

# The Sabbath Sentinel

November–December 2010



Moses in Albany, New York



**BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association**

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

# The Sabbath Sentinel

November–December 2010 Volume 62, No. 6 Issue 546

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**Our Cover:** "Rock of Horeb" in Bronze (1893). The beautiful King Fountain adorns Albany, New York's Washington Park. This is the memorial of Rufus H. King. The statue was designed by J. Massey Rhind. The statue portrays Moses surrounded by Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Age. Moses has for centuries been a symbol of freedom for those fleeing tyranny.

(Photo: WikiCommons)

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## “The Birth of Liberty”

“Ladies and gentlemen, young and old, this may seem an unusual procedure, speaking to you before the picture begins. The theme of this picture is whether men ought to be ruled by God’s law or whether they will be ruled by the whims of a dictator like Rameses. Are men the property of the state, or are they free souls under God? The same battle continues throughout the world today.”<sup>1</sup>

These words were spoken at the premier screening of the 1956 film, *The Ten Commandments*, by Cecil B. DeMille, the movie’s famous director, and they are as true today as they were in 1956 and in the 1400s BC when Israel made its Exodus from Egypt. There is a war going on all over the world for the control of the souls of men, women, and children. The battle remains the same as it has been since man set foot on this Earth. Will we be ruled by God, or will we be ruled and possessed by governments of men, which are nothing more than human beings grasping for power to control the lives, the desires, and resources of other human beings?

When I have spoken in the past of the American experiment with political and religious freedom, some have interpreted my comments as “too American.” What they fail to understand is that the principles of liberty that we hold so dear are universal principles that apply to every democratic society that came into existence in Europe and around the world because of the translation and publication of the Bible, making it available to every man and woman. From the time when publication of the Bible freed men from the established interpretations of the Catholic Church, they became free to account directly to God without the Church standing between them and their Creator. Each man and woman was now at liberty to answer only to God.

Is it any wonder that the Exodus story became so prominent in the thinking of early Americans? The biblical account of Moses’ life was repeated countless times in sermons and in the writings of the American Founders. The story of the migrations to America was viewed as God’s Providence bringing about a new Exodus. Many left their homes in England, Holland, Germany, and France under the duress of persecution. The pilgrims viewed themselves as a “New Israel,” founded in the new Promised Land of North America.



*Moses at the Red Sea by Philip James de Loutherbourg, 1792*

Again I will say that this is not just an “American” story. The elements that gave birth to the American system of freedom and government are present in greater or lesser degree in every democratic society. Where people are at liberty to serve God according to their consciences, there is a trail of understanding that leads to the conviction that the people have been blessed with God-ordained freedom. Even in places such as Japan or India, the influence of American and British concepts of freedom have overlaid and transformed the national view of the inherent rights of the people.

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*Continued on Page 16*

# Lazarus, Martha, and Mary of Bethany

by Daniel Botkin



(Excerpted and adapted from the new CD series "Jewels from John's Gospel." Contact Gates of Eden at the address given at the end of this article to order this teaching series.)

The Gospel of John says that six days before His final Passover, Yeshua went to Bethany, the village where Martha, Mary, and their recently-resurrected brother Lazarus lived. At dinner each of these three siblings did three different things. "There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Yeshua, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John 12:2f).

John could have recorded different details about this dinner. "The hummus was a bit bland, but the green olives and the fresh pita bread were delicious, as was the sweet wine served after dinner." But John did not record details randomly. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to record the details of what each of these three siblings did. Martha served. Lazarus sat at the table. Mary anointed Yeshua's body.

These three actions of these three siblings, all of them disciples of Yeshua, is a picture of three roles that every disciple should fill at different times.

## Martha

Martha served. We are all supposed to serve the Lord and His Body, the *ekklesia*, His called-out ones.

Serving means work. "Serving the Lord" consists of far more than the glitz and glamour of a public pulpit ministry. Even though I do have a public pulpit ministry, I can assure you that serving the Lord consists mostly of mundane chores: going to the post office, paying bills, recording and filing financial information, balancing the checkbook, going to the bank, going to the radio station to prepare programs, going to the TV station to drop off DVDs, buying office supplies and supplies for our outreach center, serving drinks to people at the outreach center, washing cups, answering questions (in person and on the phone), giving advice (in person and on the phone), taking out trash, vacuuming, doing research and typing articles and planning the layout of each issue of *Gates of Eden* (GOE), updating the mailing list (changing addresses,



*Martha pleading her case with Jesus as Mary sits at Jesus' feet. Painting by Nathan Greene*

adding and deleting names), printing and attaching mailing labels, stuffing envelopes for mass mailings, packaging CDs and preparing them for mailing, preparing text and artwork for advertising and promotion, photocopying articles for individuals and mailing them, and traveling to speaking engagements. For congregational activities like Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, and other special events, there are other mundane chores: locating and reserving meeting space, setting up tables and chairs, loading and transporting music and sound equipment, unloading equipment then reloading and transporting it after the event, buying food and eating utensils, cooking and serving food and drinks, and cleaning up afterwards.

*Continued on Page 13*

# How Do We Fulfill Matthew 5:20?

by Brian Knowles



For centuries, Matthew 5:20 has confused Christian exegetes. Has Jesus given his people an impossible standard? Let's read the verse in the King James Version: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." In my KJV there is a note that attempts to explain this verse. It reads as follows: "your righteousness. We may understand this as 'your practice of religion.' The Pharisees righteousness was external; it should be internal." This explanation misses the point.

To grasp what Jesus is talking about here, we must enter into the world of the scribes and the Pharisees, and view Jesus' statement from that perspective. We must also understand how the words "righteousness" and "kingdom of heaven" were used in those times.

Most modern Christians believe that the term "enter into the kingdom of heaven," means going to heaven at death. This is incorrect. The term "kingdom of heaven," as used by Jesus, means the manifested rule of God in the lives of his people. The terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" mean the same thing. Many Jews did not wish to take the risk of using the name of God lightly, so they substituted the word "heaven" for "God." In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke), when we see the term "kingdom of heaven," we can assume the writer is Jewish, or that he is writing for a Jewish audience.

Jesus' movement represented the in-breaking kingdom of God on earth in those days. For Jesus, the Kingdom had two meanings: God's rule in his people in this time, and in the world to come. In most instances, Jesus used it in the present sense, not futuristically. As Dr. Robert Lindsey writes:

To Jesus, God has given ruling authority with dominion and glory. Jesus now heads this kingdom: he functions as its king...Luke recorded that Jesus said, 'But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.' In other words, when these redemptive works occur, Jesus' dominion has become a reality...to enter this kingdom or domain is to participate in God's redemptive activity (cf. Matthew 5:20 and 6:33). Over this kingdom God has appointed a king, and he is the Lord Jesus" (*The Expansion of His Kingdom*, by Robert L. Lindsey, pp. 9-10).

So Jesus is not talking about the future kingdom here, or about going to heaven; he is addressing the issue of who may, or may not, participate in his redemptive kingdom movement in the present.

## The Meaning of "Righteousness"

When Jesus spoke the original words translated "righteousness," he was undoubtedly using the Hebrew word *zedakah*. This word, like most, experienced an evolution of meaning down through the ages. The basic meaning is "rightness" or "righteousness." It is used to indicate "what is right, just, normal; rightness, justness." It can refer to righteousness in government, or to justice. It can refer to what is ethically right. It can also mean "deliverance, victory, prosperity." (It is used this way in the following passages: Isaiah 41:10; 45:8; 51:5; 42:21; Psalms 40:10, 119:123.)

At one point it was used of people enjoying their salvation: Isaiah 62:1; 58:8; 62:2.

Dr. Roy Blizzard and David Bivin point out that, "By the time of Jesus, the rich Old Testament word *zedakah* ('righteousness' in the sense of 'deliverance' or 'salvation') had come to have a second, more restricted, meaning — 'almsgiving' (monetary help to the poor). In the eyes of the Pharisees, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting were the three most important components of righteous living. Almsgiving was the most important of the three, and so synonymous with righteousness at the time that it came itself to be called 'righteousness.' In Matthew 5:20 Jesus is playing on these two meanings of the word *zedakah* — the older, broader meaning ('salvation'), and the newer, narrower meaning ('almsgiving')."

In Jesus' time, almsgiving was viewed as a meritorious act. This explains why some blew a trumpet to announce their "righteousness" in giving alms (Matthew 6:2). Some Jews, like works-oriented Christians of today, believed that they could work out their own salvation on the basis of such works, rather than accepting the fact that there is no salvation for any of us apart from the applied grace of God. Note Romans 10:3 in this regard.

Bivin and Blizzard put Jesus' words into language we can understand: "If your *zedakah* is not bigger than the *zedakah* of the scribes and Pharisees — in other words, if it is the undersized *zedakah* of the scribes and Pharisees, and not that mighty *zedakah* of which the prophets spoke — then you will not get into the kingdom of heaven."

Put another way, Jesus is saying, "If your righteousness is reduced to mere almsgiving, then you're not qualified to become one of my followers. You don't fit in my kingdom movement. If you're focused on *your* righteousness

in the form of almsgiving, and not on God's righteousness (his salvation), then you're missing the mark."

