

The Sabbath Sentinel

May–June 2012

Super Moon

“The heavens declare
the glory of God.”

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

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

The Sabbath Sentinel

May–June 2012 Volume 64, No. 3 Issue 555

FEATURES

- 4 **God: An Animal Lover**
by Kenneth Westby
- 5 **Meet the BSA Board**
- 8 **The Rest of the Story**
by Rick Frazee
- 13 **They that Wait upon the Lord**
by Lori Godfrey
- 14 **It Was a “Super Moon” All Right**
by Aimee Herd
- 15 **It’s about Love**
by Terrell Perkins
- 17 **Divine Healing Today**
by Calvin Burrell
- 18 **Anxiety Rules**
by Ray Wooten

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 Editorial: “*The Family*”
- 16 Donald Mansell: “*Divine Magnetism*”
- 20 Crossword Puzzle
- 21 Bryant Buck: *Principles of Biblical Interpretation: “The New Reinterprets the Old”*
- 23 Notices and Advertisements

Our Cover:

Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork....”

Our cover displays the beauty of the Super Moon (technically called the Perigee Moon) rising in the southeastern sky over Washington D.C.

(Photo Source: Dreamstime)

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Opinions expressed in *The Sabbath Sentinel* are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editorial Staff or of *The Bible Sabbath Association*.

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The Family

Recently the church I attend took the Lord's Supper. As we were discussing the significance of the bread and the wine, it occurred to me that the whole ritual we were reenacting was about family. I suppose some will say, "You mean that you've never thought of it that way before?" No, not in the way that it impacted me this time. When you stop to think about it, what is supper but a family meal? This is the "Lord's" supper, and gathered around the table were the "Lord's family."

As we dig a little deeper into "the Family," we will look at several Scriptures that will solidify our understanding of the concept of living within the family of God. Since we have to live in this world, we probably give little thought to the idea that we are representatives of God's family here on earth, but that is exactly what God through his Son is in the process of building here and now. He is bringing sons and daughters into His family, and you are a member of that family.

When Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane in agony praying to His Father in Heaven, He cried out, "Abba, Father, ... everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36). However, Jesus had already introduced His disciples to the idea that God was their Father too. Jesus told the disciples what their Father expected of them when He said, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:44-45). If you want to be part of God's family, you have to put away all feelings of revenge and do to those who mistreat you the same as God has done for us when we were busy going about our lives with no consciousness of our sins and living as if there were no God. In other words, we need to put away our thoughts of calling fire down from heaven to fry our enemies.

How would you describe your relationship with Jesus and your heavenly Father? Or, do you even have a relationship with Them? Do you truly understand that you

were created for the sole purpose of having a relationship with Jesus and His Father, who is also your Father. As the apostle Paul said, "... we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15). We cry, not Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Too often we get hung up on what we can't do, and forget the One to Whom we are related by blood — the blood of Jesus. Yes, we have rules to live by, but the purpose of the rules is to enhance our relationship with our Father and His Son, not to take our eyes off that relationship for the purpose of performing a set of instructions. If we lose sight of the true purpose of the Law (the boundaries of our relationship) and think that the Law is an end in itself, we forfeit our intimacy with God and lose the most essential part of being a Christian — that close fellowship with God that we long for.

I like the way Christian apologist and author Ravi Zacharias puts it in his new book: "Our destiny is in a relationship to a person, not in a pilgrimage to a place. Our purpose is in communion with the living God, not in union with an impersonal idea or nameless Higher Power: Such categorization is intellectual cowardice. Access to an abstract power gives you no one to be grateful to in times of blessing and no one to question and receive comfort from in times of sorrow" (*Why Jesus*, page 58).

What to you is your most important family connection with God? Are you in a time of great joy or great sorrow? What is the trigger point for you in your relationship with God? What situations in your life make you think of God in terms of "Father and son" or "Father and daughter?"

There is great blessing in understanding our relationship with God in terms of Father-son or Father-daughter. It eliminates the distance that sometimes exists in our thinking (but not in God's thinking) about God. We are too prone to think of Christ and the Father only in terms of what we think they demand of us, rather than approach God recognizing His love for us and His desire to have fellowship with us. In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock;

Continued on Page 14

God, An Animal Lover!

By Kenneth Westby



God made animals before he made humans. They too display his brilliant, creative artistry in dynamic life forms—myriads of diverse species from hummingbirds to whales. These creatures are like signed portraits originating uniquely from the mind of the Creator. He loves what he imagined and made. He surveyed his living creatures and declared “that it was good” (Genesis 1:25).

Did you know that one of the Ten Commandments instructs people to give their domestic animals rest from work?¹ God sees proper care of domestic animals a point of character: “A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal” (Proverbs 12:10). One is even to help an enemy’s animal with its load if it cannot bear it.²

Even birds merit care in the Torah (God’s instructions): “If you come across a bird’s nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go....” (Deuteronomy 22:6-7). Is God concerned for animals and their kind treatment? Apparently so. Why shouldn’t he be?

Animals hold a special place in Scripture because of their creator, God, and their role in relation to people, made in God’s image. In the original order of things animals were apparently not intended for food; in the Garden of God only plants are mentioned as food.³ Yahweh views animals as representatives of his marvelous creative powers and challenges the wise man Job to step back and consider the Master’s menagerie:

“Look at the behemoth⁴, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. ...He ranks first among the works of God, yet his Maker can approach him with his sword.”⁵

Behemoth, like the ferocious sea creature leviathan⁶, are too much for a man to match, yet purr as docile pets before their Creator—huge animals fully under the control of a sovereign God.

Does God Speak to Animals?

We humans commonly do. I talk to my dog “Ike,” a miniature German schnauzer, all the time, but I

doubt he understands much. He occasionally responds properly, but has never spoken back with words I can understand. However, God’s communication with his creatures is at another dimension. He can speak in their language and they obey His word.

The fanciful Dr. John Doolittle was the hero in a series of children’s books written by Hugh Lofting in the 1920s. Doolittle captured the hearts of millions of children because he could talk to animals in their own language, and they would understand and respond. He lived a dream that many of us wonder about (what are animals thinking?) and fulfilled a yearning to communicate with them. It was a charming fantasy. There is no fantasy where God is concerned.

Even before God created Eve, he introduced Adam to his animal kingdom. “He brought them to the man to see what he would name them and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.”⁷ The process of naming was a function of having dominion over them which dominion God had already conferred upon man.⁸ It was Adam’s job to pick apropos names, descriptive of what the individual species of animal was and looked like. Obviously, God had already programmed in the newly minted Adam the mental software and language to make such intelligent judgments.

The text says that God “brought” the various animals and birds to Adam for this naming procedure. It doesn’t say how God did it, but I assume he simply summoned them to appear and they came. God made another call to the animal kingdom in the days of Noah. The text says that all the creatures “came to Noah” and entered into the ark—the “unclean”

Continued on Page 10

Meet the Board

Recently members of the Bible Sabbath Association (BSA) selected their new board of directors. Below is a short bio of our board members along with their photos. As a board we say, "Thank you" for choosing us to carry out the goals and objectives of the Bible Sabbath Association.

MARSHA BASNER is a Registered Dietitian, has a Master's Degree in Food and Nutrition and a private practice. She has been a Sabbath keeper since 1974.

Marsha is a moderator of the "Sabbath-in-Africa" Internet forum and a research fellow with the Sabbath-in-Africa Project at Oakwood College Huntsville, Alabama, researching the ancient Sabbath keeping traditions of the African continent where there have been recent discoveries of African Jews, Sabbath-keeping Christians and various Sabbath-keeping tribes. This project was founded by Dr. Charles E. Bradford, author of *Sabbath Roots*.

Marsha has authored articles on biblical topics, and she is a passionate witness and evangelist for the Sabbath. She is actively involved in Biblical research and Bible studies, and she distributes Sabbath tracts locally, nationally as she travels and on the internet. Marsha currently serves on the Board of Directors of BSA.



BRYANT BUCK is the founder and leader of Solid Rock Home Fellowship in Freeport, Illinois. After retiring from a career selling life and health insurance, Bryant has gone on to pursue his love of writing. He now has two published books: *The Prayer Warrior* and *My First Christian ABC Book*.

Besides leading Solid Rock Home Fellowship and doing book signings for his books, Bryant is the assistant captain of the neighborhood watch in his neighborhood in Freeport. He and his wife Emily have two children and five grandchildren, all residing in northern Illinois.

Solid Rock Home Fellowship emphasizes a personal experience with Jesus Christ, both the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and a return to the original Christianity of the early church. Since the early church kept both the seventh-day Sabbath and the biblical feasts, Bryant and the fellowship in Freeport are committed to these truths.

BRYAN BURRELL (*BSA Treasurer*) is a life member of BSA and a member of the Board of Directors, currently serving as Treasurer. He and his wife Sue live in Fairview, Oklahoma where they have a farm equipment business. They have been married 54 years and have two sons. Bryan, a fifth-generation Sabbath-keeper, is a member of the Church of God (Seventh Day) and active in the local church.

