



The Sabbath Sentinel

Fall 2015

***“The harvest truly is great,
... but the laborers are few.”***

BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel Fall 2015

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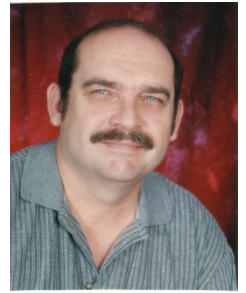
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By

Dr. Royce Mitchell, Jr.



The many translations of the Bible into English have one common problem: they use words to explain concepts that confuse understanding more than assist it. One such problem is the words translated “grace.”

To demonstrate this problem let’s examine two verses often used to “prove” that keeping the Sabbath is not required for the New Covenant Christian. The first one is found in Eph 2:8-9 “For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

This verse is used to say that the keeping of God’s Sabbath Day is a “work” which is not required for this alleged salvation under discussion. But is that what is being said?

Another verse where this confusing term of “grace” is used is Rom 3:21-24 where we read, “But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe. For there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” The idea that is promoted from this verse is that grace justifies one so that righteousness is “apart from the law.”

But what is the truth? Is God really telling us we don’t need to obey His Commandments any more once we have received grace?

The writer at JCBlog.net on the internet inadvertently shows us exactly the type of confusion caused by this usage of the word grace: “*Everyone is saved the very same way, by putting our trust in Jesus’ gift of grace.*” The author goes on to say, “*Grace is unmerited, un-*

earned favor and kindness towards us on behalf of Jesus.” And, again: “*Everyone is saved the very same way, by putting our trust in Jesus’ gift of grace. Paul said it is not by works so that no one can brag about it.*” But, does what the writer writes line up with scripture as a whole? To understand this, we need to understand how “grace” is used throughout the scriptures—not in just a few verses taken out of context.

When we appeal to the Old Testament scriptures, we find something very hard to explain—if the writer at JCBlog is right about grace being Jesus’ gift. We notice first in Gen. 6:8 that Noah found grace in God’s eyes. We all know that this is thousands of years before Jesus walked the earth as a man.

In Gen. 19:18-19 we find Lot acknowledging his finding grace in God’s sight. At Ezra 9:7-8 we find that Ezra acknowledges that the remnant of Israel who returned to Jerusalem had been shown grace by God. Moses, in Exo. 33:12-13 directly asks the LORD whether he had found grace in His sight. In verse 17 the LORD answers that Moses had indeed found grace in His sight. David recognized that YHVH granted grace (Ps 84:11).

One could try to make the case that these examples of grace were from the LORD to His people in an attempt to shore up the interpretation of “grace” used to eschew the keeping of the Sabbath Days as “works.”

However, let us not stop there. In Gen. 33:9-10 we find Jacob asking Esau whether he had found grace in Esau’s eyes. This is a serious problem for the common understanding of grace. Here we find one brother asking another for grace. At this point, perhaps we ought to look

Continued on page 10, “Grace.”



The Fruits of the Spirit (Part 1 of 2)

By

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

Before Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He taught on the importance of producing fruit. In John 15:1-8,16, Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. ... You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you." (NIV)

Christ is the vine, and we are the branches. These verses show us that the Lord expects us to produce fruit for His Kingdom. In fact, we are appointed to bear fruit that lasts (verse 16). By being fruitful and productive workers for God's Kingdom, the whole world will know God's expectations. What fruits does the Lord expect from us? Jesus' teaching in John 15 is linked to the Fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-25. In these verses, Paul lists nine fruits of the Spirit. They are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (NIV). These fruits show the world that we are His disciples (verse 8). They make us increasingly productive and effective for His Kingdom. They are a series of attitudes that allow others to experience the Kingdom of God and give God the Father glory. As they are dis-

played in our lives, they will help us build a reward for God's Kingdom.

Before we can delve into the meaning of these fruits, one must understand that they operate differently than the Gifts of the Spirit. The Gifts of the Spirit are expressed when believers make a decision to exercise one of the gifts, or not, at any given time. The fruits are not nine characteristics that come from human effort. For instance, the fruit of self-control is not self-control that you choose to exercise on your own power. As a spiritual

fruit, self-control is a trait that spontaneously manifests as you yield to God. All of the fruits work this way. A practical example will help illustrate this point. You cannot make fruit grow by shaking a tree. The tree must be nurtured, watered, and have a proper environment for the fruit to grow. We do not choose to manifest these fruits by human effort; they simply manifest as we yield to the Spirit of God (water) and obey Him in trials (sunlight). We choose to obey God, and they spontaneously manifest.

A second factor to keep in mind is that we cannot define these characteristics by the way we view them in our modern society. They must be viewed from the perspective of the Word of God and the life of Christ. He is the vine, and we are branches. We must take in from His example to understand how these fruits are displayed in our lives. Consider the first Fruit: Love. In our society, love tends to be looked at as merely a feeling. This is not the way love is viewed in the Bible. We tend to view kindness and meekness based upon a person's countenance. As you will come to understand, this is not the Biblical context for these terms. The Spirit of God is the resurrected Christ living inside of us; these fruits are Christ's characteristics manifesting in our vessels. We can see



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Cry Out for the Children!

By
John Klassek



Surely someone will speak up on behalf of our children! Acquiescing to a popularist, media-driven agenda is nothing less than dangerous – and possibly fatal.

The definition of marriage and family life is one father, one mother, married for life, providing both emotional and spiritual nurture for their children. Anything else, like homosexuality, paedophilia, adultery, fornication, incest, bestiality and the like are an aberration. In other words, these deviations are plainly sinful and wrong.

Who says so? Why, Jesus, of course! And so do His followers – or at least they should by their example.

When entire countries, supported by their judiciaries and driven by the media, begin “voting in” and incrementing what become sweeping immoral changes, then perhaps we ought to spare a thought, first, for our grandparents who would shudder to think that such immoral antics are undermining the very society they pioneered, and secondly, for our children whose minds and hearts become irreparably damaged because they’ve never known the true love and identity that only a loving father and mother in marriage can provide.

The greatest of civilizations rapidly declined when their morals also waned. Babylon, Persia, Greece and then Rome were once thought invincible. The writing is once again on the wall.

Violence today is generally accepted to be on the rise, whether highlighted in other countries or in our own suburbs. Mental illness is a growing scourge, with suicide dramatically increasing. And when our children become the pawns because of our immorality (deprived of a father and mother combination), when we kill the unborn with abandoned wanton (and call it “pro-choice”), when our sophisticated, immersive entertainment becomes more violent and pornographic – then it isn’t long before the law of natural consequences catches up.

Political correctness is as dangerous as it is deceitful. We label a baby in his or her mothers’ womb as an “embryo” or “fetus;” the underlying notion is that they are not human. They are. They’re our children. And yet we so easi-

ly succumb to a politically correct violence that dissects their little bodies before they gain their first breath of air. And we proudly call it “pro-choice.”

We’ve thrown God out of our society. “Hooray,” you say! We no longer introduce children to the Bible. “Ditto.” We no longer believe in absolutes, that right is right and wrong is wrong. And so, if this God has anything to say about this, it’s in the law of natural consequences that He designed.

Jesus said, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet and show my people their sins.” (Isaiah 58:1).

Jeremiah said the defiantly rebellious would be “pursued with the sword, with famine, with pestilence; they’ll be delivered into trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth – to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, a reproach among all the nations... because they have not heeded My words...” (Jeremiah 29:18-19).

“The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head and you shall be the tail. All these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God...” (Deuteronomy 28:43-45).