Jesus' kingdom movement was bigger than almsgiving, although that, of course, was important. Jesus and his followers operated in the supernatural power of God to bring about deliverance and healing. They met people at all levels, and at their true points of need. It wasn't a matter of giving some down-and-outer a buck for a cup of coffee; they actually solved his whole problem (if he was willing). The story of the Good Samaritan is an example of truly ministering to a person's real needs.

God is delivering people from all of their bondages, including the ultimate bondage of eternal death, and he's doing it through Jesus Christ. This is the work of the Kingdom. To participate in that work, one must be willing to go beyond mere almsgiving and religious posturing. If someone needs a fish, you don't give him a stone. If someone needs clothes, you find them clothes. If someone needs deliverance, or healing, kingdom people get him or her delivered and healed.

Some of the scribes and the Pharisees were content to continue with their fasting ("twice in the week"), their almsgiving (with great public fanfare), and their prayers. Jesus demanded more of his followers. He took them out into the real world to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, deliver the demonized, and make many disciples of Jesus' teaching. Theirs was a life of self-sacrifice — of giving their all for the sake of the Kingdom and its message. They faced hostile Jews, hateful gentiles, wild animals, storms, beatings, imprisonments, and myriad other hardships for the sake of the Gospel (cf. 2 Corinthians 11). Theirs was not a life of mere religious forms without substance. They went into the synagogues, the market places, and even the halls of government, to get a hearing for the Gospel. They told people what God's salvation (*tzedakah*) included. They went out to "set the captives free." This was the work of the kingdom. Only those who were willing to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty were worthy of performing that work.

### Sources

*Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Bivin & Roy Blizzard, Jr., pp. 109-111.

*The Expansion of His Kingdom* by Robert L. Lindsey, pp. 10-11. *Strong's Concordance* — "righteousness."

*A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs (BAG), pp. 841-842.

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## Things New and Old

*"Every teacher who is versed in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new things and old" (Matt. 13:52, Berkeley).*

I once had a neighbor who accepted only the New Testament as the Word of God for Christians. According to him the Old Testament had no value, so far as salvation was concerned. He spoke of the distinction he made as "rightly dividing the word of truth." But what my friend seemed to forget was that the only inspired writings in existence in Jesus' day were the Old Testament Scriptures, and that of them Jesus plainly declared: "They are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Jesus made no distinction between the truths of the Old Testament and the truths of His gospel, which became the basis for the New Testament. As a child, Jesus so filled His mind with knowledge from the books of nature and revelation that in later years He was able to bring forth old truths from these storerooms and clothe them with new charm and beauty. In our verse for this morning we are encouraged to do likewise.

Memory is a storeroom from which we bring forth things new and old. Those who have explored the mysteries of the mind tell us that we have two kinds of memory: long-term and short-term. With short-term memory we remember such things as a number we looked up in a telephone book, dialed and promptly forgot. In long-term memory the mind recognizes something as significant. Then something in our minds (no one has given it a name) says, "Record this," and we remember it, not for a few fleeting moments, but potentially for a lifetime.

We all know, of course, that impressions stored in the mind tend to fade unless we refresh them from time to time. What is true of memory is also true of Christian experience. Unless we regularly renew and deepen our commitment to God, our love for Him wanes. No wonder we need to be converted every day.

Because each of us is a distinct individual, no two of us are ever at exactly the same stage in Christian development. Some persons reading this devotional book are newly born Christians, others are mature Christians, and still others are somewhere in between. Yet all of us have some things in common: we all need daily to renew our "first love" (Rev. 2:4); we all need to keep our eyes fixed on Christ, our goal; and we all need to "take heed lest ... [we] fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

May our love for God ever be kept fresh as we apply to our lives the truths new and old that will be brought forth from the storerooms of nature, experience, and revelation morning by morning throughout this year.

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*Donald Mansell, **New Every Morning**, page 12. Review & Herald Publishing Association. 1981.*

# God Knows my Shoe Size

by Janet Short



“Donations appreciated,” read the hand-lettered sign on the lunch counter. I knew this implied “donations expected,” even if the gift was just a token dollar bill. I felt in my pocket for the five worn dollar bills I’d brought with me to the church camp.

Our twenty-year-old business had failed, right along with the Tulsa economy, leaving my husband without work for three months. Things had become desperate for my family and the five dollars in my pocket was all we had. I really didn’t have a dollar to give away.

One thing we were all thankful for, though, was the way this financial crisis had brought us closer to God. We began truly seeking His direction in our lives; the words “give us our daily bread” took on a deeper meaning. Our prayers became more frequent and more sincere as our money situation grew progressively worse. Even the kids were involved and earnest in their prayers.

As I waited there in the lunch line, I thought about our poor financial state. My pastor’s wife, knowing we didn’t have money for gasoline, had given me a ride to the camp, which was a two-hour drive from our home. She had suggested the camp meeting might be just what I needed at this unsettling time in my life.

I smiled absently at the woman seated behind a table next to the serving counter. The ladies’ auxiliary was doing their part to help fund the camp, selling their hand-made crafts. I looked down, a little embarrassed. I couldn’t buy her crafts; I couldn’t even replace my worn out shoes.

I stared down at my old brown pumps: a sort of old-fashioned but classic shoe style, to me they were the only shoes a businesswoman should wear. Mine still looked halfway decent with a fresh coat of polish. No one but me knew about the big hole in the left sole.

“Lord,” I prayed silently, “You know our situation. And you know I want to be a good steward. Should I put money in the donation jar?”

Immediately I felt the Spirit speaking to my heart. Yes, I only had five dollars, but my God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, He cares for me, and He’s able to supply all my needs. I would put in my dollar.

But when I raised my eyes, what should I see but a brand new pair of black leather pumps at the end of the craft table. I got excited. I needed those shoes, God knew it and there they were. They must surely be for me.

If those shoes are only five dollars and if they are my size, I’ll know they are for me, I thought. I forgot all about the donation jar.

I edged up to the end of the table and picked up the shoes. The soles were perfect; they’d never been worn. I

looked inside; they were size 8½. Wonderful! “Are these for sale?” I asked.

The answer, of course, was yes. The price for these \$120, name-brand shoes was two dollars. I could buy the shoes and still put in a dollar for my dinner!

But then I heard that still, small voice again. Buy them tomorrow, He said. If God had put those shoes on the table for me, they would still be there for me twenty-four hours later. Reluctantly I put the shoes back down — my new pumps. I dropped my dollar in the jar.

Three or four times during the afternoon service I had to turn the matter of those shoes back over to the Lord. It seemed so illogical to walk off and leave them sitting there. But I just knew it was what God was asking of me.

We were back again the next day, standing in the lunch line. I craned my neck to see. Yes! My shoes were still there! A lady in front of me picked them up and looked them over. Oh, how I wanted to butt in line. I thought, What if someone buys them before I get up there?

How foolish of me!

When the line finally crept forward enough I could reach those shoes without seeming too pushy, I snatched them up. Yes, they were still perfect, still size 8½ and just as shiny and black as I remembered.

I bought those shoes, paid my two dollars, and joyfully put my last two bills in the jar. I was so happy I almost cried right there in the lunch line. It wasn’t just because I had new shoes, of course, but because of the assurance that God cares so much for me, He gets involved in the details of my life.

Over lunch, I shared the circumstances of the shoe purchase with my pastor’s wife. She was happy and excited for my faith-strengthening experience.

Before we left the camp, I decided to wear my new shoes for the trip home. Only then did I notice the left shoe was size 8. I felt a few seconds of panic but when I slipped on the shoe, it fit perfectly. The right shoe was an 8½, the size I always wore. It fit perfectly too. I had never realized my feet were so different.

The pastor’s wife, reading the incredulity in my face, said, “Well, God knows your shoe size!” And why, I thought, should I be surprised? God knows me better than I know myself.

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# Our Own Thanksgiving Story

by Doug Ward

In the United States, the fourth Thursday of each November is Thanksgiving, a time set aside for remembrance and celebration of the rich blessings bestowed upon us by our Creator. One of the greatest of these blessings is religious freedom. During the Thanksgiving season, we Americans often think back to the seventeenth-century English Protestants who came to New England in their search for a place to worship freely. It was the Congregationalists of the Plymouth Colony who celebrated the first Thanksgiving in 1621. Less than twenty years after that, Baptists began to settle in Rhode Island, where complete religious freedom was guaranteed.

Two English Baptists are of special interest to those who keep the seventh day Sabbath. In 1665, Stephen and Anne Mumford, Seventh Day Baptists from a congregation in Tewkesbury, England, arrived in Newport, Rhode Island. After fellowshipping for several years with the First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, the Mumfords and five others covenanted together to organize the first Sabbatarian congregation in the New World in early 1672.

I first heard Stephen Mumford's name over twenty years ago. Ever since that time, I have wanted to learn more about our Seventh Day Baptist "roots." In particular, why did the Mumfords come to America? How many Sabbath keepers were there in England in those days? How did their movement start, what did they believe, and what trials did they face? What can their experience teach us now as we enter the twenty-first century? Happily, the answers to such questions are more easily accessible today than ever before, with the rather recent appearance of several books that discuss the Seventh Day Baptists [End Notes 1, 2, and 5] and the presence of many relevant papers and books on the internet (e.g., [Notes 3 and 4]). In this article, I will describe the courage and integrity, the failures and ultimate successes of the "Seventh-day men."