A graduate of Oklahoma State University, Bryan is a licensed insurance and securities agent specializing in financial planning. He is also a certified mediator for the Oklahoma Supreme Court Alternative Dispute Resolution System, volunteering as a mediator for businesses, individuals, families and churches.



CALVIN BURRELL (*BSA President*) was raised in a Bible Sabbath Association home and has been on the BSA Board many years. Now serving the Church of God (Seventh Day) as Editor of the *Bible Advocate* magazine, he desires BSA to bring people of like faith together in fellowship and in promoting the true Bible Sabbath. Calvin lives in Denver, Colorado, and has been married to his wife Barbara for 45 of his 68 years. Calvin and Barbara have three married daughters and 15 grandchildren.

Calvin is the president of the BSA and will be serving for the next two years in that capacity.

LENNY CACCHIO (*BSA Secretary*) is a 1976 graduate of Ambassador College, Big Sandy. He currently resides in Lee's Summit, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City, with his wife Diane. They have two daughters, Jennifer, and Michelle. They are charter members of the Church of God Kansas City.

Lenny is the author of two books, *Morning Coffee Companion* and *The Gospel According to Moses: The Feast Days of Leviticus 23*. He also writes a column for the Faith and Religion section of the Lee's Summit Journal.

Lenny is a Certified Financial Planner and Chartered Financial Consultant, and works for US Bank's Private Client Reserve in the Kansas City metropolitan area.



Pastor **DAVID GUERRERO** is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister with over ten years of experience, along with thirteen years in private health facility administration. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Religion/Theology and a Masters in Ministry. He is a Board certified faith-based Christian Counselor and holds Chaplaincy credentials. He has worked in a ministerial capacity in New York, Southern New England, and is currently pastoring in Wisconsin.

David is the cofounder of Rekindle the Flame Ministries (RTFM), a non-profit ministry that touches individuals in all walks of life. As their needs are met and they build relationships with RTFM staff, they seek to find the truths of YAHWEH, including the Sabbath.

David's vision for BSA is to see a greater understanding amongst all Sabbatharians so that they support each other in the endeavor of reaching the world with the Sabbath truth and aid in winsomely inviting non-Sabbatarians to join in respectful discussions on the topic of Sabbath through personal communication as well as corporate seminars, webinars, and conferences. David has successfully done this in the past and feels he could assist the BSA in formulating plans and methods to accomplish this goal. David is attracted to the BSA as it seeks to win people to truth and not to a denomination.

David is happily married to Jacquelyn and they have four children: Joshua, Hannah, Joel and Micah.

DUSTI HOWELL is an Independent Sabbath keeper and has been observing the Sabbath since his family started attending the Worldwide Church of God when he was six years old. He and his wife both graduated from Ambassador College and have three children, two of them teens.

In 2008, his family took a sabbatical to teach hill-tribe students at Legacy Institute, an independent Sabbath keeping school in northern Thailand. His hobbies include playing chess, basketball and running. Dusti has taught at every grade level. He taught English to Buddhist monks in middle schools in Thailand and Sri Lanka, He's also taught elementary students in California and high school students at the International School of Beijing. Dusti earned a Ph.D. major in Educational Technology and Ph.D. minor in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Since 1997 he has been a university professor in the Instructional Design and Technology at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. He teaches both graduates and undergraduates in face-to-face and online classes. His classes include Multimedia Learning, digital Game-Based Learning, Digital Storytelling, Learning and Motivation, and Advanced Instructional Technology for Teachers. Currently he is president of the Kansas Association for Educational Communications and Technology. He and his wife have written a dozen books on educational technology and academic success. Currently they are working on a book that will help protect kids from the side-effects of technology.



TOM JUSTUS was born in Arkansas. In 1946 he joined the navy and while in the service married Thelma, a California girl. After his discharge they stayed in California and Tom became manager of Pacific Coast Publishing Company.

He started observing the Sabbath as a member of the Worldwide Church of God and was ordained as a minister by Herbert W. Armstrong and in 1963 was asked to move to Pasadena to build Ambassador College Press. For many years he was over press operations and supervised the publishing of the *Plain Truth* magazine and at the same time ministered to several California churches. In 1978 Tom resigned from the Worldwide Church of God and started the first church for Ted Armstrong, the Church of God International.

In 1980 Tom moved to Springdale in northwest Arkansas to build a printing firm. Today, Just-Us Printers is in the top six printing plants in Arkansas. His son, Mike runs the plant but Tom is still active in decision making. Tom left the Church of God International in 1995 and became independent and now pastors a Church of God, 7th Day in Springdale with a mixture of other Sabbath keepers. Thelma died in 2007 Tom has been active in many local organizations: the Civil Service Commission board, the Airport Commission, advisory board of the Salvation Army, board of directors for the Springdale Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary board.



BILL LUSSENHEIDE (*BSA Third Vice President*) is a long time first generation Sabbatarian, since his youth. He is married and the father of three sons. Bill is the president of a mutual fund management firm and is a Registered Investment Advisor. He has been a regular speaker at civic organizations, churches, and National Feast of Tabernacle conventions. He has had a regular weekly radio program on major news talk radio stations, and is an experienced broadcaster.

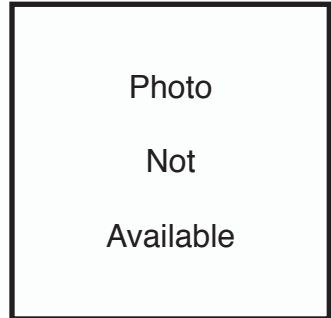
Bill is known by his friends as friendly, fun and energetic. While serving on the Executive Committee of the Constitution Party, he was a candidate for US Congress in 2010, receiving the highest percentage vote for the party for any office in the country. His platform was Pro-God, Pro-life and Pro-Traditional Marriage.

Bill is the Treasurer for Abundant living Ministries, which funds direct aid to the street children of Vinogradov, Ukraine.

ERIC MOORE (*BSA Second Vice President*) and his wife, Virginia have been married 40 years and have four children. They attended the Worldwide Church of God and were baptized in 1983. Currently they are members of the Church of God, Seventh Day, and Eric serves as an elder of the Kansas City congregation. He has served congregations as deacon, elder, teacher, preacher, and youth leader. His "helps" ministries include relief efforts for tornado victims in Joplin, Missouri, "The Brethren Night-Out Event," allowing couples to enjoy a real evening out via a paid babysitter, and the Shade Tree, providing benevolent auto care by faith based mechanics, and interaction with other faith groups through the local Community Assistance Council. Eric is an avid debater and affiliate with various speaking clubs. He is a known Road Warrior and enjoys visiting like-minded groups and sees this as an opportunity to promote BSA.

The Sabbath has been core to his walk. Over the course of his journey he continued to associate with a diverse group of believers This has been especially true over the past two decades as more individuals are disenchanted or in conflict with their faith or faith group. He is seeing folks emerge more biblically confident and committed to God. In his own congregation is a mixture from the major Sabbath keeping groups along with new converts, displaying a zeal for accuracy toward Scripture.

Central to all for Eric is the Sabbath and the BSA is a rally point providing Sabbath promotional products and educational sources.



EVA JUNE NARBER became aware of and an observer of Sabbath while in her teens, much to the shock of her family. Having served on the BSA board for 14 years, she is involved with *The Sabbath Sentinel*, youth scholarship, and promotion of BSA as interim president of the BSA.

June holds a Master's Degree in International Development from North Carolina State University, is currently working on a Ph.D. in education, is an English instructor at a community college and runs a full time tutoring and editing business called Everything English. Her research, writing, and business has taken her to Thailand, Myanmar and most recently South Korea. Recently she launched Lost Sheep Ministries which

focuses on trying to help those who left the faith to find their way home.

KEN RYLAND (*BSA First Vice President*) is the current editor of *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine. Ken has been a member of the BSA board for more than 10 years. Ken also served as interim president of the BSA after the death of BSA president, Richard Nickels. Ken has worked in publishing for many years. He was an editor and writer in the aerospace industry for 25 years and before that was the editor of the Spanish *Plain Truth* magazine. Ken is a graduate of the University of Mississippi in History and Spanish, and also a graduate of Ambassador College in theology and Spanish. Ken holds a Master's Degree in Spanish from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Ken has been married to his wife Patti for more than 30 years. Ken and Patti have four children and five grandchildren. Ken started observing the Sabbath during the mid-1960s while attending college at the University of Mississippi.



The Rest of the Story

By Rick Frazee

The article below is based on a true story. Sometimes we see God working among us and assume that it means that God is working just here and just now. This story can give us a perspective that is eye opening and encouraging, a perspective that we should be reminded of every now and then. With apologies to Paul Harvey, I call this message "The Rest of the Story."

