



# *The Sabbath Sentinel*

*November-  
December  
2016*



**BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association**

*Jesus said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me."*

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# COME LET US REASON

How great would it be if there was a truce between seventh day Sabbath keepers and those who don't believe in that kind of obedience?

I propose that we Sabbatharians stop limiting our fellowship based on this single issue. Let's quit impugning the faith of believers who don't understand Sabbath as we do. Let's be brothers and sisters to all who trust Jesus and show good fruit, admitting they may be saved by God's grace, even as we. Many of them give strong evidence of it: holiness, unselfish service, and bold witness for the Savior!

At the same time, we must not reduce our own commitment to the Sabbath or erode its theology. God gives us compelling reasons to obey all the truth we know, even while recognizing His other people who've not yet seen what is so clear to us. It is spiritually hazardous for us to move backward in truth, exchanging greater light for lesser!

Conversely, I appeal to non-Sabbatarians that you no longer dismiss the Sabbath as "law without grace," nor Sabbath keepers as "legalists." Re-think the many gospel texts that assign God's moral order — His law — to the new covenant. Consider the benefit Sabbath can be to a rootless and restless age. Remember how it reflects basic truth about Creation, redemption, and eternity. Note the absence of an explicit biblical change from the seventh-day Sabbath to another day.

Non-Sabbatarian Christians, we admire your zeal



*Image courtesy of bigwallpaper.anerg.com*

for the gospel and your obedience to nine-tenths of the Decalogue. Like you, we have our own bits of Babylon to come out of: human traditions, church confusion, spiritual drift, etc. More humility and honesty on both sides of the Sabbath issue would allow us to help each other, and that's what I'm proposing here.

We believe Sabbath will eventually be restored to a church that opted for Sunday in the second century. Until God unites us in this truth, this dispute will often breed mistrust and division between us. It's time for another approach. I propose we start with the assumption that we're partners in faith, and then reason together from there about God's perfect will for His holy day.

— Calvin Burrell  
BSA Secretary



# One Way to Save a Nation

Presently, our nation is at a crucial crossroads. The national debt is higher than it has ever been – approximately \$19 trillion. That is a staggering figure! Our military spending has decreased, while our enemies have increased theirs. Government programs such as Social Security are approaching a crossroads. There are serious political divisions in our country. This year we have perhaps the most important election in our nation's history.

I don't say these things to be an alarmist. I am simply stating the obvious. What can we as the people of God do about these things? While the situation appears hopeless, it is far from it. When times are dark, the Body of Christ should shine even brighter. I believe if our nation would apply ONE simple act of obedience, then the country can be turned around.

Let's take a trip back in time to the days of the Prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived at the tail end of the Kingdom of Judah. He was a prophetic voice that warned of judgment to come. He told the people to return to God. The wicked king Zedekiah formed a covenant with God to release the slaves and then defaulted on it. He oppressed the innocent and twisted justice. He despised the prophetic messages given through Jeremiah. We know from the story that they did not repent, and the people of Judah spent 70 years in captivity in Babylon due to it.

One detail in this story is often overlooked. Just before captivity came, God gave the entire nation an opportunity to repent. God asked them to obey one simple commandment, and calamity would be avoided.

## **Jeremiah 17:21-25**

"21 This is what the Lord says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. 22 Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day

holy, as I commanded your ancestors...24 But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, 25 then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever...." (NIV).

This is an amazing passage of Scripture! There were many sins being committed in Jeremiah's day, as mentioned above. With the many transgressions being committed by the leaders and people, God said that one lifestyle change would prevent calamity: the seventh-day Sabbath.

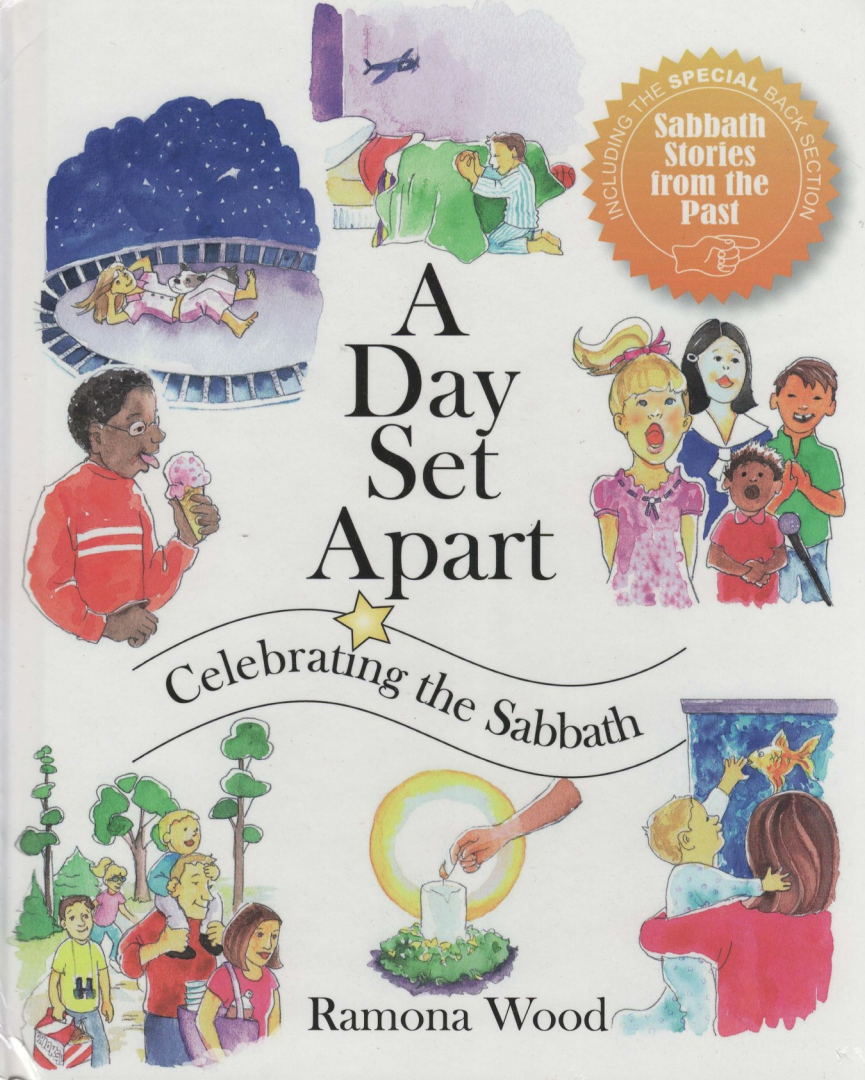
In human eyes, this may sound hard to believe. People were worshipping other gods, shedding innocent blood, killing other people, stealing, and other sins. God pointed to just one thing. Why is this?