## Sabbatarians of the English Reformation

The seventeenth century was a time of great religious and political ferment in England. The Bible was becoming much more readily available, and many people were stirred to action by the truths they were discovering in its pages.

Some, called the "Puritans," hoped to reform the Church of England, and ultimately all of society, along more biblical lines. More radical Puritans, the "Separatists," wanted to start from scratch and create new churches that were as much like the first-century church as possible. There was much interest among the Separatists in practices like believers' baptism, foot-washing, anointing with oil, laying on of hands, and abstinence from unclean meats.

There was also widespread excitement about biblical prophecy, and many anticipated the imminent return of Jesus Christ. One group, called the Fifth Monarchists (after Nebuchadnezzar's dream of Daniel 2, in which God's Kingdom is portrayed as the fifth and greatest of a prophesied series of empires), stressed the literal millennial reign of Christ on earth. The most radical Fifth Monarchists hoped to pave the way for that reign by overthrowing the King.

Puritans held the Ten Commandments in very high regard. Applying the Sabbath commandment to the first day of the week, they believed that Sunday should be observed strictly as a day of rest, rather than merely being a day on which to hold worship services. They brought this view to public attention in a number of books in the late 1500s, most notably Nicolas Bownde's, *The Doctrine of the Sabbath* (1595). The ensuing controversy over the fourth commandment was so great that Bownde's book was eventually banned [Note 5, p. 49].

Given the Puritan respect for the Decalogue and the Protestant belief that the Bible should be the ultimate source of Christian belief and practice, it was inevitable that some would respond to the Sabbath controversy by adopting the biblical seventh day Sabbath. And indeed, that is what happened.

During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, groups of Sabbatarians sprang up in various parts of England and Wales; more than sixty congregations that either met on Saturday or included Sabbatarians have been identified by historian Bryan W. Ball [Note 1]. Many of these groups lasted only a generation or two, but some survived much longer—one of them for over three hundred years. Moreover, through the Mumfords, the majority of the Sabbatarian Christians in the world today can trace their spiri-



tual lineage, directly or indirectly, to these brave and determined people.

A fascinating contemporary description of the English Sabbatarians is preserved in "M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations in his Travels around England," a book published by Frenchman Henri Misson in 1698 and translated into English in 1719. Misson, who traveled extensively in England during the 1690s, comments in his book on the various religious groups he encountered there. The Sabbatarians apparently left a strong impression upon him, because he discusses them in some detail as follows (quoted in [Note 1, p. 9]):

Here and there also you meet with a Millenarian; but I know there is a particular Society, though it makes but little noise, of People, who though they go by the Name of Sabbatarians make Profession of expecting the Reign of a Thousand Years without participating in the other opinions which are ascribed to the ancient Millenarians. These Sabbatharians are so call'd, because they will not remove the Day of Rest from Saturday to Sunday.

They leave off work betimes on Friday Evening, and are very rigid observers of their Sabbath. They administer Baptism only to adult People [footnote: 'in other aspects they subscribe to our Confession of Faith']; and perhaps they are blameable in these two Things only because they look upon them to be more important than they really are. The major Part of them will eat neither Pork, nor Blood, nor things strangled, but they do not absolutely forbid the Use of those meats; they leave it to the Liberty of every Conscience. For the rest, their Morality is severe, and their whole outward Conduct pious and Christian-like. Were it only for this one Opinion or Belief of theirs concerning the absolute Necessity of keeping the Sabbath on Saturday without paying any Regard to the next Day ...; that alone would be enough to make them unavoidably a Society by themselves.

Here Henri Misson describes a group of people who believed in a future millennial reign of Christ, but without the radical political activism of the Fifth Monarchists; practiced believers' baptism; carefully kept the seventh-day Sabbath; observed biblical dietary laws, but not in a legalistic way; and in general were orthodox Christians with a high standard of biblical morality. Not all of the English Sabbatarians fit every part of this picture; but overall, it is a good description of them and many of their spiritual descendants, right up to the present day.

## Prejudice and Persecution

The decision to observe the seventh day Sabbath was not one to take lightly. Those who made this choice placed themselves conspicuously outside of the mainstream of society. In the seventeenth century, people who adopted practices different from those of the

Church of England were placed under close scrutiny and could be subjected to fines or imprisonment. For example, in the 1660s and 1670s, local churchwardens kept careful records of all "Nonconformists," including anyone who worked or didn't attend church on Sunday, refused to have infants baptized, or kept the seventh day Sabbath. (These records have provided historians with valuable clues about the identities and locations of Sabbath keepers. [Note 1] )

The courage of those who adopted the seventh day is also notable given the strongly anti-Semitic culture of Europe in those days. (Sabbath keepers were often labeled as "Jews," and this label was not intended as a compliment.) In England, the anti-Semitism of the time was exacerbated by ignorance. All Jews in England had been expelled from the country in 1290 AD.

By the early seventeenth century, there was a small Jewish community in London, but it kept a very low profile. As a result, most people had probably never met a Jew, and those who embraced "Jewish" practices would have seemed strange and threatening to many.

One well-known example of the persecutions faced by early English Sabbatarians is the story of John and Dorothy Traske. John Traske (1585-1636) was a controversial and apparently rather colorful traveling preacher whose words and actions repeatedly got him into trouble with the authorities. What exactly he taught is difficult to determine, because the available sources on his life are largely hostile ones (see [1, pp. 48-51]). It is also not certain how many followers he attracted; only the names of a few have come down to us, including Hamlet Jackson, Returne Hebdon, and Christopher Sands. We do know that in 1617, Traske was in London teaching that one should obey the fourth commandment by resting on the seventh day and working on each of the other six days. He also taught obedience to biblical dietary laws and is said to have advocated Christian observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Traske's preaching was too radical to go unnoticed for long. By late 1617, Traske and several associates had been arrested, and on June 19, 1618, he was charged with "having a fantastical opinion of himself with ambition to be the Father of a Jewish faction" and making "the people of God, his majesty's subjects, little better than Jews." [4; 5, p. 51] Traske was whipped and pilloried, and his forehead was branded with a letter "I" (for "Iew," as "Jew" was written at that time). He was also sentenced to life in prison, where he subsisted on a meatless diet (rather than eat the pork prescribed by the court) until he recanted his "Jewish" views and was released in 1619. He published an account of his changed beliefs in "A Treatise of Libertie from Judaisme" (1620) and apparently never taught seventh-day Sabbath keeping after that. However, two of his associates refused to recant and eventually died

in prison—Returne Hebdon in 1625, and his wife Dorothy in 1645. The example of Dorothy Traske, who remained steadfast over many years in prison, was a great inspiration to other seventeenth-century Sabbatarians.

John Traske was by all accounts very eccentric, and he was threatened with arrest and imprisonment both before and after he advocated observance of the Sabbath. However, one didn't have to be as provocative as Traske to face persecution; a thoroughly orthodox Christian who wrote or spoke in favor of the Sabbath was also in danger in the early seventeenth century. Such was the case with Theophilus Brabourne (1590-1662), an Anglican clergyman who hoped to persuade the Church of England to adopt the seventh day Sabbath in two books that he wrote in 1628 and 1632. In 1634 and early 1635, Brabourne was imprisoned, repeatedly examined by church officials, and threatened with excommunication and a fine of 1000 pounds before his carefully-worded recantation was accepted on April 30, 1635 [1, p. 66]. (Brabourne claimed that he never recanted anything of any substance, and in the more tolerant climate of the 1650s he wrote again in favor of the Sabbath.)

During the Puritan rule of the Commonwealth period of the 1650s, there was much more religious freedom for Separatists, and both Sunday and Sabbatarian Baptists began to worship openly throughout England and Wales. But a new wave of persecution followed the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 under Charles II. The king feared that groups like Fifth Monarchy Men and Baptists were a threat to his government, especially after Fifth Monarchist Thomas Venner and a group of fifty armed men terrorized London for four days in January 1661. In the resulting crackdown, John James, the pastor of the Seventh Day Baptists in Bullstake Alley, Whitechapel Road, London, was arrested while preaching to his congregation on October 19, 1661.

James was no threat to the king; he did not advocate violent overthrow of the government. However, he did actively preach that Christ would return to rule over all nations—his favorite scriptural text was said to be Rev. 11:15—and that was enough to get him into serious trouble in the tense political climate of the time. James was executed, then drawn and quartered, on November 26, 1661[3].

The government of Charles II hoped to bring greater peace and stability to the kingdom by enforcing religious uniformity. In 1662, it introduced the Act of Uniformity, which excluded from parish churches all ministers who would not conduct services according to the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer. The Act of Uniformity resulted in the ejection from Anglican pulpits of many Nonconformist ministers who had gained their positions during the 1650s.

In order to silence those ejected clergy, the government went on to institute the Conventicle Act in 1664. (A "conventicle" is a secret religious meeting.) The Conventicle Act forbade any worship service not conducted according to the Book of Common Prayer that involved more than five people in addition to the family of the house. Anyone caught violating this rule for the third time could be banished to the West Indies.[3] The persecution that followed this harsh legislation was probably what led Stephen and Anne Mumford to leave for Rhode Island in 1664.

