

The Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2012

**Springtime when
life is renewed**



BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2012 Volume 64, No. 2 Issue 554

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Our Cover: *Springtime brings renewal and new birth.*

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Many Thanks!



THANK YOU! I greatly appreciate all of the cards, letters, and books I received after I had my heart attack in December. I have a huge stack of mail from people saying that they were praying for me, and I don't know how to say "thank you" enough. I guess that's why I am saying it here. I have mail from people whom I do not know expressing in Christian love their prayers and desires for my quick recovery. I am thankful to all of you and to our Father in heaven that in Him and in His Son there is unity.

Let me explain about this unity that we have in Christ, which I never really experienced in its fullness until my heart attack. At the hospital where I had open-heart surgery, a circle of friends gathered to pray during my surgery. Many of these people would never worship together or even be in the same place at the same time. They would not have met each other or known each other under any other circumstance, yet they were there praying together for the same thing — my recovery and healing. The unity in that room was their unity in Christ. I remember an evangelist who used to say, somewhat mockingly, that if "Christ is the answer," what is the question? I can tell you with certainty that for the Christian, Christ is the answer to all questions. Our trust is in Him; our hope is in Him; our future is in Him. What else is there?

There were a number of miracles that occurred during this heart-attack saga. Let me relate one that got us to the hospital in a timely manner. My wife transported me about 15 miles to the hospital in our van. It so happens that the highway that we took to the hospital runs parallel with the railroad tracks. Sometimes when the trains are running, cross traffic is stopped and the route up the highway to Wichita has green lights all the way. When we left the house for the hospital, my wife prayed that God would send a train to run interference for us up the highway. The timing could not have been better. There was a train that ran parallel with us along the highway giving us a green light at all the major intersections. I suppose that you could call this a coincidence, but with God there is no such thing as luck.

Let me relate another amazing event that took place. A close friend of mine is a computer programmer. He has been working on a program that analyzes every word in the Greek New Testament. The program is really amazing and very easy to use. It is called Greek-ToMe. About a year and a half ago he asked me to create a Spanish version of the program. I didn't have to do any of the programming. All I had to do was create the Spanish vocabulary that corresponded to the Eng-

lish version of the program. The user of the program would simply select the language he wanted to use (English, Spanish, or French), and the program would select the vocabulary that corresponds to the user's language. Well, the project was somewhat tedious and fairly lengthy, so I would often put off working on the Spanish version in favor of something more "pleasant." About two months before my heart attack I started getting a really strong conviction in my Spirit that I needed to finish the project, so I put my shoulder to the wheel and worked on the translation "religiously" for the next two months. I finally finished the project at the end of November and handed over the files to my friend. The very next day I had my heart attack.

If you would like to try out the GreekToMe program, it is free. For my friend, Chuck King, this is his ministry. That's why he charges nothing for the program. Here is the URL where you can download the program. <http://www.angelfire.com/jazz/greektome/>. It works on the PC, Mac, or Ubuntu (a version of Linux).

Let me tell you about my wife Patti's work schedule. Patti teaches at a school district near where we live. At the end of last year's school term she found out that she was being transferred from high school to elementary school. This didn't sit well with my wife. She had not taught elementary school in many years, and was hired to teach high school in her district several years ago after spending a number of terms teaching at a nearby community college, so her orientation was toward older students and young adults. We lobbied hard all summer long to avoid having her return to the elementary classroom, but nothing worked. Even when other jobs opened up in the district, she seemed to be frozen out of those jobs. She started the year with a lot of frustration and hurt feelings, but God had other plans. Because she was teaching at the elementary level, when my heart attack occurred, she was able to take the entire month of December off from teaching in order to take care of me after I got home from heart surgery. If she had been teaching at the high school, it would not have been possible to take that amount of time off. The demands of the job and the kids at the high school would not have permitted her to miss that amount of school. She is now very thankful for God's decision regarding her job and has actually come to enjoy being with the little kids. God is indeed good.

My advice: Don't be too sure you have life figured out. Relax, trust God, and let Him do His work in your life. He has you in the palms of His hands.

—Kenneth Ryland



You Can Lay Hold on God

by Kenneth Westby

Almighty God, our Father, invites us to “lay hold on him.” Are we close enough to him to do it? Have you tried doing it? Exactly, how does this work?

Our God is a God who self-reveals. Were it not for what he has given us to know about him, we would know very little. God has given mankind two powerful forms of revelation. There is *natural revelation* (the stunning cosmos full of movement and life which to a thoughtful person speaks of an intelligent designer, a Creator) and *divine revelation*, God's self-disclosure preserved in the writing of Scripture. (Some would add a third form of revelation—*personal revelation* via a personal, spiritual relationship with God. This is valid, but I suggest it is made possible by the initiative of *divine revelation*.)

Nature's marvels provide clues to what its Designer might like, but not clear, discrete information about the Designer's personal nature, his Grand Plan, or why he made man “in his image.” His specific *divine revelation* gives meaning to natural revelation. It tells us who made the cosmos, us, and every living thing. It tells us why he made it. And, most important, it tells us what the Maker is like, his nature, character, his loves and hates—and what he expects from those he made in his image.

While God reveals the keys to his Grand Plan in Scripture, and provides answers to the biggest of our big “Why” questions—the ones in his wisdom he deems we need to know. Yahweh, nevertheless, remains sovereign in what he chooses to disclose and what he chooses to let remain hidden. He doesn't tell us all we *want* to know; he tells us what we *need* to know.

We can't find a back-door way to gain knowledge about God he has chosen not to reveal. Many mystics have tried, but only further confused themselves, their devotees plunging deeper into darkness. Except Yahweh (Yehovah) reveal himself, his ways are past finding out.

Thankfully, God has progressively revealed more of his plan through his actions, his prophets, and finally, through the ministry of his Son. Jesus quoted a Psalm in the midst of his kingdom of God proclamation:

*I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since
the creation of the world (Matthew 13:35).*

He praised his heavenly father who had “hidden these things from the ‘wise and learned,’ and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure” (Matthew 11:25–26). Paul exulted, “the mystery that has been kept hidden for the ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints” (Colossians 1:26).

It is God's pleasure to reveal himself, and he invites us to come close and learn what he has planned for us and our world. In Scripture this is precisely what God has done. He has given us, as it were, his genetic code, his Spirit.

The Father has given us a profile of what he is like: his nature, his character—perfectly exemplified by Jesus, his plan, his love, his creation, his history of dealing with nations, and individual men and women.

Oh, there are still a lot of things we'd like to know about God that he has kept hidden; how can God be eternal and without a beginning? How does he create? Where exactly is his heavenly realm? etc., etc. This information has been deemed “not for your eyes,” meaning, God thinks them unimportant to his purposes for now.

God has lavishly given us everything we need to fulfill his calling, which is to become like him. This means he has given us a very accurate picture of what he is like—even in a man, Jesus, who internalized and manifested the glorious image of his Father.

Thus, the knowledge of what God is like is for us the most precious knowledge of all knowledge. God has given us the absolutely most important knowledge in the cosmos—his self-revelation. Without this knowledge his command to become like him would be impossible to obey.

The most important command—“become holy as your heavenly father is holy”—must be coupled with the most important knowledge, the truth about God.

The most important knowledge is not just of facts about God, but of knowledgeable *actions toward* God. Amid distress the great prophet of Yahweh earnestly prayed:

*No one calls on your name
or strives to **lay hold of you**;
for you have hidden your face from us
and made us waste away because of our sins (Isaiah 64:7).*

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Adventist School Helps Jewish Athletes Keep Sabbath, Compete in Texas

by Mark Kellner

News editor, *Adventist Review*



Fort Worth's Burton Adventist Academy's fight helps Houston's Beren school play



AT BAT FOR SABBATH-KEEPING: Kevin Klein, athletic director of Burton Adventist Academy in Arlington, Texas, also coaches baseball at the school. He's gone to bat for Sabbath-keeping students conflicted over tournament games scheduled for the Sabbath, and helped win a reversal by the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools on the matter. On March 1, TAPPS backed down from forcing an Orthodox Jewish academy to forfeit its playoff spot over the same issue. [Burton Academy photos]

More than a decade of dogged persistence by a Seventh-day Adventist academy in Fort Worth, Texas, may have helped another parochial school—an Orthodox Jewish institution—gain a tournament rescheduling to move a game away from the Bible Sabbath, which both Jews and Adventists observe.

Facing a federal lawsuit filed by three parents and three students at the Houston school, the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) said it would relent and reschedule a semi-final game away from Sabbath hours. That allowed students from the Robert M. Beren Academy, the Orthodox Jewish school, to participate, while remaining able to observe the Sabbath. The lawsuit, which included the Mansfield (Texas) Independent School District, slated to host the competition, alleged religious discrimination on the defendant's part, which is prohibited under civil rights laws.

Annis Parker, Houston's mayor, and United States Senator John Cornyn, R-Tex., were among those who called on TAPPS to make an accommodation, media reports indicated.

"Unlike many people, TAPPS does follow the law, and we will comply," TAPPS executive director Edd Burluson told the Houston Chronicle, which was among several national media outlets that covered the story, including ESPN.com and The New York Times.

