



The Sabbath Sentinel

Jan.-Feb.

2021

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GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

- 1 Thou shalt have no other gods before Me
- 2 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image
- 3 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain
- 4 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
- 5 Honour thy father and thy mother

- 6 Thou shalt not kill
- 7 Thou shalt not commit adultery
- 8 Thou shalt not steal
- 9 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor
- 10 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbors house or thy neighbors wife

JESUS

FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL UPON THE
NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED

ROMANS 10:13

**PREACHING THE
WORD IN MONTANA!**

BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all the creation."

The Sabbath Sentinel January-February, 2021

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Marking My Words...

I was awakened by a dream recently. In this dream, most of the Board members of the Bible Sabbath Association were gathered in one spot to bury a former Board member. As we prepared to leave, we met together to discuss our approach to the brethren who keep God's Sabbaths as He commands. The meeting boiled down to one point: when the persecution comes, it is not going to matter to those doing the persecuting whether we wear a Church of God Seventh Day, a Seventh Day Baptist, a Seventh Day Adventist, a Messianic or any other group's hat. What is going to matter is whether or not we will accept the mark. From there, we departed leaving one of us to finish the burial. I do not believe the "who" of the burial is as important as the message that was impressed upon me that in the end it won't matter the group or sect with which we associate. It will only matter that we will be the ones trying to obey God's Commandments in every aspect.

I believe that the importance of the dream was our recognizing that our similarities of doctrine are more important than our differences. This is because when the prophesied end-time events come to pass our kinship in the Spirit will be vitally important to helping each other to escape the evil that will come on us who do not follow the deceived world into worship of that which is not God. To understand this deception, we need to recognize how it is that people will get the "mark of the beast," as well as how it is that we can avoid getting that mark.

Much has been written and said about the Mark of the Beast. The reader can find all sorts of opinions both in writing and video with a quick internet search. Some state that the keeping of any day but the Sabbath is the mark. Some have no idea as to how it is that one gets the mark but focus on what happens when that mark is placed on someone. Let's simplify our understanding so that we are not deceived when we reach that desperate moment in

time.

The most important thing to understand about that Mark is that it is a mark that is put upon people who do something specific. The mark is administered by a second "beast" who has the power to perform great miracles. It is this beast who is able to cause everyone to receive the mark, either on their hands or their foreheads.

It is this same "beast" who brings to life an image or statue of the first beast. Since it is the second beast who administers this mark, we will ignore the nature of the first beast for now. But, it is worthwhile noting what this second beast tries to accomplish.

This second "beast" appears like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. The symbolism is apparent to the serious bible student. The Lamb is our Savior from other scriptures. The Dragon is Satan, the devil. (Rev. 12:9). This "lamb" is a counterfeit!

This "beast" causes the worship of the first beast, and not just that beast but the image of that beast, perhaps a statue. When we say this "beast" speaks like a dragon, we know that one way of doing this is to demand that people worship that which is not God in violation of His Commandments.

Moreover, this second "beast" commands the people to make that statue themselves for the purpose of worshipping it. This is a violation of yet another of God's Commandments.

Is it any wonder that Jesus said that if it were possible that even the very elect would be deceived? This second "beast" calls down fire from heaven like Elijah did. He brings statues to life similar to Moses' staff turning into a snake. He becomes endowed with power to kill anyone who does not worship that statue and the beast it represents. Finally, he has the power to impose the mark that we are discussing. Please read of this terrible individual in Revela-

tion 13.

Some think that this “mark” will be the number 666, represented by the statement in Rev. 13:18. But, a careful reading shows that the words in the Greek are “chi xi stigma.” They do represent numbers and that is how John indicates that they should be translated, i.e., the number of the beast is also the number of a man—666. Nowhere does the scripture state that the number will be visible or unseen on the person of that second “beast.”

It is my belief that this second beast is the “false prophet” of which is spoken in Rev. 16:13. I write this because in that verse the dragon (Satan), one beast, and the False Prophet each have an unclean spirit come from their mouths.

Coming back to our point, in order to understand how to get the mark, and how to avoid it, then we have to understand who gives it and why. It is pretty clear that the second beast, or False Prophet, will impose that “mark” as a sign of those willing to disobey the Commandments of God.

Some have said that this will be the keeping of any day but the Sabbath Day holy, or keeping no day. But, when we appeal to the context of Rev. 13 it is pretty clear that Satan will not be content to have people break only the Sabbath. It is clear that idol worship, and the creation of an image for the purpose of worship, will be the two primary tools used to separate those who worship God from those who worship what is not God.

When we think of idol worship, we could include failure to keep the Sabbath as a result of complying with the dictates of this False Prophet. That would certainly be making an idol of something that is not God through obedience to it rather than God. We see that all of the time today in the rampant abortion epidemic in the world. The false god is the murder of another life for some convenience. We know that God forbids murder. Murdering another means that we have made something else our god rather than the Father and Christ. I bring all of this up because I don't want us to become so focused on an interpretation that we lose the original words of the scrip-

tures that warn us.

We are looking at a beast, a false prophet, who looks deceptively like a savior but speaks blasphemies against God. We are looking for this individual who can perform great miracles and is empowered by another powerful beast/individual to kill, possibly without a trial, and to impose a mark, a sign, an indicator of obedience to and worship of a false god. When this individual rises to power, we need to be ready—to see who he is for what he is. We need to be ready to serve one another no matter what our differences in doctrine might be.

I am concerned that these days may be near. Once I believed that our Bill of Rights would protect our right to worship God as He proclaims we should. Last spring we saw the Supreme Court allow California to interfere with religious worship in the name of the greater good, a “plan-demic” that kills a whopping 2.5% of anyone unfortunate enough to contract it (*see the CDC numbers at www.worldometers.info*). Meanwhile, abortion which kills 100% of its victims remains lawful. If something as minimal as Covid-19 can lead to restricting the right to worship, then the First Amendment has no real authority any more. It was effectively destroyed for convenience. We are all in trouble.