In Note 1, p. 257, Ball describes the precautions taken by one Sabbatarian Baptist congregation during this era to avoid arrest under the Conventicle Act. This congregation met on Saturday evenings at a roadside cottage near the village of Stalham in the county of Norfolk. According to Ball, "John Woolstone, who at the time lived four or five miles away at Walcott, would frequently arrive to conduct worship disguised as a drover and carrying a whip to allay suspicion. The large, lower room of the cottage would be laid out as a dining-room, and Woolstone would preach from a seat at the table, to a congregation assembled in the upper rooms. On other occasions, meetings were held in a barn at the rear of the cottage, and lookouts were posted at strategic points to warn of the approach of informers. Many of the worshippers lived at a distance from the meeting-place, and would travel home by various routes to avoid detection. It was a situation typical of many Nonconformist gatherings throughout the country at the time."

Not all were able to escape persecution. For example, Francis Bampfield (1615-1684), an early leader among the English Sabbatarians, was imprisoned for over ten years of his life. Originally an Anglican, Bampfield prepared for the ministry by obtaining B.A. and M.A. degrees at Oxford. He then served congregations in Rampisham and Sherborne, becoming known for his "eloquence, learning, and pastoral concern" [1, p. 145]. During the 1650s, he began to adopt Nonconformist beliefs, and he lost his position as vicar in Sherborne in 1662 under the Act of Uniformity.

After that, he began to conduct services in his home, but he was soon arrested and spent much of the next decade in jail. While in jail, he became convinced of the seventh-day Sabbath and the validity of believers' baptism by immersion. For several years before his release in 1672, he conducted Sabbath services in prison. Later, in 1676, he founded the Pinners' Hall Seventh Day Baptist congregation in London, which he served as pastor until a final arrest in 1683. When he died in prison in 1684, the Seventh Day Baptists lost one of their ablest spokesmen.

## Firm Convictions

The Sabbatharians resolutely observed the seventh day in spite of ridicule and persecution. What convictions led them to this course of action and sustained them in carrying it out?

First and foremost, the Seventh-day Men looked to the Bible as the ultimate authority for their faith and practice. Like other Puritans, they viewed the Sabbath as divinely established at Creation and confirmed as part of the eternal moral law of the Ten Commandments. They also recognized Sabbath observance as the custom of Jesus and the early church, and they saw no biblical directive to abrogate or change the Sabbath.

Like other Protestants of their day, the Sabbatharians saw the Roman Catholic Church as the “little horn” of Daniel 7:24-25 that would “think to change times and laws.” For them, observance of the seventh day was part of a return of the church to its first-century foundations, before its corruption by centuries of Catholic traditions. And they were strengthened by an awareness that through the centuries, there had been many Christians who had kept the Sabbath (see [1, Chapter 1]).

Moreover, the Sabbatharians valued the biblical meanings of the Sabbath as a memorial of creation, a symbol of the rest in Christ enjoyed in this present life by believers, and a foretaste of the eternal rest of God's Kingdom. The first of these meanings is discussed in William Saller's “A Preservative against Atheism and Error” (1664). Saller, a Sabbatarian leader in London from about 1653-78, stressed in this work that the Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the fact that God is our Creator.

The second and third meanings are expressed poetically in the classic hymn “Another Six Days' Work is Done” by Joseph Stennett (1663-1713), the distinguished pastor of the Pinners' Hall congregation from 1690 until his death. This hymn mentions the present peace and anticipation of future joys that have always been part of the Sabbath experience:

Another six days' work is done,  
Another Sabbath is begun;  
Return, my soul, enjoy thy rest,  
Improve the day that God hath blest.  
O, that our thoughts and thanks may rise,  
As grateful incense, to the skies,  
And draw from heav'n that sweet repose  
Which none but he that feels it knows!  
A heavenly calm pervades the breast,  
The earnest of that glorious rest  
Which for the Church of God remains,  
The end of cares, the end of pains.  
With joy, great God, thy works we view,  
In various scenes, both old and new;  
With praise, we think on mercies past;

With hope, we future pleasures taste.  
In holy duties let the day,  
In holy pleasures, pass away;  
How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend,  
In hope of one that ne'er shall end!

On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the Sabbatharians did not view Sabbath keeping as a means of earning salvation. William Saller stated this clearly in 1671 when he wrote the following (quoted in [1, p. 87]):

Let him not slander Christ whatever he casts upon the Sabbath-keepers. But this I shall say for my brethren as well as for myself, we are all of us of the Apostles mind, quite dead to the Law, not having the least hope or expectation to bring forth any acceptable fruit unto God by virtue of it. We look not at all to receive grace or strength from the Law, to sanctify us no more than to justify us.

It is also the case that they did not generally avoid fellowship with Christians who did not share their convictions about the Sabbath, nor did they claim to constitute the “one true church.” In Salisbury, Seventh Day and Sunday Baptist congregations cooperated in using the same building throughout most of the eighteenth century [1, p. 141]. A number of Seventh Day Baptist pastors—e.g., Joseph Stennett—preached for Sunday congregations as well. And in various parts of England and Wales, scattered Sabbatarian Baptists who did not have congregations of their own worshipped with their Sunday-keeping Baptist brethren. For instance, the Tewkesbury congregation with which Stephen and Anne Mumford fellowshipped before their move to Rhode Island apparently included people of both persuasions.

In summary, the English Seventh Day Baptists determined to obey what they saw as a clear biblical command, regardless of the cost. With the Psalmist, they said, in effect, “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Ps. 118:6) They saw their Sabbath keeping as an appropriate response to God's grace, not as a means of earning salvation or of determining the identity of “true Christians.”

## Interest Waned in England—Why?

After the persecutions of the seventeenth century had died down, English Sabbatharians enjoyed substantially greater freedom of worship, but by this time their movement seemed to have expended much of its energy. Several congregations flourished for a while, especially those in London, and they counted among their members such distinguished citizens as barrister Sir William Tempest and lexicographer Nathaniel Bailey. However, they slowly diminished in numbers and impact as the eighteenth century passed, and by 1800, only a few small congregations remained.

Several factors seem to have been involved in this decline. One is the failure of the congregations to organize together on a national level to promote evangelism, train pastors, and instruct and support their young people. As a result, many of the congregations faded away when their pastors died and no replacements could be found.

Part of the blame for their lack of organization may lie in divisions stemming from differences on other points of doctrine. In London, for instance, the Mill Yard congregation consisted of Arminian or "General" Baptists who felt that Christ had died for the sins of all and believed in man's free will. Other London Sabbatarian congregations were Calvinist or "Particular" Baptists who believed that Christ had died only for the elect, those predestined to be saved. The two groups often cooperated in certain ways, sometimes sharing meeting places and speakers, but there was also frequent friction between them that hindered their working together on larger projects. This friction was heightened in the eighteenth century when there were many in the Mill Yard congregation who were not Trinitarians.

Another factor detrimental to the Sabbatarian cause was the occasional extremism exhibited by some of its proponents. As I have mentioned above, the English Seventh Day Baptists usually did not have a legalistic or exclusivistic outlook, but one exceptional episode in the mid-seventeenth century dealt a great blow to their reputation and the progress of their movement in the northern and eastern parts of England.

Thomas Tillam, the pastor of a Sabbath-keeping congregation in Colchester beginning in the late 1650s, became convinced that Sabbatarians should not associate with those who would not accept the seventh day Sabbath. He also believed that Christ would return soon to judge England. In order to flee the persecution of the 1660s, Tillam and Christopher Pooley led a group of Sabbatarians to a "place of safety" in Germany. They hoped to set up a community there that would live strictly according to biblical law and wait in peace and safety for the coming judgment. Their community did not survive long, and some of the congregations in Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, and counties further north greatly suffered from loss of members. In 1667, seven Sabbatarian leaders published a tract denouncing the Tillam-Pooley scheme, but not before some lasting damage had been done.

In the final analysis, though, the best explanation for the decline of the English Sabbatarian movement may be that the early persecution it endured was ultimately too great for it to overcome. In coping with the Conventicle Act and other persecution, the Sabbath keepers apparently became accustomed to being a scattered, underground community. As Henri Misson put it in his 1698 memoir, they made "but little noise." When cir-

cumstances eventually became more favorable, they were not prepared to take full advantage of new opportunities.

Although the Sabbatarian movement largely died out in England, it should not be viewed as a failure. In addition to leaving us a commendable example of integrity and courage, the English Sabbath keepers succeeded in exporting their cause to America, where it enjoyed a freedom that was much more conducive to growth. Let us now turn to the story of the Mumfords and their American brethren.

## The Sabbath in America

The Baptist congregation in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, to which Stephen and Anne Mumford belonged in the early 1660s kept its membership records in code to ensure secrecy. When the Mumfords arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1665, no further secrecy was required. The charter that Baptist leader Dr. John Clarke had secured for the Rhode Island colony in 1663 explicitly guaranteed freedom of worship. The Mumfords could worship openly with the First Baptist Church of Newport, which had been founded under Clarke's direction in 1644.

Two other Newport Baptists, Samuel and Tacy Hubbard, began to keep the seventh day Sabbath in the spring of 1665, and soon the number of Sabbatarians in the group increased to eleven. For a while, their relationship with the rest of the congregation was peaceful, but fellowship became strained in 1669 when four of the eleven changed their minds and started to speak against the Sabbath [5, p. 98]. At this point, the remaining seven were not sure what to do. Should they remain together with the rest of the Newport Baptists, a course of action that was becoming increasingly difficult, or should they form their own separate congregation?