The Sabbath question was one Burluson had faced before, beginning in 2001. That's when Burton Adventist Academy, located in Arlington, Texas, a Fort Worth suburb, had "a really good basketball team," school athletic director Kevin Klein recalled.

Even though the Burton team had a 17-3 season, and won the agreement of the other schools slated for that year's play-

offs, TAPPS was adamant: the rules were the rules, and unless the Burton team played, they'd forfeit the game. The school stood its ground, which must have disappointed the students.

The same thing happened in 2004, he added. The school had a great year, was playoff bound, but their hoop dreams were dashed by TAPPS, despite support in the community and from local media.

"The kids deserve whatever they earned," Klein explained in a telephone interview with *Adventist Review*. "If they earned the chance to play for a state championship, let them play for it."

By 2010's fall soccer season, however, there was a crack in the TAPPS wall: if Burton Adventist Academy would secure, and pay for, an alternate venue for the soccer final previously scheduled for the Sabbath, TAPPS would accommodate them. The school complied, but the team lost its semi-final match, keeping them from the championship game.

Klein and the school saw it as a victory: here was an opening for Sabbath-keepers to compete with other private and parochial schools, while remaining true to their beliefs. A similar situation happened in 2011 with Burton's basketball team: the school made arrangements to cover rescheduling expenses, but lost a semifinal match.

Still, the growing momentum for Burton's students, now joined by national attention to the Beren Academy's case, may lead to a real change by TAPPS leadership.

"Our team having that opportunity really was a key part of this," Klein said, before departing to watch the Beren team play a pre-Sabbath game. "I'm just thrilled that it happened."

Beren's coach Chris Cole agreed: "All we asked for was a chance and we got it," he told ESPN.com.

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ADVENTIST ATHLETES: Soccer team from Burton Academy following a semifinal game loss in November of 2010. The team ended up third among state teams, and made history as being the first team to have TAPPS move a playoff game to avoid a conflict with the Bible Sabbath.

The Two Messiahs of Judaism

by Dr. Daniel Botkin



Judaism teaches that there will be two different Messiahs, *Mashiach ben David* and *Mashiach ben Yosef* (Messiah son of David and Messiah son of Joseph). When most people hear the title *Messiah*, they usually think of Messiah son of David, the one who will inaugurate and rule over the Messianic Kingdom. The rabbis were (and are) very aware of this aspect of the promised Messiah. The Scriptures speak about the coming Redeemer who will be victorious and rule forever over the Messianic Kingdom in a renewed earth. But the Prophets also wrote about the Messiah suffering and dying. To explain this seeming contradiction, the rabbis concluded that there must be two different Messiahs, one who will suffer and die and one who will reign as King. To the suffering Messiah, the rabbis gave the title *Mashiach ben Yosef*, to distinguish him from the reigning Messiah, *Mashiach ben David*.

Mashiach ben Yosef is not talked about as much as *Mashiach ben David*, but “a good number of [Jewish] commentators do refer to him briefly or at length,” according to Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet. Schochet devotes nine pages to *Mashiach ben Yosef* in Appendix II of his 110-page book *Mashiach*. Much of the information for this article is gleaned from Schochet’s book. Page numbers in parentheses reference Schochet’s book.

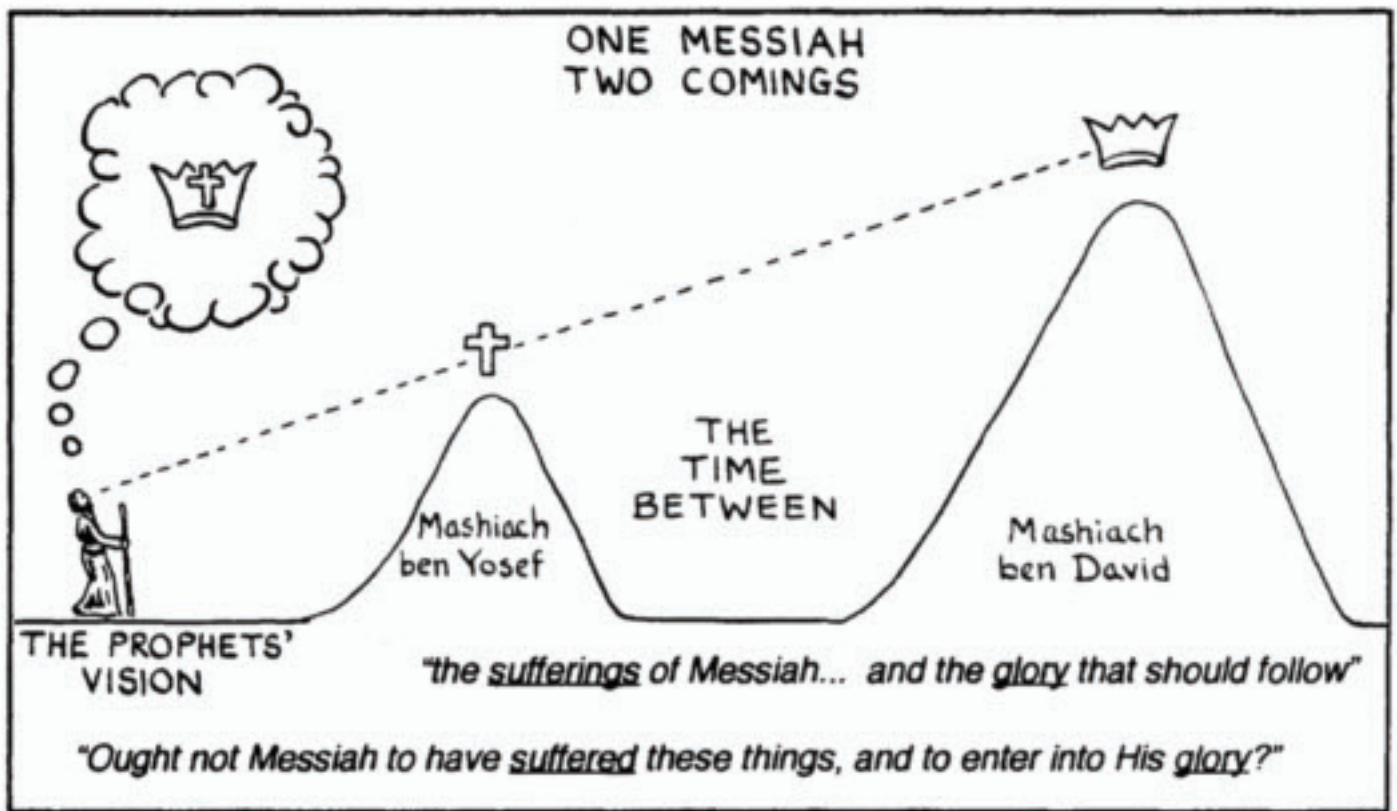
Schochet’s summary of what the rabbis taught about *Mashiach ben Yosef* is fascinating when one considers the similarities between Yeshua of Nazareth and some of the things the rabbis said about *Mashiach ben Yosef*. It is even more fascinating when one considers the fact that Jacob Immanuel Schochet, the rabbi who has compiled and summarized this information about *Mashiach ben Yosef* is not trying to make a case for Yeshua of Nazareth. As a matter of fact, Schochet is actually an anti-missionary, and is therefore strongly opposed to the suggestion that Yeshua was the Messiah. (Schochet’s anti-missionary activity was briefly mentioned by another writer in *Gates of Eden* 8-3, page 8.) When information comes from a witness who is hostile to your case, it makes the evidence even more compelling. With that thought in mind, let’s consider some of the things that Jewish commentators have said about Messiah ben Yosef, and compare their description of this Messiah to Yeshua of Nazareth.

The rabbis dubbed this Messiah “son of Joseph because they believed (erroneously) that he would be a

descendant of Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, and a descendant of Joshua. With this belief, they could just as easily have dubbed him ‘ben Ephraim’ or ‘ben Joshua,’ but they chose to call him ben Yosef. This is interesting in view of the fact that 1) Yeshua’s earthly foster father was named Yosef; and, 2) Joseph’s rejection and betrayal by his brothers, and his later exaltation among the Gentiles in Egypt, is an exact pattern of what Yeshua experienced in His role as Messiah ben Yosef. Though Yeshua was not a physical descendant of Joseph, He can be viewed as a descendant in a figurative, symbolic, prophetic sense. As a matter of fact, one rabbi drew “an analogy between the role of Joseph in Egypt and the role of the *Mashiach*” (page 96, fn. 7).

The “suffering and dying” aspect of *Mashiach ben Yosef* presents the most striking similarity to Yeshua. Amazingly, the rabbis point to Zechariah 12:10 as a prophecy of the suffering Messiah, *Mashiach ben Yosef*: “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born” (KJV). The New Testament references this verse to the piercing of Yeshua (in John 19:37 & Revelation 1:7). That such an idea accords with what rabbinical commentators said about Zechariah 12:10 is obvious (the following quotes are not printed in Schochet’s book, but he does refer to “Sukkah 52a, and parallel passages” in footnote 12, without quoting these parallel passages):

- Sukkah (52a): “It is well according to him who explains that the cause (of the mourning [in Zech. 12:10]) is the slaying of the Messiah the son of Joseph, since that well agrees with the Scripture verse: ‘And they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced: and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.’”
- Rashi (and also Radak): “Our rabbis interpreted it as referring to Messiah ben Joseph.”
- Rabbi Moses Alshech: “‘They shall look unto me,’ for they shall lift up their eyes unto me in perfect repentance, when they see him whom they have pierced, that is Messiah, the son of Joseph; for our rabbis, of blessed memory, have said that he will take upon himself all the guilt of Israel, and shall then be slain in the war to make atonement in such manner that it shall be



accounted as if Israel had pierced him, for on account of their sin he has died; and, therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent and look to the blessed One, saying that there is none beside him to forgive those that mourn on account of him who died for their sin: this is the meaning of 'They shall look upon me.'