And so, accordingly, history is set to repeat itself. Nations of strange language and customs seem to assert their power as never before. The Islamic State, for example, defined by their throat-cutting brutality and an ominous black flag seem uncannily unstoppable – perhaps because our will-power and weakened response has become one of containment. Their goal is to raise the black flag of Sharia law on the entire world, and they begin by enticing our gullible youth.

Another example is the increasing Chinese influence through trade and expansionism. It isn’t all that it seems, as this economic juggernaut sponsors the construction of

Continued on page 13, “Children.”



Who Was Jesus Christ?

By

The Reverend Terril D. Littrell, Ph. D.

Over 2000 years ago, a Man walked the earth who had a greater impact than any other person in history.

Lowly born, He rose to prominence as He spread His vision of the redemption of the world. He attracted the attention of faithful disciples and suspicious local authorities. Eventually He was tried, convicted, and executed. His crucifixion, ignominious and degrading, ended His life in a way reserved for the lowest of criminals.

Today, the story is known the world over. Yet, more than two millennia later, great thinkers and everyday people still struggle to answer a single question: “Who was Jesus Christ?”

Was He a wise sage who called powerful teachings from centuries of Jewish tradition to create a new world vision of peace and love?

Or was He God himself, the embodiment of divinity on earth, sent to bring salvation and redemption from sin to all humankind? How did Jesus come to be seen by millions of believers worldwide as God?

Since the earliest days, these questions have been at the heart of debate. Over the centuries, they have led to fierce dispute and produced deep divisions among religious people. These questions have driven profound acts of faith and worship and incited war and persecution. They have contributed to the building of nations and the shaping of lives and deeply influenced some of the greatest thinkers of Western philosophy. To ponder questions like these is to understand the very shape of the Western world and to comprehend the remarkable power and influence this Man has had in the life of believers.



The Historical Jesus

The faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in new covenant order, begins with Jesus Christ. The effects of His life, a response to His teachings and experience of His death and resurrection, were the beginnings of a new community called “The Way” (Acts 24:14), a sect of Judaism. No doubt this is referring to Jesus who taught that He is “the way” to God (John 14: 6).

Jesus was a Jew, thus the earliest beginnings of His teachings are in fact a movement within Judaism. Jesus did not come to start a new religion called “Christianity,” but to reform God’s ancient system of praise, worship and service.

The very acknowledgment of Jesus as “the Christ” means the confession that He is the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the Messiah—Yeshua!

When the apostle Peter is represented in the new covenant as confessing that Jesus is “the

Christ, the son of the living God,” he speaks for the ages to come. And it is in response to this confession that Jesus is described as announcing the foundation of His church: “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18).

But the gospel of Jesus encountered opposition within Judaism, just as Jesus had. “He came unto his own (Jews) and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God” (John 1:11-12). Within Judaism there could be no question that Jesus was not the long-awaited Messiah, who was envisioned as a powerful warrior-king!

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WHO WROTE PSALM 119 (AND THE OTHER “ORPHAN” PSALMS)?

By

R. Herbert

A great many of the prayers and hymns found in the Book of Psalms are attributed to King David, or other named individuals, but some – such as Psalm 119, the longest psalm and longest chapter in the Bible – are unattributed, and it is unsure who composed them. The authorship of these so-called “orphan” psalms is more than just an academic question, because knowing the author of any work can sometimes help us to better understand its allusions and meaning.

Of the one hundred fifty psalms in the Hebrew Bible, most have “superscriptions” giving the name of the author, musical instructions, reference to the occasion they were composed or other information. But the authorship of many of these psalms is still often unclear, as even some that appear to bear their author’s names actually have superscriptions that are ambiguous. Although many of the psalms found in English translations have the title “A Psalm of ...,” there is still uncertainty about some of them. The underlying Hebrew, which does often have the meaning “belonging to ...,” can also mean “concerning ...,” “for ...,” or “dedicated to ...” Psalms said to be “... of the Sons of Korah,” for example, could be just as well written for them as by them.

At least we have some indications of origin with these named psalms, but thirty-four psalms have no superscriptions whatever. Interestingly, most of these psalms occur in groups or clusters. While a few of the early psalms (Psalms 1; 2; 10; 33; 43; and 71) have no attribution, two of them (Psalms 10 and 43) are actually continuations of the preceding psalms, and the remaining psalms without named authors are all found in the clusters 91; 93–97; 99; 104–107; 111–119; 135–137; 146–150.

So who wrote these untitled or “orphan” psalms? A variety of opinions exists, and Psalm 119 is a good example of this. Jewish tradition is divided on the matter, with some Rabbinical scholars maintaining that Psalm 119 was composed by David, while others thought that it was written by some other individual. Some of the arguments that have been made for Davidic authorship of Psalm 119 are not compelling by themselves. For example, although the psalm contains allusions to taunts, plots, and persecutions suffered by its author, which are reminiscent of many of David’s named psalms, such things could happen to other individuals. In a similar manner, the author of Psalm 119 states that nobles talk about him

behind his back and that he spoke of God’s testimonies in the presence of kings. Such things are more likely true of a nobleman or king – although not necessarily King David. These things would all fit well with Davidic authorship if we can prove it in other ways, but are not sufficient evidence of themselves. However, there are clues that are perhaps more convincing and that might well suggest that David was, in fact, the author of this beautiful psalm.

We can see this by looking more deeply into the style of the psalm, the language it uses, and its themes. The most noticeable feature of Psalm 119 is its acrostic style – in which each group of 8 lines begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is notable that of the only other psalms utilizing this literary style – Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, and 145 – almost all are attributed to David and the remainder are not attributed to anyone else.

When we look at the language of Psalm 119, we find a similar situation. The psalm uses a number of expressions such as “Turn to me and show me favor” and “I am a stranger in the land” which are only found elsewhere in psalms attributed to David. There are many similar expressions in Psalm 119 that are only found in David’s songs and prayers. It is interesting, for example, that only David refers to himself when addressing God (as he does many times in the various psalms attributed to him) as “Your servant” – a phrase which shows David’s particular relationship with God and which is also found several times in Psalm 119. In a similar way David tellingly refers to God’s commandments as *pekudim* – a word meaning “counting” or more precisely “taking note of.” This usage of the word is unique to the psalms attributed to David and also to Psalms 119 and 111 – which is also an orphan psalm exhibiting other characteristics which show it was likely written by David.

Finally, many of the themes found in Psalm 119 are very similar to themes found in the named psalms of David. If we compare what is said in this psalm with themes found in Psalms 18, 19, 25, and others by David, we see that they are very similar or even identical. The similarities with

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The Sender of Strong Delusion

By

Daniel Botkin

The American Supreme Court's recent decision to legalize same-sex "marriage" did not surprise me. I was grieved and disappointed, but not surprised. I expected it to happen. I would have been pleasantly surprised if they had not done it.

But the thing that grieves and disappoints me even more deeply than the Supreme Court decision is the apathetic attitude that so many professing Christians have, and the great number of so-called "Christians" who now insist that homosexual acts are not sinful.—even Tony Campolo, for crying out loud!

According to the news, Tony Campolo's son is a practicing homosexual, and Mr. Campolo refuses to call his son's behavior a sin. Apparently Tony Campolo loves his son more than he loves the Lord, and he therefore disqualifies himself from being a disciple of Jesus, as it is written, "he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10:37).

If I could talk to Tony Campolo in person, I would like to ask him: "Mr. Campolo, are you not disturbed by the thought of your son voluntarily stripping off all his clothes and eagerly engaging in homosexual acts with another naked man, and deriving pleasure from performing those acts?"

Actually, I would ask the question in much more graphic details if I were speaking to Tony Campolo, but I cannot write it that way here.