In Ezekiel 46, we are told about a Temple that will be built in the Kingdom of God. God tells us that the gates to this Temple will be open every Sabbath.

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened' (Ezekiel 46:1). Hebrews 8:5 informs us that the earthly Temple reflects the Heavenly Temple. From this we learn that the gates of Heaven are also open every Sabbath! Remember, the Law is spiritual (Romans 7:14).

In I Corinthians 3:16-17, we learn that the human body is also the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This means something in us is open as well! The inner most parts of our being are open for God to enter in and make true, lasting change. The Sabbath reflects salvation. Just as we cannot earn our salvation by works, so we do not work on the Sabbath. Jesus compared his Body to the Temple in John 2:19. Something in Him is open as well.

Jesus taught us to pray that God's will should be done



# A Day Set Apart

by Ramona Wood

"When the sun goes down at the end of the week, God's Sabbath begins." A family takes a break from their full schedules to refresh body, mind, and spirit on God's Sabbath. Included is a special back section "Sabbath Stories from the Past" showing that keepers of the seventh day are in step with both Old and New Testaments of the Bible: Jesus kept the Sabbath. The Apostle Paul did too—even as he blazed the trail for the spread of the Gospel in a brand-new era of God's Church.

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"...on earth as it is in Heaven." As we physically rest on the Sabbath, we are literally patterning our earthly Temple after the Heavenly Temple!

Now, let us return to the question posed above: Why did God tell Judah to keep the Sabbath above any other commandment? I believe He said this because He knew that if they would keep the Sabbath that He would be able to reach into the deepest part of who they were and correct the rest of their disobedience. One of the primary purposes of the Sabbath is to strengthen our relationship with God.

The problem with the people in Jeremiah's time was a relationship problem. It is the ultimate problem with all of humanity even today. As a nation, we have not established and maintained a relationship with God. Since God never changes, I believe that if our nation will honor God's Sabbath, then we can receive a national deliverance from our ills. He will connect with us and speak to us in such a way that will turn us from our sinful behav-

ior.

There is hope for America, but it only comes by returning to God Almighty. We can honor His Sabbath and reconnect with Him. Revival will easily follow.

It is a time for us as Sabbath keepers to really examine our Sabbath keeping. Let's remember that the Sabbath is not just a time out. Resting from our worldly labors is an opportunity to allow the Spirit of God to enter into the deepest parts of who we are and change us. It is an opportunity to allow healing to enter into who we are. We each encounter conflicts throughout the week. Allow God to heal and resolve that on the Sabbath. This special day is an opportunity to allow Heaven to connect with earth.

One reason why the BSA exists is to reinforce the life-changing power of God available on the Sabbath. It is the power to save a nation.

Kelly McDonald, Jr., President BSA



*Early and Medieval Christian Beliefs and Documents Regarding*  
**Christ's Tuesday Last Supper,**  
**Wednesday Crucifixion &**  
**Sabbath Resurrection**

**Blaine Neumann**

There has been an early belief in Christendom that records a Tuesday night Last Supper.

The third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum* says about Christ "...for He was yet with us before He suffered as we were eating the Passover with Him. He said to us, 'Today, in this night, one of you will betray me' ...and Judas came with the scribes and with the priests of the people and betrayed our Lord to them...for when we had eaten the Passover on the third day at even we went forth to the Mount of Olives, and in the night they seized our Lord Jesus."

At the beginning of the fourth century a fast on Wednesday (until 3:00 pm) commemorated Christ's arrest. Victorinus, Bishop of Petau (martyred A.D. 304) explained, "Now is manifest the reason of the truth why the fourth day is called the tetras, why we fast to the ninth hour. The man Christ...was taken prisoner by wicked hands, by a quaternion, on account of the majesty of His works. Therefore, we make a stationary ... fast."

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (A.D. 367-403) wrote "as Wednesday began the Lord was arrested..."

In the Book of Adam and Eve (c.a. 406) God mentioned that he would suffer on Wednesday.

The Narrative of Joseph (4<sup>th</sup> Century) states, "Jesus also was taken on the third day...on the following day, the fourth day of the week, they brought Him at the ninth hour in the hall of Caiphas."

Even today the Coptic Church in Egypt fasts on Wednesday and says that "Wednesday was the day on which Jesus Christ was condemned to be crucified."

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-220) wrote that some Egyptian Christians believed that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, April 14, A.D. 28 (19<sup>th</sup> of Pharmathi).

Church historian, Lactantius (A.D. 250-330) from North Africa, placed Christ's crucifixion on Wednesday, March 23, A.D. 29.

In the ancient Acts of Pilate / Gospel of Nicodemus a date often given in several manuscripts for the date of Christ's crucifixion was Wednesday, March 25, A.D. 33. Epiphanius in A.D. 375 comments "that there were Christians during his lifetime who believed they could accurately date the crucifixion to 25 March on the authority of a work known as the 'Acts of Pilate.'"

In the second and third centuries there were those in North Africa who believed Christ was raised from the dead on the Sabbath indeed, as well as those who believed in a Sunday resurrection. Tertullian (A.D. 160-240) stated that while most refused to bend the knee in honor of the Sunday resurrection, there were those who refused to bend the knee on Saturday.

Socrates (ca. A.D. 440), church historian, wrote that while many wished to observe Easter on Sunday, "others in the East kept that feast on the Sabbath indeed."

Roman bishop, Gregory of Tours (A.D. 538-594) of Tours, France, was a believer in the Sunday resurrection. He made the following pronouncement, "Now in our belief the resurrection of the Lord was on the first day of the week and not on the Seventh as many deem." Notice in the late sixth century there were still many who believed in the Sabbath resurrection.

The Armenians of the early seventh century "taught that Christ rose from the dead on the Sabbath day..."

So, in early church and medieval writings one can find traces of those Christians who believed in either the Tuesday Last Supper, Wednesday crucifixion, and above all a Sabbath resurrection.

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## DISPUTE IN A GRAINFIELD:

### *THE RESPONSES OF JESUS IN THEIR FIRST CENTURY CONTEXT*

R. Herbert

Although all of the four Gospels record the teachings of Jesus, the Gospel of Matthew is unique in giving us insight into the *way* Jesus often taught. Because Matthew appears to have been written (probably first in Hebrew) for a primarily Jewish audience, it includes many details that would have been readily understandable to his 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish readers, though we may not notice or easily grasp them today. An important example is found in Matthew's story of Jesus' argument with the Pharisees over the matter of his disciples "harvesting" grain on the Sabbath day. The account is found in Matthew 12:

"At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, 'Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath'" (Matthew 12:1-2).