Counsel on this question came to Newport from several sources. Baptist churches in Boston and Providence urged the Newport congregation to stay together. On the other hand, letters to the Mumfords and Hubbards from fellow Sabbatarians in London encouraged them to start a new congregation. One thing that probably increased the tension in Newport was the fact that about ten years before, twenty-one members had left the Newport Baptists in a disagreement over the practice of laying on of hands and other doctrines of Heb. 6:1-2. This incident may have made the congregation wary of other doctrinal differences. In any case, the situation reached a crisis point in 1671 when Obadiah Holmes gave a sermon against the Sabbath, saying it was causing people to leave Christ and go to Moses. On January 3, 1672 (by today's calendar), the Mumfords, Hubbards, William Hiscox, Roger Baster, and Ra-

*Continued on Page 18*

*Botkin: "Lazarus, Mary, Martha" cont. from page 4.*

People who do these inglorious but necessary, behind-the-scenes practical jobs are serving like Martha. In our local congregation, we have a lot of Marthas (and Martins) who pitch in and help make our special events successful. I appreciate every single individual who serves like Martha.

## **Lazarus**

Lazarus sat at the table with Yeshua. Sitting together at the table speaks of fellowship. We all need fellowship with brothers and sisters.

Fellowship consists of more than just sitting in rows of pews looking at the backs of each others' heads while listening to a sermon. Assembling together to listen to teaching and preaching is very important, but this is not the aspect of fellowship represented by Lazarus sitting at the table with Yeshua.

At the building we rent for our Sabbath meetings, the pews are bolted to the floor, so we are forced to look at the backs of each others' heads during our praise and worship and teaching time. But after this part of the Sabbath meeting is finished, we sit together at tables and have face to face fellowship over a shared meal. This gives us the opportunity to talk to one another, to encourage one another, and to enjoy one another's company.

At mealtime we have face to face fellowship, like Lazarus had with Yeshua. This is important because it gives us the opportunity to build friendships. It's also important because by the time we have finished our singing and teaching and preaching and praise and worship and prayers, everybody is hungry! So we have a lot of Lazaruses (and Lazarettas) who stay for table fellowship.

## **Mary**

Mary anointed Yeshua, wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

This story is recorded in all four Gospels. Some people believe that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are reporting a different incident when a different woman anointed Yeshua's feet like Mary of Bethany did in John's Gospel.

The reason for thinking that John is reporting a different incident is because of some details in John's telling of the story. John identifies the woman as Mary of Bethany, but in the other three Gospels the woman is unnamed. This in itself does not prove that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are reporting a different event, though; it only proves that they did not mention the woman's name.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all place the story in the home of Simon (called 'simon the leper' by Matthew

and Mark), not in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. However, John does not say that the dinner took place in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus; he only says that these three siblings were present at the dinner. Furthermore, Matthew and Mark say that the dinner was in Bethany, the town where they lived.

Matthew and Mark report the story as taking place two days before Passover, while John says six days before Passover. However, John does not say that the dinner took place six days before Passover. John only says that it was six days before Passover when Yeshua arrived in Bethany. The dinner could have taken place anytime after His arrival.

So it seems likely that all four Gospels are reporting the same event, and that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were at the home of Simon of Bethany at this dinner two days before Passover. Even if someone wants to insist that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are reporting a different event, the lesson is the same. This woman's action was so significant to the Lord that He said, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her" (Matt. 26:13).

Why was this woman's act so significant to the Lord that He commanded His disciples to tell her story wherever the gospel is preached? Probably because her act was a vivid expression of a grateful, loving disciple pouring out lavish worship to the Lord, a devoted disciple giving her very best to her Master while she had the opportunity.

Serving the Lord like Martha is important, and fellowshiping like Lazarus is important. But our service and fellowship should be the spontaneous outgrowth of that aspect of discipleship pictured by Mary. If we do not take time to focus on the Lord Himself, if we do not take time to lavishly pour out praises and adoration, our service can become drudgery and our fellowship can become dull.

When the other disciples saw Mary pouring out the very costly ointment on Yeshua, their indignant response was 'to what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor' (Matt. 26:8f). Our devotion to the Lord should be so complete that it causes carnal people to wonder why we are "wasting" so much of our time and energy and resources on the Lord.

"Why does he spend so much time reading the Bible and praying? He could use that time to get a second job and earn some extra money to help the poor."

"The poor are always with you," the Lord said, "but Me you have not always."

Yeshua did not say this because He had no concern for the poor. Anyone who thinks Jesus was indifferent

to the sufferings of the poor has not read the Gospels very closely. What Yeshua meant here was that the disciples would always have opportunities to help the poor, "for the poor shall never cease out of the land" (Deut. 15:11). But this was a once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-eternity opportunity that Mary saw, namely, the opportunity to anoint the Messiah's body for His burial: "For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial" (Matt. 26:12).

People normally anoint a body for burial only after the person is dead, not while the person is still living. People in New Testament times would not anoint a living person "for burial" any more than we would embalm a living person "for burial" today. So why did Mary anoint Yeshua's body for His burial while He was still alive? Apparently Mary understood that her Master was soon going to die.

And she also apparently understood that He was going to rise from the dead, and that He might do so before she had an opportunity to properly anoint His body after death. She did not want to miss this once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-eternity opportunity to anoint her Master's body for His burial, so she did it before His death. After Yeshua's death, three other women went to His tomb and "brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him" (Mark 16:1). But they were too late. He had already risen. Unlike Mary of Bethany, these woman missed the opportunity to anoint His body for burial.

Because of her foresight, Mary of Bethany was able to anoint His body for burial. She was able to generously and lavishly pour out the most precious thing she owned as a final demonstration of her devotion and love for her Master.

What was it that gave Mary her foresight? How was it that she understood that her opportunity was a now-or-never opportunity? The answer to that question is in Luke 10:38ff:

[N]ow it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Yeshua's feet, and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." And Yeshua answered and said, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Yeshua was not belittling or minimizing the importance of serving like Martha, nor was He discouraging Martha from serving. He was just pointing out to her that she was too cumbered, too anxious, and too troubled because she was so focused on her service for the

Master that she was neglecting the Master Himself. He would rather have had Martha's company and a simple meal than an elegant meal without Martha's company. Martha needed to focus less on serving the Master and more on the Master Himself, like Mary was doing.

We all need to serve like Martha. But if your service for the Lord becomes so cumbersome and burdensome that it distracts you from spending time with the Lord Himself, you need to refocus and re-prioritize. You need to take time to just sit at the Master's feet, like Mary of Bethany did, and commune with Him.

Sometimes I find myself overwhelmed by all the responsibilities I have. I think about all the things I need to do, all the things I should do, and all the things I would like to do if I had more time. I look at my calendar and see deadlines that are fast approaching. For someone like Martha, despair and panic could easily set in. But I'm not going to be like Martha, I tell myself. I'm going to follow the example of Mary, and take some time to sit at the feet of Yeshua. I'm going to enter into my prayer closet, shut the door, and leave all the burdens of unfinished tasks outside the door. I'm going to forget about all those things I need to do, and I'm going to just focus on the Lord Himself for a while.

Human logic and the reality of deadlines and unfinished tasks scream out like Martha, "You're crazy! You don't have time to sit at the feet of Jesus! You need to get busy!"

But I ignore the voices that would discourage me from spending time with the Lord, and I choose "that good part" like Mary did. And you know what? Afterwards I find myself renewed, revitalized, and reenergized by the Holy Spirit. Those who serve like Martha but never spend time waiting on the Lord wear themselves out. "But they that wait upon Yahweh shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). After I spend some time in the presence of the Lord, my spiritual and mental senses are sharper and I can get more work done in less time. I am able to "work smarter, not harder."

Mary of Bethany saw her once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-eternity opportunity and she took it. She lavishly, generously poured out the most precious thing she had. The most precious thing you have in this world is your lifespan, your soul, "for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" You have been given a lifespan that lasts from your conception to your death. Whether your lifespan is long or short, this is your "ointment of spikenard, very costly." What are you going to do with your life?

Use it to pursue pleasures and comforts? Hoard it for yourself like a hermit? Waste it pursuing things that have no real and lasting value?

"I'm ashamed to admit that I've already wasted 30 years pursuing things of no real and lasting value,"

some might say. If that's the case, start pouring out your remaining years in lavish praises to the Lord. If you have a sinful past, accept the Lord's forgiveness and get over it. In Luke's account, it says that the woman who anointed Yeshua had a reputation as "a sinner." But the Master said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." So get over it.

When Mary of Bethany poured out her precious spikenard, "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." When you pour out your soul in devotion to the Lord, your life will be filled with a sense of the sweet presence of the Spirit of God.

There is one very important point about Mary's outpouring of ointment that must not be overlooked. The precious ointment was sealed up inside an alabaster flask. That flask had to be broken before the fragrance could be released. The fragrance inside you is "messiah in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). In order for the sweet fragrance of Messiah's presence to be released in your life, you must be broken, like Mary's alabaster flask.

According to Alfred Edersheim, the historian Pliny wrote that alabaster flasks of this sort were shaped like a closed rosebud, and sealed in such a way that they had to be broken to be opened. Just as a rosebud must break open to release its fragrance, so we must be broken to release the fragrance of Messiah in us.