What happened? Did the Devil deceive Tony Campolo? No. God is the one who deceived Tony Campolo, and all the countless other clueless "Christians" who now condone homosexuality. Let me explain.

In Deuteronomy 28, Moses lists the curses which will come upon a nation that disobeys Yahweh. (I know, this

chapter is primarily about the nation of Israel, not America. But it is not exclusively about Israel because the general principle of obeying and being blessed or disobeying and being cursed is a universal Bible truth.) Moses lists various forms that the curses will take. After listing around twenty ways that Yahweh will curse the disobedient nation, he writes: "Yahweh shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart" (Deut. 28:28).

In Romans 1, Paul tells us what form this God-sent insanity and spiritual blindness finally takes. It takes the form of homosexuality.

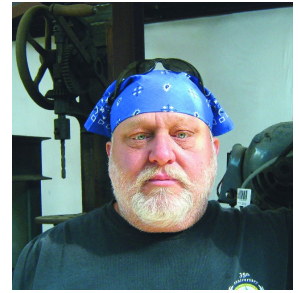
In Deuteronomy 28, Yahweh promises to smite the disobedient nation with madness and blindness. In Romans 1, Paul tells us what form this God-sent insanity and spiritual blindness finally takes. It takes the form of homosexuality. If a nation continues to defy and disobey the Creator and His laws long enough, eventually God lets their foolish hearts be darkened, and He lets their morals descend to depravity, as it is written:

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth

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Spiritual Blindness and Discernment

By
Terrell Perkins



It is trait of human nature, the well from which we all draw, to tend only to see what we want, or expect, to see. While most of us would like to believe that we arrived at our beliefs by our own reasoning, the fact is most of what we believe has been handed down to us from the past or from some person or group we respect. It's much more common that we start off believing something and then only see what reinforces that belief and ignore what doesn't. Questioning the beliefs we've been taught all our lives is tougher than it sounds. Questioning what someone we respect and admire teaches is also much tougher than it sounds. As human beings we have a tendency to believe what someone within our sphere says and pay less attention to what someone outside of our sphere says. In matters of faith we can develop a kind of spiritual blindness both to the truths someone outside our group has and to the error someone inside our group has. As Christians we are called on to develop and exercise OUR spiritual discernment.

Those Christians who are called to understand and observe the Biblical Sabbath typically become suspect of most teachings in the world of Christendom. If something as obvious as the fourth commandment can be overshadowed by human tradition, most reason, then all teachings in the Christian world should be called into question. We may rightly call such a "prove all things" philosophy and it's a good thing. That is exercising spiritual discernment.

One drawback, however, is that such an attitude 'can' cause us to believe God is only working with those who believe what we do and disregard any work done by those who don't. That would mean closing our eyes to God's power. To do so is to make the implicit assumption that God doesn't work through anyone who doesn't

believe what we have come to believe. This would mean that we are ignoring the obvious...God worked with most of us BEFORE we came to believe what we believe. Therefore, the fact that He works with those that don't believe what we do is glaringly obvious.

Any believer who accepts the Bible as the revealed Word of God must implicitly believe that God had His hand in preserving the scriptures through the centuries and through countless translations.

Any believer who accepts the Bible as the revealed Word of God must implicitly believe that God had His hand in preserving the scriptures through the centuries and through countless translations. Since it is historical fact that the preservation and canonization of the scriptures can be traced to both Jewish and Catholic scholars, and most biblical translations are credited to Protestants, one must acknowledge that God has worked through them to bring us His word.

Most Bible dictionaries, commentaries, lexicons, concordances and other Bible study aids were brought to us by Sunday keepers. How then should a Sabbath keeper approach materials brought to us by someone who doesn't observe the Biblical Sabbath? We all have known Sunday keepers that seem more led by God's Holy Spirit than many Sabbatarians. Where do Sunday keepers fit into God's plan? All Sabbath keepers must eventually face those issues. I believe the answers can be addressed by considering the following points.

First: Gods calls some to understand more fully than most. The Bible teaches there is a form of predestination. It's widely misunderstood that it is salvation that is predestined; it is God's calling to understand His word that is predestined. Some were predestined before the foundation of the world to be called by God to understand His word more fully. That DOES NOT mean God

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at the underlying word interpreted as "grace."

When we read of the interaction between YHVH and men, we find the Hebrew word "chen" interpreted as "grace." That word should actually be translated "graciousness," not grace. One might believe that they are the same, and to one who grasps older English it might be. But in today's understanding of the terms, grace is nebulous while graciousness is a concept easily grasped. Where we see the word "grace" used we would get a better understanding of the writer's intent by changing the word to graciousness.

With that in mind, we can examine other scriptures containing the word "grace." In Gen. 39:3-4 we find that Joseph finds grace in the eyes of the master who owned him. This master was an Egyptian, not even an Israelite, and yet he had grace toward Joseph.

When David had fled from Saul to Gath, he found grace in the eyes of Achish (1 Sa 27:4-5). Ruth, after having been granted special privileges by Boaz, questioned him as to why she had found grace in his eyes (Rth 2:8-10).

Even the non-Israelite King Ahasuerus was able to grant grace and favor to Esther (Est. 2:16-17). Solomon wrote in Pro 3:19-22 that wisdom and understanding were "grace to the neck." Moreover, he wrote that the one who loves pureness of heart had grace on his lips.

In an interesting prophecy found in Zec 12:8-10, we find that God will pour out on the House of David the spirit of grace, not grace itself. No matter how you look at the word grace, it is not, as is supposed by those who deny the requirement to obey God by keeping His Sabbaths holy, something from Jesus granting license to disobey.

But, some might say, grace in the New Covenant is

something different. However, when we appeal to the Greek word we find a reassuring comfort in the term. The Greek word translated "grace" is "charis." This word means "graciousness," also!

When we go back to the verses cited by the JCBlog writer, and use a word more easily understood, we find the verses take on a different connotation for us. For instance, Eph 2:8-9 becomes the following, "For by graciousness (of God) we are saved through faith, and that (the faith) is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Now it is easy to see that faith, not grace, is the gift of God.

The question is this, "If 'grace' is the unmerited pardon, or the gift of Jesus, then why did Jesus need grace as is clearly stated in Luke 2?"

When we look at Rom 3:23-24 we now read the following, "... for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely, by (or because of) His graciousness, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..." Now we can easily see that what justifies us freely is the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, not some nebulous concept of grace.

Another question arises because of yet another verse with our mystical word grace. It is found in Luke 2:40 where we read, "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was on Him." The question is this, "If 'grace' is the unmerited pardon, or the gift of Jesus, then why did Jesus need grace as is clearly stated in Luke 2?" The answer, of course, is that the word means graciousness as we have been discussing. Restated using the proper word, "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom. And the graciousness of God was on Him." That verse makes a lot more sense, now, doesn't it?

In Act 15:11 we read, "But we believe that through the

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grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, according to which manner they also believed." This verse seems to indicate that the "grace" saves us as some want us to believe. But, other verses indicate that we shall be saved by Jesus' life (Rom 5:10). So, which is it? The truth is easily grasped when we substitute the correct word. We find this, instead, "But we believe that, through the graciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, ..." Now, combined with other verses of scripture that verse makes much more sense.

In Rom 4:3-5 we read, "For what does the Scripture say?

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. But to him working, the reward is not reckoned according to graciousness, but according to debt. But to him not working, but believing on Him justifying the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." One of the things we know about Abraham is that he was obedient. He had works. It was because of those works that he was allowed to enter into a covenant with the LORD whereby he would be the father of an uncountable multitude.