The rabbis not only said that Messiah ben Yosef would suffer and die; they also said he would be resurrected shortly after his death (page 98). The rabbis believed that Messiah ben David would come and resurrect him. The rabbis' understanding of the details and sequence of events was somewhat off, but they did see a Messiah who would suffer and die and be resurrected soon after his death. Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, the greatest Jewish sage of the 10th century, actually taught that the sequence of events was not definite, but contingent upon "the spiritual condition of the Jewish people at the time the redemption is to take place" (page 98). In other words, if Israel repents at the appointed time of the Redemption, the suffering and death of Messiah ben Yosef might not have to take place; if Israel does *not* repent at the appointed time, Messiah ben Yosef will have to suffer and die. (The rabbis even admit that some of the events relating to Messiah ben Yosef "may have occurred already!" [page 100; emphasis Schochet's.].)

This idea of contingency can also be seen in a similar answer that Rabbi Joshua gave to those who asked

whether the Messiah would come "with the clouds of heaven" as Daniel said (Dan. 7:13), or "lowly and riding upon an ass" as Zechariah said (Zech. 9:9). Rabbi Joshua said, "If they are meritorious, he will come with the clouds of heaven; if not, lowly and riding upon an ass" (Talmud Sanh. 98a). We know that Yeshua's death was necessary to atone for the sins of the world—He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Nevertheless, the possibility that the fulfillment of some prophecies might be contingent is suggested by Yeshua's words in Matthew 11:14 when He spoke about John the Baptist. "If ye will receive it [or, 'him'], this is Elijah, which was for to come." This idea of contingency ("if ye will receive") explains how John the Baptist could answer "No" when asked if he was Elijah (John 1:21), yet Yeshua could say that John the Baptist was Elijah—at least potentially ("If ye receive")—but "they knew him not" (Matt. 17:10-13). (Perhaps even John himself did not realize he was [potentially] Elijah.)

Some rabbis taught that Messiah ben Yosef would regather the exiles and reunite the tribes of Israel. "The harmony and cooperation between Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yossef signifies the total unity of Israel, removing the historical rivalries between the tribes of Judah and Joseph" (page 94). Anyone with an understanding of the Two Houses and Ezekiel's two

Continued on Page 10, Col. 2.



Alternative Sanctity of Life

by Brian Franks

When someone says the phrase “Sanctity of Life” people are inclined to think of abortion controversies or perhaps euthanasia or even do not resuscitate orders; but, what about the sanctity of a Christian’s life dedicated to God? Before exploring that thought, first consider a few things. Sanctity is related to a biblical word: sanctify. Both pertain to holiness and in the Bible, holy means set apart. Think of how Aaron and his sons were set apart to God for high priestly work (Exodus 28 and 29:9).

So, taking the phrase Sanctity of Life at face value, without all the political connotations, what would it mean to Christians today? The Bible has much to say about the subject. In Luke 14:26 Jesus says, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.” Jesus says we must “hate” our life. That’s an interesting thought given our topic. There’s no getting around the point of this passage that Jesus needs to be the number one pursuit in a Christian’s life. Is He for you? To follow Christ above all else is not a suggestion but a requirement for us. Paul adds more to consider with 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 which says, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” Beyond just needing to follow God, our body is the temple of His Spirit, literally replacing the static temple of the Old Testament, which housed God’s Spirit as well. We are not even our own. God has bought us with the highest price possible, a price we are not worthy of: Christ’s blood. As a result, we are to honor God with our body. Going yet deeper, Romans 12:1 says that the proper response to this grace of God is, “to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.” Consider that the Israelite’s animal sacrifices of the past were to be flawless, set apart for God; now Paul says our own bodies are to be offered up to God as a spiritual act of worship. Unfortunately, Israel frequently ignored the flawless part. Have we? In Malachi 1:7, 8, God explains that He does not accept flaws in sacrifice:

You place defiled food on my altar. But you ask, “How have we defiled you?” ... When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering

them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you? says the LORD Almighty.

We are called to sacrifice our lives to God today without flaw, but how can we when we know of mankind, “... not one is righteous, not even one ...” (Romans 3:10)? We already have the answer, with man it would be impossible but with God, acting as the atoning sacrifice, it was made possible to all who believe (Luke 18:27, cf John 3:16). In Christ, we are made a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), in this light, we are expected to offer our lives as a living sacrifice to God, holy and pleasing. Note the living part; the way we live is to be the sacrifice, all for God.

Considering that many scripture quotations are coming from his writings, how does this principle affect Paul’s life? He shares in Philippians 3:7-11, near the end of his ministry. As you read, ask yourself, if you have the same attitude:

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul certainly believed in the sanctity of his life, setting it apart wholly for God’s work.

Finally, we must ask ourselves, through Christ’s work in us, do we lift up a flawless sacrifice to our God and Savior or do we try to pass off less than our best? Do our idols get in the way? Is our life pleasing to God? Do we really believe in the Sanctity of the Christian Life, setting our lives apart for His work?

In your pursuit, “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Brian Franks pastors a Sabbath-keeping church in Walla Walla, WA. He is married and has two young sons.

When Was Satan Expelled from Heaven?

by Paulo Jorge Coelho

Revelation 12:9 (*NKJV throughout*) speaks of the expulsion of Satan and the fallen angels from heaven and its fallout on the earth. This event is controversial in regard to its interpretation and time of implementation. Some argue that this occurred in 1914; others point to a time even closer to the future coming of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Despite this controversy we will see in this article that the Holy Bible itself gives us strong clues so that we can now formulate a solid explanation for this event told in the book of Revelation.

Let's go first to the context of Revelation 12:7-12. This text reports a battle in the heavenly dimension of God's creation between the angels of Yahweh and the fallen angels led by Satan (Revelation 12:4,7). The outcome of this battle is the expulsion from heaven and of access to God by the Devil and his celestial followers (Revelation 12:8-10, 12). During his stay in the heavenly dimension Satan had as one of his core businesses to accuse the children of God and try to prevent God from looking with mercy and forgiveness on His creation (Revelation 12:10b). This type of activity is also reported in the book of Job (Job 1:6-12).

This celestial war served to clear heaven of iniquity and defilement that the fallen angels brought to the heavenly dimension of God's creation. Its outcome, the victory of the angels of Yahweh, was that heaven was cleansed of the evil that was still in it. That is why we feel the joy that was in heaven and that is reported in Revelation 12:12a.

However, the question still remains: When was Satan put out of Heaven? When was the battle between God's angels and fallen angels?

The same text of Revelation, verse 11, gives us a first clue about God's victory, when it says: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." Indeed, as we shall see, the Word of God is clear when it teaches us that the great defeat of Satan and the expulsion of his minions from heaven occurred about two thousand years ago when Jesus Christ fulfilled his redeeming sacrifice.

The earthly ministry of Jesus was in itself a remarkable time for both the inhabitants of Earth as well as the inhabitants of heaven. While Jesus, as a man, was battling to bring His mission to the end, the angels of God fought the satanic hosts in heaven. In the gospel of Luke 10:17-18, we see a reference to this fight in the two di-

mensions of God's creation, the earthly and heavenly. Jesus clearly says: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." However, the text that most clearly relates the relationship between the earthly mission of Jesus and the heavenly fight reported in Revelation, chapter 12 is presented to us in the gospel of John Chapter 12:31-33. In this text are the very words of the Master saying — "now the ruler of this world will be cast out" — relating the expulsion of Satan from heaven at the time of His redemptive death on the cross.

Therefore, we have from Jesus Christ a clear answer to the question: "When was Satan cast out from Heaven?" Satan was expelled when Jesus had successfully completed His mission of redemption through his sacrifice as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Moreover, we can add, by everything we wrote earlier, that His act of salvation has had implications not only on Earth but also in Heaven. So, the simple phrase — "It is finished!" (John 19:30) — has a dimension not only earthly or human, but universal and cosmic, covering the whole creation of God (Hebrews 2:14-18). Thus, Jesus after his resurrection could say that the power resided in Him completely, because the evil forces had suffered a decisive defeat in the conflict that stretched out through the whole creation of God (Matthew 28:18). So we understand what Paul refers in Colossians 1:20: "and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." The same idea is given by the author of Hebrews: "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore, *it was necessary* that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:22-24).

However, the defeat of Satan in Heaven entailed dramatic consequences for humanity. Satan knows he lost the war against God. Therefore, he will apply all his strength in the earthly conflict against the Church of

Continued on Page 13

Westby: "Lay Hold on God..." cont. from page 4.

Repentance from sin will invite God to turn his face toward us so we may *lay hold of him*. Lay hold of God How? Why?

When we turn to God, he opens our eyes to see hidden things.