What brings the kind of brokenness that will release the fragrance of Yeshua that is bottled up inside us? Yeshua referred to Himself as the prophetic 'stone which the builders rejected,' and then added these words: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44).

So, these are your two choices.

You can fall on the stone which the builders rejected. You can cast yourself upon Israel's rejected Messiah, throw yourself at His mercy, and let yourself be broken. Let Him break your stubborn will, your pride and arrogance, your hard, harsh, mean-spirited attitude, and your insistence on doing things your own way instead of His way. You can fall on the stone which the builders rejected and be broken like this. Or, you can reject the stone like the builders did, and then that stone will fall on you and grind you to powder. Personally, I prefer to do the former.

Messiah dwells in the heart of every sincere believer. But how many unbroken alabaster flasks are there among His followers? How many believers keep the life and the fragrance of Yeshua imprisoned inside them because they refuse to be broken? "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). Which is more important to you, the earthen vessel or the treasure inside? You or Yeshua in you?

I want to smell the spikenard.

I'm not interested in accumulating and assembling a collection of unbroken alabaster flasks to exhibit in a museum. Mary of Bethany didn't care about the opinions of others who were present at the dinner. She turned her eyes upon Jesus, looked full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth grew strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace, just like the old hymn says. She was determined to freely and lavishly pour out her love for her Messiah, even if others criticized her for it. This was her once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-eternity opportunity, and she wasn't going to be deprived of it.

Now you have the opportunity to lavishly pour out your praises to the Lord. Don't let the carnal critics rob you of your opportunity by their cynicism and criticism. Be another Mary of Bethany.

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## **Moscow Must Permit Gay Parades: European Court of Human Rights**

**By Matthew Cullinan Hoffman**

October 22, 2010 (*LifeSiteNews.com*) — The European Court of Human Rights this week ruled that the city of Moscow must allow homosexuals to hold "gay parades," and ordered Russia to pay a fine of \$41,300 for previous refusals to do so, according to international press reports.

Since 2006 the Moscow city government has refused to issue a permit for such parades on the grounds that sodomy spreads diseases, is unnatural, and offends the morals of Russians. He has received the vocal support of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religious leaders.

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov has consistently defended the government's position over the years despite massive opposition from unsympathetic European politicians and international homosexual groups, even going so far as to call gay parades "satanic."

The court ruled that Moscow had violated Article 11 of the European Convention of Human rights, which protects the right of "peaceful assembly," and that its acts were discriminatory.

The European Convention of Human Rights was last amended in 1966 and does not mention homosexual rights. Russia, as a signatory, is bound by the court's decision.

The court's decision was announced on the same day that Moscow's city council elected a new mayor, Sergei Sobyanin. Luzhkov, who had ruled Moscow for over 20 years, was removed late last month by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in an apparent dispute with his chief political rival, former President and current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

## The Scots

The American founders were avid students of both the Bible and history. I have no doubt that many were influenced by the Scottish struggle for freedom. In what is known as the *Declaration of Arbroath* (1320 AD), Scottish earls and barons responded to the Pope's orders of excommunication against their king, Robert the Bruce, Scottish nobility, and the people of Scotland. This "Scottish Declaration of Independence" is quite unique in that it declares that the king (who previously was regarded as having been appointed by God) could be expelled from power if he compromised or subverted in any way the freedom and interests of the country. The "Declaration" reads in part as follows:

Most holy Father and Lord, we know and gather from ancient acts and records, that in every famous nation this of Scotland hath been celebrated with many praises: This nation having come from Scythia the greater, through the Tuscan Sea and the Hercules Pillars, and having for many ages taken its residence in Spain in the midst of a most fierce people, could never be brought in subjection by any people, how barbarous soever: And having removed from these parts, above 1,200 years after the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt, did by many victories and much toil obtain these parts in the West which they still possess, having expelled the Britons and entirely rooted out the Picts, notwithstanding of the frequent assaults and invasions they met with from the Norwegians, Danes, and English; And these parts and possessions they have always retained free from all manner of servitude and subjection, as ancient histories do witness....

...But at length it pleased God, who only can heal after wounds, to restore us to liberty, from these innumerable calamities, by our most serene prince, king, and lord Robert, who, for the delivering of his people and his own rightful inheritance from the enemy's hand, did, like another Joshua or Maccabeus, most cheerfully undergo all manner of toil, fatigue, hardship, and hazard. The Divine Providence, the right of succession by the laws and customs of the kingdom (which we will defend till death) and the due and lawful consent and assent of all the people, made him our king and prince.

So, it is not just the American story that draws its inspiration from Moses and the Exodus. The Scots long before the coming of the Pilgrims to America's shores sought guidance for their political and religious freedom from the life of Moses.

## The American Seal

The Continental Congress proposed on July 4, 1776, to create a new seal for the United States. A committee was chosen by the Congress to undertake the design of



*The American Seal proposed by Dr. Benjamin Franklin*

the seal. The three members of this committee were "Dr. Franklin, Mr. J. Adams, and Mr. Jefferson." Each member was to submit a design to the others on the committee. Dr. Benjamin Franklin's proposal was submitted as follows:

Moses standing on the Shore, and extending his Hand over the Sea, thereby causing the same to overwhelm Pharaoh who is sitting in an open Chariot, a Crown on his Head and Sword in his Hand. Rays from a Pillar of Fire in the Clouds reaching to Moses, to express that he acts by Command of the Deity.

Jefferson, on the other hand, proposed a different scene from the Exodus. John Adams describes Jefferson's ideal for the Great Seal in the following manner: "Mr. Jefferson proposed, The children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night." Jefferson also suggested an image for the back of the seal, the Saxon rulers Hengist and Horsa, "whose political principles and form of government we have assumed." Adams proposed Hercules as depicted in an allegorical painting from the time but dismissed his own idea as "too complicated" and "not original."<sup>2</sup>

It is very clear that these three (of the original five) drafters of the American Declaration of Independence believed that Moses and the story of the Exodus should be the face of the new nation and that Moses was its true "Founding Father."

## Freedom Founded in Biblical Morality

Thomas Jefferson once said, "He who is governed least is governed best." Jefferson, of course, was telling us that the society in which its citizens are grounded in a common moral law does not require that its citizens be subjected by force to common norms of behavior.



The natural outgrowth of a moral society is freedom. The natural outgrowth of a morally corrupt society is tyranny.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (2 Peter 2:19-21 KJV).

It is interesting that the book of the Bible most often quoted in the writings of the American Founders is not found in the New Testament. Rather, it is the book of Deuteronomy, the book that not only repeats the Ten Commandments, but outlines the rules of civil government in accordance with God's eternal laws. Again we see that good civil government for a free society starts with the writings of Moses. As John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States, wrote in *Letters to His Son*, "The Law given from Sinai [The Ten Commandments] was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code" (p. 61). Or, as the fourth American president, James Madison, put it, "We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We've staked the future of all our political institutions upon our capacity...to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God" [1778 to the General Assembly of the State of Virginia].

The American Founders saw no conflict between God's gracious pardon of their sins through the sacrifice of Christ and the need to follow God's laws. They understood clearly that a free society can only exist in an atmosphere of truly converted people abiding by God's moral laws founded in the Ten Commandments.

## The Blessings of Liberty

Both Canada and the United States celebrate a day of thanksgiving. For Canada the day comes in October. For the U.S. Thanksgiving Day is always in late November. Thanksgiving Day for all free people should be a reminder of the determination of our Christian forebears to help succeeding generations understand that freedom cannot long exist in an environment devoid of the influence of God and His Holy Word. The Lord gives us a standard beyond our own human presumptions and whims that He designed to stand above and like a beacon on a hill, guide human beings in the pursuit of His blessings. If we continue to live by His standards, we will go on living in His blessings.

*I would like to end this editorial with a few quotes from the American Founders as a reminder of the source of our manifold blessings:*

*"Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and pure...are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governments."*  
—Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence

*"God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the Gift of God?"* —Thomas Jefferson

*"The foundation of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality; ...the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained..."* —George Washington, First Inaugural Address, April 30, 1789.

*"What students would learn in American schools above all is the religion of Jesus Christ."* —George Washington in a speech to the Delaware Indian Chiefs, May 12, 1779.

*"Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."* —John Adams, second U.S. president.

*"Political interest [can] never be separated in the long run from moral right."* —John Adams, second U.S. president.

*"As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, is the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see."* —Benjamin Franklin, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Jesus once said to his disciples when they were disputing with one another over who would be the greatest in His kingdom, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them. It must not be this way among you! Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

—Kenneth Ryland

(1) Thanks to Lenny Cacchio for bringing this subject to light ([morningcompanion.blogspot.com](http://morningcompanion.blogspot.com)).

(2) See *America's Prophet* by Bruce Feiler, chapter 3.

Ward: "Thanksgiving Story" cont. from page 12.

chel Langworthy signed a covenant to become the Newport Seventh Day Baptist Church.

This first Sabbatarian congregation in America received continuing moral support from the Bell Lane Seventh Day Baptist Church in London, which kept in touch with the Newport group for about twenty years. Stephen Mumford returned to London for a brief visit in 1675, and shortly thereafter, Bell Lane member William Gibson and his family joined the Mumfords in Newport. Gibson would later succeed William Hiscox as pastor of the Newport church.