I started this article talking about a dream that I had recently. Let it not be said that I am a prophet. It seems to me that God speaks to all of us in different ways—if we will be quiet long enough to hear His small, still voice. Prophets will come but I am not that one. In the case of this dream, it seemed to me that God was trying to impress upon me the importance of understanding that worshipping Him as I think He desires from scripture, while giving everyone else the same benefit, is important for being able to rally around each other in the coming evil days. We know what to watch for. Let's prepare by finding fellowship with all brethren who are trying to obey God's voice as spoken at Sinai, and having Jesus' testimony that we are His.





Kelly McDonald

In the last edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, we reviewed the early life of Martin Luther. We also discussed the early part of his efforts to reform the Roman Church. Among the issues that arose was the Sabbath. Contemporaries of that time knew that Sunday was an institution of man. One of his colleagues, Andreas Karlstadt, seriously thought that the Sabbath needed to be addressed.

To conclude this series, we will review Luther's view of the Sabbath, which includes his view of Karlstadt and known Sabbath-keeping groups. Below, we have a series of quotes from Luther which were written in the 1520s.

"Thus it is not true that there is no ceremonial or judicial law in the Ten Commandments. Such laws are in the decalogue, depend on it, and belong there. And to indicate this God himself has expressly introduced two ceremonial laws, namely, concerning images and the sabbath....Yes, if Karlstadt were to write more about the sabbath, even Sunday would have to give way, and the sabbath, that is, Saturday, would be celebrated. He would truly make us Jews in all things, so that we also would have to be circumcised, etc." (Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets*).

"Therefore also, whoever destroys images, or observes the sabbath (that is, whoever teaches that it must be kept), he also must let himself be circumcised and keep the whole Mosaic law" (ibid).

"It is not necessary to observe the sabbath or Sunday because of Moses' commandment. Na-

The President's Corner

Martin Luther and the Sabbath

(Part 2 of 2)

ture also shows and teaches that one must now and then rest a day, so that man and beast may be refreshed. This natural reason Moses also recognized in his sabbath law, for he places the sabbath under man, as also Christ does (Matt, 12 [lff.] and Mark 3 [:]). For where it is kept for the sake of rest alone, it is clear that he who does not need rest may break the sabbath and rest on some other day, as nature allows. The sabbath is also to be kept for the purpose of preaching and hearing the Word of God" (ibid).

Luther considered the prohibition of images/ idols and the Sabbath to be part of the ceremonial law, but considered the rest of the Ten Commandments to be God's Law and morally binding. His statements are not always consistent and at times are very confusing. Some of his statements clearly mocked Karlstadt's point of view that the Sabbath still retained importance. For some reason Luther attributed the Sabbath to Moses. This is not Scriptural as the Sabbath is never called the Sabbath of Moses or Jews. The seventh day is called the Sabbath of the Lord our God (Ex 20:8-11).

Luther's rejection of Catholic dogma led to several public debates between the two sides. Often, the doctors of the Roman Catholic



Church took advantage of Luther's inconsistencies. One of the doctors who opposed Luther was named Johann Eck. Many people have heard of Luther's 95 Thesis against the Roman Church, but very few know about the 404 Thesis that the Catholic Church sent to Luther. Johann Eck compiled the theses to point out errors with Luther's theology from the Roman perspective. He wrote the following:

"There are some who think that the Sabbath ought still to be observed, since we have Scripture for this, and not for the Lord's Day" (Section 179. 404 Thesis of Johann Eck).

"Therefore it thus is clear that the Church is older than Scripture, and Scripture would not be authentic without the Church's authority. . . . Scripture teaches: 'Remember to hallow the Sabbath day; six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath day of the Lord your God.' etc. Yet the Church has changed the Sabbath into Sunday on its own authority, on which you have no Scripture" (Eck, p 12).

Luther's own precept of *sola scriptura* was inconsistently applied when it came to the Sabbath. While his opponents took advantage of this, they also acknowledged that Sunday observance was an invention of human authority.

Between 1532 and 1538, Martin Luther began teaching against a group of Sabbath keepers that arose from relative obscurity in the 1520s. They were very prominent in Bohemia and Moravia. During a similar time frame, the Roman Church made lists of groups considered heretical. The group 'Sabbatarians' are found in these lists and were usually enumerated just after Lutherans and Calvinists (Hasel, pp 101-106).

In 1532 and 1535, Luther denounced the Sabbatarian groups. In his lectures on Genesis he stated: "In our time there arose in Moravia a foolish kind of people, the Sabbatarians, who

maintain that the Sabbath must be observed after the fashion of the Jews. Perhaps they will insist on circumcision too, for a like reason" (Luther's Works, vol. 47, p 60).

In 1538, Luther dedicated an entire letter to denigrating them called "Against the Sabbatarians: Letter to a Good Friend." It was a letter written to Count Graf Wolfgang Schlick zu Falkenau, who wrote about the Sabbath keeping tendencies in the region. I will summarize it below.

Most of the work is directed against Jewish people; he denigrates them. He claimed that their exile from Jerusalem and the troubles they faced since 70 AD came because of their sins (ibid, pp 67, 98). Due to this, he continued, they live under God's wrath and that their punishment lasts an indefinite time (ibid, pp 72, 75). He stated that they were punished worse than any heathen people (ibid, p 67). He concluded the letter by saying that they are forsaken by God and even compares them to the devil (ibid, pp 96-97).

He finally transitioned in the letter to make the distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of God, with the Law of God being the Ten Commandments (ibid, p 88). While he accepted that the first commandment applied to both Christians and Jewish people, he viewed the Sabbath differently (ibid, p 92). He asserted that the Sabbath is "a commandment that applies to the whole world; but the form in which Moses frames it and adapts it to his people was imposed only on Jews..." (ibid, p 91).