The Mosaic law specifically provided for individuals to pluck grain as they walked through a field (Deuteronomy 23:25), so for the Pharisees the problem with the disciples' actions was not taking the grain, but taking it on the Sabbath. Jesus responded to this accusation by giving a number of examples showing why the disciples were not breaking the Sabbath.

"He answered, 'Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. 5 Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? 6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. 7 If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath'" (Matthew 12:3-8).

The examples Jesus enumerated may seem to be random, but for Matthew's Jewish audience they were far more meaningful. In the decades before Christ and during the first years of his life, the great Jewish teacher Hillel (c. 110 BC, died AD 10) and his followers among the Pharisees developed a number of rules for interpreting the Scriptures. The Pharisees used these principles continually in their study and disputing of the law. What Matthew clearly shows is that Jesus effectively used the Pharisees' own principles in refuting their criticism.

**The Argument from Analogy** (Vss. 3-4): "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests."

The Pharisees were fond of arguments by analogy in informal discourse: If "X" is the case, then a similar situation should probably be the same. Jesus used this type of argument in his initial statement by showing a clear biblical example of a ritual law being broken when there was a pressing physical need that could be alleviated. The fact that the physical need – hunger – was the same in this example as in the situation the Pharisees were criticizing made this argument all the more potent. This was akin to the Jewish interpretative principle of *gezera shawa* (equal category), based on the argument that if two separate passages contain the same word, this provides sufficient reason to explain the one text in the light of the other.

**The Argument from Extension** (Vss. 5-6): "Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? 6 I tell you that something greater than the temple is here."

Most Pharisees belonged to either the very strict division of the Shammaites or the more lenient school of the Hillelites.

While the former rejected many arguments from extension, the followers of Hillel believed the biblically sanctioned work of the priests in their temple service could sometimes be extended to appropriate situations. This was often done by means of a *Qal va-hodem* – literally “light to heavy” – or “how much more” argument which was frequently used by Jesus (as in his Sabbath day healing – Matthew 12.10) and also utilized by him here: If it is right for work to be done if it were associated with the temple, *how much more* if work were done that was associated with one greater than the temple? This could mean Jesus himself, but the Pharisees could hardly attack him on this point as the “something” that was greater could be the principle of mercy to which Jesus immediately turned.

**The Argument from Higher Principle** (Vs. 7): “If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.”

Jesus then assailed the Pharisees with another, and even more potent, argument to which they themselves often appealed. The argument from higher principle carried great weight, and Jesus accomplished it by quoting the Book of Hosea (Hosea 6:6) to make his point. The Hebrew word for “mercy” which he quoted here was *hesed*, connoting steadfast love rather than simply judicial mercy. The term convicted the Pharisees for placing their scrupulousness ahead of love and concern. Jesus also knew, of course, that the Pharisees were aware of this scripture – his statement “if you had known these words” is a second conviction, as they knew them well.

**The Argument from Personal Authority** (Vs. 8): “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Jesus followed his initial logical arguments with one which doubtless shocked the Pharisees – one that clearly implied his own authority to render judgment in the matter. Yet it was an argument the Pharisees could not challenge, as Jesus had just demonstrated his superior knowledge and interpretation of the Scriptures and the

principles involved – using their own techniques of argumentation. We should also understand that the arguments Jesus utilized were not randomly stated. Rather, he carefully worked from the least powerful argument up through the examples he gave so that his final one – that of his own authority – stood at the head of the chain of argumentation.

Matthew 12 also records other clear examples of Jesus beating the Pharisees at their own game, but one of these examples is particularly instructive. Matthew records that “Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them ...” (Matthew 12:25a). These words are usually presumed to imply that Jesus could somehow read the minds of the Pharisees, and perhaps this is what it does mean, but the word that Matthew uses to say Jesus knew their “thoughts” – *enthymēsis* – is related to *enthymēomai* to think, or deliberate, and *enthymēma*, the method of deductive argumentation used in the Pharisees’ discourses. The word might perhaps be better understood as Jesus knew *how they thought*, and Matthew seems to point to the fact that Jesus knew how they argued and that he argued accordingly. Jesus’ following words in Matthew 12:25a-28 certainly show this was the case, with a rapid-fire succession of analogy, comparison and argument by extension.

Clearly, Jesus knew well the styles of discourse and the argumentation used by the Pharisees. When they challenged him in a Galilean grainfield regarding the application of a point of law, he decisively swept away their arguments using their own methods and procedures. He also led them through ascending arguments to the conclusion they most needed to see – that he was not simply a talented student of the Mosaic law, but the one to whom the law itself ultimately pointed.

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# THE *RAPTURE*

## OF THE *CHURCH*

Bryant Buck

In our previous study we looked at the passage in Luke 17:34-36 often cited by pre-tribulation rapture theorists in support of their pre-tribulation rapture doctrine. When we expanded our examination of the text to the full passage (Luke 17:22-37), we concluded just the opposite of the pre-tribulation rapture theorists. They teach that the righteous are taken off to heaven and the wicked are left here on earth. However, the full context of Luke 17:22-37 shows that the wicked are taken out in judgment and the righteous are left here on earth. In our next two studies we will look at doctrinal teachings relating to the return of Jesus Christ at the end of this age. Specifically, in this study we will consider the teaching of the rapture of the church and in our subsequent study we will look at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Basically, the doctrine of the rapture of the church goes like this: Jesus Christ will appear unexpectedly and without notice and will rapture (take up) all the saints (Christian believers) in His church from this earth to be with Him in heaven. The rapture will occur before the start of the Great Tribulation; so Christ's saints will be with Him in heaven during the Great Tribulation. Thus Christ's saints will escape all of the trials and judgments that will be taking place on earth during the Great Tribulation. Then after the Great Tribulation the Lord will return with His saints to set up His kingdom on the earth.

The proponents of this doctrine teach that the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus Christ are two separate events with the rapture occurring before the Great Tribulation and the second coming occurring in the middle of the Great Tribulation or after it.

So what Scriptures do the pre-tribulation rapture advocates use to promote their doctrine? Other than the passage in Luke 17:34-36, basically they take just one passage of Scripture on which they base their whole pre-tribulation rapture theology. That passage is found in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NAS): "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so



God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

"Therefore comfort one another with these words."

From this one text of Scripture the pre-tribulation rapture proponents conclude that all Christians are going to be raptured off to heaven to be with Yeshua before any of the trials and judgments of the Great Tribulation commence here on earth. So, in light of what the pre-tribulation advocates propound, let's take a close look at the Scripture passage in I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

First, please notice that the passage does not state that Jesus is taking His saints to heaven. The text declares that "we ... will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." According to I Thessalonians 4:17, we will meet the Lord in the air and we will always be with Him, but nowhere does this Scripture declare that Yeshua is returning to heaven or that we are going to heaven with Him.