Remember the story of the "Mutiny on the Bounty"? Remember Captain Bligh and the hero/mutineer Mr. Christian? That was essentially a true story that happened in the late 1700s. It begins with King George III of England in the year 1768 when he decided that certain uninhabited South Sea Islands would be more useful if they had a better food supply.

It was believed that the breadfruit palm could make these islands habitable, so in 1787 King George sent out a small ship — The Bounty — to transplant the breadfruit from Tahiti to these other South Sea islands.

The Bounty arrived in Tahiti on October 26, 1788. Just a few months later, some of the crew led by Mr. Christian mutinied. They didn't want to leave this beautiful island. The pirates were chased down and most of them were brought to justice. However, nine mutineers escaped on The Bounty taking with them seventeen natives, including six men, ten women, and one girl of 15.

In their desperation to escape the hangman's noose they fled to a small, little known place called Pitcairn Island. It was a tiny place, only two miles long and one mile wide, a rugged, mountainous island with only about 88 acres of soil suitable for crops.

This small group set out to make Pitcairn their home, nine hardened, tough English sailors and seventeen Tahitians creating one of the most diverse and unlikely groups imaginable, marooned on a beautiful South Sea island.

They had escaped the oppression of British rule, and surely their dreams were of an island paradise of peace and happiness. But the society that resulted, well, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* called it "Hell on earth." They created their own culture with no rules, with no law. They not only practiced polygamy, but every possible combination of men and women. History is unclear on the details, but some have said that the hero, Mr. Christian, was shot and killed after attempting to steal another man's wife.

They lied, cheated, stole, and murdered until within just a few years there was just one of the original mutineers left. It was so wretched and violent that only one

of the original fifteen men died of natural causes. This society gave new meaning to the word dysfunctional. It was on course for extinction: one man left with a harem of Tahitian women and a bunch of children.

This brings us to "The Rest of the Story."

The last mutineer was named Alexander Smith. This man who could barely read and write was left wondering what had happened to their dream of paradise, a man left with ugly memories and an uncertain future.

Then, in a sailor's chest, he found a book. He began to read it. It made sense. He started to regret his past and resolved to follow the principles that he found in that book. He set out to teach a new way of life to the kids. They grew up, got married, and more children were born. Their society prospered.

Finally, nearly twenty years later in 1808, the American ship The Topaz brought news of the fate of the mutineers to the rest of the world. What could be left of such a dysfunctional group of people with terrible examples of family relationships?

What was society like when Pitcairn was rediscovered?

I would like to quote from *The Book Nobody Knows*, by Bruce Barton:

"There was no jail. There was no hospital. There was no insane asylum. There was no illiteracy, no crime, no disease. The people had no doctors, took no medicine, used no liquor.... Nowhere on earth were life and property more safe. What changed that place from a hell on earth to a little speck of heaven dropped down on the South Seas?

"The reading of The Book."

The reading of the Holy Bible?

Now, my curious nature said, "This is too good to be true. This sounds like a fairy tale." After a trip to the library and armed with a stack of books I set out to discover the true story of these people, who were human beings just like you and me. I found that the picture Bruce Barton painted in words was essentially true, but it failed to express their struggles. The struggle to sur-

vive the elements, the hurricanes, the heat, drought and cold. The fight to overcome their own mistakes brought down on them by a dysfunctional society, illiteracy, and their own human nature. Through all of this a seemingly perfect society began to emerge. Why? They took the Bible literally, and they did their best to pattern their little island world after the model they found in God's Word, the Bible. As a result, God poured out abundant blessings.

Are we as committed? Are we as determined?

I have known many who have studied the Bible, sometimes pretty diligently, but seldom with such graphic results. So I determined to find out what they did that so dramatically turned their society around. I found evidence of three basic points whose results are so dramatic and inspiring.

First, they put themselves in God's hands, totally, and without reservation. They trusted God to speak to them through the words of his Bible, by prayer, and by study. They prayed together in the morning and in the evening. In their tradition they all studied the Bible together, every day, using it as a guide for living.

One story tells of a visitor staying with an Island family. After everyone in the house had gone to bed, the Pitcairners waited until they thought the visitor was asleep, then they all got up to pray. They were dedicated to looking to God for answers.

Which brings me to the second point: they tended to be open minded. They followed the example of the Bereans. In Acts 17:11 we read, "... they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

The people of Pitcairn Island actively followed this verse. One book said the Pitcairners were known for their insatiable desire for religious tracts. When they found the truth, the same thing happened to them that happened to the Bereans: "Therefore, many of them believed" (Acts 17:12). They were actively searching God's Word for His will and asking how it applied to them.

Finally, they took action. They were motivated. When they found the truth, they applied it. They zealously embraced the principles they discovered in God's Word, sometimes maybe too enthusiastically.

When they discovered fasting, for a while they fasted twice a week.

When they came to understand foot washing as a symbol of humility, they washed each other's feet every week.

When the seventh day Sabbath was presented to them in the mid-1800s by the Seventh Day Adventists

"with the support of many passages of scripture," they zealously embraced the Sabbath.

The book Pitcairn Island, by David Silverman, says, "Evidence of the modern Pitcairners' faith is both abundant and impressive. Their close observance of its tenets involves not merely the practice and rituals; it requires many material sacrifices. The Sabbatarian restrictions on labor frequently proved galling [from the author's point of view], as when, on one of their all-important trips to gather miro-wood... unfavorable winds landed them at Henderson Island on the Sabbath. The Pitcairners chose to return without the prized wood rather than cut and load it on the Sabbath."

These people energetically embraced the Bible as the literal words of God, a blueprint on which to base their lives. It worked with awesome results. Even when outsiders severely criticized them for their strict adherence to biblical principles, they followed the Bible anyway. Think about it! They were being called legalistic, yet no one could argue with the results.

A friend of mine once knew a man who went to Pitcairn as a social worker. When he came back, he was not only baptized, but he came back to the United States to tell their story to anyone who would listen.

What an awe-inspiring example for us today! They used the Bible, the power of God speaking through His Word, to overcome the worst kind of dysfunctional background and physical trials. The next time you are discouraged or depressed, the next time you are faced with an impossible trial, turn to the answer Book. Look for God to reveal the answer through the textbook of life, the Holy Bible. Expect God to help just as He helped them. God did it for them, and He will do it for us.

Earlier, I promised "The Rest of the Story." I'd like to list for you a summary of the teachings of the Pitcairners of the late 1800's. Again, from David Silverman's book Pitcairn Island (remember that Mr. Silverman was an outsider – think about what he would say if he were talking about us):

"Their tenets included belief in the Second Coming of Christ and the concurrent beginning of the Millennium, and a Hebraic emphasis on Sabbath observance on Saturday. The new creed further involved acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, the doctrines of salvation by faith, baptism by immersion, foot-washing before communion, and tithing."

Mutineers to God's elect! Could *that* be ... the *real* rest of the story?

Rick Frazee is an elder in the Church of God, Kansas City. This article is taken from the church's newsletter, "Helpers of Your Joy," April 2000.

Westby: "God, An Animal Lover" cont. from page 4.

by breeding pairs, the "clean" by breeding pairs of seven and seven of each bird species. God called this conglomeration of critters to peacefully gather for Noah to separate and load into the ark. The creatures obey the voice of their Maker. Somehow he speaks the language unique to each species.

God has done some amazing things with his animals. Remember the story of Balaam's Ass?⁹ The poor beast had been severely beaten by the brute Balaam, a corrupt prophet, for her failure to move forward to his command. She had good reason for disobeying Balaam because she was facing her Maker's fighting warrior—an angel of YHWH [Yahweh], sword in hand and fire in his eyes.

"When the donkey saw the angel of YHWH [for the third time] she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff [for the third time]."

What transpires next is utterly amazing, and humorous.

"Then Yahweh opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?' Balaam answered the donkey [in shock, no doubt], 'You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now.'" The fool had no idea that his donkey had saved his ass, the other kind!

"Then Yahweh opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the road with his sword drawn." The angel thundered at the quivering Balaam, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her." The headline would have read: "Jackass Killed, Donkey Lives."

Can a donkey talk? Yes, when God tells it to and provides the message. To the hungry and scared Elijah, the God of Israel said, "You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.... The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook."¹⁰ God can order not meals-on-wheels, but meals by airmail, if he chooses? Do ravens listen when their Creator commands? Does God know how to speak raven? He clearly does and why not? He designed every squiggle of raven DNA and the entire software package of instinct and nature to run the raven's brain.

Ravens communicate among themselves, but rarely does their Creator speak directly to one of them. When he commands, the ravens obey. Such straightforward obedience is rare in the human race despite the fact

that the Creator continuously speaks to his image-bearers. Humans feel free to disobey their Creator; animals do not have free will to ignore their Creator's voice.