He then allegorized the meaning of this commandment by saying "For the true meaning of the third commandment is that we on that day should teach and hear the word of God, thereby sanctifying both the day and ourselves... Wherever God's word is preached it follows naturally that one must necessarily celebrate at the same hour or time and be quiet...But the sanctifying—that is, the teaching and preach-

ing of God's word, which is the true, genuine, and sole meaning of this commandment – has been from the beginning and pertains to all the world forever. Therefore the seventh day does not concern us Gentiles, nor did it concern the Jews beyond the advent of the Messiah, although by the very nature of things one must, as already said, rest, celebrate and keep the Sabbath on whatever day or at whatever hour God's word is preached..." (ibid, pp 92-93).

On his interpretation of Isaiah 66:23, which is a future promise of Sabbath keeping, he said "For the sanctifying of the word of God will enjoy full scope daily and abundantly, and every day will be a Sabbath" (ibid, p 93). He said the Jews "shamefully distort and pervert the prophets." Again, the anti-Jewish sentiment is obvious. He also went on to explain how parts of the fourth, ninth, and tenth commandments no longer apply (ibid, pp 94-95).

As stated earlier, Luther had a confusing and contradicting view of the Sabbath and the Ten Commandments. He allegorized the Sabbath as either being a time whenever the Word of God was preached/taught or eventually being every day. This is similar to early allegorical teachers from the late second and early third century (such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, which we have reviewed in prior issues of this magazine).

Towards the end of his life, Luther's disdain for the Jewish people increased. In 1543, he released his highly anti-Semitic work "On the Jews and their Lies." In it, he condemned the Jewish people to damnation. He considered whether or not their synagogues should be burned down; he proposed that they be ignored and banished from the land altogether. The rhetoric contained in this document is quite sickening.

His hatred for Jewish people led him to also hate the Sabbath. Following the same line of reasoning from anti-Semitic teachers in the

second century, Luther resorted to labeling the Sabbath as 'Jewish' and allegorized it away.

Despite Luther's rejection of the Sabbath, the Sabbatarian Anabaptists still had a strong presence. Other German leaders at this same time in history, such as Desiderius Erasmus, also commented on Sabbath keepers in Germany. At this time, the Sabbath keeping movement was vigorous and was prevalent enough to garner the attention of political and religious leaders of the time. Oswald Glait and Andreas Fischer were two contemporary leaders that spread the knowledge of the Sabbath. Using a consistent application of *sola scriptura* to the Ten Commandments, they convinced many Lutherans in Moravia to honor the Seventh Day Sabbath. We will feature them in a future Sabbath Sentinel article.

Let us remember that two reformations happened simultaneously in the 1500s. One preached obedience to all Ten Commandments; the other did not.

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THE SABBATH AND THE FIRST DAY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Bryant C. Buck

Continuing our study of the Sabbath and the first day of the week, we come to the book of Acts. Acts is of critical importance in our study because it is the last historical book in the Bible. After Acts there are only letters to various churches and individuals and the prophetic book of Revelation. The letters were written to the people who lived the book of Acts. So if we find that Acts shows that the Biblical weekly holy day was indeed changed from the Sabbath to the first day, then any Scriptures in the letters that might be interpreted to support the Sabbath continuing as the Biblical weekly holy day must be reinterpreted to support the first day. Vice versa, if we find that Acts shows that the Biblical weekly holy day remained the Sabbath and was never changed to the first day, then any Scriptures in the letters that might be interpreted to support the first day as the Biblical weekly holy day must be reinterpreted to support the Sabbath.



Those who claim that the weekly holy day was changed from the Sabbath to the first day argue that this change was made either when Jesus was crucified and resurrected or when the early church made the change at the council of Jerusalem. Those who claim that the change was made when Jesus was crucified and resurrected generally argue that the

law including the Sabbath was nailed to the cross during His crucifixion and the first day was instituted with His resurrection on the first day of the week. Those who claim that the change was made at the council of Jerusalem generally argue that the Sabbath was not included in the list of things the church leaders required of the Gentiles; therefore, the holy day was changed at that time. Does the historical record in Acts support either argument? We shall see as we go through Acts.

If either of the above arguments that the weekly holy day was changed from the Sabbath to the first day is correct, then the book of Acts should strongly support the change. Moreover, as already noted above, interpretations of the references to the Sabbath and the first day in the New Testament epistles cannot overthrow the actual experiences of the early saints as recorded in the book of Acts. On the contrary, the references to the Sabbath and the first day in the epistles must be interpreted in terms of the actual experiences of the New Testament believers in the book of Acts.

In the first twelve chapters of Acts the apostles were primarily reaching out to their Jewish brethren. Cornelius and his family of God-fearing Gentiles were converted to Christ in Acts 10, but that is the lone non-Jewish conversion recorded in Acts chapters 1-12. The only reference to the Sabbath in these twelve chapters is found in Acts 1:12: "Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away." (NAS) The Sabbath day's journey was the standard of how far believers could travel on the Sabbath day. Interestingly, there is no other reference to Sabbath observance in the first twelve chapters of Acts. Since all these early Jewish believers kept the Sabbath, Luke felt no apparent need to mention the Sabbath in the early part of his history of the New Testament church. But when the early disciples commenced

their mission to the Gentiles in Acts 13, Luke suddenly begins making repeated references to the Sabbath.

However, before we begin to consider the mission to the Gentiles, we first need to know something about the Jewish synagogues in Gentile nations. Besides those who were Jews by natural birth most synagogues among the Gentile nations had two other groups of people – proselytes and God-fearers. The proselytes were Gentile converts to Judaism who accepted circumcision. The God-fearers were Gentile believers in the moral teachings of Judaism who refused circumcision. Jews by natural birth would accept the proselytes as true Jews, but the God-fearers they still considered Gentiles.