That was the reward for his obedience, whereas his faith in the Word of the LORD made him righteous. But, again, all of this was the result, not of some nebulous idea of grace envisioned by some, but of the graciousness of God. Why? Because, let's face it, Abraham was a sinner just like the rest of us, and as He is to us, He was gracious to Abraham.

We could go on indefinitely in the same manner, but I believe that I have made my point. Anyone doing an exhaustive study of the idea of grace can't help but notice the many contradictions in the use of the term as promoted by "Christianity" today. But, anyone using the actual meaning of the word, graciousness, can begin to see that there is far less contradiction and confusion

about that word and can begin to meld the statements of the various writers into a cohesive, plainly understood, set of statements which allow us to see that which every one of the first century apostles saw—that God, or Yah, or Yahweh, or Jehovah, or however you wish to say His name, is indeed a gracious God and always has been.

We can see what Noah, Abraham, Israel, Joseph, Ezra and many others of the Old Testament times saw: a gracious God, full of mercy and willing to forgive. We can begin to see that the Fruits of the Spirit found in Gal 5:22 can be summed up in that one word—graciousness.

We serve a gracious God, patient and loving, willing and wanting to forgive and to allow us repentance and the

washing of the blood of the Lamb, His Son, and our Savior and King. Understanding the extent of His graciousness is possible when we are not distracted by archaic translations of terms and the willful ignoring of scriptures that don't make sense using the actual words.

While we have come to understand these things, our future brethren remain deceived. Let us pray for the day when the eyes of all will be opened to the Truth of God and His graciousness.

I don't mean to single out the writer of

JCBlog.net as being any more in error than anyone else. That writer is probably sincere in his beliefs. But, as we all know, we can be sincerely wrong. This writer prays for the day when all will be made clear and that the graciousness of God which surpasses all understanding is made known to all men.

Dr. Royce Mitchell is a founding member of the Houston Church of God. He is a past editor of this magazine as well as the current editor. Royce and his wife, Susan, have been married 39 years, have 5 children, 21 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Royce can be contacted at royce.mitchell@rocketmail.com.

Anyone doing an exhaustive study of the idea of grace can't help but notice the many contradictions in the use of the term as promoted by "Christianity" today.

these in His life.

The first Fruit of the Spirit is love. It is the first fruit because the Spirit of God is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5). We need the Love of God to love God and others. We cannot love God with our carnal mind. This is the starting place and foundation of our faith. When you are first saved, a mindset of love should overflow from within your vessel. The Greek word for love is *agapeo*. It is a decisive mindset where we desire to meet any cost to please God. Jesus gave us this example by being our sacrifice (John 15:9-13). This fruit is displayed by a person's decision to obey the Word of God. As an example, Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Instead of doing things our way, we begin doing things His way. We will treat others in a Christ-like manner. *Agapeo* love will manifest as action.

The second fruit is joy. We think of joy as simply being happy, but it is much more than that. Joy is a realization that your life has value to God in this world. This joy grows as we obey God (see John 15:9-11). As we obey, our Kingdom reward increases. As a result, the fruit of joy intensifies in our lives. The fruit of joy also arises in our hearts and minds as we realize what He has done for us and others (Savior, redeemer, deliverer, provider, etc.). This is why the disciples had joy when they heard about the work of God in the life of others (Acts 15:3). It is the joy that a person experiences from fulfilling their intended purpose as a member of God's family.

These first two fruits (Love and Joy) represent the first phase in the life of a believer. When a person first receives the Holy Spirit, they fall in love with God. There is joy from our new life. The next phase comes when we are growing in Christ and face trials.

Peace is the next fruit. In our modern world, we define peace as the absence of war or conflict. Jesus told us there would be conflict in our lives for serving Him. He said that even our family would become our enemies (Matthew 10:34-39). The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*, and it means wholeness. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). The fruit of peace is the in-

ner wholeness that comes from walking with God. When our lives are falling apart on the outside, we are not falling apart on the inside. Our outward environment has not changed our inward resolve to obey Him. God's Spirit is consoling us and making us whole in the middle of trials. Jesus said we should not be troubled or afraid when He spoke about His peace. When we pray, the peace of God guards our hearts and minds. It surpasses human understanding because wholeness in the midst of outward turmoil is beyond the natural mind of humans (Phil. 4:6-7). In the world, there is peace only when there is a lack of conflict. With Christ, there is peace with or without conflict. Of course, we must live in peace with others. This means having a wholeness of relationship and not merely an agreement to avoid conflict.

The next fruit is patience. It can also be translated as endurance, perseverance, or longsuffering. In America, the word patience has a connotation of waiting for something. The Greek word literally means to breathe very passionately for an extended period of time. To have fruit that lasts, we must have trials that last. Some trials do not last long in terms of human time, but they seem long when we are going through them. Patience manifests as we endure in trials.

Some trials do not last long in terms of human time, but they seem long when we are going through them.

When we are provoked to act, we refrain. This is patience or long suffering. Our normal, fleshly reactions are restrained so that the longsuffering Christ had for us may be visible to others. In these tough situations, we allow our Savior to work out situations beyond our control instead of working them out by our human understanding. We must also have patience when we deal with each other. After all, the Lord shows us patience and endures us while we learn from Him.

When we experience the fruits of peace and patience, God's character is being refined in us. This is preparing us to be used in God's Kingdom Work. Next time we will finish by covering the last five fruits.

Kelly McDonald, Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. Kelly has authored nine books and twenty booklets. He is the editor for the ministry's magazine, Pursuit. He received his bachelor's degree summa cum laude from Lambuth University. Kelly has been preaching since 2007, and is available to speak at other churches upon request.

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military bases well beyond their recognized international borders. Our policies of acquiescence, appeasement and containment will not work. There should be no need to reiterate the details of the Ukraine crisis at the moment.

The days of western dominance and economic might are over.

Hope for a return to basic morality might seem distant. Revival and right relationships, according to history, do however return, but only it seems after a time of suffering – a time of suffering when our enemies are victors, when perhaps Sharia law displaces democracy, and when the entire world is at war. That is, in effect, what Jesus says. That's what the Christian Bible echoes in both old and new testaments. And that's what we need to understand.

War is coming. We have the nuclear missiles, the warships, tanks and planes, as well as the protagonists. And in this war, be it outright conflict or through years of attrition, because of our immorality, it will quickly become apparent who is the weaker side.

Now the "politically correct" might describe our embrace of Jesus' teachings as "homophobic." They also commonly tout the term of "marriage equality." Such trendy buzzwords are subtle inventions designed to linguistically sound appealing to the voting public. And yet marriage historically and culturally has always been defined as the covenant lifetime relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of any others. Homosexuality isn't marriage.

Followers of Jesus cannot remain silent; we're called to shine the light in both our life example and in the things for which we speak out. And because our words find momentum and authorship in the Holy Spirit, we would have committed the greater sin by remaining silent.

Therefore, cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and allow Jesus' words to again echo across this country. Someone has to speak up!

John Klassek is an ordained elder in the Church of God, and active in the broader Sabbatarian community. He defines his Christian walk in terms of simply following Jesus. In 2010 John published the book "Hope of the Resurrection" which, now in its 3rd edition, is being distributed right across the world for free. Visit www.classicit.net.

Very soon attention was given to the gentile world (Acts 13: 46), and His disciples for the first time in history were nicknamed "Christian" at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

Ideologically, Greco-Roman, Christian thought defined the gospel of Jesus Christ as both the correction and fulfillment of Greek and Roman philosophy.

Gradually the gentile nations began to recognize that the coming of Jesus divided history into two distinct eras. B.C. and A.D., leading eventually to the printing of annual calendars to reflect how many years the world had come from that night when the angels sang, "for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11).

