshly abilities. As a matter of fact, when Paul lists these qualities, he is contrasting the fruit of the Spirit to the works of the flesh. ("Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, etc.," Galatians 5:19-21).

Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are not works that we do. These are qualities that God produces in us by the life and flow of the Holy Spirit, just as He produces apples by the flow of the life-giving sap in the apple tree. An apple tree produces apples because the tree comes from an apple seed. We produce the fruit of the Spirit because we are born of the Spirit. God's creation of fruit trees on the third day of Creation is a picture of how we bear fruit as a result of the Messiah's Resurrection on the third day. We, too, are "the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself" (Genesis 1:11). The seed in us is "the Seed of the woman," the virgin-born Messiah who came to crush the serpent's head. (See Genesis 3:15.) Yeshua is the Seed in us that causes us to bear the fruit of the Spirit and prevents us from living a sinful life and manifesting the works of the flesh. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).

The fruit of the Spirit is what the world needs to see Yeshua's disciples bearing. The life and fruit on Aaron's rod was the confirmation that silenced the murmurings of the rebels. As we manifest the life of Yeshua and bear the fruit of the Spirit, it will put to shame those

rebels who murmur against the authority of our High Priest Yeshua.

There is no substitute for the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit there can be no fruit of the Spirit. For an apple tree to produce apples, the sap must flow. For you to bear the fruit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit must be flowing in your life. As a matter of fact, if the Holy Spirit is not moving in your life, I would question whether the Holy Spirit is even there. Why do I make such a statement? Because the Hebrew and Greek words translated "spirit" (*ruach* and *pneuma*) both mean "breath" or "wind" as well as "spirit." Breath and wind are the movement of air. If there is no movement of air, there is no breath or wind present. If there is no movement of the Holy Spirit, there is no Spirit present.

There is no substitute for a bountiful harvest of fruit produced by the moving and flowing of the Holy Spirit. Even strict obedience to the commandments of the Torah is no substitute. Obedience to the commandments is extremely important (and without obedience fruit cannot be borne), but external obedience is not the primary manifestation that will confirm Yeshua's authority in the eyes of the world.

It is the fruit of the Spirit — especially love, the first and primary fruit — that will confirm Yeshua's authority and our status as His disciples: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). "By this ... if ye have love one to another." Not by your strict adherence to a list of rigid rules, not by your knowledge of the Bible, not by your eloquence as a preacher, but by this, if ye have love one to another. This in no way minimizes the importance of obeying the commandments, studying the Scriptures, and preaching. These (and many other activities that could be added to the list) are extremely important, but if they are performed without love for the brethren, they are futile because the two most important commandments are to love God and to love our fellow man. And the only way to manifest a love that is the fruit of the Spirit (rather than a shallow surface love) is to allow the Holy Spirit to flow through your life like sap flows through a tree. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap" (Psalm 104:16). Amen, may it be so, and may the sap of God's Spirit flow freely in our life!

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Violence against Christians Spreading in India

Maharashtra state increasingly vulnerable, rights leaders say

February 11, 2013 By Our Mumbai Correspondent

MUMBAI, India (Morning Star News) — Hindu extremist attacks on Christians in Maharashtra state could expand even as violence elsewhere in India grows in areas where extremist groups had not been so active, Christian leaders said.

Ram Puniyani of the All India Secular Forum said at press conference in Mumbai this month that Maharashtra is vulnerable to increased attacks on Christians after “a decade of heightened *Hindutva* [Hindu nationalism], especially targeting tribal and Adivasi [indigenous] communities, as they are easy targets, with little fear of retaliation.”

The Catholic Secular Forum (CSF) released preliminary results of a study on Feb. 1, with Christian leaders saying that persecution is not increasing in comparison with previous years but is appearing in new areas. While the perennially troublesome Karnataka state saw the most attacks on Christians with 67, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 28, four new states entered the top 20: More attacks from Hindu extremists took place in Tamil Nadu, Assam, Mizoram and Goa than in previous years.