All animals have some means of communication with their own kind, whether auditory, visual, chemical or in other mysterious fashion. Ants communicate, bees do, whales do. Does God know their various skills of communication? Can he talk to and command their actions? The answers are obvious.

What did God instruct the lions to do as his beloved servant Daniel was thrown into their den for dinner? God sent his angel with this message for the lions: "Shut your mouths, behave, Daniel is mine!" Their Creator had spoken. The lions obeyed and as it turns out later reaped a much bigger meal for their obedience.¹¹

Our Maker's Creative Mind

How does God create? How did he come up with the millions and millions of designs for living things? How long did all this take? How many staff did he employ on his creative projects? We can only speculate, but the enormity of creating complex life forms and integrating them into the dizzying complexity of a global ecology is beyond comprehension...for us. Our best scientists using their most powerful computers cannot even master how the weather works and predict with any certainty what it will be beyond a few weeks out.

The Creator carefully designed his creatures, no doubt, with the aid of his heavenly host and entire angelic kingdom—each of these beings at earlier times were themselves designed and made by God. These millions of sentient beings of power could each be likened to a skyscraper jammed full of computing power operating not a slow light-speed, but at the thresholds of dimension X, God-speed. Tasked with specific jobs, these assistants to the Creator were at his side as he in three or more dimensions made working models of his animal kingdom. God was involved in the sub-atomic details of construction for every creature. They all bear his signature and display his intelligence and love for his living things. He has made a beautiful world and that love of beauty extends to the billions of galaxies all coruscating with colors, marvels, and mystery.

All of God's planning, intelligence and helpers were likened to *Wisdom*, as if it were a person. Wisdom was present at creation, watching and assisting him. Wisdom is likened to a person standing beside God as he made things. It is a picturesque, poetic, dreamscape way to describe what is so beyond anything we know. It is called *personification*, the taking of a key aspect of God's nature and likening it to a person. Another personification of God is *Word*, the communication of God, of what he is like, what he has planned for his

creation, and how he wants man to live. Jesus embodied both God's Wisdom and Word as he taught and lived with his fellow man. He asks us to also internalize God's Wisdom and Word thus manifesting God's glory among mankind.

Wisdom is the overwhelmingly powerful essence of God that evidences in all he does. Proverbs presents wisdom as always present with God and gives it a voice. The eighth chapter of proverbs pictures Wisdom at creation watching the Master at work in all his glory

"Yahweh brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I [Wisdom] was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began....I was there when he set the heavens in place....Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind."¹²

Hummingbirds & Whales

Trying to imagine how God could make just two of his creatures is enough to tax the mind into stupor. Perhaps someday we will actually watch the Creator create new species. How thrilling would that be? To create, God first had to have a picture in mind of what he wanted, the thing's overall function, its variety of appearance and behavior, how it would live and reproduce, where it would live, how it would fit with the rest of creation, and many more factors. Then he would set about building it.

How long this process took for the many millions of species and varieties of creatures to be constructed is known only in heavenly realms. But God was in no hurry and he obviously enjoyed the process as can be seen by the myriad life forms from tube worms at 300 degree thermal vents at the bottom of the ocean to majestic eagles soaring above mountains. Each of his creatures is beautiful in its own way—if not visually, then beautiful in its design, function, or its fit in the majestic world of living things.

Speaking of beauty, here I can agree with St. Thomas Aquinas that the word Beauty is perhaps the best one word description of everything pertaining to God. Beautiful is God's nature, his love, his plan, his vast creation, his Fatherly care for his children, and beautiful too is his design, care, and love for animals. A passionate David said, "...This is what I seek...to gaze upon the beauty of Yahweh and to seek him in his temple."¹³

I recently watched the program Nature on PBS which was featured the paradoxical hummingbird by capturing its unique flying skills with super high speed cameras that could slow down its wings to almost stop movement. What a marvel of physics these energetic birds display...and what irresistible beauty! One could see the tiny wing muscles flexing as they hover midair with their long bill and tongue/tube deep into a flower.

They resemble tiny mythical fairies ranging in size from 8 to 2 inches and weighing from 20 g (0.7 ounce) to 2 g for the smallest of all living birds, the bee hummingbird of Cuba.

There are about 320 species of hummingbirds and all are restricted to the New World. Their colors are brilliant and jewel-like with feathers having a prismatic construction that iridescences in changing light and from direction viewed—ornamentations and colors unsurpassed in the animal kingdom. Some can fly at 60 mph, wings on the smallest beat at 80 times a second, tiny hearts beating like trip-hammers, and all can fly straight up and down, sideways, and backward and hover keeping their heads perfectly still. Their long bills come in a variety of lengths and shapes and seem perfectly fitted to the flowers and food supply they enjoy.

God not only chose to design and adorn these little jewel-birds but also had to design the flora and insects that would sustain them. Why did God make so many different types of hummingbirds and create such extra work for himself? Apparently God doesn't regard creating as toil and thoroughly enjoys the challenge of making beautiful things, especially so knowing their beauty and marvel will be shared with his sons and daughters.

Each species of hummingbird seems to mutually excel in what it does and all the variety of little tufts and feathers and tails and colors make studying hummingbirds anything but boring for us earthlings. In fact, I think God regards our love for and marveling after his creations as a real form of praise, much like a patron standing enthralled before a glorious piece of art, the artist observing unseen at the back of the gallery.

With creation comes responsibility. We warn our little children clamoring for a pet, "You must take care of it and feed it." God takes his creation seriously and provides for all living things he creates. You make it; you feed it, is his rule. It seems the business of creation is an ongoing activity of God. "The lions roar for the prey and seek their food from God."¹⁴ So in fact does every living creature including man who should intelligently pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." If God can provide food for his squadrons of hummingbirds, is he not even more concerned to care for his sons and daughters? Jesus made this point.¹⁵

The Biggest Living Thing Ever

We leave the smallest of living things and consider the other end of the scale; the largest and most massive animal to have ever lived on earth, the blue whale. It can reach 100 feet long and weigh 150 to 200 tons. It eats shrimp-like crustaceans called krill and can consume 8 tons of them a day. To catch them, the blue whale's huge mouth is lined with up to 400 plates of baleen or "whalebone" which God uniquely fabricated for trapping the little krill which perfectly supply all the

nutrition the monster needs. The richest schools of krill are in the southern ocean of Antarctica and which produce the largest of the blue whales.

What was God thinking when he made all the various species of whales including this giant blue whale? Well, he needed to fill the land surface with interesting creatures from wolves to wombats, the air with flying creatures from hummingbirds to hawks, and the largest part of the earth's surface with things that swim from walleye to whales. If he could make a hummingbird smaller than your little finger with the weight of a postcard and a heart so small you'd strain to see it, could he not design a whale to rule the oceans?

How big would that heart need to be? The heart of one blue whale weighed in at 1500 pounds! It wasn't designed for a flying, hovering machine like our little jewel-birds, but for feeding blood to the largest body of bone, muscle and fat ever made and moving it speedily above and below the surface of the seas, and keeping it toasty warm inside as it cuddled icebergs. How many whale models did God make before establishing his final "kind" or species? How long did he take in building the blue whale genome? A year? A hundred years? What went into all the design considerations? We must ask him one day!

"Intelligent Design," is the new science that examines and appreciates the irreducible complexity of the created order, and it is bringing down the silly myth of Darwinian evolution. The deeper any living thing is examined the more the facts cry out: "I was made by the most intelligent being—I am the Creator's creature!" All the scientists on earth working day and night for the next hundred years could not create a single living, working slug! The creation declares the glory of God and it is about time people begin to hear it speak and step back in awe of the Father of Creation.

Does God Have an Attachment to His Creatures?

At the beginning of this piece I mentioned that God included animal care in the foundational Ten Commandments. I'm sure, good Bible student that you are, and reader of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, you knew I referred to the Sabbath commandment as presented in Deuteronomy. Not only did God want his people to rest, he wanted that rest to be shared by the working animals they controlled. Does this tell you something about God's concern for his creatures?

Remember the amazing story of the prophet Jonah's trip to Nineveh, the huge but corrupted queen city of the expanding Assyrian empire? The reluctant prophet didn't want to warn them of God's plan to destroy the city like he did Sodom. Why? Jonah didn't like the Assyrians to begin with; they were Gentile enemies of Israel. But his real fear was that they might repent, and

the kindness of God would get the best of him and he'd relent from destroying Nineveh. Jonah tried to run away from doing God's mission, but that's another whale story.