However, one thing is clear: since "we shall always be with the Lord" from this time forward, wherever the Lord is going, we are going there with Him. We shall examine where the Lord is actually going in our next study on the second coming of Christ.

Now please notice in verse 16 that Christ will come down from heaven with three signs – "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God."

A parallel passage that elaborates the sign of the trum-

pets is found in I Corinthians 15:51-52 (NAS): "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." First, let us note that although I Thessalonians has been placed after I Corinthians in the Bible, I Thessalonians was actually written before I Corinthians according to the evidence found and examined by Bible scholars. So in I Corinthians Paul had the opportunity to clarify anything that he didn't make completely clear in I Thessalonians.

Looking again at I Thessalonians 4:16, Paul informed the Thessalonians that Yeshua would return "with the trumpet of God." However, in I Corinthians 15:52 Paul stated that Yeshua would return "at the last trumpet." In I Corinthians the apostle Paul made it absolutely clear that the rapture will not occur until the last trumpet.

So, if we can determine from the Bible when the last trumpet is to occur, we will have a good understanding as to when Yeshua will return to planet earth.

At this point I encourage you to open your Bible to the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation. "When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them." (Revelation 8:1-2 NAS).

According to Revelation 8:2, how many trumpets are there? SEVEN. So if there are seven trumpets, which one will be the last one? THE SEVENTH TRUMPET. In Revelation 8:7-12 the first four trumpets sound and the tribulations associated with each of these trumpets are spelled out. In Revelation 9:1 the fifth trumpet sounds and the tribulation associated with this trumpet is explained in Revelation 9:1-12. Then in Revelation 9:13 the sixth trumpet sounds and the tribulation associated with this trumpet is explained in Revelation 9:13-21. At this point the Bible has shown us that we have had all seven seals and six of the seven trumpets, but we still haven't gotten to the last trumpet. At this point we have had conquest, war, famine, death, martyrs, and terror ( the first six seals as related in Revelation 6:1-17) plus a third of the earth burned up ( the first trumpet), a third of the sea becoming blood (the second trumpet), a third of the waters in the rivers becoming too bitter to drink (the third trumpet), a third of the sky being darkened (the fourth trumpet), men-like locusts terrorizing the earth for five months (the fifth trumpet), and an army of two hundred

million men wreaking havoc on the earth (the sixth trumpet). If these events aren't great tribulation, you tell me what is. The doctrine that we are going to be raptured off this earth before any of the events of the Great Tribulation occur is unproven doctrine.

When do we finally find the seventh and last trumpet? "Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.'" (Revelation 11:15-16 NAS).

As already noted, there will be all sorts of miserable tribulation events before the seventh and last trumpet sounds. But please note as well that at the seventh trumpet "the kingdom of the world" becomes 'the kingdom of our Lord.' This would not be possible if Jesus is going back to heaven until the Great Tribulation is over. If Jesus is going back to heaven, then the devil and his demons will have free rein to run rampant until Jesus actually returns and sets up His kingdom on the earth. But when Yeshua sets up His kingdom on the earth, He will be present on the earth. The days of the devil and his demons are numbered on planet earth. At the last trumpet, when Yeshua returns, the devil's reign of evil will be finished.

In closing this study, I will share with you a piece of church history. The doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture cannot be found in church history until early in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

For over 1800 years the church never had this unproven teaching. Then why now? "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (II Timothy 4:3-4 NAS).

The pre-tribulation rapture doctrine is an ear-tickling doctrine if there ever was one. "Christian, you don't need to make either natural or spiritual preparations for the evil days ahead. Before all the real trouble starts, Jesus is going to come and take you off to heaven." How ear-tickling is that? It definitely appeals to our "own desires" because we don't like the idea of going through difficult tribulations. Yet the problem is simple: The pre-tribulation rapture doctrine is in clear contradiction to the truth of the Scriptures.

Think about this as well: Christians all over this world are being persecuted and martyred every day without

being raptured off to heaven. Why would God allow only Western Christians to escape tribulation while most Asian Christians and many African Christians are already enduring tribulation every day? Chinese Christians have been enduring tribulation for over 60 years. If Chinese Christians knew that there would only be three and a half more years of tribulation, they would probably be celebrating in the streets. Christians in North Korea, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, and many other countries throughout the world have been undergoing tribulation for years. They don't have the doctrine that they will be raptured off to heaven before all the tribulation starts. These Christians are in tribulation now.

The ramifications of the true teaching that Christians will go through tribulation before the return of Jesus Christ are great. Are you storing any food or water? What will you do if the government makes the electric company or the gas company turn off your heat in the middle of the winter? But spiritual trials will be even more important. Have you prayed that you will not deny Christ no matter what persecutions or tortures you may go through? Have you made up your mind that you will starve or freeze to death rather than take the mark of the beast? "A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength

***Christians in North Korea, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, and many other countries throughout the world ... are in tribulation now.***

into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.'" (Revelation 14:9-10 NIV).

In our next study we will look at what the Bible really teaches about the second coming of Christ. Plus we will show Scriptural evidence that Yeshua is not taking His saints to heaven with Him. Rather, He is taking them with Him to set up His kingdom here on earth.

*Bryant Buck is an elder with Solid Rock Fellowship in Freeport, Illinois. He is the author of two Christian books, The Prayer Warrior and My First Christian ABC Book.*

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# HAS TRUE WOMANHOOD... BEEN LOST?



Darl Arbogast

The scene in the garden of Eden was a beautiful semi-tropical veritable paradise. The young man (Adam) in the picture seemed to have everything going for him; he had perfect health, radiant good looks and a keen alert mind. His employment was ideal, attending the garden with every abundant wealth in natural resources nearby.

A paradise? Yes!

Adam undoubtedly walked and talked with the LORD God every day and as he walked in these gorgeous surroundings, he ate the delectable natural fruits, he observed and petted the animals; all the animals were friendly.

However an aching, gnawing feeling began to grow inside of him. He was not content, he was lonesome for one of his kind, someone with whom he could share the beauty of the garden, as well as his plans, hopes, and dreams. He also realized that all of the animals had a mate of their own kind, but he did not! He was alone!

## WHY GOD CREATED WOMEN!

Genesis 2:18, 22 thru 24 NKJ – 18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Scripture tells us what a woman should be in Proverbs 31:10 thru 31 NKJ 10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. 13 She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands. 14 She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar. 15 She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her

maidservants. 16 She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle. 20 She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet. 22 She makes tapestry for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants. 25 Strength and honor are her clothing; she shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 29 "Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all." 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

As we watch the societies of the world we can see it would be a happier place for all if every young girl would be taught this inspired account of her reason for being and if every young boy of today could be given proper understanding of becoming a future husband and a father.