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares Yahweh, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and the future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you **seek me with all your heart**. I will be found by you (Jeremiah 28:11-13).*

Laying hold of God means a determined wholehearted passion to find him, to learn of him, to become like him. If we seek, he promises we will not be disappointed—"I will be found by you." Isaiah continues with what happens when the righteous seek to lay hold of God:

*Oh, Yahweh, you are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the Potter;
we are the work of your hand (64:8).*

When we seek God, yield to him as pliable clay and determine to follow his way, we will find ourselves in his hand—in the very hand of the maker of the cosmos! Does he know how to fashion marvelously beautiful things! In his loving hands he will mold us into his image, just as he did with his beloved son.

When we lay hold of God, *he lays hold of us* and a beautiful creation begins to take form. Here is a prayer we can make our own in pursuit of laying hold of our Father.

*As the deer pants for streams of water
so my soul pants for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
Where can I go to meet with God? (Psalm 42:1-2).*

Ken Westby is a board member emeritus of the BSA and founder and director of the Association for Christian Development and the Virtual Church (www.godward.org).

Teacher of the Year Suspended

Mount Dora, FL — Jerry Buell, last year's "Teacher of the Year" at Mount Dora High School, has been suspended from the classroom for a comment he made on his own personal Facebook page, expressing his disapproval of legalized same-sex marriage in New York. School officials received a complaint about Buell's comment on Tuesday from a 2002 Mount Dora graduate who was never even in Mr. Buell's class. The Lake County School District responded by taking away Buell's teaching privileges and reassigning him to administrative duties.

Liberty Counsel is representing Buell and demanding that he be immediately reinstated with an apology for violating his First Amendment rights.

Botkin: "Two Messiahs of Judaism" cont. from page 7.

sticks and Hosea chapter 1 should be able to see Yeshua fulfilling this role as He brings Ephraim and Judah together. (See "The Two House Teaching," *Gates of Eden* 8-3.) Descendants of the ten northern tribes (called "Ephraim" or "Joseph") are included somewhere in those great multitudes of Gentiles who are being gathered together in the Messiah Jesus. And as more and more Christians are being drawn to the Torah, while more and more Jews are being drawn to Yeshua, Ephraim and Judah are drawing closer together. Even Jews who do not believe in Yeshua (and Christians who do not believe in following the Torah) are coming to realize that Bible-believing Christians and Jews have a lot more in common than they formerly thought.

Those of us who have had the glorious revelation that Yeshua is the promised Messiah know that there are not two different Messiahs. Rather, there is one Messiah who comes at two different times in history. He came the first time "lowly and riding on an ass;" He will come the second time "with the clouds of heaven." The possibility of Messiah ben Yosef and Messiah ben David being one and the same person is even suggested in Schochet's book: "R. Isaac Luria (*Arizal*) notes that the descendant of Joseph, by being the precursor of the ultimate Mashiach, is in effect *kissey David*, the 'seat' or 'throne' of David, i.e., of Mashiach. Thus when praying in the daily *Amidah*, 'speedily establish the throne of Your servant David,' one should consider that this refers to Mashiach ben Yossef..." (page 99). If, as Isaac Luria taught, "Your servant David" truly "refers to Mashiach ben Yossef," then it would follow that Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Yosef are one and the same person.

Peter says that the Prophets "testified beforehand the sufferings of Messiah, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:11). When Yeshua scolded two of His disciples after His Resurrection, He said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25ff). The eyes of these two disciples were opened to recognize their risen Lord and Messiah when He sat down at the table with them, blessed the matzah, then broke it and shared it with them. Let's pray that our Jewish friends will recognize Messiah ben Yosef (and Messiah ben David!) as we sit down and share with them the good news of Yeshua ben Yosef, the suffering Servant whose body was broken for all of us.

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Comfort Book

By Brian Knowles



If you ask many men what is their favorite comfort food, they'll reply, "Mac & cheese." The same question, asked of a woman, may generate the response, "Chocolate, of course." We all seek comfort in various things: music, old movies, raggedy old clothes, items of well-worn furniture (like Frazier's dad's chair), a shot of good single malt scotch, or even the feel of the soft fur of a pet dog or cat.

Some folks seek comfort in hobbies: painting pictures, photography, whittling, model ship building, fixing up old cars, quilting and even gourmet cooking.

Comfort comes in many forms. We seek it because we need it — especially in a world that does so much to threaten our comfort and security. There is sparse comfort in a culture that operates largely outside of God's will. The more we are engaged in advancing the cause of Christ, the more endangered we are. Paul said, "We are hard pressed on every side..." (2 Corinthians 4:8). Paul's strength came from the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit and from the Lord himself. The Scriptures also brought great solace to God's first century servants (2 Timothy 3:15). (In those days, "Scriptures" meant what we now call "the Old Testament" or the "TaNaKh." Now we have those Scriptures and more, besides.)

The Bible is a huge collection of documents written and edited over a period of many centuries by a large number of people. We can only understand them with the benefit of competent scholarship. Translation itself is an act of interpretation and scholarship. Commentary (midrash) is also the product of scholars (or at least it should be). There are aspects and sections of Scripture that are comforting: some of the Psalms, Philippians and a few others to name a few. Yet the Bible as a whole contains a mixture of stories of sin, warfare, conquest and evil run rampant. The whole spectrum of human rebellion and carnage is chronicled in its pages. Only in the stories of redemption can we find real comfort. When the dust of history settles over the face of a blood-drenched planet, a glorious Anointed one will come to bring about healing, goodness and truth. Until that happens we must seek comfort where we can find it. I find it in prayer, in parts of Scripture, and in a tiny handful of books that resonate with my own needs in life. One of those books is entitled, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus — How the Jewishness of Jesus Can Transform Your Faith* by Ann Spangler & Lois Tverberg.

I have many books that illuminate the Jewish background of Jesus and his original apostles and church, but this one stands out. It is written by two gifted ladies who truly understand how to "sell" a subject that often arouses hostile feelings in some Christians who are strongly anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic. This book is gently, but soundly written. It reflects scholarly excellence, yet it is accessible to us unlearned folk. It's the kind of "comfort book" you can read and reread and never tire of. It puts one in the picture of Jesus' time and circumstances in a most palatable way.

In their Introduction, the authors write: "Writing this book has been a joy and a privilege. How lucky can you get to spend the better part of your day, month after month, steeping yourself in the life of Jesus and the Jewish world in which he lived? Even as we worked, our own lives were often affected," (p. 7).

My life too was affected as I read their wonderful words. At the end, I felt I knew Jesus and his world better. I understood more fully his teachings and his Torah-true example. I grasped more fully the profound nature of the relationship of a rabbi and his *talmidim* (disciples).

One insight I gained from the book was that the relationship of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha sets the tone for that of rabbi and disciple. The authors write, "Where did the rabbis develop their ideas of discipleship? They found their model in Scripture, especially in the relationship of two men — the prophets Elijah and Elisha," (p. 54). After learning that, I was able to study the prophet's story with fresh eyes. The book is filled with similar insights.

Jesus instructed his disciples — later apostles ["those sent"] — to make more disciples [students or learners — *talmidim* Matthew 28:19]. He said that these disciples were to be drawn from "all nations" and that they were to be taught the same things Jesus had commanded those original disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Today, many of us are Jesus' disciples, albeit with varying degrees of awareness of our privileged role. The point is, if we are Christians, we should view ourselves that way.

In this great little book, you will learn what it means to be a disciple and to follow Rabbi Yeshua. It's not just a matter of following his person, but of following his specific teachings and his personal example. From Yeshua, we learn how to live, love, pray, heal, teach and be taught, worship, bless and enjoy the abundant life in the here and now. We come to understand that the Kingdom of God is not just for the future — it is a present reality.

The book has appendices on the prayers Jesus prayed, the feasts he observed and a glossary of Hebrew terms he used.

Jerusalem school scholar, David Bivin, sums up the value of this book: "For disciples of Yeshua (Jesus) who know little about his Jewishness, including his rabbinic and Hebraic teaching style, *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus* is the place for them to start. Spangler and Tverberg have created the perfect introduction for the uninitiated. This book will have a deep impact on the thinking of ordinary Christians through the world."

May it be so.

Brian Knowles is a professional artist and writer and is a former magazine editor. Brian is an avid student of the Bible and a frequent contributor to the Association for Christian Development website (www.godward.org).



The Sabbath Rest

by John T. Klassek

Scientists predict that in approximately four billion years' time, the sun will run out of the hydrogen that fuels it. As a result of the enormous gravitational pull inward, it will begin to collapse in on itself. The sun will then reach a point of critical mass, whereupon it will expand to become a red giant, and in doing so destroy not only the earth but the entire solar system.

The Bible also predicts that one day the earth will be destroyed by fire. God says that beyond that there will be a new heaven and new earth.

What does this have to do with the Sabbath? It's all about time.

The weekly Sabbath rest is more than just a reminder that as physical humans we're bound by constraints of space and time. It's about holiness, it's about REST, and it's about being at one with God.

When this earth, as we know it, no longer exists, neither will the current parameters of days and nights, weeks, months or the years that help govern our passage through time.

At the beginning of the known era of humanity, there are two things that are intriguing in the Genesis account of creation.