Jonah finally passed on God's message and lo and behold, Nineveh repented from the king down, and yes, God relented. This turn of events made Jonah depressed and angry at God for showing mercy to these stupid, unworthy Gentiles. He wanted mercy for himself, but resented the fact God showed love, mercy, and compassion upon these degenerate pagans. God responded to Jonah and acknowledged that these Assyrians were ignorant about many things, yet they received Yahweh's warning and heeded. Much was at stake: The destruction of the entire population with all their livestock and animals—all creatures of God's hand. God was happy to avoid doing that. He reasoned with Jonah: "Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city."¹⁶

The Creator had concern for every creature, both man and animal which he lumps together in his final words with Jonah. The psalmist sings, "O YHWH, you preserve both man and beast."¹⁷

Creation Praises Its Creator

Frequently we read of all creation praising its Maker—animals, trees, the heavenly bodies—often to the shame of humans who have taken to worshipping idols and the creation itself instead of its Creator.

I believe an imbedded connection exists between the high order of created living things and their Maker and when these non-human creatures are stimulated they must respond to their Creator. I can't prove such a bond of *sympathetic neuron stimulation* or *sympathetic strings* exists, but I suspect one exists and is somehow "wired" right into the creature's DNA and genome.

Presently, the creation is pictured as mourning, even groaning, at the chaos and evil of this age (see Romans 8:23). Not cognitively, but metaphorically. This metaphoric scene has all of God's beautiful creatures anxiously waiting, as it were, the return of the Master and the restitution of all things to a state of peace, a new and glorious world order. Hence, the vision of the coming Kingdom of God features the wolf and the lamb pasturing peacefully together.¹⁸

The immediate response of the creation to the Creator's voice upon his kingdom's invasion of earth will be something to behold. I can picture the creatures of the sea leaping for joy, the beasts of the field roaring and jumping, and the birds of the air singing their lungs out.

“How many are your works, O Yahweh! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small....These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them they gather it up; when you open our hand, they are satisfied with good things.

...Yahweh is good to all: he has compassion on all he has made. All you have made will praise you, O Yahweh; your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of our kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom...let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

...Praise Yahweh from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths...wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations.”¹⁹

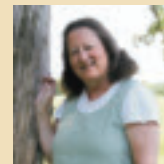
God is pleased with the creatures he envisioned and made. They belong to him, but he has chosen to share them with his image-bearers even giving us dominion over them. What a gift! What a trust! May God also give us the wisdom to care for his animal kingdom and appreciate the gloriously artistry and intelligent design of His handiwork. Are you an animal lover?

End Notes

1. Exodus 20:8-11
2. Exodus 23:5
3. Genesis 2:9, 16. After the flood animals are mentioned as food (Genesis 9:3) a practice that may have begun after expulsion from Garden of God.
4. Hebrew means “beast par excellence” probably an elephant or the largest land animal.
5. Job 40:15-19
6. Job 41. Mighty and terrifying, but weak compared to God. Its identity is not clear but was a sea monster of some sort and had mythical, figurative usage in Bible. See Psalm 104:24-26.
7. Genesis 2:19
8. Genesis 1:28
9. Read the entire Balaam saga in Numbers 22-24 and 31:7-16.
10. 1 Kings 17:1-6
11. Daniel 6:16-24
12. Proverbs 8:22-31
13. Psalm 27:4
14. Psalm 104:21
15. Matthew 6:26
16. Jonah 4:11
17. Psalm 36:6
18. Isaiah 11:6
19. Psalm 104:24-28; Psalms 145:9-12, 21; 148:7-11

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They that Wait upon the Lord



Waiting upon the Lord enables us to enter into a greater realm of fellowship and trust with our heavenly Father. How do I know? Because we who are called by His name to wait patiently for his soon return. One day the trumpet will sound, and we who are looking for Him and will see Him when He appears a second time.

Yet, there is another type of waiting that we experience everyday — waiting on each other. We wait in line at businesses, we wait on our children; sometimes we even wait on the weather to change. Whether we like it or not, living in the world requires waiting. God never said it would be easy. In fact, it is one of the most difficult tasks we face, but if we will realize that waiting brings positive results into our lives, we would embrace it. Embrace it, you say? Yes, embrace it. It has taken many years of walking with the Lord and many tribulations to see what the true meaning of what “They that wait upon the Lord” really means.

We cannot fathom the innumerable blessings we will receive by waiting on our heavenly Father. And, by the way, it is not pleading with God, nor is it a state of depression. Waiting is the atmosphere of quiet reserve, arriving only after you have sought God. When you have done all that you can do, then stand in His presence and wait (there is that word again) for Him to have His perfect will in your life.

If you study the life of an eagle, you will soon realize what Isaiah was trying to convey. As an eagle soars to the heights of heaven, he is keenly aware of his surroundings and yet flies without any trepidation as he soars with the velocity that his Creator supplied, landing unnoticed. We who wait on the Lord can run and not be weary; we can walk and not faint. I know because the many times that I have waited on God, He has taught me to be as the eagle while learning to wait on him.

Is waiting a pleasant endeavor? No, we would much rather bypass that particular experience than to endure, but as I mentioned earlier, the blessings that we receive are well worth the wait. Therefore, let us embrace the opportunity to see God’s hand in our life because he knows exactly what He is doing when He requires us to wait.

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Editorial: "The Family" cont. from page 3.

if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me." Like Adam and Eve in the Garden, we like to hide from God assuming that He can't see us. It's like the small child who pulls the blanket over his head believing that others can't see him. It is not God who hides from us, but we are the ones who want Him "not to know...." He stands at the door and knocks. He wants to come in and dine with us if we will let Him. We just have to open the door.

We need always to keep in the forefront of our minds the plans that God has for us who love Him and His Son. The apostle Paul tells us of God's plan for us in Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, so that we may be also glorified together [with Christ]." Our destiny as children of God is to share everything that the Father has given to His Son. Did you get that? We will share everything with Christ.

There is a verse that we often quote to encourage ourselves or others when we have doubts about what God is doing in our lives. However, the scope of this verse goes well beyond an emotional pick-me-up. It goes right to the heart of God's desire for His children: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11). You are a joint-heir with Christ. That is your future, and that is your hope.

How does God look at you, his child? We often short-change ourselves by refusing to believe that God even now looks upon us with great affection. We think it is just too fantastic to believe that "...God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever [you and I] believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." We think that if God only knew what we were really like, He would look elsewhere for sons and daughters. Somehow, in our minds we have this idea that God doesn't actually know already what is in our minds and hearts. Let me assure you; He does. The apostle Paul explains exactly how God sees us in our current condition. "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,..." (Ephesians 2:5). Wherever Jesus goes, He carries us with Him. We are seated with Him next to the Father in heaven. Does that seem too incredible for you? If so, you need to rethink your relationship with God and believe the Scriptures.

How close are you as one of His children to the heart of God? What does He think of you, and how much does He yearn for you? Is it enough for you to be one of God's "little ones?" What does the Scripture say about God's affection for you? "See that you do not

look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matthew 18:10-14). Yes, He will leave the 99 who are safe to go after the one (is that you?) who has gone astray. He esteems His fellowship with you as His top priority.

The Bible ends in the book of Revelation with God making a statement about us. "[W]ho overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7). Believe it, and live it fully here and now is this life.

—Kenneth Ryland

It Was a "Super Moon" All Right!

"God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night." –Genesis 1:16

Many of us last weekend had cameras on standby waiting for Saturday's "Super Moon" (May 5) to creep above our local line of sight.

According to NASA Science, the "super Moon," was as much as 14% bigger and 30% brighter" than any of the other full Moons will be in 2012.

NASA goes on to state that the "scientific term for the phenomenon is 'perigee moon.' Full Moons vary in size because of the oval shape of the Moon's orbit. The Moon follows an elliptical path around Earth with one side ('perigee') about 50,000 km closer than the other ('apogee'). Full Moons that occur on the perigee side of the Moon's orbit seem extra big and bright."

Especially as the moon rises above the horizon, it looks its largest and often has an orange hue. "For reasons not fully understood by astronomers or psychologists, low-hanging Moons look unnaturally large when they beam through trees, buildings and other foreground objects," notes NASA.

Such was the case on Saturday, for those of us who were blessed with clear skies. The moon rose like a huge, round, orange hot air balloon, and then became brilliantly brighter the higher in the sky it climbed.

Another reminder of how the heavens declare the glory of the Lord.

—Aimee Herd, *Breaking Christian News*, May 9, 2012

It's about Love

by Terrell Perkins



"I just love my wife so much I'd kill her if she ever left me." We've all heard statements like that. Love is the most popular subject in our music and our poetry but it's also the most misunderstood concept in the world. Even with as much as we obsess over the subject, as a society, I believe we are somewhat uncomfortable with the subject of love. We're not quite sure how or when to express it. It is often mistaken for weakness and we don't want to appear weak.

In a Sabbatarian church I once attended, it was "politically incorrect" to talk about love. That was a subject that Protestants, and other "touchy-feely" types talked about. Love was too often used to dismiss God's law and what mattered was the law. Never mind the fact that God revealed His law to us as an act of love like when a parent tells their young child to stay away from a busy street. It is out of love that they do so. The law of God glows with love for His children. Love flows through every line of His word. That's something it would do well for all us to remember.