God instructs the young and the old in Titus 2:1 thru 5 NKJ - 1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the

older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

## **WOMEN HAVE QUESTIONS;**

### **GOD HAS THE ANSWERS**

\*Just what feminine characteristics should a woman have? \*Just where do women fit in, anyway? \*What value does the Creator place on women? \*What is the purpose of a woman?

The personalities of many modern women today have the tendency to be aggressive, domineering, loudmouthed, and "hard" in their approach to life, causing a distressing phenomenon. First of all it seems to make life for her more distressing, for her family and for everyone else. An obvious sign of distress are ulcers, formerly thought of as an essentially male illness. Ulcers are now afflicting almost as many women as men, especially women in the business and executive fields. The more women stray into the male areas of life, the more health issues they have such as high blood pressure, heart disease. Other similar maladies tend to be their lot as well.

God has designed women for a purpose and with a purpose. Women hurt themselves competing against males, with other woman and even themselves, they admit their frustrations and emptiness and have deep problems that are mental, spiritual and emotional.

Far too many women around the world have been brain-washed into believing it is beneath their intellectual station to be a housewife, homemaker and a mother.

Question, what do you suppose is the most gratifying moment in a woman's life? Perhaps when she holds her first baby in her arms? Or when her husband first proposed to her? Maybe it is the work place where she got her first job or when she won her first big business deal.

Obviously men are not self-sufficient, they get lonely, and they need help for many reasons! Man is not complete unto himself. Every man needs inspiration, warmth, and balance imparted by the right woman as his wife by his side!

Man could never achieve the full, abundant, peaceful, balanced life which God intended for him without the help of his woman.

In Genesis 2:18 NKJ. 18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

God created woman to share with her man his life, plans, hopes and dreams. She was created specifically to help him, to be his helpmate!

Many women become edgy, resentful, and frustrated, heading up a "blind alley" because they are failing to fulfill the very purpose for which they were created! A wife needs to learn to be responsive to her husband, helping him with his plans regarding the home, share with him fun times and together prepare a way of life for the family's future.

A woman needs to realize that she plays a big part in the success of her husband; his triumphs and achievements are partly her own as well. And just as important she should equally share in his sorrow and disappointments, giving him the right kind of balance along with positive support, encouragement and contentment.

A very important area for a woman to cultivate success and her service is that of bearing and training the children. Certainly young mothers exert a powerful influence on the leaders of tomorrow! Teaching her children is far more important than any office position. A woman also needs to realize the overwhelming importance of zealously and joyously dedicating herself to this as their highest physical calling. Parents are responsible for the spiritual life of their children. Proverbs 22:6 NKJ 6 Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Christian women who objectively and enthusiastically give themselves to their God-given calling are adding immeasurably to their own happiness and well-being—and to those of their family members. Putting God first goes a long way, it is very deep and far reaching as well as adding to the society in which we all live.

It can not be said loudly enough or often enough that women actually accomplish far more in the end by being the kind of wife and mother that God Almighty intended.

Abraham Lincoln, the most revered of all American Presidents, at the height of his accomplishments stated: "All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my angel mother." His mother was a great example of a dedicated mother and a witness for God. She was familiar with much and had the wisdom God had given to her as she taught her son things such as patience, religious instructions, guidance, encouragement, inspiration and wisdom, too.

## THE ULTIMATE GOAL

To the woman who reads and understands the Bible, another goal presents itself. The goal of preparing to help rule and construct society in the world of tomorrow. This is very deep and far reaching, as it is stated in Revelation 2:26 and 5:10 NKJ (Jesus said), 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

Today many women are leading and directing businesses, they are busy with the family in addition to public activities, they are learning and preparing for tomorrow's world, alongside of their husbands. But, "Can every woman be this multitasked"? The answer is "probably not!"

A woman needs to develop her natural talents given to her by God. She needs to be aware of the opportunities around her to excel as a wife and a mother because these goals are often ignored. To be successful, an early education is extremely important and should not be overlooked. Her husband and her children rely on her every day and will continue to do so into the future.

Every man, woman and child are responsible to others in various ways, in the family, the community and socially in general.

When the wife is home she learns to be zealous and wise in her planning, executing and following through regarding her domestic responsibilities. She knows and understands how to plan and delegate. She is the CEO over her children—caring, training and watching them. Her day does not end when the sun goes down, other duties outside of the home are also to be considered. She and her husband are training and preparing their children together for a successful, well-prepared life aimed toward the Kingdom of God.

For both the husband and the wife, it is important to realize a basic principle of leadership. You must first learn how to responsively take orders and to accomplish an assigned job effectively, before you can be trusted with leadership. Jesus inspired the words in Acts 20:35 NKJ - 35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak.

Also remember the words of the Lord Jesus saying, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Women learn in a direct, personal sense to give in yielding, to be responsive, to help and to serve.

Happiness, joy, the sense of a deep-down satisfaction and accomplishment which comes to a dedicated and a successful wife and mother bears eloquent testimony to the eternal truth of the above inspired statement from the Son of God.

True femininity is much more than an attitude, it's an entire way of life! A woman's attitude and approach is basic, trying to help and add to the stature of her husband. Femininity is gladly bearing and training her children, spending time and effort with them in the realization that they may be the leaders of tomorrow. It is also preparing herself for the ultimate spiritual goal in the Kingdom of God by learning the lessons of love, obedience and service here in this life and expressing these to the full as a wife and mother, while passing them on to the next generation. What an awesome responsibility!

It really matters to ask God for help in the attempt to live in a Godly relationship with your husband, family and your society. Attempt to help, supplement, and serve in these areas to permeate your thinking and every approach to any situation, this brings balance to every decision in life.

Study, analyze and obey God's inspired instruction found in I Peter 3:1 thru 11 NKJ 1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- 4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. 8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and

do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

With the attitude of deep respect for her husband, the wife will anticipate his wishes and his directions. The husband in turn will protect her, provide for her, love her and be the one on whom she can lean on and trust the rest of her natural life.

I Peter 3:7,8 NKJ 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. 8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.

One eminent physician has said that words like, "I am sorry, dear" for example are very medicinal in their effect in people's lives. A simple and sincere apology often averts a great deal of trouble. It takes courage to admit that you and sometimes you alone, are wrong in a particular situation. Proverbs 15:1 NKJ - 1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

A good thing to remember is if your husband is not a Christian, God says that he may be won apart from the word, or Bible teaching, by the conduct of the wife. If a wife shows deep respect and reverence for her husband, he may be won over to Christ by his admiration of her willingness to take the place which God has assigned the woman in his life. She wins him not by preaching at him, but by her Christian humility in submitting to him in her attitude of a life reflecting a meek and a quiet spirit.

In part two of this article we will consider five specific feminine characteristics which every woman would benefit from if she learns to apply them.