Eventually this crucified "enemy of Rome" was named the only begotten Son of God, and Savior of the World, and within four centuries He was believed by millions to be coequal and coeternal with God the Father.

Since Jesus Christ made such an impact upon the world, a person might think that all peoples would know about Him, would recognize His name, and explain His mission on earth.

On the contrary, the vast majority of people today live in spiritual ignorance. It is said that one half of all people have not heard of this Man. Among many of those who claim to believe in Him, controversy often blurs His person and work. Scholars dissect His words, weigh His inflections, and question His authority. Among philosophers, historians, and nominal Christians the question still is "Who was Jesus Christ?" If those who claim to be His disciples are unclear about Him and His mission, how shall the world understand who He is or what His purpose is?

Knowing Who He Is

Knowing who Jesus is connects us with God in a vital relationship, rather than a religious observance or a philosophy of life. This relationship cannot be understood merely by logical conclusions or natural laws of physics. Jesus Christ is beyond the material world and our finite understanding. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him

not" (John 1:10).

It is only by faith that we grasp and appropriate the meeting of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Faith transcends history either secular or biblical. Faith lifts Jesus out of the pages of the past, brings Him into the present, and projects Him into the future. He transcends time: "before Abraham was, I am" (John 8: 58); these are the words of Jesus himself. He did not say, "was" or "will be," but "I am"—the present tense.

History alone does not prove His deity; that is left to our faith. The Bible records and affirms it, experience confirms it, but only faith decides and embraces it.

Drawing on biblical revelation, confirmed by over 2000 years of history, reason, and personal experience, disciples of Jesus Christ emphatically proclaim that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. He is unique in the universe. He came as a man and yet he was God. He is both God and God's means of redeeming fallen, sinful humankind.

"... the vast majority of people today live in spiritual ignorance. It is said that one half of all people have not heard of this Man."

Two Natures

Jesus Christ is one Person with two distinct natures. He has a distinct human nature, and a distinct divine nature. As a result, Jesus Christ has perfect humanity and undiminished deity. These two are united in one person forever as 100% God and 100% man.

Christ added humanity to deity. He became the God-man, not God and man. Christ is the invisible God and God is the visible Christ. This is not a paradox but a mystery of our faith.

In the first three centuries of church history, the humanity of Christ and the deity of Christ were both often denied from time to time. In our day however,

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel"

the deity of Christ is denied.

His Humiliation

The two natures of Christ must not be confused with his divine states of humiliation (Philippians 2: 5-8) and exaltation (Philippians 2:9-11). It was necessary for Christ to have two natures. It was necessary for Him to have a human nature in order to die. Yet, in order for Him to be effective in His total ministry, He had to have a divine nature.

Christ took on human nature, but not our sinful fallen human nature. The incarnation is necessary because God could not die, and man could not atone for sins. Jesus Christ remained who He was and became what we are.

There is none other like Jesus Christ. He came, but He was already here. He went away, but He never left. He became a man, but He never ceased to be God. He was the creator Who became the creature. He was the first to become the last, but He did not cease to be the first. He made himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of a man. He humbled himself, but God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is LORD.

Our Mediator

Jesus Christ, the son of God, was indwelt by God (2Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 10:50. He spoke as God (John 7:46) and He spoke as man (John 19:28). He knew why He was in the world (Luke 2:29). And he completed the work for which He was sent (John 17:4: 19:30).

As the son of God, He qualified perfectly as a mediator

between God and man. Paul wrote of "the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2 : 5), but he also called Jesus "the only wise God" (1 Timothy 1:17). A true mediator must have the qualities of both entities. That is why Jesus fully qualifies as our mediator. He has the attributes of both God and man!

Sin separates us from our Creator. Only Jesus Christ can bridge that gap. God sent His son to be born of a virgin. He grew to manhood and proved His deity by healing the sick, raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, and ultimately by resurrection from the dead. Later He ascended into heaven to serve as our advocate, mediator or priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

He established a new and better covenant on the promises of mercy, forgiveness, and assurance of salvation by faith in His atonement for sin (Hebrews 8:6).

Our Coming King

In His earthly ministry He was our prophet. In His heavenly ministry He serves as both our priest and our coming king.

Paul wrote: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (2 Timothy 2:8).

This reveals that Jesus Christ was a true man, descended from King David, and the promise is made that He will reign on David's throne, and of His government there shall be no end (Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-36).

Systems of human government will come and go, kingdoms and empires will rise and fall, but the kingdom of Jesus Christ will abide throughout eternity.

This is the real Jesus Christ; any other is a man made Jesus, and is helpless and worthless. The real Jesus will someday reign as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19: 16).

Dr. Terril D. Littrell became a member of the Bible Sabbath Association in 1961. He served as assistant editor of the Sabbath Sentinel in 1967 and served on the Board of Directors from 1967-1969. He was elected president of the B.S.A. from 1970-1978.

isn't working with other human beings; it simply means that those so-called have a greater responsibility.

Second: Think of understanding God's word like a jigsaw puzzle. The only way to truly understand where all the pieces fit into the bigger picture is to have seen the picture on the top of the box. Others may be able to piece together several smaller parts but, without seeing the bigger picture, they can't complete the puzzle. This analogy allows that some may carefully study individual pieces and come to know their piece, or pieces, very well. There are Sunday keepers that understand parts of God's word better than some Sabbatarians do.

This is Satan's world and his forces will do anything to obscure the truths of God. We are all going to hear and read false doctrines every day. That doesn't mean we should close our eyes, ears and minds to what's being taught in the name of Christ. There will certainly be some truth in what's being taught. As Christians we must develop spiritual discernment and guard against spiritual blindness. To grow we must exercise that discernment. Exercising it means learning to separate what's true from what's false. It doesn't mean ignoring it completely.

We'd all like to believe that we have the intellectual maturity to read the scriptures and understand them. The truth is it takes more than intellectual maturity. We must be guided by God's Holy Spirit to see the picture on top of the box and understand how the principles in God's word fit together. That understanding comes from obeying what God has allowed us to understand. If someone reads the Bible and comes away understanding only one thing—let us say an understanding that stealing is wrong—and they go away and cease to steal because they want to obey God, I believe He blesses them for their level of understanding and obedience. We are all responsible for what we have come to understand. God's allowing someone to understand more than they are prepared for can put them in spiritual danger. Anyone who has matured as a Christian and grown in grace and knowledge understands that.

Because of that we can't condemn or ridicule someone who doesn't understand what we have come to understand. That simply makes no sense. There are sincere

people in the world of Christendom who are obeying God to the best of their understanding—the best of their calling. Many of them have come to know the parts of the puzzle they've studied very well. For that reason they're worth listening to. As in all things we must exercise our spiritual discernment and weed out the truth from the error in what anyone teaches.

Some groups believe they have a prophet, apostle or pope through whom God reveals His will. We can allow for the possibility that such may be true. However, what those individuals teach is still subject to the scrutiny of our spiritual discernment. Since, historically, great abuses have been committed through the hierarchal forms of church government wherein such spiritual leaders are found, exercising our spiritual discernment and guarding against spiritual blindness are critical. The Protestant reformation came about out of a 'protest' against such a form of church government. The slogan of the Protestant Reformation became "Sola Scriptura" meaning the final authority in all matters of correct doctrine lays in only one place—the Holy Scriptures. *

As honest Christians the scriptures must be the final authority in what we are to believe. Like the Bereans in the Book of Acts, we must continually search the scriptures and prove all things. We must continually search ourselves for any trace of spiritual blindness and we must exercise spiritual discernment. There is no organization on earth that will ensure our salvation. Each of us is personally responsible to our Heavenly Father for our own salvation.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11 (KJV).