Love, in English, means very different things depending on how it is used. Webster's defines love as follows:

1. *a* (1): strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties <maternal love for a child> (2): attraction based on sexual desire : affection and tenderness felt by lovers (3): affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests <love for his old schoolmates> *b*: an assurance of affection <give her my love>
2. warm attachment, enthusiasm, or devotion <love of the sea>
3. *a*: the object of attachment, devotion, or admiration <baseball was his first love> *b* (1): a beloved person: darling —often used as a term of endearment (2) *British* —used as an informal term of address
4. *a*: unselfish loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another: as (1): the fatherly concern of God for humankind (2): brotherly concern for others *b*: a person's adoration of God

Greek uses four different words for our word love:

- *Agápe* (γάπη *agápē*) means unconditional love in modern day Greek
- *Éros* (ἔρως *érōs*) is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing. It is the root word for erotic.

- *Philia* (φιλία *philia*) means friendship or brotherly love in modern Greek.
- *Storge* (στοργή *storgē*) means affection in ancient and modern Greek.

The Bible most often uses the word Agape. The Bible also tells us the qualities of Agape/Love:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away (1 Cor. 13:4-8) NIV.

These qualities define Love. These are the qualities that God wants us to cultivate in our lives. These are qualities we must show to love God and other people.

Here are just a few things God's word says about love and some commentary:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Matt. 5:44).

Love is not just what we feel it's what we do.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (Matt. 5:46)

We have often heard love defined as: "an outgoing concern for others," but it is more than that. Love is the extension of our sense of self. It is the extension of our sense of "I-Me-My-Mine" to include others. What we love, we consider a part of us. We all come from God so even the worst of us are connected to us.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. 7:12).

This is "nuts and bolts" Christianity. This is the aim of God's Word. It's not just for our brethren...it's for everyone.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

What God asked of Abraham, to kill his only son Isaac, was to test Abraham's faith in God. Well, God showed His faith in, and love for us by sacrificing His own son.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him (1 John 4:16).

All real love flows from God. When we open our hearts to receive it and to allow it to flow through us we allow God to live in us. This scripture says it all.

If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)

We can't say our hearts are open to God but closed to other human beings. They are a part of us and we of them. To love them is to love God.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another (John 13:34).

Christ loved us enough to die for us...that's how He loved us. What are we willing to do for each other?

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).

We shouldn't overlook the fact that others have died for us too. American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and police are some who have given their lives for us. Their sacrifices should never be overlooked.

By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:35).

We often hear churches claim one proof or another that they are the true church. This is the proof that Christ pointed to.

"If you love me keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Love has rules. It has boundaries. God tells us here how we are to love Him in no uncertain terms.

The fact is that it doesn't matter what a church teaches officially or unofficially. The only thing that matters is what the Scriptures teach. The Body of Christ will teach those things in whatever church its members find themselves in. It's all about love...

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Divine Magnetism

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

Magnetism has been known to man for at least 2,500 years, and probably much longer. Thales, the Greek sage of Miletus, who lived about 600 B.C., spoke of naturally occurring magnets.

According to one account, magnetism was discovered by Magnes, a shepherd, who first observed that his iron-tipped shepherd's staff picked up bits of magnetic ore. Other accounts state that the magnetic ore owed its name to that district of Asia Minor known as Magnesia, which was one of the principal sources of the substance in ancient times.

Iron is the best known magnetic material, but it is only one of many substances that have magnetic properties. Nickel and cobalt also are magnetic, but less so than iron. Aluminum and chromium also are magnetic, but even less than nickel and cobalt. Most surprising, perhaps, is the fact that oxygen, at extremely low temperatures, is highly magnetic.

At the present time the most powerful magnets are alloys of iron combined with one or more of the rare earth elements. Some of these magnets are capable of lifting several hundred times their own weight. In the future these magnets will doubtless be surpassed in power.

One of the basic characteristics of magnetism is that the strength of a magnetic field varies in inverse proportion to the square of the distance from the magnet's center. Thus, if at a distance of four centimeters a magnet exerts an attractive force of four kilos, at a distance of two centimeters it will exert an attractive force of 16 kilos. Another interesting fact is the ability of permanent magnets to impart attractive force to potentially magnetic substances. Thus, a steel nail having no magnetism of its own can be made to attract other unmagnetized steel nails.

Just as substances vary in their response to magnetism, so different people vary in their response to the drawing power of Jesus Christ. However, whereas inanimate objects have no control over the quality of their response to magnetic attraction, human beings can determine how they will respond to the drawing power of Christ. A steel nail possesses no power in itself to move toward a magnet, but you can choose to take a step closer to God, and as you "draw nigh to God, ... he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8) — with increasing attractive force. This process in turn imbues you with increasing power to attract others to Christ.

This morning Jesus says to you: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3). As you feel Christ's drawing power, respond to it.

*Donald Mansell, **New Every Morning**, page 24. Review & Herald Publishing Association. 1981.*

Divine Healing Today

By Calvin Burrell



Few Christians doubt that Christ possessed the gift of healing. He showed it during His earthly ministry, as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John attest, by curing all manner of sickness and disease among the people. Mark 6:5 reports that Jesus' miraculous ability was once stymied to some extent, due to the unbelief of His hearers. Even then, a few sick people were healed by our Lord.

Miraculous cures are recorded not only of Christ, but also of the early church, although their frequency diminishes in Acts when compared to the Gospels.

Is it God's will that His church continue to exercise healing gifts comparable to those in the Gospels and Acts? A yes answer finds support in these texts:

- "These signs will follow those who believe they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17, 18). Attributed to Christ, this saying may not have been part of Mark's original Gospel.
- "to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit" 1 Corinthians 12:8-10). One of nine gifts mentioned by Paul early in this chapter focused on the Spirit.
- "And the prayer of faith will save the sick" (James 5:13-16). The sick and suffering are told to seek healing through various means, including prayer and anointing by church elders.

Is it primarily bodily healing we should expect from these instructions? Or is psycho-emotional and moral healing also promised in response to prayers of faith? The Greek words for sick and healing in these texts have moral-spiritual connotations, along with physical ones.

Without discouraging fervent prayers or earnest requests for prayer, I confess to having "faith-based doubts" about divine healing as often taught and practiced. Specifically, I doubt that Christ or the apostles intended physical healing to be at the core of the new covenant gospel—God's promise to forgive our sins, write His law on our hearts, and be our God forever.



If physical healing now is assured through Christ's atonement (according to some views of Matthew 8:16, 17 and 1 Peter 2:24b), then why are there so many failures to see healing — even after the elders' fervent prayers commands?) of faith with anointing oil, per James 5:13-16? Does not the failure of prayers for healing raise doubts about prayers for forgiveness, since forgiveness is assured through the same stripes of atonement?

In many church services and prayer meetings, requests for bodily needs, ranging from minor injury to terminal illness, are many. By comparison, prayer requests for spiritual vigor, healthy homes and churches, and gospel work around the world are few. For me, this imbalance does not reflect the priorities of the new covenant gospel.

I do not question God's ability to heal bodies or doubt that He has done so often, from Bible times until today. I do question whether it is His will to heal in any and every situation where elders are called to pray. And I question why, in ministering to the sick, it's a mistake to pray that God's will be done.

Reprinted from Bible Advocate magazine, May-June 2012, p. 7. Calvin Burrell is the editor of Bible Advocate and also president of the Bible Sabbath Association. Calvin Burrell is inviting people to comment on this article. If you have a comment, e-mail Calvin at bibleadvocate@cog7.org.

Anxiety Rules

By Ray Wooten



Anxiety is all around us. It is a malady that plagues almost everyone to one degree or another. It not only affects the poor, it affects all people regardless of their status in the world. A huge part of the world's resources has been spent in an effort to resolve the problem of anxiety through counseling, drugs, rehabilitation centers, and may other means only to fail miserably. It just intensifies and deepens as we try to treat the problem gently by focusing on the problem. Could it be that we need to reconsider our approach to this debilitating problem and listen to our Savior's solution to the whole matter of worry and Anxiety? If you believe that we should, then here we go.

The Bible shares Jesus' dissolution of this entire matter very early in His training class for His disciples. This counseling also applies to you and me, His modern-day disciples. Matthew 6:19-33 explains that the entire cause for anxiety is contained in the matter of what each of us individually values and cherishes as our most important treasure. This means both now and eternally. Jesus says in verse 19, "Do not store up riches for yourself here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal." Moths eat cloth and rust oxidizes metal. Nothing is this physical dimension lasts forever. Material things always picture or symbolize the spiritual or invisible things that are eternal (see Romans 1:20).

Thieves and robbers don't only come to your home to break in to steal. Stealing is often more subtle than that. Charlatans posing as friends, teachers, businessmen, employers, employees, dictators and, yes, politicians in the "free" world who enact and enforce "laws" which legalize stealing our treasure usurp the power and authority over our lives and treasures.