Firstly, mankind was created after God's own "image and likeness." Thus, we were made with a capacity for relationships, were made to be creative, to have hopes and dreams. In other words, we have a mind that compares to nothing else in the known created world.

And, secondly, the creation week was concluded by the Great God (who doesn't weary) by resting from all the work He had done. He set the seventh day apart, and made it holy. Later, Jesus Christ would give greater insight into why this was.

One of the things we learn from the creation week is that we're moulded after the Godkind. One particular and obvious difference, however, is that, unlike God, we're bound by the constraints of time and space, and as God told Adam and Eve, they would one day "surely die." It was God who instituted a seven-day cyclic pattern at the beginning of the "human era" to assist, it seems, in marking the passing of time. But with that passing of time God included an "escape clause" picturing rest, for God told Adam (and Eve in similar manner after they had sinned) that his life would be characterised by labour — by the sweat of the brow, and further depicted by "thorns and thistles" (Gen. 3:17-19).

This was fascinating material and a road of discovery for a young boy growing up in one of the Churches of God. The passing of time, as marked by the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath rest, was celebrated in our family home by a special Friday-night mealtime. Mum would cook a special dinner, using shiny cutlery and our finest crockery. Sometimes she would place a small vase with some fresh flowers from her extensive garden. Dad would offer us children a small glass of wine. He also rehearsed a point that Jesus had made: that "the Sabbath was made for man" (and not just for the Jews) (Mark 2:27).

Thus each passing week the Sabbath would be a natural reminder that God had created everything, and that along with our toil He promises us rest. When the Ten Commandments were given to ancient Israel, God again reminded his people about the creation of the Sabbath at the beginning of the human era. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," God said. Then God elaborated: "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exodus 20:11).

Despite the toil in our often mundane routine of earning a living, God wanted mankind to taste, to appreciate and to value the concept of rest. Jesus' compelling words ring out for all time when He exemplified the Sabbath rest by saying: "Come to me all ye who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

In time, I also learned what God accomplished through the coming of Jesus Christ. I learned about the spiritual rest found only in Jesus. I learned that all things have their fulfillment in Him. And as a result I benefitted enormously from the anticipated weekly time of rest, worship and fellowship. The Sabbath became recognised in our family not as some kind of legalistic old covenant appendage, but as a treasured gift of the Lord, breaking the yoke of slavery. The words "Thy Kingdom come..." often fittingly featured in Sabbath evening prayer. There was a yearning in our hearts for the passing of time, when the ultimate rest for all mankind would be fulfilled.

Then it was with interest that I read of Jesus' encounters with the misled Pharisaical application of the law. The Jews in their zeal had turned a day of rest into a burdensome day, thus missing the point of what true rest was all about. Today, we live with the opposite extreme in our western society: there is little demarca-

tion between the holy and the profane. (But that's another subject altogether.)

Jesus chose the Sabbath on several occasions to confront the Jewish religious leaders. He said that "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:8), and that it is "lawful to do good on the Sabbath." He used their own limited understanding of law to chastise their hard-heartedness and blindness.

The Pharisees reasoned that He could have chosen any other day of the week to heal; on one occasion we read where He asked those (critically) watching Him whether "it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath." Jesus chose to heal, to bring rest to those "in bondage," within the framework of the Sabbath. In one reference to healing on the Sabbath day, He said: "My Father is working, and I must do the will of Him who sent me."

The Sabbath rest as experienced in the Churches of God today is all about Jesus Christ and His work. It was made by Him, it foreshadowed Him, it represents Him, and it exemplifies His work and will. The Sabbath can be an expression of Christ-centredness. In today's frenetic, secular lifestyle, it can also be a dynamic part of discipleship: being prepared to forego all and follow Christ, whatever the cost, whether it be social life, weekend sports, or work. It's a recognition that enjoying an extra special Friday-night meal as an expression of God's love to your family amidst the fine food, laughter, learning, and the rehearsed hope of a better world.

The Sabbath rest is a gift of the Lord. It's a gift to man. It marks the passing of time, but more than that, it points us to a time yet future when holiness will transcend all, and all will find rest.

Regarding the future of the cyclic hours and days, months and seasons, which include the weekly Sabbath, Jesus Himself tells us that one day there will be no night, with no need for the sun or moon, for the old (current) earth and heaven will have ceased to be (Revelation 21). We gain a glimpse that there will be a new earth and a new heaven where God Himself will be the light. The old sun and the solar system of which the earth is now a part will have long been forgotten. At that time the physical Sabbath rest will have finally served its purpose, and we gain a glimpse of this time from the writings of a prophet of old on this subject:

"'As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,' declares the LORD, 'so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 66:22-23 NIV).

John Klassek lives in Australia. He is a writer and video producer of material relating to the Sabbath and Christian living. His Web site is a good resource for articles, videos, and sermons. His site can be reached at <http://www.message7.org/>.

Coelho: "When Was Satan Expelled..." cont. from page 9.

God (Revelation 12:12-13). With heaven completely purified by the blood of Jesus, this left to the devil and his angels to fight to prevent the success of the proclamation of the Gospel message of God's Kingdom. Starting two thousand years ago, Satan continues fighting against the ones that believe in Christ and in the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17). In the broadest sense, the "great tribulation" started on the earth and against humanity when Satan began to dwell on earth, regardless of periods of greater or lesser intensity throughout the history of the Church of God.

We also know that some battles between good and evil are still to occur in human history and in the path of God's people toward the Heavenly Kingdom that one day God will establish on Earth. However, the decisive battle has been won by Christ on the cross. Just as in Europe the Second World War was not decided when the Soviets entered Berlin, but much earlier, for example in the landing at Normandy on "D" day, the war between God and the Devil will not have a decision in any future battle. It has been won for nearly two thousand years. Jesus won it as a man on behalf of all creation redeemed of God, human and celestial.

By the "blood of the Lamb," this is our flag and our guarantee of victory!

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

*Paulo Coelho is the publication coordinator of the magazine, **Compreender**, published by the Alliance of the Churches of God, Seventh Day, of Portugal (www.ijc.pt).*

Pastor: School Calls Cops to Shut Down Preaching

Southwest Minnesota State has demonstrated a prejudice against Christians

A Christian minister who believes he should follow the biblical mandate to "go and tell" the Gospel message is outraged that officials at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall called local police to threaten him with a citation for trespass.

Marshall police spokesman Robert Yant told WND that there were no charges filed against the pastor, John Chisham. The pastor's story appears on a website connected to the River of Life Alliance Church. It outlines the latest dispute he's had over speech rights on campus.

Chisham said he and another "campus minister," Jake Larson, were "proclaiming the gospel in the open air on the SMSU campus prior to their weekly meeting of Change Collegian Network."

(WorldNetDaily — <http://www.wnd.com/2012/03/pastor-school-calls-cops-to-shut-down-preaching/> (full article)



The Power of Association

By *Bill Lussenheide*

Here is a prediction that is guaranteed to come true! The kind of Christian that you will be in five years will be the direct reflection of the people you associate with.

When I reflect back over my 54 years, I can see the major influences in my life that have shaped the kind of person that I am. Tops on this list are the dreams, thoughts and people that I allowed into my life. I was taught early on in life, by more than a couple of my dear mentors to "Never underestimate the power of influence." Why was this advice proffered to me?... because the influence of those around us is so powerful! Many times we don't even realize we're being strongly affected because influences generally develop over a long period of time and are nearly undetectable when measured in the short term.

The reason peer pressure is such a powerful force is because it is hardly seen or felt. But make no doubt about it, If you're around people who seek the love of the world, chances are excellent that you'll be a lover of the vanities of this life too. If you are around people who talk about sports more than they talk about God, chances are excellent that you'll do the same thing. If you are around people who don't read their Bibles and enjoy discussing it, chances are excellent that you won't be reading or thinking about your Bible either. Your association can keep nudging us off course a little at a time until finally, we find ourselves asking, "How did I get here?" Those very slow, and continuing influences need to be studied carefully if we really want our lives to turn out the way we've planned, and if we wish to please our Creator.

Three quick points we must always be asking as a Christian:

1) "Who am I spending the bulk of my time with?" Always be aware of the people with whom you most often associate. Do they have high standards; are they moving towards God or away from him?

2) "What are these associations doing to me?" That's a major question to ask. What have they got me doing? What have they got me listening to? What have they got me reading? Where have they got me going? What do they have me thinking? How have they got me talking? How have they got me feeling? What have they got me saying? You've got to make a serious study of how others are influencing you, both negatively and positively.

3) "We all must ask if that is fine with God"... Maybe everyone you associate with has been a positive, energizing influence. Then again, maybe there are some real tares and wolves in the bunch. Maintain your objectivity and always question. The power of influence is so powerful, that you must examine those you are around and you must ask if this is who you want to be. For we must remember, we will, without a doubt turn into the people we associate with.

It's easy to let influence shape our lives, to let associations determine our direction, to let pressures overwhelm us, and to let tides take us. The big question is, are we letting ourselves become what God would desire for us to become?

The scriptures give us some insight on this topic...

Amos 3:3 admonishes and questions us with "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?"

Psalms 1:1-2 adds this insight ... "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night."