Joseph Dias, general secretary of CSF, said the study chronicled 250 of the worst cases of persecution, but that the actual number of incidents nationwide was much higher. While there were no pogroms such as occurred in Orissa state in 2008, persecution has become more widespread, with an increase in Hindu nationalist attacks even where the “Hindu brigade” is not traditionally strong, he said.

Parliamentary and state assembly elections in the next year portend an increase in attacks as Hindu extremists try to divide voters along religious lines, he said.

Michael Saldanha, former justice of the Bombay High Court, told Morning Star News that he has urged federal Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde to ban *Hindutva* groups such as the Sanathan Sanstha and Abhinav Bharat, which come under the “Saffron umbrella” with an agenda of a Hindu religious state.

Overall, the states with the highest number of incidents after Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh were Tamil Nadu with 25; Orissa — where the most serious crimes took place, including rapes of minors — with 20; and Andhra

Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, both also with 20. Maharashtra, with nine incidents, was seventh on the list.

The Maharashtra-based Christian leaders emphasized violations in their state, including not just abuses by Hindu nationalists but by family members of converts to Christianity. Two young women in Padmavati Nagar, Pune, 20-year-old Lakshmi Rathod and Vimla Rathod, 19, fled their home on Aug. 12, 2012, after their parents had forced them to drink cow urine daily. They were assaulted, threatened with “honor killing,” labelled unholy and locked in a room for several days after they were found reading the Bible.

The report included an account of an attack last month in Maharashtra by Hindu nationalists suspected to belong to Sanathan Sanstha. On Jan. 11 a Hindu extremist mob stormed into New Life Grace Ministry Church in the Sawantwadi area, Sindhudurg District, and severely beat members of the 600-strong congregation, including many women, children and elderly Christians. They threatened to stop any Christian services in the district, according to CFS.

Abraham Mathai, ex vice-chairman of the State Minorities Commission, told Morning Star News that police often look the other way.

“Such police apathy encourages the perpetrators of the crimes to continue their unprovoked violence against Christians with impunity,” he said. “If the police do not reign in the perpetrators, violence against the minority Christian community would increase in the run-up to the forthcoming general elections scheduled for 2014.”

India’s population is 74.3 percent Hindu, 14.2 percent Muslim, 1.9 percent Sikh, 0.82 percent Buddhist, and 5.8 percent Christian, according to *Operation World*.

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Notices and Advertisements

Yahweh's Children A website for kids

Have you searched for Sabbath-oriented activities for your children? Sometimes that can be challenging. We want our children to enjoy the Sabbath day, yet to learn appropriate activities acceptable to our Father.

Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah, Rocheport, Missouri, has a children's website which has been designed for this exact purpose. We have tried to make it eye-appealing for children and periodically change the background to keep it that way.

If you go to the website and click on "Bible Books," you will see that we are putting actual books of the Bible online in a format easy for children to read with activities scattered throughout each segment. At the end of each chapter, there is an interactive quiz for them to take—no records kept.

www.yahwehschildren.org
www.yaim.org

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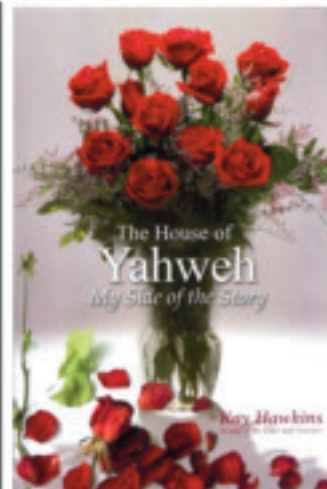
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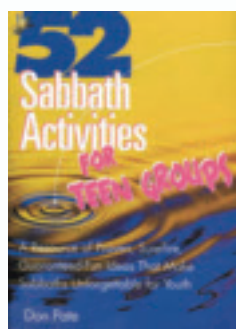


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