In verse 20 Jesus states, "Instead, store up riches [make deposits] for yourselves in heaven [i.e., to God] where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." In verse 24 Jesus adds, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." This is a law. Mammon not only includes money or wealth. It also refers to kingdoms or governments of man. No manmade government or institution is God's kingdom. Mammon includes all of

man's systems, governments, industry, education, church, etc.

Too often when Christians think of law, they limit their parameters to the ten commandments which were given to a physical and carnal nation to regulate the conduct of people who were disconnected from God's Holy Spirit, and had no real concept of the most a man made rule to prevent man from acting on his carnal motivations. It is a driving force that transforms man's mind, heart and soul and empowers him to think, feel and react in a pure manner with both God and fellowman.

God's government or kingdom is not institutional it is relational and God's kingdom exists and is alive today and forever In some disciplines or training it is called the law of attraction. Jesus called it the law of sowing and reaping.

Sowing and Reaping

Usually when one considers the law of sowing and reaping he thinks of digging in the ground and planting seeds. That is a form of sowing and reaping, but let's look further into this dynamic law. In order to do this we must first understand why we think, feel, and act the way we do. Here are some ideas and possibilities:

Man's first recollection is in the human dimension. Although we are created from pure spirit or energy, the process begins with spirit cells. These cells are living but do not have ability to think, feel or act on their own. Man was created with a brain, heart and body and through the power of a breath of our creator was infused with spirit that imparted the powers, that is, the ability and authorization to think, feel and act produce at the human level and ultimately at the divine level.

Since the human level is our first recollection, we tend to think the human or physical level is the reality and that the spirit level is symbolic or typical of the physical. This is backward. The spiritual is eternal and therefore, first. The physical is symbolic or typical of the spiritual which is the reality.

So, when someone says to me, "You're trying to spiritualize everything away." My first thought is, yes,

now you're getting it. Jesus certainly taught that spirituality is transcendent to the physical or matter.

Cure for Anxiety

Now notice v. 25 Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought (i.e. have no anxiety, fear, mental anguish or worry) for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing." We all naturally know that life is much more than eating well, dressing up and looking good. We should also understand that wearing clothing and eating food are good things. The problem is making those things along with all other needs our treasure. Anxiety and worry about these needs is a lack of faith and trust in God. So, Jesus is giving us a lesson in faith and trust in Him/God. This is in opposition to believing the lies of Satan who told Eve, who told Adam that God was depriving them of having access to the very blessings that God promised them. Satan told Eve that by defying God, which is to deny God, she could be like God. You can read these facts in Gen. 3:1-24.

The tragedy is great, but the solution and the outcome are wonderful, marvelous and glorious. They are also eternal just as God promised.

Matthew 6:30-32, "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

Christ then shows what He means by taking no thought about food, shelter, clothing, etc. He shows in verse 33 that we should "Seek first the kingdom, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."

The Kingdom

How do we seek the kingdom? First we obey the law of sowing and reaping. We do this by taking Christ at His word. Believe Him by obeying His law of love. He created us from pure spirit energy Then He breathed life into us.

Gen. 2:7 This life began at that moment as the breath of God "jump started" it in Adam who became a "living soul" Jesus shows us that man consists of heart, soul and mind. Matt. 22:37 " ... you shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Because Adam and Eve decided to follow Satan in his rebellion he lost access to the holy spirit which gives man another dimension. This dimension transcends man's ability to think, feel and act/produce. Jesus, the Son of God, lived His human life guided and empowered by the holy spirit and without sin, died voluntarily for the sins of mankind. Through Him we have access to that same spirit which gives man the ability to think, feel and act at the divine level.

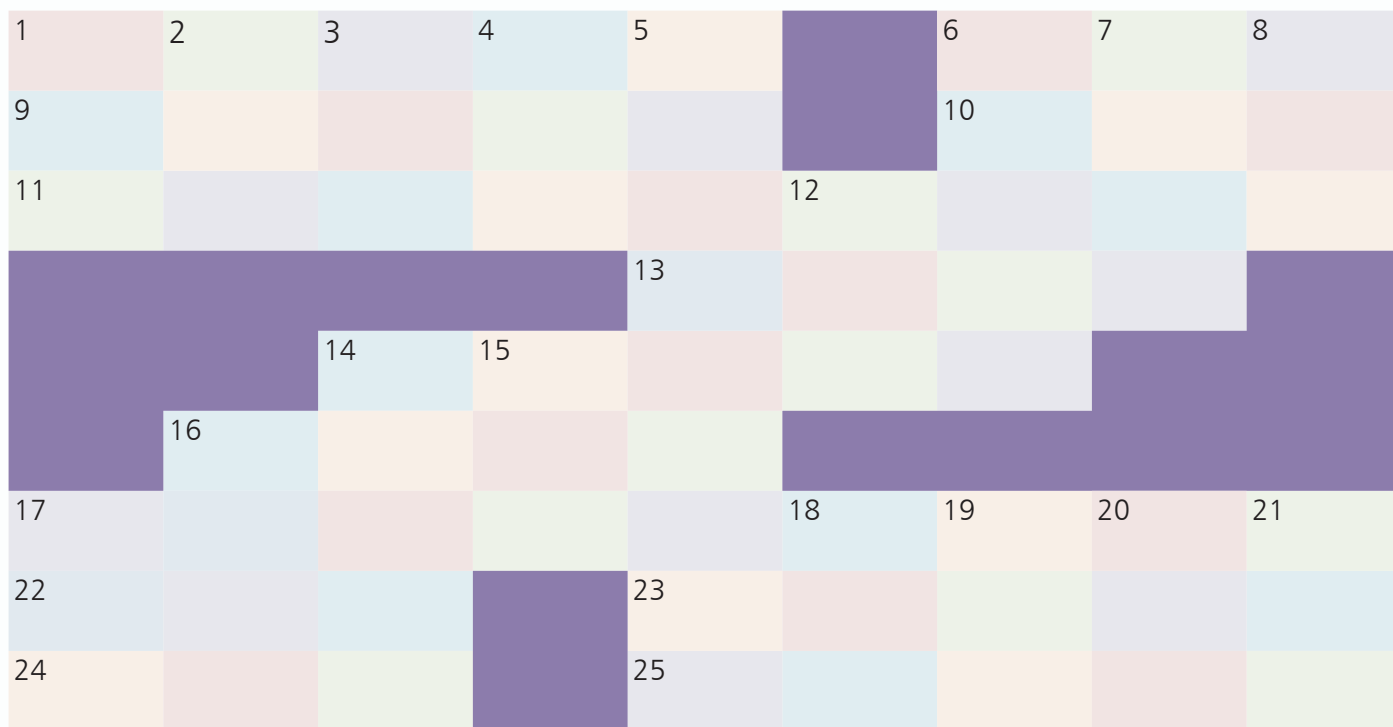
Christ officially began this process when He breathed on His disciples and said, "receive you the holy spirit." On the day of Pentecost His disciples came together at Jerusalem and there is where the final phase of creation became visible to man the Holy Spirit is the power that empowers man to experience the transformation, the metamorphosis, that completes the creative process of becoming into God's likeness or kind. We will then have the same nature as God.

As Christ's apostle says in 2 Peter 1:1-4, "Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as our own, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

Partakers of His divine nature is the purpose God always had for man. In fact this is what God said in Gen. 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." i.e. after His kind.

This is the theme of the entire Bible. Also, it is through this same spirit that we are part of the kingdom. So, when Jesus said seek you first the kingdom he was seek you first to be just like Him. Use the spiritual power and authorization think the right thoughts, feel the right emotions and do the right things. In this way you will emit and plant the right seeds into the universe and the fruits of those thoughts, emotions and action will come to you in far more abundance than you can provide otherwise. You will also experience the anxiety dissipating.

Reprinted from "The Christian Beacon," vol. 16, No. 1, 2012, page 1. Published by United Christian Ministries (4ucm.org).



ACROSS

DOWN

- 1. Threw
- 6. Dog or sauce
- 9. Hawaiian island
- 10. Gent or duct finisher
- 11. Paul went through here on his way to Thessalonica
- 13. Consequently
- 14. Indian tribe
- 16. A very little bit
- 17. King of Judah
- 22. Wrath
- 23. Tendency
- 24. Give or bear starter
- 25. Sicilian volcano, et al

- 1. Ala. Neighbor
- 2. What Gideon's 300 did before surprising the Midianites
- 3. Card game
- 4. Suffix with infer or inter
- 5. Barzillai was one
- 6. Depend
- 7. Potpourri
- 8. English habit
- 12. Web address finisher
- 14. Different
- 15. Paulo
- 16. Space prefix
- 17. Peanut butter
- 18. Skill
- 19. Stabler or Griffey
- 20. jam; pinched to the max
- 21. AMA members

Crossword Puzzle, Copyright 2012 Bryant C. Buck. See answers on page 23.