In Acts 13:1-4 Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the assembly at Antioch to take the gospel to the Gentiles. After first going to Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas then continued to Asia Minor. They landed at Perga and then proceeded to Pisidian Antioch. In Acts 13:14 (NAS) we read: *“But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.”* If the weekly holy day had been changed from the Sabbath to the first day with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, why were Paul and Barnabas still going to the synagogue on the Sabbath? Those who believe that the weekly holy day was changed to the first day argue that Paul and Barnabas did this because they were only reaching out to Jews here. However, in this synagogue they were reaching out to God-fearing Gentiles as well as Jews. Moreover, the passage in Acts 13 refutes the assertion that Paul and Barnabas were only reaching out to Jews at Pisidian Antioch. In verse 16 Paul began his message to those assembled in the synagogue: *“Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!”* (NIV) If Paul was only reaching out to the Jews here, why did he also address the Gentiles? If the Sabbath was just for the Jews and the first day was just for the Gentiles, why didn't he tell the Gentiles that he would meet with them separately on the first day of the week? The God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogue were not considered Jews; that's why Paul addressed them as Gen-

tiles. Plus, the fact that Paul addressed both Jews and Gentiles together on the Sabbath indicates that the Sabbath was for both Jews and Gentiles.

After Paul finished his message to the assembled Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue, we read this account of what ensued: *“As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.”* (Acts 13:42-44 NIV) First, the Bible records that *“the people invited them to speak further ... on the next Sabbath.”* It wasn't just the Jews who invited Paul and Barnabas to speak again the next Sabbath; apparently it was almost everybody in the synagogue including the God-fearing Gentiles. If those who advocate for the first day are correct, then Paul should have told the Gentile members of the synagogue that they didn't have to wait a whole week; rather, he should have told them that they could meet with him and Barnabas the next day on the first day of the week. But he didn't. Instead, he and Barnabas waited a whole week and met with the people *“on the next Sabbath.”* (v. 44) Moreover, they didn't just meet with a few Jews and God-fearing Gentiles on the next Sabbath. *“On the next Sabbath the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.”* (v. 44) Since the majority of Pisidian Antioch's citizens were unconverted Gentiles, that means that Paul's primary audience on the next Sabbath was unconverted Gentiles who had no connection to the Jewish synagogue. Why didn't he tell them that the holy day had changed? The answer is simple: it hadn't. In the first outreach to the Gentiles the Scriptures totally uphold the Sabbath and give no credence to any change of Yahweh's weekly holy day.

So if the Biblical weekly holy day wasn't changed after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, was it changed at the council of Jerusalem? The council of Jerusalem was convened for one reason: to determine whether or not a person had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Quoting from Acts 15:1-2

(NAS): "Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue." In Acts 15:5 (NAS) "some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.'" So the believing Pharisees wanted to make the discussion about observing the law of Moses as well as circumcision. However, the apostles kept the discussion to just what was necessary to be saved. Peter stated his concluding argument as follows: "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." (Acts 15:10-11 NAS) In context, the yoke to which Peter referred was circumcision. Is it possible that he was also referring to the law of Moses? This is not likely since the pillar of the law of Moses is the Ten Commandments and the Ten Commandments are upheld throughout the New Testament. We know from Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:14 that the part of the law called the ordinances was done away with in Christ, but that was not the focus of the discussion in Acts 15. The Jerusalem council simply made the determination that circumcision (which was an ordinance) was not necessary for salvation.

Interestingly, in the council at Jerusalem there is one reference to the Sabbath. When the council reached the decision as to the few ritual Jewish customs that the Gentile converts must observe, the apostle James made this statement: "For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath." (Acts 15:21 NIV) Many have argued that the Jerusalem council did away with the Sabbath. Why then would James state that Moses "is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath"? The answer is obvious: most of the Gentile believers in Yeshua were still attending Sabbath services in Jewish synagogues. If the Sabbath had been

done away with at the Jerusalem council, James never would have recommended Sabbath observance for learning the teachings of Moses. Furthermore, if the whole law of Moses had been done away with at the Jerusalem council, James would never have recommended Sabbath observance in the synagogues where the primary focus was the law of Moses.

Just before James reinforced Sabbath observance, he made the recommendation as to what should be required of the Gentiles. "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood." (Acts 15:19-20 NAS) When Acts 15:19-21 is taken together, James wasn't declaring that the law was done away with, but that only four aspects of the law should be required of the Gentiles as things which might mess up their consciences in regard to their salvation. By following up his statement of what should be required of the Gentiles with the statement that the law of Moses "is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath," James was declaring that although the law had nothing to do with salvation, it was still God's guide for Christian moral behavior.

In Acts 16:9 the apostle Paul was directed in a vision to go to Macedonia. Although Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, they were not nearly as plentiful in Macedonia as they were in Asia Minor. When Paul and Silas arrived in Philippi, they did not go to any synagogue to preach the gospel. Rather, the Bible records: "And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer, and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled." (Acts 16:13 NAS) People of many different religions went down to riversides to pray. However, on the Sabbath it was probably Jews and God-fearers who went down to the riverside to pray. On Sunday more devotees of Roman deities would have assembled at this riverside since Sunday was the most esteemed day of the week in Roman thinking. But Paul and Silas

went down to the riverside on the Sabbath to preach to a group of women who were probably Jews and God-fearers. Why didn't they go on Sunday when they would have had a larger audience? If Sunday was the new Christian holy day and particularly the holy day for Gentile converts to Christianity, what were Paul and Silas doing preaching the gospel to Jews and God-fearers on the Sabbath?

"When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures." (Acts 17:2 NIV) What was Paul's custom? His custom was that he observed the Sabbath and reasoned from the Scriptures on the Sabbath. He reasoned with the Jews of Thessalonica for three Sabbaths in a row. The Bible doesn't mention him meeting with them on any other day. If the Sabbath had been changed from the seventh day to the first day at the Jerusalem council, there should be some mention of first-day meetings here as well. But the Biblical reference is that Paul met with the synagogue members for three consecutive Sabbaths. Whether with Jews or Gentiles, Paul's custom was the same: he kept the Sabbath as God's holy day. I add that Paul was still keeping the Sabbath as God's holy day after the council at Jerusalem (where some affirm that the Sabbath was done away with).