*Some organizations don't believe the Bible is the final authority. The Catholic and Mormon churches, for example, believe their 'latter day revelations' outweigh any scriptures.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15 (KJV).

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. 5:1 (KJV).

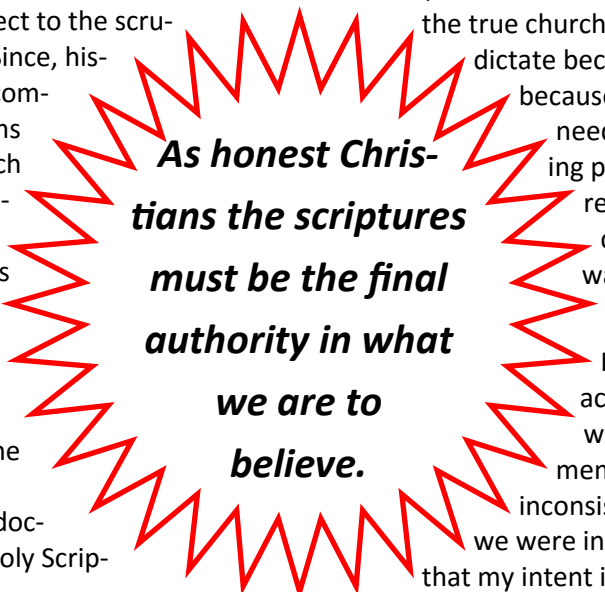
On a personal level, like many readers of the Sentinel, I was once a member of the Worldwide Church of God under the leadership of Herbert Armstrong. One of the things that drew me to the organization was Mr. Armstrong's often repeated dictate to not believe him but to study the scriptures, to see if what he said was true. If, the church claimed, we teach the truth of the scriptures then we are the true church. Unfortunately, after baptism, the dictate became "what we are telling you is true because we are the true church—so one need not think any further." To a thinking person that's a clear case of circular reasoning. Exercising spiritual discernment was discouraged when it was turned toward the leadership and teachings of the church.

Many things were supposed to be accepted without question...because we were in "the true church." Most members were spiritually blind to the inconsistencies and obvious errors because we were in "the true church." I should add here that my intent is not to bash the old WCG. There were many sincere Christians who only sought to obey their Creator in that organization. It taught a great deal of truth in the process of spreading the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God.

Only God can open our minds to understand His truths and most of us realize from life experience that He tends to do so a little at a time. We must learn to be open to what the Most High is attempting to teach us. If we are faithful to obey what God reveals to us then He may reveal more. He holds us responsible for what we understand; so there is a danger in allowing someone to understand too much at once.

We should always be open to what God teaches us through His Holy Spirit. We can be guided by the truth that the Holy Spirit will never contradict what the scriptures

Continued on page 17, "Blindness."



teach. If you believe God's Holy Spirit is leading you in a direction contrary to the scriptures then you are NOT listening to the right spirit.

This is meant to show that we can be spiritually blind to the error that those within our sphere teach because of our trust. On the flip side of that is the fact that we can also be blind to what truth those outside our sphere teach because they don't believe what we do.

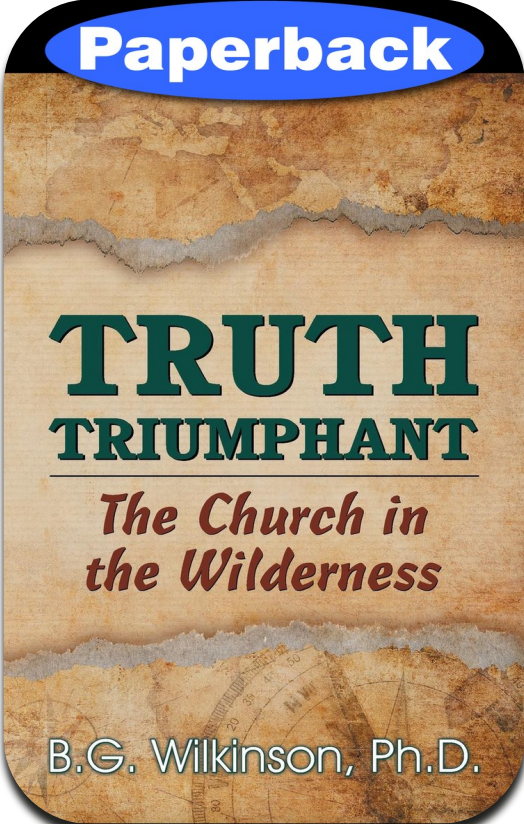
The airwaves, both on television and on radio, are full of people claiming to preach the true gospel. Some of them have a great deal of truth; some of them have very little. For the mature Christian, grounded in the truth, they are worth listening to simply for the nuggets of truth they contain.

Several organizations do great work in strengthening the family, helping others become free of addictions and teaching the person of Christ. We can take those nuggets and leave the rest.

My point is this: When someone tells you to stop "proving all things" and simply believe them a red flag should go up in your mind. That's a sign you may be dealing with a cult. We should ALWAYS search the scriptures and hold what we believe up to them to prove them. And we should always allow for the possibility that we may be wrong. Remember, "Prove all things" is one of over 300 commandments in the New Testament. We grow in grace and knowledge by sifting out the wheat from the chaff both from those within our spheres and those without.

We simply aren't qualified to determine with whom God is and isn't working. We can, and should, always weigh what they believe and teach against the scriptures. We can know them by their fruits. To do that we must guard against our own spiritual blindness and we must exercise spiritual discernment. Finally, we must bear our own fruits. Our judgement must begin with us.

Terrell Perkins graduated from Ambassador College in 1981, and has been a Sabbath keeper since. Terrell lives in Capitan, New Mexico, and works as an artist-blacksmith hand forging metal sculpture; architectural hardware; furniture and blades. He has been a freelance writer for over 30 years. Contact him at: Terrell_Perkins@yahoo.com



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of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one towards another; men working with men that which is unseemly [*indecent*], and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet [*appropriate*]. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient [*proper*]" (Rom. 1:24-28).

Notice in the above passage that the full fruition of rejecting God and His law is homosexuality, which the Bible calls uncleanness, vile affections, and an idea that is spawned from reprobate minds. There is nothing more unclean, vile, and reprobate than homosexual behavior. It is the apex of perversion, the grand climax of a nation's descent into immorality.

"But Daniel, isn't bestiality more perverse than homosexual acts?" Maybe, but I'd say no, for two reasons. First, because Romans 1 portrays homosexuality as the epitome of perversion. Secondly, because bestiality involves only one person made in the image of God defiling himself. Homosexuality involves two people made in the image of God defiling themselves with each other, so it is twice as depraved.

Also notice in Romans 1 that it is God, not the Devil, who gives these people over to this depravity.

I am convinced that the widespread acceptance and celebration of homosexuality in this nation is a madness and spiritual blindness sent by God because of this nation's continued disobedience. If you do not believe this, consider the following:

The percentage of Americans who are homosexuals is

actually quite low, somewhere between 1% and 2% according to polls I have read. And many, perhaps most, of that small percentage are not political activists pushing for the acceptance and celebration of homosexuality; they are just people who want to do their depraved deeds, and they have no desire to harass the heterosexuals. So the actual number of homosexuals who are political activists pushing for the acceptance and celebration of their perversion is a very small number, percentage-wise.