Association is a powerful tool in honing your soul and your destiny, and the ability for you to influence others through the Spirit which works through you. Sabbath assembling, beyond just the worship of God, is a vehicle that God uses to create spiritual synergy. Beyond just Sabbath rest, is the power of fellowship and mutual esteeming through meeting together

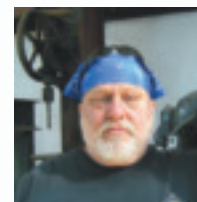
Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much more, as ye see the day approaching."

Take advantage of the power of positive association, by meeting with others on God's Sabbath day whenever possible.

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

The Power of Forgiveness

by Terrell Perkins



Forgiveness is without doubt one of the fundamental elements of Christianity...perhaps it is *the* fundamental element. Forgiveness is the key to God's plan. God forgives us our sins, and we are commanded to forgive one another of the wrongs we do each other. Without forgiveness God's plan would be pointless. There would be no hope for any of us. Without our forgiving each other we would be unable to live together in harmony or know any kind of inner peace. Forgiveness is the foundation upon which a Christian life is built.

I've thought about writing an article on forgiveness for some time now. I first thought to do so in general, academic terms with a kind of dispassionate observer's perspective. I came to realize that my own personal story may be the best way to approach the subject. Maybe there is someone struggling out there who needs a personal story to connect with. This is my testimony of forgiveness.

As a child I lived in a home filled with alcoholism, physical abuse and violence. The details aren't important anymore. It was a long time ago. But it occurred at such an early stage in my life that it affected everything in my life for decades. For most of my life my relationships with other people have all been tainted by the abuse I suffered. I know that I'm nothing special. Unfortunately this is far too common a story in our world. Too many of us have had to deal with similar things, or far worse, in our own lives. The good news is that there is a way out of the darkness such things bring into our lives. The truth really can set you free.

For years I never talked about the darkness abuse brought into my life. It was too personal. I balled my feelings up and pushed them deep down inside me without ever addressing them. They kept me from getting too close to any other human being. They kept me from being able to trust anyone. They kept me from being hurt again. They made me prone to depression. And, they awakened dreams of revenge in me. Like a spiritual cancer, those feelings slowly ate away at me. I clung to the hate they created in me like it was a personal treasure. That hate gave me a feeling of power, a power I didn't have in my childhood.

I became a Christian some years later. With my efforts to seek God and obey His will, I began to study His word. When I first read in the scriptures His admonition to love our enemies, it was very hard to hear, but my heart knew it was the truth. I probably read the scrip-

tures about how I should forgive my enemies hundreds of times, all without connecting what I was reading to my issues. It wasn't talking to me; it was talking to other people. I wasn't ready to let go of my power. I wasn't ready to let go of the dark feelings that felt good to me. The armor of God I wore was full of chinks.

One day, after professing to be a follower of Christ for years, I read about forgiveness yet again in God's word. This time, I realized He was speaking to me. I finally took it personally. In prayer I admitted that I didn't have the ability to forgive, I just didn't know how, but I knew that God, through His grace and the power of His Holy Spirit, could do it through me if I would get out of the way. So I prayed for God to work through me and forgive those who had hurt or wronged me. True to His word He worked in me to do it. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't an overnight event. It took me a long time asking the same prayer to finally let go of my hate and resentment, but it happened. God set me free from something that had pulled me down my whole life. I felt as if an enormous weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I still have scars on my body, but my heart has been healed.

I had to repent of my dark feelings before God could forgive through me. Repentance is closely related to forgiveness. Repentance, admitting our sins, shortcomings and weaknesses opens our hearts and allows God's forgiveness and love to flow through us. Only God's light can drive out the darkness.

It seems a part of our human condition that we allow things to come between us. We want to see ourselves as separate. It makes us feel special. But we are dynamic beings. Holding on to darkness only causes us to stagnate. It doesn't allow us to grow. It pulls us down. God's love, God's light is dynamic. It flows through us and uplifts us.

I've made it a part of my life to study mankind by studying myself. I've learned that we hold on to hate and resentment because they feel good. They can give us a sense of power and control. God's Holy Spirit working in me quietly taught me that that kind of power is an illusion. It only works to pull us down. Hate and resentment only hurt the one who holds on to them. They don't cause the one hated to lose any sleep.

There's a popular parable that says each of us has two dogs fighting inside us, one good one evil. The one that wins is the one that we feed the most. I know

feeding the one that holds hate in us feels good. I also know that road holds no inner peace. It only leads to destruction. Satan uses those chinks in God's armor to constantly pull us away from God. I know that forgiveness is the only way to let it go. Forgiveness is a part of love, and real love flows from God.

The truth is we are all connected. We all come from the same ancestors and they came from God. I wonder at people who question whether God even exists. I think they must live in a kind of prison. I want to shout to them from the rooftops that I KNOW God exists because of what He has done in me! He doesn't exist "out there" in some intellectual realm. He can live in us, if we make room for Him by allowing His light to drive out the darkness in us.

Because God's love is dynamic, we can't just stop at forgiveness. We are called on to go further. We are called on to love our enemies. I knew that my heart had truly been healed when I was able to pray for those who hurt me and mean it.

I used to think of miracles, like calling down fire from heaven to destroy one's enemies, as the greatest proofs of God's power to mankind. I came to realize that what He wrought in me by teaching me to forgive was a greater miracle. I don't need any greater proof of His love!

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

The Flesh of the Lamb and Healing

The flesh of the lamb in the passover meal in the Old Covenant is a type of the Body of Christ in the New Testament. It is interesting to note that not one of the 3 million or so Israelites who left Egypt was feeble or sick after eating the flesh of that lamb (Psalm 105:37). How is it possible that so many church members are sick while the Israelites were so healthy? Could it be that the church has ignored a vital meaning of the Lord's supper as it applies to us? The flesh of the Son of God is supposed to have power when received by faith to impart physical healing to our bodies. This is in line with all God's healing covenants and the declaration of Isaiah 53:5, "By his wounds we are healed."

(Quote taken from *Divine Healing – A Scriptural and Practical Approach* by Michael Fackerell © 1998.)

Dig In!

By Jill Roberts

The most dreaded time of my summers growing up was early morning. Not because I had to wake up early (oh don't get me wrong, I hated that too), but it was because my siblings and I had to spend an hour everyday (except Saturday) weeding the garden. I hated it. My poor mother had to listen to us complain for the entire hour.

Gardening was a family task. My dad tilled the garden. My mom picked out which seeds we were to plant and arranged the rows so that everything would be by its "buddy," the plant that would make each grow best. When we were really little, we helped by planting the seeds, carefully measuring, "Three together and then one hand-width apart." As we got older we became more helpful. My brothers learned to till, and we could form our own rows and plant the seeds without needing to use our hands to measure. When summer was over, we worked hard to can what produce we had not already consumed.

I hated gardening so much because I hated vegetables. I hated to wake up early to work hard and sweat because I didn't see the reward. I am realizing more and more that there are things we have to do whether we feel like it or not. There are things that we must do for which we don't see the reward immediately. In some cases, we are never going to see it, but strangely enough these are often the things that are most worthwhile.

When I was freshly 18, I moved six hours from home, to Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque, Iowa. There were a couple of things I knew for certain at that point: 1) God had made it abundantly clear that I was supposed to be going to Emmaus, even though it is not a 7th Day college, and 2) Everything that was "normal" and familiar to me was 6 hours away and I would have to start over.

Before I had finished moving into my dorm room the Lord reassured me that He would always take care of me and that this was the place He wanted me to spend the next four years of my life. It only took a couple of hours for me to fall in love with the place.

This is my second year at Emmaus, but I am a Junior (all that gardening got me on the fast track). I will graduate next year with a double major in Counseling Psychology and Biblical Studies. I am working 20 hours a week with an incredible ministry of Emmaus called EmmausOnline. We film our Bible courses (and other classes too) and put them on iTunesU so that people can watch them for free all around the world. I am extremely blessed to be at Emmaus even though it has proved to be one of the hardest experiences of my life.

I have taken several courses on the Bible and Christian life. I have studied the Old and New Testaments in survey courses; Greek almost killed me because it was difficult as well as being early in the morning; and I have taken multi-

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RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

by Dr. Doug Ward



The annual Hebrew festival seasons are a very important feature of the gospel of John. Many of the events narrated in this gospel occurred during those sacred times. John's accounts of these events have much to teach us about the ways in which the festivals direct us to Jesus Christ.

For example, John 7 chronicles the last Feast of Tabernacles of Jesus' earthly ministry (see John 7:2). During that festival, Jesus made the following pronouncement:

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:37-38, KJV).

John goes on to explain in v. 39 that the "water" referred to in v. 37-38 is the Holy Spirit. Jesus was saying that those who believed on Him could come to Him to receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' statements caused great amazement and controversy among His audience (v. 40-53). Some asserted that He must be the Messiah, that great Prophet spoken of by Moses in Deut. 18:15, 18. Officers who had been ordered by religious authorities to arrest Jesus (v. 32) returned to their superiors empty-handed. When asked why they had not seized Him, they answered, "No one ever spoke the way this man does." (v. 46, NIV)

Why did Jesus' proclamation in John 7:37-38 elicit such a strong response? To understand the full impact of this famous passage on its original hearers-and its significance for us today-let's take an in-depth look at these verses and their historical and cultural background.