Under Hiscox and Gibson, the Seventh Day Baptists thrived in Rhode Island. There were thirty-seven members in 1678 and seventy-six by 1692. In 1708, a second congregation was formed in Westerly, Rhode Island. The Westerly Church (later called the First Hopkinton Church) became the leading Seventh Day Baptist congregation in the United States, with 764 members by 1800 [5]. These congregations maintained a good relationship with the Rhode Island Baptists who met on Sunday.

Seventh Day Baptists played a significant role in the history of the American colonies. Especially notable are the descendants of Thomas and Amy Ward (no relation to the author), early members of the Newport congregation. Their son Richard was governor of Rhode Island from 1740-1742, and their grandson Samuel (1725-1776) was governor of Rhode Island in the 1760s and later represented the state in the First and Second Continental Congresses.

Samuel Ward, who became a baptized member of the Westerly congregation in 1769, was chairman of the Committee of the Whole of the Continental Congress. Unfortunately, he did not live to be able to sign the Declaration of Independence, dying of smallpox on March 15, 1776. His great-granddaughter Julia Ward Howe later wrote the words of the famous Battle Hymn of the Republic.

Meanwhile, some people in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, two other havens of religious liberty, became Sabbatarians during the colonial period. When the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference was organized in about 1802, it consisted of 1119 members in eight churches in four states. During the nineteenth century, the denomination spread across the United States, and by 1902, there were 9098 members in 100 churches in twenty-three states. Missionary efforts and the discovery of the Sabbath by people in various parts of the world have since resulted in the founding of Seventh Day Baptist congregations in a number of countries. Today the churches in the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation include well over 50,000 members, the vast majority outside of the United States. For over 300 years, the Seventh Day Baptists have provided a living

testimony to the fact that Sabbatarianism does not necessarily lead to legalism or exclusivism.

The Seventh Day Baptists are also indirectly responsible for the acceptance of the Sabbath by other groups of Christians. In particular, they helped introduce it to the Adventists of the Millerite movement. In 1841, Rachel Preston Oakes, a Seventh Day Baptist, joined a congregation of Adventists in Washington, New Hampshire, and convinced her pastor, Frederick Wheeler, to accept the Sabbath in 1844. Other Adventists soon adopted the seventh day Sabbath, and two Sabbatarian denominations—the Seventh-day Adventists and the Church of God Seventh Day—soon came out of the Millerite movement. Later, in the 1930s, Herbert W. Armstrong and others associated with the Oregon Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day began the Radio Church of God (later called the Worldwide Church of God), which itself has had a number of Sabbatarian offshoots.

At present, there are well over ten million Sabbatarian Christians in the world, and that number is likely to continue growing in the years ahead. In today's fast-paced world, the value of a weekly appointment with our Creator is greater than ever. And as more and more Christians reclaim the Hebraic roots of their faith, the number who choose to keep that appointment on the biblical seventh day will increase. The courageous Sabbatarians of the seventeenth century would no doubt be glad to know about the ultimate fruits of their efforts. I, for one, am honored to follow in the footsteps of such people of integrity and am very thankful for the freedom to do so openly.

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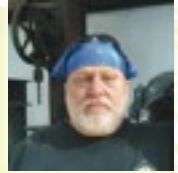
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# Religion or Faith?

*by Terrell Perkins*



It's common these days, when you ask someone if they're religious, for many of them to tell you they're "spiritual, but not religious." That most people can't even define what "spiritual" means makes this response virtually meaningless. But the point should be taken that organized religion has failed so many people that it has been rejected by many of them.

So much evil has been done in the name of religion throughout the centuries that the very concept is distasteful to many people. Fanatics in the name of every religion have rationalized and justified their lunacy as being "the will of god," even when their actions have been pure evil by any standard.

Typically two things exist in a religion, the body of beliefs that individuals adopt as their faith, and the culture that develops among its believers. The first, the body of beliefs is the idealistic part of a religion. The second, the culture of a religious community, often goes unstated in its official beliefs. It is the culture that develops in a religious community that usually comes to dominate it. A particular religion can give one a community wherein one is supported and strengthened when it is working as it should. When it has gone wrong, however, it ceases to be idealistic and can become oppressive, even dangerous, to its members.

Religions should exist for individuals and families; individuals do not exist for the religion. When the focus of a religion becomes the organization and not its individuals, it has lost its way. When a religion becomes focused on itself or on its human leader(s), it becomes a cult. A religion should never be about the personalities of its leaders. It should be about the beliefs that define it. Those beliefs should make its members better human beings. That is the "why" of religion and faith. Human beings can and do often corrupt religion, but they cannot touch a deeply held faith.

Faith and religion are not the same thing. Faith is what guides us in what we do; it's what we expect from ourselves. Religion is what we expect other people to do. Faith is within individuals, religion is in organizations. Faith gives people purpose. Religion gives them ceremony. Faith gives individuals a connection with something unseen and much bigger than themselves. Religion gives them affiliation with other people. Faith gives you power. Religion gives others power over you. Religions usually become static bodies of beliefs. Faith is a living thing wherein beliefs may change as one grows and matures. Religion, at its worst, has served to divide people and to fuel hatred. Faith has quietly gone about changing the world one individual at a time.

Religion can be a true force for good in the world, but only by doing good. Religion must be guided by honest people of good will, people of faith.

By definition, since there is only one truth, there is only one true faith—one truth that we can hold and have hope in. As a Christian I am convinced that the Christian world-view is the true one. That doesn't mean that all, or even most, people calling themselves Christians would agree with it, and they certainly don't live by it. Most are divided by their respective religions. Imagine that; people who claim the same faith divided by their religions? The only people who benefit from that are the religious leaders. This serves to do the very opposite of what Christ taught. When a "Christian leader" teaches something different from what Christ taught, he or she has left the faith once delivered, and they should be left behind.

It is not a human leader's place to live a Christlike life for their followers. It is every believer's place to do so. What the world needs is fewer religions and more faith.

Still, it is not what we believe that makes us decent human beings; it's what we do. Religion all too often makes us complacent. Simply belonging to a religion doesn't make us better people. We must act. Faith prompts us to action, and faith without works is dead.

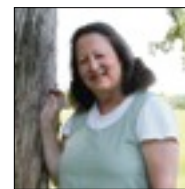
These three abide: Faith and Hope and Love. (Religion isn't even in the running.)

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*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.*

# The Seventh Day

by Lori Godfrey



We know from reading the Bible that the seventh day mentioned in Genesis is the day the Creator God chose for our rest. Nonetheless, as the years pass, we continue to find mainstream Christianity celebrating the day of rest on Sunday even though the calendar declares that the first day is not the day that God chose.

Emperor Constantine concluded that if he succeeded in uniting paganism with Christianity, he could strengthen his empire by unifying the empire's religious worship.

On March 7, 321 A.D., Constantine passed his National Sunday Law which stated: "Let all judges and townspeople and occupations of all trades rest on the venerable day of the Sun ..." (*Codex Justinianus*, lib. 3, tit. 12, 3; translated by Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, 1902, p. 380).

Sunday worship became the norm. However, when the Lord gives us a revelation, He expects us to make that the norm.

The Lord in His own time opened my eyes to realize the truth regarding His rest. Consequently I, along with many others, now share the same view about God's Shabbat, the seventh-day Sabbath rest, the day on which we worship Him. The first book of the Bible does not stand alone when speaking of God's rest. There are also Scriptures in the New Testament that speak of the seventh-day Sabbath. Hebrews 4 also mentions the seventh-day rest.

Jesus kept the seventh day as His day of rest. The Gentiles and the Jews commemorated the Sabbath together in the book of Acts.

The Lord says to the prophet Isaiah in chapter 56, verse 2, "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil."

In Isaiah 58:13-14, God says to His people, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

There are Christians who say the Old Testament is written only for the Jews, and the New Testament is for



*The Conversion of Constantine by Raffaello Sanzio*

the Gentiles. However, the book of Isaiah tells us that the Sabbath will be observed by all mankind, both Jew and Gentile, in the New Heaven and New Earth. Isaiah also presents the atoning sacrifice of Christ for all mankind. It's not about Jew or Gentile; it's about God's mercy toward all mankind at the cross.

God tells us in Malachi 3:6, "For I am the Lord, I change not ...."

People observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church at the Council of Laodicea transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. But the Word of God says in Isaiah that we will still be keeping the Sabbath in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

From Genesis to Revelation, God's Word is inspired and written for all people. From the beginning the seventh day has been God's day of rest. Why have we who have accepted Christ's atoning sacrifice on Calvary not also accepted the seventh day as God's eternal day of rest?

*Lori Godfrey is a Christian freelance writer reaching out to those who are searching for godly answers to life's problems. Her websites are [www.writingforhim.net](http://www.writingforhim.net) and [www.bibletruths.us](http://www.bibletruths.us). E-mail Lori at [lgodfrey@writingforhim.net](mailto:lgodfrey@writingforhim.net). Lori lives with her family in the Midwest.*

# How Well Do You Reflect God's Kingdom?

By *Dave Havir*

BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently I was preparing a sermon with the goal of helping people to see a glimpse of God's Kingdom in our lives.

There are some professing believers (including some inside the Church of God movement) who claim to have more knowledge and insights than the rest of us. While I acknowledge and appreciate any and all truth that God has given to us, I agree with the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12.

We see through a glass darkly.

We know only in part.