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# MORE ON IGNATIUS AND THE SABBATH

Bob Thiel, Ph.D.

This is the third part of a multi-part series explaining why certain early documents that are claimed against the seventh-day Sabbath are misunderstood and not actually against it.

Many on the internet and elsewhere, have pointed to some basically 19<sup>th</sup> century translations of certain ancient documents in an attempt to support their contention that Sunday was observed early on by the original Christians. But do they?

Perhaps the most commonly cited major claim in favor of early Sunday worship is from Ignatius' Letter to the Magnesians. And that was partially handled in the previous part which explained that Ignatius' writing was NOT doing away with the Sabbath, but only warning not to keep it the way that many Jews did.

How did many Jews keep it? Alfred Edersheim, a 19<sup>th</sup> century scholar, observed related to the Jewish Talmud (the Mishna and Gemara) and keeping the Sabbath:

In not less than 24 chapters, matters are seriously discussed as of vital religious importance, which one would scarcely imagine a sane intellect would seriously entertain. [1].

Note that these are mainly restrictions that are not found in the Bible (I have read many of these restrictions in the Mishna and they do seem to be absurd). Jesus also taught that Pharisaical Jews had improper concepts about the Sabbath (e.g. Matthew 12:1-14; Luke 13:10-17).

It may also be of interest to note how the less-accepted "longer" version of Ignatius' Letter to the Magnesians was translated in the Ante-Nicene Fathers as follows:

Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner...[2]

Furthermore, the above version of Ignatius' letter adds:

But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a



spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and walking within a prescribed space, nor finding delight in dancing and plaudits which have no sense in them. [3]

It should be obvious that Ignatius was not teaching that the Sabbath was done away and replaced by Sunday. The above version seems to be more consistent with that meaning than how most others have translated the more "accepted" version.

## **Ignatius's Other Writings**

It should be understood that Ignatius' other writings show that he did not try to do away with the sabbath commandment. Notice what else he wrote in his Letter to the Magnesians:



It is fitting, then, not only to be called Christians, but to be so in reality: as some indeed give one the title of bishop, but do all things without him. Now such persons seem to me to be not possessed of a good conscience, seeing they are not stedfastly [*sic*] gathered together according to the commandment. [4]

The commandment that involves meeting together is the fourth commandment. It is the commandment that says to:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8).

Part of the way the Sabbath day is kept holy is by meeting together for church services (referred to as "an holy convocation" in Leviticus 23:1-3). There is no direct statement anywhere in the Bible requiring a weekly convocation on Sunday.

In his Letter to the Romans, Ignatius observed that true Christians kept the commandments:

I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: to those who are united, both according to the flesh and spirit, to every one of His commandments [5].

But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked devices and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time being conquered by his artifices, ye grow weak in your love [6].

Notice that Ignatius is once again complaining about Judaic customs that are not from the Bible. How do we know that the practices that Ignatius is referring to are not from the Bible? Because Ignatius is clearly saying to avoid snares from "the prince of the world." The "prince" Ignatius is referring to is Satan (see Ephesians 2:2), and since the Sabbath did not come from Satan, as it came from God (see Genesis 2:1-3), Ignatius would not refer to something that God made as wicked.

Furthermore, notice that Ignatius mentioned about keeping "every one of His commandments," thus this is not simply an admonition to love, but to keep all the commandments.

In his Letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius warned about false Christians:

But I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of [effecting] this. But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ. I undergo all these things that I may suffer together with Him, He who became a perfect man inwardly strengthening me. Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us [7].

Since he writes that some of the false Christians do not have "the law of Moses" it is reasonable to conclude that Ignatius believed that he did have the "law of Moses" (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:8-12) in regards to the ten commandments, including the Sabbath commandment.

The idea that those who professed Christ had a more positive, and less ceremonial attitude toward the Sabbath than did most of the Jews can also be found in an anonymous document titled the Epistle to Diognetus (probably written in the late second century). Specifically, in the following portion the writer claims that the Jews:

4:3 And again to lie against God, as if He forbid us to do any good thing on the sabbath day, is not this profane? [8]

This is simply additional evidence that the way of sabbath emphasis of those who professed Christ was different from that held by many of the Jews then. True Christians understood Jesus' teachings that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath (e.g. Matthew 12:12).

Ignatius' writings do NOT 'do away with' the Sabbath. They basically point out the Christians are to keep it as God intended, not as some Jews later decided.

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God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.  
(Genesis 2:3, NKJV)

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# Persecution—Or Suppression of the Truth?

## Dr. Royce Mitchell

There exists within the Christian community certain groups of individuals who think that they do God a service by attacking other Christians and their differing beliefs. Not only does the Sabbath-keeping community of believers attack others who believe 99% or more the same thing, something that should never be, but also attacks on the Sabbath-keeping community are coming from the outside.

Our brother Calvin Burrell, in his editorial in this edition, rightly points out that we who accept and obey 9 of the 10 commandments of God should find ways to work together to spread the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God. We should not dwell on the very small doctrinal differences that we have—allowing, instead, God the room to correct error as HE sees fit.

However, there are some who believe that they alone have the truth. They go out of their way to interfere with the efforts of others, whose beliefs differ from theirs, to preach the gospel and make converts to Christ. One such individual who works against other Christian groups is a man named James Kieferdorf (“JK” hereafter) of Dallas, Texas.

JK seems to work in tandem with a “Dr.” Robert L. Sumner of “The Biblical Evangelist.” He has also published his materials via “Media Ministries Outreach” which is currently under the direction of Richard and Cheryl Schatz. At times he has written under the pseudonym “rushtyping.” Whatever the forum or name, the purpose seems to always be the same—attack those with beliefs he does not consider to “at least meet the basic criteria of orthodoxy,” as defined by JK, Sumner and others in their small band.

The main thrust of JK’s “ministry” seems to be to attack any Church that teaches that the Bible does not teach the existence of the “Holy Trinity” as defined by them to be

the existence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit combined as a triune God. These attacks never come with proof of the existence of the “Holy Trinity.” Instead, the truth of that dogma is assumed by JK in all of his writings to the various media outlets, upon which platform he then presumes to relegate organizations who teach differently to the realm of heretics.

There are numerous instances shown via internet searches of JK’s name that he both writes, and encourages others to write, to media complaining about the teaching of “heresy” by various Church of God groups, including Christian Educational Ministries, the United Church of God, Church of God International and pretty much any other of the Sabbath-keeping groups that have come into existence since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong.

One such website to which the reader can turn for information on JK is:

[http://mmoutreachinc.com/cult\\_groups/kieferdorf.html](http://mmoutreachinc.com/cult_groups/kieferdorf.html). JK’s venomous attacks on the various groups is undisguised. JK does not even get some of the doctrines to which he takes exception properly stated, which gives rise to the probability that he doesn’t even understand what those groups teach.