The Water Libation Ceremony

John specifically mentions that Jesus spoke the words of John 7:37-38 on "the last day, that great day of the feast." This was most likely the seventh day of the Feast, a day known in Jewish tradition as *Hoshana Rabba* (literally, the "great Hosanna"). It is also possible that this was the eighth day (see [3]). In any case, commentators agree that Jesus made his statement in the context of the water libation ceremony, a major part of first-century celebrations of the Feast in Jerusalem before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. This ritual was carried out on each of the first seven days of the festival (see References[1-6]).

The water libation ceremony began with a priest drawing water from the pool of Siloam in a golden flagon that held about one and a half pints of water. A procession of men and women then accompanied the priest through the south gate of the Temple (which was called the Water Gate) and up the altar ramp. In the procession, people waved the *lulab*, a bouquet of palm, willow, and myrtle branches, and sang Psalms 113-118. The singing was accompanied by trumpet blasts and the music of reed flutes. The procession circled the altar seven times, and the priest then poured the water from the flagon into the western half of an open-drained, twin-tubbed silver bowl on the south side of the altar. He also poured wine from a silver flagon into the eastern half of that bowl.

One scripture associated with these festivities was Isa. 12:3 ("With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."), and this was indeed a joyous time. It would later be written in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sukkah* 51 a-b) that "he who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the Water-Drawing has not seen rejoicing in his life." [2]



The Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem.



Sukkah (booths) where most eating, drinking, and sleeping are done during Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)

The water-drawing celebration was well-known throughout the Jewish world. Some archaeological evidence of this has been found in Cyprus in the form of a six-sided glass bottle, now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, whose side panels contain pictures of the golden flagon, reed flutes, and other festival symbols. Since fragments of an identical bottle have been found in Jerusalem, and many Jews from the Diaspora traveled to Jerusalem for the festivals (e.g., Acts 2:5, 9-11), it has been speculated that this bottle may have been purchased in Jerusalem by a pilgrim from Cyprus as a first-century Feast of Tabernacles souvenir. Further evidence that the bottle dates from the first century is found in the fact that one of its panels contains the name of Ennion, a prominent Sidonian glassmaker of the first century [2, p. 117].

The waters of the ceremony held several levels of meaning for first-century feastgoers. First of all, the water poured out on the south side of the altar represented rain that the people hoped God would provide for the following year's harvests during the coming rainy season. Prayers for rain were an essential part of the ceremony. An important scripture in this regard was Psalm 118:25: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." In Hebrew, "save, I beseech" is *Hoshana*. This verse was the source of the name *Hoshana Rabba* as a title for the seventh day of the Feast.

Interestingly, there is apparently another symbol of the festival prayers for rain on one of the six panels of the ancient glass bottle mentioned above: two keys. In Jewish tradition, rain is thought of as a key in the sole possession of God, based on Deut. 28:12: "The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season...." The keys pictured on the bottle may represent the early and latter rains, for which prayer was made at the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover [2, p. 118]. The presence of these keys on the bottle gives further indication of the importance of prayers for rain at the Feast during the time of Jesus.

Second, the ceremonial water of the Feast symbolized the Holy Spirit. A link between water and the Holy Spirit is implied in the parallel structure of Isaiah 44:3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon

the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." When the people prayed for rain at the Feast, they may also have prayed for the rain of the Holy Spirit to fall as was prophesied in Joel 2:28-29.

Third, the waters of the libation ceremony were associated with the waters prophesied to go forth from Jerusalem in the Messianic kingdom. This connection is founded in part upon the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, which relates the Feast of Tabernacles to the Messianic kingdom (see v. 16-19) and is a traditional part of Jewish festival liturgy. In Zech. 14:8, we read, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem...." A second and more detailed source for this symbolism is Ezekiel 47:1-12, which describes a healing river that will flow out from beneath the prophesied future temple.

These second and third aspects of the symbolism of the water libation ceremony—the Holy Spirit and the cleansing waters of Messiah's kingdom—are of course related in the scriptures, for example in Ezekiel 36:25-27, 33:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause

you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.... Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.

Further insight into the way these different symbols—rain, the Holy Spirit, and future living waters—fit together in the theology of the water-drawing celebration is available in the third chapter of the tractate *Sukkah* of the *Tosefta* (see [3]). The *Tosefta* ("Tosefta" literally means "addition") is a collection of rabbinic teachings that expand upon the instruction in the *Mishnah*. These teachings were probably compiled in written form some two centuries after the time of Jesus, but they are often based on oral traditions that could well have been known to those who heard Jesus' words.

The *Tosefta* (*Sukkah* 3:3-9) explains that the name "water gate" for the *south* gate of the temple and the pouring of the water from the golden flagon on the *south* side of the altar are derived from Ezekiel 47:1, which says, "The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar." (NIV) In other words, the water poured out in the temple ceremony was meant to symbolize the prophetic waters of Ezekiel 47. Moreover, *Tosefta* identifies the healing waters of Ezekiel 47 with the living water of Zech. 14:8, and it emphasizes the cleansing function of those waters, citing Zech. 13:1. (In the NIV, Zech. 13:1 says, "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.")

The *Tosefta* (*Sukkah* 3:11-12) also brings out yet another aspect of the symbolism of the water ceremony: its recalling of the miracle of Exodus 17:1-7, in which water came out of the rock at Horeb when Moses struck that rock. The *Tosefta* refers to those waters as a "river," citing Ps. 78:20 and Ps. 105:41. Grigsby [3, p. 107] adds the interesting fact that one Aramaic paraphrase of Ps. 78:16 (which recounts the miracle at Horeb) refers to the waters that came out of the rock as "rivers of living water."

As feastgoers looked back to the miracle of Exodus 17, they simultaneously looked ahead to the Messiah, who they believed would duplicate such miracles. Grigsby [3, p. 107] points out that a rabbinic commentary on Eccl. 1:9 ("there is nothing new under the sun") gives the belief in a future water miracle as one example of history repeating itself: "As the first redeemer [i.e., Moses] caused the spring to arise, so the last redeemer [the Messiah] will cause water to rise up."

Two Questions about John 7:38

A knowledge of first-century festival customs can lend insights into two questions about John 7:38 that have often been posed by scholars. First, to what scrip-

ture was Jesus referring in John 7:38? In our discussion of the water libation ceremony, we have looked at several candidates, including Zech. 14:8, Ezek. 47:1-12, Isa. 44:3, and Ps. 78:16. Given that Jewish teachers typically brought together several related scriptures to explain a point or principle, it is likely that Jesus had a number of passages in mind, including these four.

Second, from whose belly would the living waters flow—the believer's or Jesus'? The explanation given most often is that the waters flow from the believer in a new, spirit-led life. This is the reading that is implied in the KJV and given explicitly in the NIV. It is supported by John 4:14, in which Jesus says to the Samaritan woman at the well,

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (KJV).

It is worth noting that the Greek word for "springing" in John 4:14 is the same as the one used to describe the lame man "leaping" in Acts 3:8 when He was healed by Peter and John [6]. The words of John 7:38 and John 4:14 picture the Holy Spirit as a Producer of dynamic, life-giving results in the lives of Jesus' disciples.

The view that Jesus is saying that the living waters would flow from the believer is also supported by the punctuation given in the oldest known punctuated manuscripts [4, p. 160].

On the other hand, there is another reading (used in the NEB and Jerusalem Bible and mentioned in a footnote in the NIV) that is based on a different punctuation of the text. In this version, Jesus' invitation is rendered,

If any man thirsts, let him come to me; and let him drink, who believes in me. As the scripture said, from his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Here "his" could be interpreted as a reference to Jesus Himself.

Those who support this second reading point out that it is consistent with the thrust of John 7:37-39, which pictures Jesus as the giver and the believer as the recipient of the Spirit. It has also been suggested that v. 38 might look ahead to John's account of the Crucifixion, where John mentions that "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34, KJV). Such a connection fits well with the customs of the water libation ceremony, where water and wine were poured before the altar, and with the typology of the miracle of Exodus 17. Just as "living water" came from the rock at Horeb when this rock was struck, so water mixed with the cleansing, purifying blood of Jesus' sacrifice

came out from His pierced "belly" at the crucifixion. In addition, a link between John 7:38 and John 19:34 might help explain the statement in John 7:39 that "the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

Each interpretation has its merits. We note that in either case, Jesus Christ is the ultimate Source of the Spirit, the One to whom we must come to receive this life-giving "water."

The Implications of John 7:37-38

Having investigated the rich symbolism of the water libation ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles, we are now in a position to grasp the great impact that Jesus' invitation of John 7:37-38 would have had on its original audience. Consider the following implications of John 7:37-38:

Jesus is the Messiah. In the first century, the Feast was a time of great messianic hope and fervor. The water celebration brought to mind prophecies of the Messianic kingdom like Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47. Another messianic reference that would have been on the minds of Jesus' listeners was Psalm 118:26 ("blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord"), which was sung during the festivities [1]. By proclaiming Himself as the Bringer of the prophesied "living waters," Jesus was implying that He was the Messiah, the one who would follow in Moses' footsteps and perform a new water miracle.

Jesus is God. In Jeremiah 2:13, God referred to Himself as "the fountain of living waters." By calling Himself the source of living waters, Jesus was indirectly asserting His divinity.