Finally, in Acts 18:4 (NIV) we read of Paul when he was at Corinth that *"Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks."* Long into his mission to Asia Minor and Greece, Paul was still proclaiming the gospel on the Biblical Sabbath – the seventh day of the week. Moreover, Paul didn't just try to persuade Jews on the Sabbath; *"every Sabbath"* he tried *"to persuade Jews and Greeks."* Why would we expect anything else? We have already read that Sabbath observance was his custom. Paul reached out to both Jews and Gentiles repeatedly on the Sabbath.

Previously we noted that when the gospel was being preached to the Jews in the first twelve chapters of Acts, there is only one mention of the Sabbath. But when the gospel went to the Gentiles where

supposedly the Sabbath was to be done away with, we find Luke making repeated references to it. In the six chapters from Acts 13-18 there are seven references to the Sabbath. In other words, when the gospel went to the Gentiles, the Sabbath came to the forefront in the Biblical record. If it was indeed done away with as many would like us to believe, it should have receded or not been mentioned at all when the gospel went to the Gentiles. Just the opposite is the case. Moreover, in the six chapters where the gospel went to the Gentiles, there is not one mention of the first day of the week. The record of the book of Acts is clear: the Biblical weekly holy day remained the Sabbath. It was never changed to Sunday until post-biblical compromisers replaced the biblical Sabbath with the heathen Sunday after the New Testament was written.

Turning to the first day, there is only one reference to the first day of the week in the book of Acts. *"On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight."* (Acts 20:7 NAS) This solitary reference to the first day of the week in the New Testament historical record is taken by Sunday proponents to overthrow all the evidence to the contrary that we have just gone through. There are three problems with Acts 20:7 being used as proof that the early church met on the first day of the week rather than on the Sabbath. First, the Bible requires at least two witness for any matter to be established. (See Numbers 35:30 and Deuteronomy 17:6.) Jesus Himself upheld this principle in Matthew 18:16 (NAS): *"But if he does not listen to you, take two or three more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED."* (The capitalized letters in the NAS are words that Jesus quoted from the law.) Since there are no other references to the first day of the week in Acts, the one reference in Acts 20:7 is insufficient to establish the first day as the Biblical weekly holy day.

Second, we read in Acts 20:7 that the disciples *"were gathered together to break bread."* Christians breaking bread together is first mentioned in Acts 2. *"They*

were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42 NAS) "Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." (Acts 2:46 NAS) From these two verses in Acts 2 we learn that the early disciples devoted themselves to the breaking of bread to such a degree that they broke bread together "day by day" "from house to house." Breaking of bread wasn't something that the early Christians did just once a week on the first day of the week. They broke bread together every day. In consequence, the fact that the disciples in Acts 20:7 broke bread on the first day of the week does not prove that this is the only day of the week on which they broke bread. The testimony of Acts 2:42 and Acts 2:46 proves otherwise.

Third, the meeting in Acts 20:7 did not occur on Sunday, but rather on Saturday evening. Acts 20:7 states that these believers met "on the first day of the week" and that Paul "prolonged his message until midnight." In Genesis 1:5 we get Yahweh's definition of a day: "And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day." (NIV) In other words, a day in the Bible starts at sundown and ends at the next sundown. Since the believers in Acts 20:7 met on the first day of the week and Paul continued his message until midnight, we can only conclude that this meeting occurred on Saturday evening. If it had occurred on Sunday evening, the Bible would have told us that it was "on the second day of the week." Put another way, any day in the Bible starts on the average 6 hours before any day on our unbiblical Roman calendar. In the Bible the first day of the week always begins at sundown on Saturday evening. This means that it always ends at sundown on Sunday evening. For Paul to continue his message till midnight and the day still remain the first day of the week, the meeting in Acts 20:7 had to take place on Saturday evening. To use a meeting that occurred on Saturday evening to prove that Sunday replaced the Sabbath is ludicrous. The book of Acts, then, supports only one weekly holy day – the seventh day Sabbath.



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GOD'S

TEN COMMANDMENT PARK

Bill Lussenheide

Dusti Howell, a board member of the Bible Sabbath Association along with myself, Bill Lussenheide, Vice President of that same organization, together with our wives had the distinct pleasure of visiting God's Ten Commandments Park in the Flathead Valley of Montana, right near the entrance to Glacier National Park this October.

Our families were in Glacier to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, hosted there by the Seventh Day Sabbath observing United Church of God.

The park features dozens of billboards quoting the Bible, with a major theme of the Decalogue. God's Ten Commandments Park is impressive and a can't miss sight while driving, as it sits on 10 acres immediately adjacent to the major highway leading into the globally famous Glacier Park. It thus is seen by over two million people each year from every cor-

ner of the world. It also has a very nice visitor center, which graces every visitor with a free half sheet sized magnet featuring the commandments just for stopping by.

In the visitor center is a map with pins in it from all the visitors since the location opened in 2004. 137 countries and virtually every city and small town in the USA have pins on the map. The location sells banners and billboards to any and all with an interest in having one as their own, and the billboards are now found in 39 countries and all 50 states as well!

The park was founded by Phillip and Suzy Klevmoen in 2004. One day while reading the Bible, Phillip was inspired and felt a calling to spread the word of God around the world. "I felt Jesus was speaking to me," Klevmoen says.

He answered God's call and opened the "10 Commandments Park" at the base of the entrance to Glacier National Park, off U.S. Highway 2. The park, which consists of large signs with the 10 Commandments and other quotes from the Bible are part of Klevmoen's efforts to spread the word of God. He subsequently has been distributing signs, billboards, magnets and stickers with the 10 Commandments for years.

The Klevmoens are ranchers in the nearby northern Flathead Valley, and their ranch has massive posters, on the buildings, barns and horse stalls including one that reads "Legalize Jesus!"

Phil Klevmoen wasn't always a Christian. He made his money at the poker tables of Las Vegas, through "the misery of others," as he puts it. Although he has given up gambling, Klevmoen has turned the



Howell and Lussenheide pointing out the Sabbath Command



skills that made him a formidable poker player to what he considers God’s work. He says he reads the discomfort in people at the mention of Jesus the same way they used to call out players’ bluffs at the poker tables. His remarkable memory, once used to remember every card that had been played, now bolsters his excellent memory of the scriptures for the purpose of evangelism.