Some people wonder how such a tiny minority is able to impose its will on the majority so easily. Yes, the homosexuals have Hollywood and the mainstream media behind them, but even that does not explain how such a small number of people can impose their will on the majority. The only explanation that makes sense is a spiritual one. And that spiritual explanation can be found in the Scriptures.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul tells us that if people do not love the knowledge of the truth, then God Himself will send them strong delusion so that they will believe a lie and be damned, as it is written:

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. 2:11f).

The cause of this God-sent delusion is stated in the previous verse: "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

If someone resists the truth and refuses the truth long enough, at some point God gives them over to a reprobate mind. God Himself sends them a delusion strong enough to convince them that a lie is true, so that they will be damned.

We see examples of this happening in the Bible. In the story of the Prophet Micaiah, the Bible says that Yahweh sent a lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets, so

that Ahab would be deceived into going to war and then fall in battle and die. (See 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18.)

Yahweh also sent an evil spirit to trouble King Saul after his disobedience. (See 1 Samuel 16.)

In Ezekiel we learn that if a false prophet is deceived, it is Yahweh, not the Devil, who has deceived that prophet:

"And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I Yahweh have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of My people Israel" (Ezk. 14:9).

Think about the implications of these truths about God-ordained deception. If God Himself is the one who has deceived the people by sending them strong delusion, and if God's purpose in sending them this strong delusion is so that they will believe a lie and be damned for their refusal of the truth, what can be done for such people?

Yahweh warned that disobedience will eventually bring the curse of madness and blindness upon a nation. "Yahweh shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart" (Deut. 28:28).

Our nation has been smitten with a God-sent insanity. This madness is driving even heterosexuals to celebrate homosexuality. If someone is insane, you cannot use logic and common sense to try to reason with the insane person. You cannot reason with a madman in the same way that you can reason with a sane man. This explains why the homosexual debate cannot be won by reasoning from the Scriptures.

Even some clueless "Christians" who claim to believe the Scriptures have been smitten with this madness and spiritual blindness. Someone recently made me aware

of a series of YouTube videos of various heterosexual people who claim to be Bible-believing Christians explaining why the Bible does not really condemn homosexual acts. These counterfeit Christians say that Christians who condemn homosexuality "are being very hypocritical." Why? Because the anti-gay Christians eat pork, and get tattoos, and the women don't wear head coverings, the pro-gay "Christians" say.

"Paul wrote that women should always keep their heads covered in church," the pro-gay counterfeit Christians correctly point out. "Yet Christian women don't feel morally obligated to follow that edict."

And Jesus broke the law when he healed the man at the pool of Bethesda, they claim. "He broke the law," they say. "And He didn't break just any obscure ordinance.

He broke one of the hallowed Ten Commandments, 'Remember the Sabbath day. On it you shall do no work.' Jesus broke one of the biggest laws in the whole Bible."

(Of course Jesus did not break the Sabbath; He only broke the Pharisees' man-made rules, their flawed interpretation of the Sabbath.)

These counterfeit Christians say that the Old Testament laws that prohibit same-sex relations do not matter now.

"Christians aren't supposed to follow Levitical laws," they say. "In the New Testament, Paul repeatedly and explicitly says that following Christ means no longer following the Hebrew laws of the Old Testament. Christians are under no obligation - none - to follow the laws of the Jewish Bible."

As someone who believes that Christians are supposed to obey the commandments of God in both the Old Testament and New Testament (including keeping the Sabbath and dietary laws, not getting tattoos, and women wearing head coverings), I find it very ironic that these counterfeit Christians use the typical Christian's twisted

"And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I Yahweh have deceived that prophet..."

view of the Torah to justify homosexual acts.

God warned that He would send strong delusion to people who do not love the knowledge of the truth. The seed for this God-sent deception is the antinomianism that was embraced by the Church after the death of the Apostles. Antinomianism has saturated the Church since the second century. Now the seed of antinomianism is finally bearing its bitter fruit of strong delusion.

So, what can be done for those people whom God Himself has deceived? To my knowledge, not very much.

That might sound cold and cruel and pessimistic. But if God Himself "gave them up to uncleanness" and "gave them up unto vile affections" and "gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1), what can I possibly do for them? If God Himself sent them strong delusion as a judgment for refusing the truth, so that they will be damned, then what can I possibly do to un-deceive these accursed people?

As long as deceived people remain in an unrepentant state with their hearts hardened and their consciences seared, they will remain deceived. God obviously wants these truth-rejecters to be deceived, because He sent them strong delusion so that they would believe a lie.

The only hope for these deceived people is to repent, to turn to God with a sincere desire for the knowledge of the truth.

Yahweh is the one who sent them the strong delusion as judgment for their rejection of truth, and He is the only one who can remove the strong delusion from their darkened hearts and un-deceive them. And He will only remove the strong delusion if they repent and express a sincere desire to know the truth and are willing to walk in that truth with God's help.

I cannot un-deceive those whom God has deceived. The only thing I know that can be done for people whom God has deceived is to warn them of the wrath to come,

and to then leave the results in Yahweh's hands, as it is written:

"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezk. 3:18f).

I don't want any blood on my hands. If you do not want any blood on your hands, you must condemn homosexuality, not condone it. You must abominate it, not celebrate it.

No, I do not hate homosexuals, just as I do not hate heterosexual adulterers. God sent His Son to suffer and die to pay the penalty for their sins and mine. I do not want Yeshua's suffering on their behalf to be for nought, so I want to see them repent and be reconciled to their Maker. Some of them have done that, and they are now my brothers.

Every sodomite is a potential saint. But without repentance, without turning away from sin, there is no reconciliation. The sacrifice of the Son of God takes away a sinner's sins only if the sinner repents and believes the good news. Without repentance and faith, there is only God's wrath to look forward to, as it is written:

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26f).

Daniel Botkin publishes a bimonthly magazine, Gates of Eden. See www.gatesofeden.org. For a sample copy of the magazine, send \$3 to Gates of Eden, PO Box 2257, East Peoria IL 61611-0257. Daniel is also an artist. See samples of his artwork at www.danielbotkin.com.

Continued from page 7, "Orphan."

Psalm 19 are extensive, and Psalm 119 actually appears to be an expansion of the thoughts found in that psalm:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous." (Psalm 19:7-9).

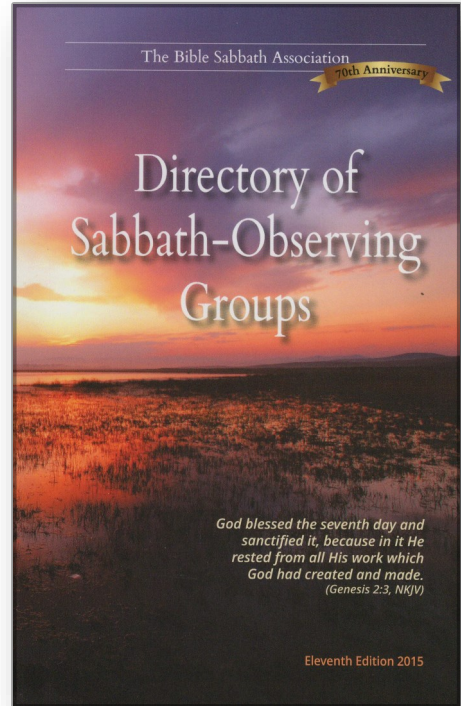
As Dusti Howell wrote in a previous issue of the *Sentinel*, words such as law, statutes, testimonies, commandments, and precepts appear throughout Psalm 119.

Taken together, these facts may not prove David's authorship of Psalm 119, but they certainly indicate it as being likely. When we combine the acrostic structure and allusions to the life of the author, as well as the specific vocabulary and expressions used, we have a combination of factors which support the likelihood of David's authorship of this great psalm.