If we (who claim to be believers) have a fuzzy picture of God, how unclear does an unbeliever see?

And, if an unbeliever has only a fuzzy picture of the Kingdom, what are we doing to reflect the Kingdom of God while we walk this earth?

## Helpful book

I found material in a book titled *Kingdom Principles* by Myles Munroe to be helpful in my preparation. I thought I would share some of the information with you.

Dr. Munroe is founder, president and senior pastor of Bahamas Faith Ministries International, based in Nassau, Bahamas. He is an international motivational speaker and business consultant and has earned degrees from Oral Roberts University and the University of Tulsa.

## Beginning premise

On page 11 Dr. Munroe begins the introduction with the following quote: "The greatest threat to civil society is mankind." He shows examples of why he believes that statement to be true.

Dr. Munroe quickly begins to explain his point that many people use religion as a replacement for an understanding and a commitment to the Kingdom.

On page 12 Dr. Munroe writes: "All of this is compounded by our establishment of sophisticated religions into which we retreat to escape the social chaos we have created."

On page 16 Dr. Munroe writes: "A careful and honest look at the biblical Script will reveal that the fundamental message of this greatly misunderstood Book [the Bible] is about a King and a Kingdom."

On page 18 he writes: "Jesus' first announcement was the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven. His solution to the malnourished and bankrupt human spirit was not a religion but the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, if you are spiritually poor, only the Kingdom will satisfy and

fulfill your hunger. The Kingdom is God's priority and must become our priority if we are to overcome the confusion of religions and the threat of self-destruction.

The power of religion lies in its ability to serve as a substitute for the Kingdom and thus hinder mankind from pursuing the genuine answer to the dilemma."

Then he lists the following conclusions:

- Religion preoccupies man until he finds the Kingdom.
- Religion is what man does until he finds the Kingdom.
- Religion prepares man to leave earth; the Kingdom empowers man to dominate earth.
- Religion focuses on heaven; the Kingdom focuses on earth.
- Religion is reaching up to God: the Kingdom of God coming down to man.
- Religion wants to escape earth; the Kingdom impacts, influences and changes earth.
- Religion seeks to take earth to heaven; the Kingdom seeks to bring heaven to earth.

## Nine helpful principles

Dr. Munroe proceeds to give nine principles about the Kingdom, hence the title of the book.

Here are the nine Kingdom principles:

- The Kingdom concept of kings.
- The Kingdom concept of Lord.
- The Kingdom concept of territory.
- The Kingdom concept of constitution.
- The Kingdom concept of law.
- The Kingdom concept of keys.
- The Kingdom concept of citizenship.
- The Kingdom concept of culture.
- The Kingdom concept of giving to the king.

## Begins with us

Jesus Christ gave His disciples many parables about the Kingdom during His life. They are edifying and inspiring.

Notice one of His shorter Kingdom parables.

In Matthew 13:31-32 Jesus told about the Kingdom being like a grain of mustard seed. He called it the least of all seeds.

Yet He described how that seed would grow into a huge tree to accommodate the birds.

The Kingdom of God begins with the least of all people: me and you.

Of and by ourselves we are not special. Yet God has chosen to establish His Kingdom through us.

Is our religion getting in the way of our living the principles of the Kingdom? Or do we as little ones reflect the glorious Kingdom of God?

*(This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's Web site, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Sept. 11-12, 2010.)*

# The Church in the World

## The Continuing Tragedy of Forced Marriages and Conversions of Christian Girls in Islamic Countries

By Aidan Clay

(Special to ASSIST News Service)

**LAHORE, PAKISTAN (ANS)** — Shah Taj, a fourteen-year-old Christian girl from Lahore, Pakistan, was on her way to school last year when a vehicle occupied by three men pulled up beside her. Grabbing her, they threw her in and sped off. As frightening as this may seem, the ordeal of the victim had just begun.

In her own words, she described what happened: "I was standing at the bus stop waiting. Three Muslims came up to me in a car. They were armed with deadly weapons. They pushed me into the car and took me to a hotel. While there, one of them raped me. Afterwards, at gunpoint they took my thumb impression and my signature, placing them on blank papers."

"I tried to make noise; but they pointed their guns at me and threatened to kill my father and my younger brother if I make a noise." Later, Taj was forced to marry a Muslim man and required by law to convert to Islam. They had used her signature and thumbprint to create a document saying she had converted to Islam.

Like Shah Taj, Christian girls throughout the Islamic world are being abducted and trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and coerced into domestic servitude. Equally shocking is that Muslim men are offered financial incentives when they marry a Christian girl — a technique designed by Islamic fundamentalists to convert young girls to Islam forcefully.

Recent investigations have revealed frightening information exposing the criminal phenomenon of forced Islamization of Christian girls which is occurring on an alarming scale. On April 16, 2010, eighteen members of the United States Congress wrote to the State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Office, concerning continued "reports of abductions, forced marriages, and exploitation of Coptic women and girls in Egypt."<sup>1</sup>)

International Christian Concern ([www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org)) recently visited Egypt to investigate. Meeting with top human rights lawyers and activists who have defended Egypt's Christian minority, we have uncovered valuable sources and obtained names, birth certificates, and conducted personal interviews with the parents of victimized Christian girls. Source after source exposed astonishingly similar cases, all of which told the same story:

### Planned Seduction

Forced marriages are systematically orchestrated. What appears to a girl to be a natural and inconsequential friendship with a young man may on the contrary be a deceptive plot to lure the girl into a forced marriage. A Muslim man or his accomplice exploits the girl's trust by convincing her of the man's friendship. "They are planning and organizing a plot to fool this person... it may seem like friendship or falling in love, but in actuality, it is a planned seduction," Bishop Thomas of the El-Quosia Diocese in Upper Egypt told ICC.

After fourteen-year-old Shah Taj escaped from the three men who abducted and raped her, a legal investigation discovered a marriage certificate and a document validating Taj's conversion to Islam. In both Pakistan and Egypt, once a marriage certificate is official, the girl's complete identity is changed. She is given an Islamic name, and her Christian religious status is removed from her identification card. A bribe is offered and a deal is bartered between the abductor and the police officers, guaranteeing that the girl's location and condition are permanently concealed.

Once the paperwork is finalized, it is as if the Christian girl never existed. The town she grew up in, the names of her parents, and the date she was born become mere memories, known only by those closest to her. All documents revealing the girl's childhood or family history are burned or tucked away in bureaucratic files where there is no likelihood the girl's whereabouts will ever be discovered. She becomes a ghost, with no past, but only an uncertain future, but only an uncertain future which will likely be lived-out as a re-sented wife to a detached husband.

The girl is then kept captive in her husband's home. As is commonly the case, the Muslim husband may take a second, third or fourth wife, using the "Christian" girl as nothing more than a household servant. If the girl is bold and fortunate, she may escape. However, according to a report by Christian Solidarity International, girls who are able to escape "usually remain so heavily burdened with social and legal problems... that anything like a normal life is impossible... While they may be successful in obtaining a divorce from their Muslim husband, they are rarely able to obtain a reversal of their religious status."

1) "US Lawmakers Urge State Department to Address Forced Marriage, Conversion of Coptic Girls". Assyrian International News Agency. April 21 2010 . (ANS New Service, [www.assistnews.net](http://www.assistnews.net))

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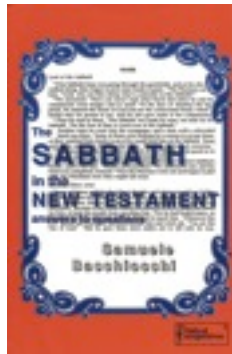
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## The Sabbath in the New Testament

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# *The Sabbath Sentinel*

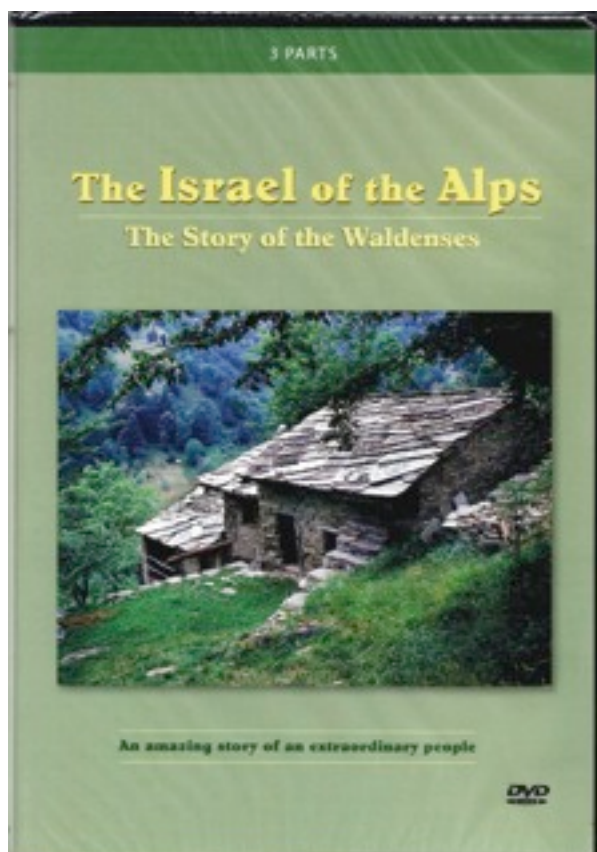
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