“There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance,” he says.

“Our only purpose is to reach people, to help them,” he says. “2.2 million people go past our signs every year; most of them pass by it on their way out of (Glacier National Park) as well ... If we can reach one in a thousand, that’s a big deal.”

The Flathead County planning and zoning department regularly receives calls regarding the park, with many of the callers asking about the regulations and legality of the billboards. The county manager has been quoted as saying “The information being displayed essentially equates to large statements of his personal beliefs on his own property and are totally legal”.

Where the truth of God is found, there is often op-

position and persecution. A few years ago seventeen of the 21 billboards at the park were seriously damaged. The signs had been vandalized with spray paint and some were slashed with a knife.

Klevmoen accepts that some people might disagree with his message and that others may find his signs ugly and offensive, and he sees the disagreements as a sign of a healthy democracy. For years, he has had posters on the billboards of Las Vegas that read, “What happens in Las Vegas ... GOD KNOWS!”

Due to complaints and a threatened lawsuit in Las Vegas, he considered taking them down until he heard the story of a married man about to walk into a brothel. When the man saw the sign, he returned to his car where he sat shaking before repenting and leaving the city. The signs had been a witness to righteousness and produced fruit.

I know that for both the Howell and Lussenheide families, we considered the 10 Commandments Park a wonderful addition to the natural beauty that the Eternal created in Glacier Canyon and a great bonus to our Feast of Tabernacles celebration. We recommend a visit to anyone who comes to the area!



THE SABBATH CONUNDRUM

(Article 1 of 3)

Bill and Karen Bishop

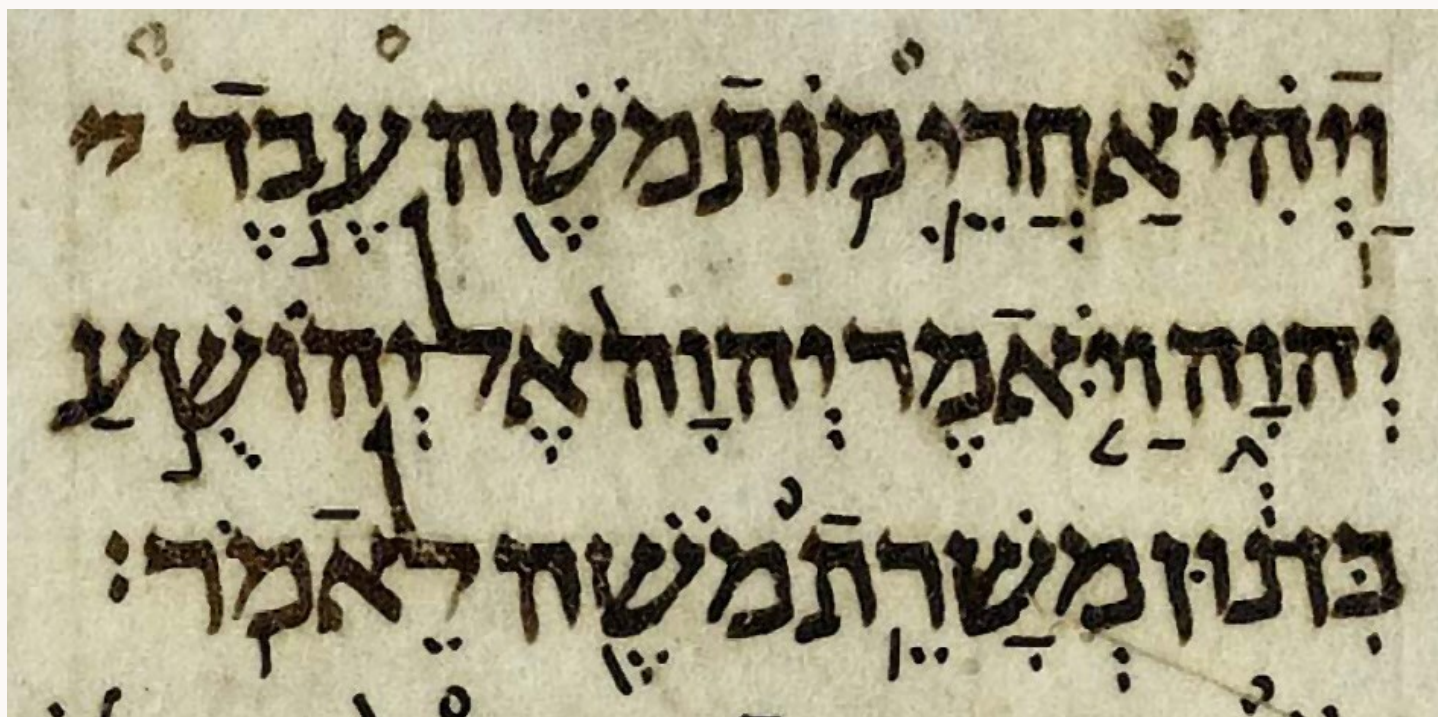
Many have come to realize the importance of observing the annual Sabbaths as well as the weekly Sabbaths. If this is you, how does the calendar you use determine the dating for the holy days you are observing?

Yah's weekly Sabbaths are always on the seventh day (Exodus 20:11). These are special days which He hal- lowed. Work is to be avoided on them (just as He rested from creation on the seventh day). It is com- monly understood that the weekly Sabbath is a time of celebration. The Sabbath is a special time to com- mune with Father, fellowship with others, worship and study. But more than this, the weekly Sabbath maintains a joyful air, and special foods are often pre- pared. This day is "set apart" from the six days of work for us to be refreshed. In it we celebrate the

end of our weekly labors, and prepare for the upcom- ing week. It is also significant as a shadow of the Mil- lennial Kingdom period of rest for Yah's people.