As was stressed above, this is not just a matter of scholarly concern – Psalm 119 is especially important. It is longer than many books of the Bible (to be specific, it has more verses than 14 Old Testament Books and 17 New Testament Books), and any information which might help us to better understand the content of this psalm is worthwhile. The likelihood that Psalm 119 was composed by David, also, perhaps increases the likelihood that other orphan psalms (such as Psalm 111) were also written by David, even if they are not attributed to him in the biblical text.

One thing is certain, however. The orphan psalms, like Old Testament books such as Ruth, Esther, Job, Kings, Chronicles and others, and the New Testament Book of Hebrews, all remind us that the names and the people themselves who wrote the word of God are never as important as the message itself. In our age of "celebrity" televangelists, "famed" gospel preachers and "best-selling" devotional writers, it is good to remember that the identity of the authorship of even the longest chapter of the Bible is uncertain and unimportant compared to its timeless, inspired, and inspiring message.

R. Herbert (a pen name), Ph.D., was trained in biblical and ancient Near Eastern languages, culture and archaeology. He writes for a number of Christian venues as well as for his websites at LivingWithFaith.org and TacticalChristianity.org.

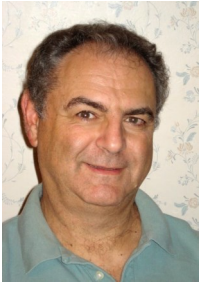


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The Centurions

By

Lenny Cacchio

No, the centurions were not a 1950's Rock and Roll band, at least not as far as I know. Centurions were Roman military officers who were commanders over military units of about 100 men each. They were ubiquitous in the Holy Land during Jesus' day because, after all, Judea and its environs were occupied territory.

Yet there is something curious about each and every centurion mentioned in the New Testament. Let's take a quick survey of these men and the accounts about them.

Luke 7:1-10 and Matthew 8: 5-13 -- A centurion sends word to Jesus, begging him to come and heal a servant who is paralyzed and near death. Jesus agrees and offers to go to the servant's bedside. As Jesus is on his way the centurion sends word to Jesus, stating his own unworthiness to have the Lord "trouble" himself to "enter under his roof," and instead to just say the word, knowing that his servant would be healed. Jesus marvels at his faith and heals the servant from a distance.

Mark 15:39 -- After seeing signs (a darkened sun, an earthquake, and the temple veil being torn), a centurion recognizes that "truly this man was the Son of God."

Acts 10: 1-48 -- The centurion Cornelius, "a devout man and one who feared God with all his household", and "who gave alms generously to the people", and "who prayed to God always" receives a special revelation from God to send for Peter for instruction in the way of God. God chooses this centurion and his household to be the first of the Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 22: 25-26 -- Paul is delivered to the soldiers to be

scourged even though there is no basis for it other than unfounded accusations by a small politically-driven religious class. Paul addresses a centurion who was standing by and reveals his Roman citizenship, which meant it was illegal for him to be scourged. The centurion prevents the scourging and appeals Paul's case to the commander, who rescinds his previous order.



Acts 24:23 -- A centurion at the command of the governor Felix allows Paul liberty.

Acts 27 -- A centurion named Julius is charged with the transporting of Paul as a prisoner to Rome. He treats Paul in a "kindly" way by allowing Paul to go ashore to receive medical care. Later (verse 43) he saves Paul's life as the ship was about to break up.

I take a lesson from this, though I am sure there are many more than just one. First Century Rome was an extremely corrupt place. Its empire was corrupt, its morals were corrupt, its people were corrupt, its officials were corrupt. In spite of all this there were still men of honor who were a part of the Roman system.

It is the same today. It is tempting sometime to paint everyone in the government employ with the same wet brush. But that just isn't fair, as the stories of the centurions show.

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

Centurion image courtesy of: Jesusinlove.blogspot.com.es.



Letters to the Editor

ADVERTISEMENTS

I wanted to leave you some feedback on the latest Sentinel (*Summer 2015*). I think it turned out beautifully! The format changed a little...for the better. It looks very clean and crisp. My hat is off to Royce Mitchell!

I hope this finds you (*BSA President Calvin Burrell*) and your family well. You, too, are in my prayers. I appreciate very much what you do in the BSA. I think it very important to have a source that attempts to unify Sabbath keeping Christians instead of dividing them...

Terrell Perkins

For such a beautiful and wonderful blessing you've been to me. Many times our Fathers Ruach Haqodesh has used you as a tool, buffer, guide and answer to prayers. You've fed and watered me and shedding powerful light in dark times. You've been a confirmation in almost every aspect of my studies and have helped me to grow. That you all for your love and consistency. For reaching out into dark places connecting one to another in love and truth, in wisdom and righteousness. It's a wonder in these chaotic times how the Father is bringing each part of his Son's body together, assembling us in preparation of His return and reign. Using each of us in unique ways and unexpected places that His Word might continue to manifest Himself in each of our lives and those around us. Thank you Sabbath Sentinel for being there for us.

Prisoner in Huntsville, TX

Old lady (70) on Louisiana farm needs help renovating mobile home. Got halfway and ran out of money. Will provide vegetarian meals and place to sleep. Work at your own pace and take off to see the sights. Stay a few days or a few weeks. In the meantime I am living in an old RV. Help! (318) 649-8815.

LETTERS, continued...

Thank you for responding to my last letter. The pamphlets you sent were great and I have shared them with others here who still hold to a Sunday worship...I really enjoy reading and studying and then sharing what I learn with others...Thank you for sharing information about the Sabbath with people everywhere. May your ministry continue to be blessed by God!

Prisoner in Las Animas, CO

I am writing because I have been enjoying your "Sabbath Sentinel" for several years...I have been recently transferred and as far as I can tell (*there are*) no other Sabbath keepers. I was hoping that you might donate a subscription so that I might continue to be blessed by the bible based articles and teachings and that I in turn might bless others here with it, too.

Prisoner in Rosharon, TX

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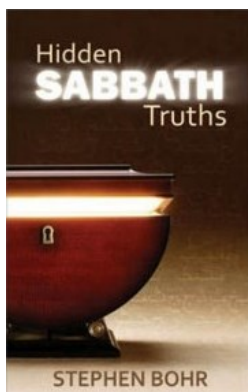
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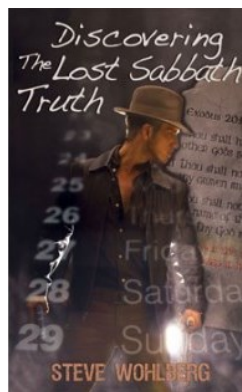
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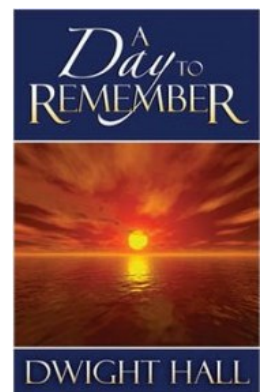
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**Discovering the Lost Sabbath Truth
by Steve Solberg.**

Beginning in Genesis, through the Ten Commandments and Jesus' example, the brief pages of this pocketbook declares the veracity of the Sabbath. In Discovering the Lost Sabbath Truth, the murkiness gives way to the facts of human tradition and the church history of how leaders attempted to change God's law to fit their own way of thinking. The author parallels Christ's Sabbath rest once He finished the creation of this world to His Sabbath rest when He concluded His earthly work of salvation. Even in death, He rested on the Sabbath day. Since the Garden of Eden, man has wanted things his way. From the cross, Jesus pleaded with us to choose Him and His day.

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