Jesus is the Incarnation of the future eschatological hope in the present. The healing, life-giving waters of Zech. 14 and Ezek. 47 were prophesied to come in a glorious future time. By announcing the availability of those waters, Jesus was saying that the first stages of the kingdom had arrived with Him.

Jesus is the new Temple. Jesus had previously referred to his body as a temple (John 2:19-22), and He made this connection again in John 7:37-38. The living waters of Ezekiel 47 were to emanate from the prophesied temple, and Jesus identified Himself with the temple by saying that He was the Source of living waters. (See Rev. 21:22; 22:1 for further development of this symbolism.)

Jesus is the foundation stone and cornerstone. In Jewish tradition, Israel was the center of the world, Jerusalem was the center of Israel, the temple was the center of Jerusalem, the Holy Place was the center of the temple, the Holy of Holies was the center of the Holy Place, and the foundation stone under the ark of the covenant was the center of the Holy of Holies. The

creation of the world was said to have begun at the site of that stone, and it was believed that the prophesied living waters would spring from it [4, 5]. Just as Jesus identified Himself with the temple in John 7:37-38, He also identified Himself with its foundation stone. He was the pierced rock from which living waters would flow (Ps. 78:20; John 19:34), the stone that would be rejected and become the chief cornerstone (Ps. 118:22-23; Matt. 21:42, 1 Peter 2:7).

Jesus' words on that last day of the Feast were remarkable. So, too, was the way in which He delivered those words. It was typical for Jewish teachers in those days to instruct their disciples from a seated position. By standing up and speaking in a loud voice (John 7:37), Jesus indicated that He was making an important announcement [6]. He wanted everyone to hear this announcement, even though He knew that it would anger some of those present who sought to take His life.

It is no wonder that Jesus' listeners marveled at what He said! In the brief statement recorded in John 7:37-38, Jesus revealed Himself as the embodiment of all the prayers, hopes and longings that were part of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in first-century Jerusalem.

As we celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles today, awaiting the glorious return of our Messiah, we can think each year about this wonderful symbolism and give thanks for what it means in our lives. As we strive daily to advance His Kingdom, we can be renewed and empowered by the living waters of the Spirit which He offers to us freely.

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ple theology courses, and Christian Worldview. I have even studied how to study the Bible. One would think that with all of these courses, it would be impossible to not be on fire for the Lord. Logic would tell you that I would have to be growing like a weed, if I can use that analogy, but spiritual things don't always make sense from our perspective.

Yet, one thing does make sense — THE BIBLE. Since I have been at Bible College I have developed a huge love for the Bible. Like Peter says, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). God has given us everything we need to know in the Bible. Reading a newspaper is not bad, nor is listening to the radio, or watching TV, but the thing I have learned is that I need to be reading the Bible more than I consume other media, or read other books, or do other things.

You see, my first few semesters at Emmaus were spent watering and weeding my spiritual garden. I was given the perfect conditions to learn about my Savior. I had professors pouring wisdom into my life. I had homework that involved studying, reading, and learning about the Bible. I had great godly friends who were keeping me accountable, but I didn't have a fence around my garden. I learned as a child that if you don't have a fence around your garden, animals come in and eat all of your prized fruits and vegetables.

I was growing and learning so much, but the fruit produced in my life was hindered because I was not personally getting into the Word. I didn't have a personal quiet time with the Lord, nor did I protect the time I had, so it got filled with other things. I didn't pray for growth. I had no way to protect and defend my garden, or my life, against invaders.

This year, I had a life-changing experience at a Passion Conference. Passion Conferences are for college-aged people and they focus on making Jesus central in our lives. I found that I needed to be taken out of my comfort zone to relearn the lesson I had been hearing almost every day at Bible College: I need to read my Bible for myself every day. I must also pray for growth in my life if I actually want to grow.

I have found a Bible reading program that involves reading 10 chapters a day. It's ambitious, and I don't always get all 10 chapters read every single day, but I am striving hard after my Lord and I am growing. Some mornings I get up and I feel like sleeping in for another hour instead of reading my Bible, but I just remember those scorching mornings, weeding the garden. It is hard work, but there is an eternal reward.

The Lord promises this reward to every one of his children. When we take time to be alone with the Lord, He blesses us by showing Himself to us. He is the greatest thing that we can have in our lives. It sounds so simple, but the solution in my life is to be in the Word and pray constantly. The more you read the Bible, the more you want to read it. It's time to dig deeper into the Word!

*Jilli lives in Missouri and can be reached at jilli2010@yahoo.com. This article is taken from *Faith Network* magazine, Jan-Feb 2012, page 6.*

Things We Are Free to Do?

by Lenny Cacchio

Longer ago than I care to think about I took a Bible as Literature course at the state college. It was a great class, really. Being a state college, it was light on deep theology and heavy on the significance the Bible has had on literature and culture.

And the professor was entertaining if not curiously eclectic.

As we were working our way through the Torah, we inevitably came to the Ten Commandments. The prof pointed out that so many people view the Ten Commandments as a restrictive law filled with too many "Thou shalt not's." But in reality, he said, the Ten Commandments are a great set of laws that give tremendous liberty.

I was fairly young in my Walk at the time, but even then my mind shifted to that verse in James (chapter 1, verse 25) that calls the law the "perfect law of liberty." So I was silently pumping my fist and cheering.

And then he said, "Take, for example, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' It might outlaw adultery, but look at all the other things you can do!"

And then, of course, my jaw dropped.

As the decades have passed, it has become apparent to me that the professor's little riff really does represent the way many of us practice the law of God. "I'm not really lying. It's just a white lie that I'm telling you for your own good." "I'm not stealing. I'm borrowing. They'll never miss it anyway." "I'm not coveting, I just want what I'm entitled to, and be damned that the next generation will have to pay for it."

And then there is this one: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy ... In it you shall do no work." Maybe I can't work on that day, but look at all the other things I can do!

I'm not one who is inclined to lay down all kinds of little rules as the Pharisees did on what should or should not be done on the Sabbath Day. But people do need to make some distinctions between those activities that enhance our relationship with God, family, and friends and those that don't. Ezekiel draws a sharp distinction between the "holy" and "profane" (or "common", as rendered in the New International Version.) That's something to take seriously. See Ezekiel 44:23-24, 22:26, and 42:20.

This is just to say that we can use the laws of God as a path to blessings or litigate our way around them and miss the blessings. The prof was right: the law is a law of liberty even though he never understood what true liberty is.

You can catch all of Lenny's latest commentaries on <http://morningcompanion.blogspot.com>. Lenny is a board member of the Bible Sabbath Association.

The Church in the World

Ugandan Girl Tortured for Christ Regaining Use of Legs

Released from hospital, Susan Ithungu takes steps with support.

By Simba Tian

BWERA, Uganda, January 16 (*Compass Direct News*) — A 15-year-old Christian girl in western Uganda who lost the use of her legs after her father locked her in a room for six months for leaving Islam has begun to take tentative steps.

Susan Ithungu of Isango village, Kasese district, had been hospitalized since September 2010 after neighbors along with police rescued her from her father, Beya Baluku, who had given her hardly any food or water. He was arrested shortly afterward but quickly released. She and her younger brother, Mbusa Baluku, lived alone with their father, who was divorced from their mother.

In March 2010, Susan had trusted Christ for her salvation – prompting her father to threaten to slaughter her publicly with a knife.

After her release, they took her to a hospital on Sept. 6, 2010. She would not be discharged from hospital care until Oct. 19, 2011.

“Well-wishers have been paying the house rent and buying me food and clothing,” said Susan, who added that she has forgiven her father.

A member of the Bwera Full Gospel Church in Kasese, Biira Dreda, left her own four children under the care of her mother in order to look after Susan while she was hospitalized.

Susan has begun to walk with support. She cannot squat or stand upright because she lay on one side for such a long time, besides suffering a bout of malaria.

“I thank all those who have continually supported me spiritually, materially and even morally,” Susan said. “I am also thankful to Biira Dreda, who stood by me in the hospital, and to date she is still with me when none of my family members has come to see me. I now take Dreda as my mother because of her care and love. My own people have abandoned me.”

Jacob Mukobi, who works with Uganda police as a child protection volunteer, was tipped off that Susan had been locked up in the house for six months.



“When I got the horrifying message about Susan that she had been put under house arrest for converting to Christianity, I went with the police to the house on Sept. 6, 2010 and took her to Bwera hospital,” he said.

“A neighbor heard Susan’s father saying that she will be accepted back to the family only if she recants the Christian faith and rejoins Islam,” he said.

When Mukobi asked Susan’s father about his mistreatment of her, he said only that he was upset by her conversion to Christianity, Mukobi said.

On Oct. 22, 2010, Susan was referred to Kagando hospital, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Bwera. Six months later, she was referred to Curso hospital in Kampala. She still could not walk. Surgeons operated on both her thighs, but as a doctor tried to stretch her leg, one thigh bone was so weak that it broke.

Though she has had to drop out of school, she said she hopes to return this year.

“I am now able to handle a pen and write,” she told *Compass* late last year. “I am able to sit down for at least one hour, and I hope by next year it will be much better, enough to enable me go to school.”

Pastor Baluku said that “Many Good Samaritans” came to her aid.

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