In addition to the weekly Sabbaths, Leviticus 23 points to the annual feast days. The High Holy Days in these periods are also called Sabbaths by Yah. Just as the weekly Sabbaths, these High Holy annual Sab- bath Days are so called because we are not to work at these times either. They are also typically associated with feasting, with a single exception. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is the other end of the spectrum, being a day associated with fasting and intense and somber personal introspection. It is presented in Le- viticus:

Leviticus 23:26-30 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation*



unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

The lunar structure of most religious calendars today causes the Annual Sabbath Feast days to drift to different weekdays each year. More often than we might want to realize, this somber day of Yom Kippur can fall on a weekly Sabbath day. This is where the conundrum enters the picture. At such times, is the Believer supposed to celebrate the weekly Sabbath with music and dancing, sharing food, and joyously interacting with others (as each weekly Sabbath is typically observed), OR is the Believer supposed to afflict his soul by fasting and somber reflection? Usually Yom Kippur wins out, and the fasting and somber introspection ensues. But – is this cheating Father out of the joyous interaction with Him that was intended for all weekly Sabbaths, including this one? If we don't afflict our souls on Yom Kippur, Leviticus says that we are definitely in a problematic position with our Father. It's a no-win scenario!

In 1948 (the same year Israel became a nation), Yah allowed His children to gain access to scrolls that had been hidden away in Qumran. These Dead Sea Scrolls contained manuscripts of many ancient books, including at least fragments of all of the books in our Old Testament except Esther. Along with these books were other books which many believe were studied as Scripture by the early church. Actually, the pages of our Bibles often quote from them. One such book is The Book of Jubilees. Among other manuscripts that were found, this book reveals the structure of a calendar that prevents this conundrum. Research indicates that this calendar was used in an-

cient times, and only lost to mankind for a time after the shift in priesthood that followed the Babylonian captivity. (Our book *The Biblical Calendar Then and Now* provides a historical picture of this transition.)

When using this calendar, the year never ends with a remainder of weekdays, but there are always exact and complete 7-day weeks in the year. The structuring of this calendar then enables the annual Sabbaths to fall on the same weekdays each year, with no exceptions. So, due to Father's majestic construction, neither Yom Kippur nor any other annual Holy Day Sabbaths will ever fall on weekday seven, the day of the weekly Sabbath. This leaves the weekly Sabbath days undisturbed by any other annual Holy Days whatsoever: The Book of Jubilees 6:32 - The Researchers Library of Ancient Texts Volume 1 - by R.H. Charles, Oxford – p. 288 - *And command thou the children of Israel that they observe the years according to this reckoning- three hundred and sixty-four days, and (these) will constitute a complete year, and they will not disturb its time from its days and from its feasts; for everything will fall out in them according to their testimony, and they will not leave out any day nor disturb any feasts.*

Using this method, an annual Sabbath should never share a date with a weekly Sabbath, each form of Sabbath retaining the separate holy attributes of its intent by Yah - set apart for its own rite and purpose.

We have more to share in future articles about the beauty of this calendar (also known as the Sabbath calendar) and the reasons why it may still have importance to us today.

Due to space limitations, this is a condensed version of our original article, simply titled *Conundrum*. You can read the full article by visiting our website: returningtothegarden.com.



ETERNITY... A NEW BEGINNING

“Where will you spend eternity?” is a common query by evangelical Christians.

There is a Biblical answer! *Here is the Plan!*

James McBride

Eternity is the very reason God created mankind. It is the new beginning when we leave behind our temporary dwelling in fleshly bodies and acquire a new spirit body: “...it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (I Corinthians 15:44).

For some—those now invited, in this age—that transformation takes place at the return of Jesus Christ to reign for a thousand years (the ‘millennium’). Those who physically survive into that era—after the chaos of the ‘last days’—will have the opportunity to also become spirit. While for the rest of mankind—from every age of man since his beginning—there will, after the millennium, be a resurrection to physical life with the same chance to take on the same spirit body: “...the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished” Revelation 20:5).

Outline Plan

The entire plan has been outlined for us in the series of “feasts of the LORD” (Leviticus 23). There are seven of these, but in the autumn there are four with reference mainly to the end times—and beyond.

One of these festivals is the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles. Although it has wider significance, it specifically encompasses the events from the return of Jesus as King of kings and LORD of lords until the end when, “...he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God” (I Corinthians 15:24).

Tabernacles references our temporary pilgrimage in the flesh, dwelling in our temporary physical mortal bodies. It derives from the Israelites dwelling in booths (temporary dwellings) for the seven days of the feast: “...You shall live in booths seven days.” (Leviticus 23:42), after which they could return to their houses (note John 7:53).

Nehemiah fills in some detail: “...Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner” (ch 8:18). Note here: Nehemiah records that the last day of the feast is the seventh day of Tabernacles. The Modern KJV translates John 7:37: “...the last day of the great feast.”

A New Beginning

There is, however, a final annual festival immediately following on Tabernacles. This Eighth Day completes the outline plan, and can only refer to eternity. For all flesh has by then been either consumed by fire or transformed as spirit: “...Behold, the



tabernacle of God [the Father] is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away. And He sitting on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21: 3-5).

The Eighth Day

The symbolism of the Eighth day (Leviticus 23:39) of the autumn festival focuses on eternity - God's “end game.”

The number eight—mentioned eighty times in Scripture—is associated with new beginnings, a new order. Examples are the “eighth day”—the first day of a new week. Jesus, following his resurrection as the eighth day was beginning (the first day of the week, Sunday) presented himself before the Father on that day in his new spirit body. Eight persons survived the Great Flood to enter the new world. God's people were covenanted through circumcision on the eighth day of life. Even in physics—for the eighth note on a musical scale is the same as the first note, etc.

Within Judaism, this eighth day—following the seven days of Tabernacles—is a festival in itself.” It is a time of exuberant jubilation—a veritable marriage feast. “...it is this day which above all expresses the joy of the Jewish religion” (Teach Yourself Judaism p.188).

Each of the “holy days” God has revealed is an important guide to the divine plan for mankind—for now and for eternity. Not the least is this closing day of the festival year, pointing us to the culmination of His magnificent plan.