More of JK’s incessant ranting against certain Sabbatarian organizations can be found as recently as this year at Sumner’s website:

<http://www.biblicalevangelist.org/index.php?id=517&view=Guest+Editorial>.

As usual, the thrust of JK’s actions is to bombard, and encourage others to bombard, media outlets that televise or broadcast the evangelistic programs of many of the Churches of God with letters demanding the shutting down of their programs. In the above recent article, “Dr.” Sumner lauds JK for taking action to contact many television outlets and “*doing a tremendous job telephoning and*

*writing these stations at his own expense, giving documentation of their heresies, and very kindly begging them to take these heretics off their stations.”* Sumner then goes on to list many of the Church of God groups stating this, *“Although there are some details in these Armstrong groups’ teachings that differ from the old Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong doctrines, these new cults and others hold to the primary ones, such as a denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ, the denial of the full deity of Jesus Christ (i.e. The Living Church of God, The Church of God Internationally affiliated associates, Wade Cox’s Christian Churches of God, and Anthony Buzzard’s Restoration Fellowship).”*

The problem with JK, Sumner and those of his ilk are that they have set themselves up as arbiters of what passes for “the Faith once delivered.” A doctrine that is not in accordance with their beliefs is, by *their* standard, heresy, and worthy of their concerted action to silence the truth as understood by the various Churches of God.

Admittedly, some Churches of God groups have brought some of the venom on themselves. They’ve done this by calling teachings of mainstream Christianity “damnable lies.” These types of statements should not be among those used by Christians. As I stated in a previous editorial, there is not a one among us who has not learned that they were in error on some point of doctrine in the past. The truth in that statement is that, if we were doctrinally wrong before, then we can be just as wrong today. JK and those like him are just another set of self-proclaimed Christians who don’t understand that truth.

An interesting point related to JK, Sumner and others is that the largest Sabbath-keeping organizations, i.e., Seventh Day Adventists, Church of God Seventh Day, and Seventh Day Baptists, seem to have escaped their notice despite nearly identical doctrines. Most likely this is because their evangelistic efforts are primarily done through the print media, local evangelistic campaigns and with direct face-to-face teaching about the Gospel.

There are several scriptures that come to mind that are relevant to this situation. The first is in Mark 9:38-42: “And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one

casting out demons in Your name, and he does not follow us. And we forbade him, because he does not follow us.

“But Jesus said, Do not forbid him. For there is no one who shall do a work of power in My name who can lightly speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is for us.

“For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, truly I say to you, He shall not lose his reward.

“And whoever shall offend one of these little ones who believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and he were cast into the sea.”

The context is found just after Jesus had just admonished the disciples to receive little children. The point here is that there were people doing a work for God who did not follow the Jesus the disciples followed and Jesus told them to leave those people alone because they were on the same side.

There is another relevant scripture which is found in Acts 5:38-39: “And now I say to you, Withdraw from these men and let them alone. For if this counsel or this work is of men, it will come to nothing. But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God.” Gamaliel, the teacher of Saul who became the apostle Paul, wisely instructed the leaders in the Sanhedrin to leave Peter and the apostles alone. Why? Because they could not know for certain that they would not be working against God.

In this case, JK and his band are ignoring the plain admonition of scriptures to leave those who are preaching Christ alone because they ARE preaching Christ and it isn’t known who has the exact truth.

What should we do, then? Two things come to mind. First, pray for these misguided men who have not learned some of the simplest things of scripture. Second, where we find these media broadcasts and telecasts, offset the evil by writing or calling the stations carrying them and thanking them for allowing the good news of Christ’s Kingdom to be preached through them.



## Letters to the Editor

I want to thank you – and congratulate you again – for another excellent Sentinel. I studied it this past Sabbath and found much of profit.

I did have a concern, however, that I would like to share with you. Back in the day when I was a member and minister in the old WCG we did not accept the use of images or pictures of Jesus, as you know. As the years have gone by I have gotten past feeling that there is a problem with images of Jesus during his physical lifetime as I can see the argument that he was human at that time and not fully God. Once the resurrection occurred, however, because the New Testament makes it clear that He became God along with the Father, then I feel that we should not use images of Him in his current form. To me, that is a situation covered by Romans 1:23: "... and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being..." I don't mean to quote Scripture at you, I'm just saying this is why I believe that pictures of Jesus as God are wrong. As a result of the way I see this I felt very uncomfortable with the cover of this past issue of the Sentinel.

I do not know how many Sentinel readers share my feeling in this regard, but I would guess that in a group that feels the fourth commandment must still be kept there, are many who feel the second also applies to representations of the post-resurrection Jesus. So I bring this to you to ask if you would be willing to consider forgoing such pictures for the sake of those brethren who, like me, may be "weaker" brethren who are not comfortable with those images.

Again, I was very pleased with the Nov-Dec issue as a whole and hope my comment will be understood as a positive one looking for resolution of something that is problematic for some of us.

Richard

I just got a copy of the latest Sentinel and think it looks great. I was especially glad to see that the BSA web site has been updated with the latest Sentinel.

I know how important feedback is in a position like yours so I wanted to send a short note. I only have one issue that

I'm just a little uncomfortable with and that is pictures of Christ displayed in the artwork. I have come to believe that's a violation of the spirit of the second commandment. I know many other Sabbath keepers have no problem with it but I also know there are many that do. It's a matter for your discretion as editor, of course, and I had thought to send a note a couple of issues back but didn't want to put you off.

Please understand that I send this in the spirit of Christian love and not as a complaint against you in any way.

T. Perkins

*I want to thank you both for your feedback on the September edition of TSS. We at the BSA, which has as its mission the goal of encouraging fellowship, do not want to post anything that might be offensive to the Sabbath keeping brethren. But, we also want all the brethren to give space for different understandings of the scriptures, too.*

*That said, I would like to make it understood that as a Christian I take the commandments of God very seriously. Like everyone else, I don't walk perfectly in them and rely upon the blood of Christ and the wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit for both cleansing and understanding.*

*When I chose the graphics for the magazine, it was with the understanding that nobody in any of the Sabbath keeping groups could possibly make the mistake of trying to worship the artistic depictions of the return of Christ found on the pages of the magazine.*

*To this student of the scriptures, it appears that the commandment is referring to making images for the purpose of worship. This is because if God meant no creating images of any kind (as my friends here seem to believe) then there would be no reason for the additional command not to worship them (See EX 20:4-5)—because there would be none to worship.*

*Because two wrote concerning this, I felt it should be discussed. I would like some feedback from other brethren concerning this. Obviously, we should all do as we read in the scripture. This means that we are not seeking doctrinal absolutes. We would like to know how you, our readers, understand the commandment to read. We think that this is a way that we can understand one another without the compulsion to change our own beliefs except as we are persuaded by how the Spirit leads us.*

*Please let me know what your thoughts are!*

—Ed.