The New Reinterprets the Old

by Bryant Buck



As Sabbath keepers, we agree that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord and not the first day. However, if we are honest with ourselves and one another, we have to admit that there are many doctrinal issues on which we as Sabbath keepers do not agree. Often I have seen Sabbath keepers “hammer away” at fellow Sabbath keepers with their doctrinal “truths” as opposed to their fellow Sabbath keepers’ doctrinal “errors”. The usual response to these doctrinal assaults is for those Sabbath keepers who have just been “hammered” to “hammer back” with as much or even more force than they were “hammered” in the first place. The end result of these disputations is almost always that neither party changes their minds about the “truths” they believe and that both parties become even more steeled in their absolute resolve to promote and defend their doctrinal positions. Moreover, looking deeper, we observe that both parties in these conflicts rarely make any effort to examine their underlying thinking that leads to the doctrinal positions which they maintain.

We will use algebra to make a comparison. For example, let’s say we know that $2a + 2b = 2c$. Moreover, let’s say we know that $2z$ does not equal $2a$. So if we now substitute $2z$ for $2a$, we cannot say that $2z + 2b = 2c$. Since $2a + 2b = 2c$, $2z + 2b$ cannot equal $2c$ because $2a$ does not equal $2z$. In algebra you cannot force a conclusion that is not supported by the facts already given. However, if we choose to ignore facts already given, then we can reach virtually any conclusion that we want to reach. The tragedy is that most Christians and unfortunately most Sabbath keepers force their algebra all too often. Since they want to reach certain conclusions on certain doctrinal issues which are not well supported by an overall consistent interpretation of the Scriptures, they have to substitute their own skewed positions somewhere into the equation, which necessitates that their conclusions will also be skewed.

So let’s start our thinking about biblical interpretation with the relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament. A couple of years ago I read a book by a man who claimed to be a Messianic Jew; in this book this man used the books of the law to rein-

terpret the book of Galatians. In other words, he used the Old Testament to reinterpret the New Testament. Jews, of course, do not believe that the New Testament is inspired by God; from their perspective only the Old Testament is inspired by the Almighty. But Christians believe that both the New Testament and the Old Testament are inspired by Yahweh. That being the case, is it legitimate Christian interpretation to use the books of the law (or any part of the Old Testament) to reinterpret books of the New Testament?

The letter to the Hebrews was written to make clear to Christians of Jewish descent that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ resulted in a new covenant with new covenant Scriptures. The author of Hebrews does not waste any time in getting into this Biblical reinterpretation as he immediately proclaims the New Testament thinking in Hebrews 1: 1-2 (KJV). “God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.” Here the writer confirms that the Old Testament was indeed inspired by Yahweh (vs. 1); however, he contrasts the Old Testament with the New Testament in verse 2, making it clear that what God said through His Son was greater than what He said through the prophets.

There is no prophet who is the heir of all things – only Yeshua. There is no prophet by whom God made the worlds – only Yeshua. Therefore, what Yahweh said by the Old Testament prophets is indeed the Word of God, but what He said by His Son is the paramount Word of God. We shall consider how Jesus reinterprets the Scriptures in the second article in this series.

From Hebrews 6:13 through Hebrews 7:28 the writer of Hebrews reinterprets the biblical priesthood. In Hebrews 6:20 he asserts that Jesus Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Then in Hebrews chapter 7 he goes on to elaborate why the priesthood of Melchizedek is a greater priesthood than the priesthood of Aaron. He avers this basically because Levi (the father of the Aaronic priesthood) was yet in the loins of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. (See Hebrews 7:9-10.) Then

comes the writer's clinching statement: "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" (Hebrews 7:11 KJV) There is no getting around that the New Testament reinterprets the Old Testament in Hebrews chapter 7. Of course, if you are a Jew, you don't accept this reinterpretation. However, if you are a Christian, you should accept the new priesthood of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, you are in danger of skewing Yahweh's equation.

But let's go to the next verse after Hebrews 7:11. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Hebrews 7:12 KJV) Looking at the same verse in the New American Standard version, we read: "For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also." Many Sabbath keepers refuse to honestly deal with Scriptures like Hebrews 7:12. What is the problem? From this verse (and many others which I will not take time to list here) the Scriptures make it clear that the law has changed. We may well disagree about what in the law has changed, but if nothing in the law has changed, then we need to tear Hebrews 7:12 out of our Bibles and get rid of it. (Of course, the problem created by just getting rid of verses that we don't like basically puts us back in the position that we can interpret the Bible any way that we choose. Do you think that is a good idea?) Now go back to Hebrews 7:12 again. This verse does not tell us that some things in the law have changed, but that the law itself has changed.

Now after the writer of Hebrews concludes his basic argument on the change of the priesthood and expands it to the change of the law, he further elaborates on the change of the law in Hebrews chapter 8. "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, 'Behold, the days come,' saith the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not,' saith the Lord. 'For this the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' saith the Lord; 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord:' for all shall know me from the least to the great-

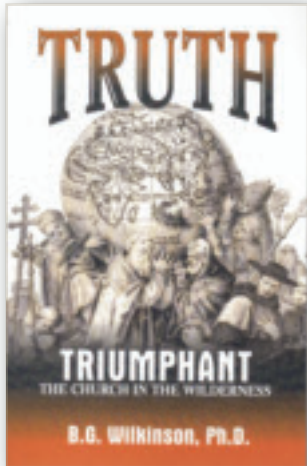
est. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' In that he saith, 'A new covenant,' he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8:7-13 KJV) Let us note first that Hebrews 8:8-12 is a quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34. In other words, in the Old Testament itself we find the prediction that the covenant of the Old Testament would one day be replaced by a new covenant. The writer of Hebrews declares that that day came when Yeshua died on the cross. (See also Hebrews 9:11-15.)

Now many are quick to point out that this passage in Hebrews confirms the law because Yahweh declared in the quoted prophecy that He would write His laws in our hearts. However, Yahweh also declared in the quoted prophecy that this covenant would not be according to the covenant that He made with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. What covenant did He make with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt? The covenant of the law. I believe the key to a correct understanding of this passage is in the phrase "all shall know me." Through our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we come to know Him in a personal way that only a few people really experienced under the old covenant. As we grow in our personal relationship with Him, what does He lead us to do? Be lawless and disobedient? Definitely not. As He instructed His disciples after the last supper, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15 KJV).

There are many other Scriptures that could be brought out to establish the principle of biblical interpretation under consideration here. Even the Old Testament prophecy of Jeremiah confirms that the New Testament reinterprets the Old Testament. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.) If we insist on reinterpreting the New Testament by the Old Testament, we are in effect Jews and not Christians. Moreover, the fact that the great majority of Christians misinterpret many New Testament Scriptures because of the false traditions handed down to them by their denominations does not give us license to interpret the Scriptures any way that we choose. We have plenty of ammunition to defend the truth with the right interpretation of the Scriptures. The New Testament reinterprets the Old Testament; the Scriptures support no other position.

*Bryant, a BSA board member, is the founder and leader of Solid Rock Home Fellowship in Freeport, Illinois. After retiring from a career selling life and health insurance, Bryant has gone on to pursue his love of writing. He now has two published books: **The Prayer Warrior and My First Christian ABC Book.***

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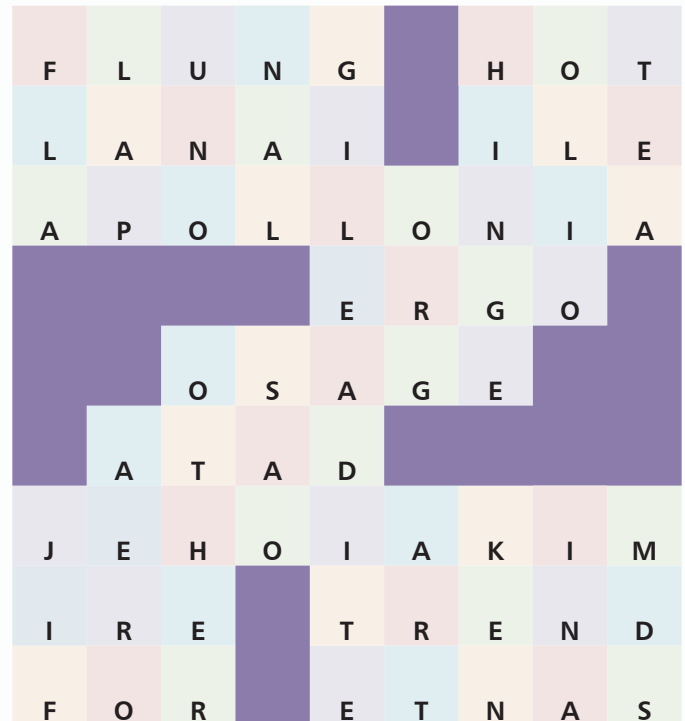
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