# MORE Letters to the Editor

This concerns the article on pp. 18, 19 of the Sept./Oct. 2016 issue of The Sabbath Sentinel.

The five verses in Mat. 24 and Lk. 17 that say that one shall be taken and the other left use the Greek words paralambano ("receive closely") for "taken" and aphiemī ("forsake") for "left." The latter word also means "forgive" because our sins are forgiven when God drops charges against us. In KJV English, it is always our sins that are forgiven, never we, because God is forsaking our sins, not us.

(If you question this point, see if you can find anywhere in the KJV where it speaks of people rather than sins being forgiven. The Lord's prayer says, "Forgive us our debts/trespases." In other words, "Forgive to us our debts/trespases." It is debts/trespases that is the direct object of the sentence, not "us.")

Mat. 24:39 says that the flood came and took them all away. The word for "took ... away" here is airo, a totally different word than paralambano. So we can't use Mat. 24:39 to define what "one shall be taken" means because the Greek words are not the same.

The bottom line is that I don't see any possible way for the taken to be the lost and the left to be the redeemed given the meaning of these Greek words.

To further illustrate, paralambano is used in Mat. 1:20, 24 when saying that Joseph took Mary as his wife. This certainly doesn't mean that he destroyed Mary in judgment. It is also used in Mat. 2:13, 14, 20, 21 when referring to Joseph taking Jesus and Mary to Egypt and then back to Israel. Again, this doesn't mean that Joseph destroyed Jesus and Mary in judgment.

The disciples left (aphiemī) their nets to follow Jesus (Mat. 4:20). They forsook (aphiemī) Jesus in Gethsemane (Mat. 26:56). Neither of these verses mean that the nets were saved, or that Jesus was saved. Those who are left are those who are forsaken and abandoned.

So while the idea of reversing the meanings of "taken" and "left" is intriguing, it isn't sound. And we don't need to reverse the meanings to refute the idea of a secret rapture. Lk. 17 is clear enough that those who were taken into the ark and out of Sodom lived, and those who were left outside of the ark and within Sodom died. And where were they left at? Where the body is, there will the

eagles be gathered together.

Bob Pickle

*Thanks for your letter, Bob. Before I get into it I'd like to remind everyone of the purpose of the Bible Sabbath Association.*

*We at the BSA recognize that there are different beliefs within the Commandment keeping community. As Editor of the magazine I don't look too closely at non critical understandings of the writers. We want to encourage everyone who is of the Sabbath keeping communities to understand one another and to work together to spread the much more important message that we ought to all, as Christians, be keeping all of the Commandments of God as found in Exodus 20 and other places.*

*Mr. Buck's article is one of those instances where there is a difference of belief between what was written and what I personally believe. From your letter, I ascertained that you have a different take on the scriptures used, also. It is my belief that the ones "taken" are the ones who are "changed, in the twinkling of the eye," who are the ones rising to meet the Lord in the air whose feet will land, in that day, on the Mount of Olives.*

*Mr. Buck painstakingly laid out the reason that he believed that the "Rapture" is not an event found in the scriptures. That was the underlying point of his article. I believe that we all are on the same page in that understanding despite how we come to the same belief. The BSA goal of promoting understanding among the various Sabbath keeping groups leads me to understand what Mr. Buck has written, and allowing him his belief, while at the same time holding onto my own beliefs, personally.*

*Thanks for writing! I invite you to also submit articles for publication in a future edition of TSS.*

—Ed.

Thanks for your courageous article (Editorial—"Whose rights") in the July 2016 magazine. And I appreciate your wonderful magazine.

Take care and keep up the good work.

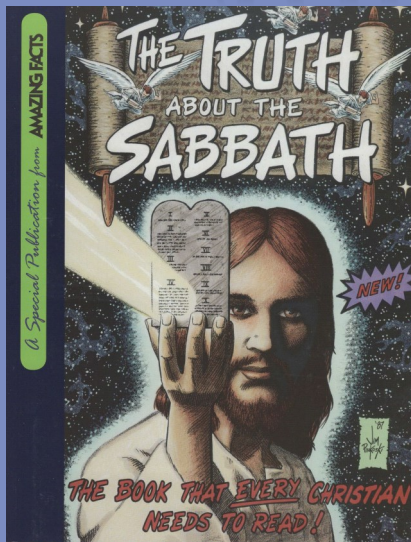
V. Singh

*Thank you for your kind words, Mr. Singh. Thank you, also, for your generous donation to the Bible Sabbath Association. Donations like yours, as well as memberships in the BSA, help us to have the funds necessary to produce and mail the magazine to those who can't afford to contribute.*

*It is my belief that sometimes, while allowing for differences in understanding among the brethren, we need to point out what is sin. My editorial was premised on that as is my article in this edition. Sometimes the truth is not popular.*

—Ed.

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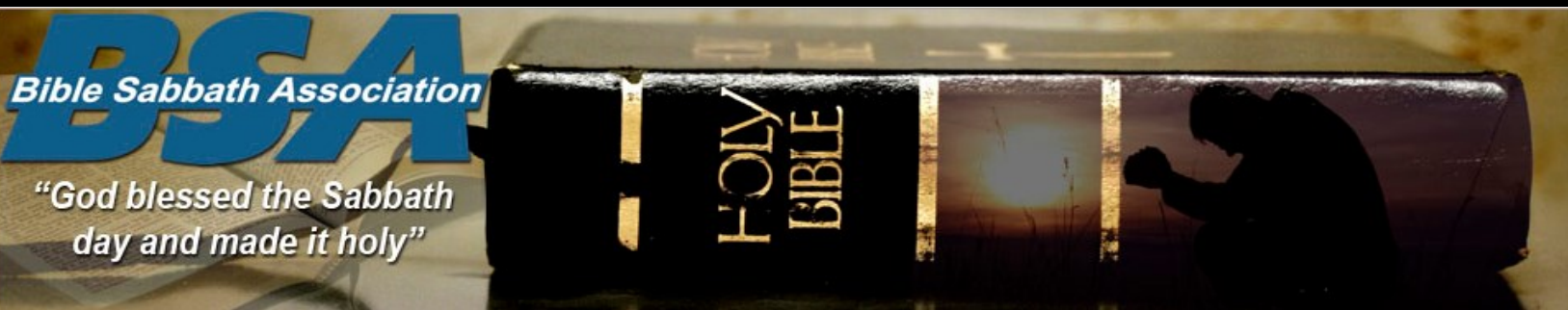
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