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Coronavirus and You: SPIRITUAL VIRUSES

Part Two

John L. Merritt, MD & J. Lawrence Merritt, II, MD

In the first article on Coronavirus, we reviewed a bit about what a virus is. A virus plays a part within the circle and design of life, infection, immunity and the balance of bacterial, animal, and human lives. Yet still, we still do not understand how the virus fits the definition of what life is. Viruses can replicate, they can infect, they even have DNA (or RNA) like other living organisms with a specific set of genes – all designed to perform a specific set of tasks and reproduce in a very specific manner – as other living organisms can. Viruses can infect nearly all forms of life – from bacteria to plant to animal and humans.

Viruses also share patterns with non-living things, but they cannot grow by themselves; they cannot multiply by themselves; they themselves have no form of metabolism; and they cannot produce energy. While they are complex sets of proteins, DNA, lipids, and carbohydrates, they are unable to perform even most basic tasks that simple bacteria can.

We previously discussed the effects of a viral infection. A virus will invade its host, and kill it or it will cause a reaction, inflammation from an immune response, and the death of the host cell or ultimately even perhaps the organism. In this way viruses are distinct—they don't really take in regard the needs of the host—in the end the virus will win, and the host will die. There is no symbiosis or coexistence of most viruses and hosts. (Of course, the authors note there are always exceptions to these general statements in virology, but the basic point remains.)

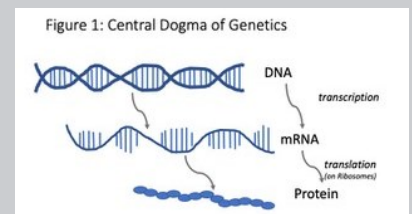
There are certainly some viruses that do remain in

balance with their hosts and their environment. There are actually some viral elements, left behind from viral infections of untold years past, where the viral DNA has integrated within the human genome. Some of these elements have been integrated and adapted within our own genome (the entire set of all of our DNA and genes) to develop features that give our cells certain functions or turn on and turn off certain genes and regions of our genes. Estimates have placed over 8% of our own human genome may have come from viruses, including a special type of virus called a “retrovirus” (a virus with RNA that converts its RNA back into DNA first, before that DNA is then read to make the viral proteins) – and sometimes these retroviruses leave parts of themselves behind in the host (<https://www.pnas.org/content/113/16/E2326>). Some of the areas may be helpful, some are benign, and some in fact cause disease, or genetic disorders, or cancer when they are activated.

Viral Spiritual Messages

Ultimately when you begin to break down the individual elements of a virus' life cycle, you can see that there are some parallels in what we can learn from them in our own lives. Our genes are essentially the messages our cells use as instructions for how to function. Our genes are transcribed into messenger RNA, which is then translated into chains of amino acids known as proteins. Proteins carry out the functions of our cells as enzymes or other structures of our cells.

(Figure 1: Central dogma of genetics) A virus at its



simplest form is a message. It is a means of transmitting its viral genetic code as DNA or RNA into another organism. This message is designed to have an effect on the host and change that host. Most hosts will die, some will survive, but none will be the same.

Daily we are all being constantly bombarded by various messages, good and bad. Some of these messages are pushing us forward, giving us thoughts and hopes an encouraging us to get out of bed. To look forward to our morning breakfast and tea, to look forward to seeing our family and spending time with them. We look forward to our work and the effort that we will have to put forth to something of value that day, and then the reward of the end of the day when we may be able to relax a moment and then return to bed.

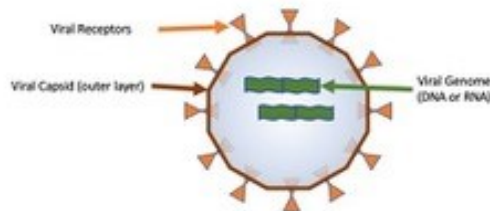
We are also being constantly bombarded by other messages that have an influence upon us. We are hit with aches and pains in our own bodies, perhaps our back pain or the ache in our muscles from exerting them too much the day before. Perhaps we are hit with a headache of yesterday's overindulgences, or of the pain of a loss.

Invariably, we are also bombard by the influences and messages of this world. This world is hitting us with all sorts of challenges. We are hit with the news of the local crime spree; we are hit with the news of the world events—the wars going on. We are hit with the deceptions of our governments and politicians, we try to sort out the new of the good and the bad. To try to understand if the coronavirus pandemic is waxing or waning. We sort out the news of the current coronavirus, and how the viral pandemic will affect us today, tomorrow, and how it affected us yesterday.

We try to fight the effects of these viral messages—these influences attacking us from outside. Just as the outer viral shell (or capsid) has special proteins (receptors) that are designed to recognize specific proteins of the specific cell it is supposed to attach to—so too the messages that influence our lives may be spe-

cifically targeting some of us, or some part of our mind or spirit.

Figure 2: Viral structure



(Figure 2: Viral structure) A virus can only attach in a certain manner though; a viral message in our life may have multiple effects upon us or upon others.

Incoming messages may have good news, to bring us good things and messages that are encouraging and build us up. Or we may have to pause and try and understand if that message brings good or bad input. We are challenged to distinguish between the good and the bad. If we let evil messages enter, they have potential to multiply and to take over our lives and our inner machinery, injuring, wounding or even destroying us. Targeted viral news will corrupt our spirit and allow ourselves to allow the evil message to grow within us. Even then infecting others, spreading and changing our minds and hearts, and even changing others for good or bad.

When the virus knows it has hit its target—it enters the cell—and just the same, evil messages, once they have entered us will fester and grow in us. (Figure 3: Viral Life Cycle) We may quickly recognize it as bad news or a bad influence, and we may try to shrug it off, but the temptation to let it in is often too strong. We may give into the influences of the powers of this world (Ephesians.2.3) There is a term in the study of viruses called the “viral load”. This is a concept that recognizes a certain “amount” of viruses are required to successfully infect a host organism in order to cause disease. This also the idea behind wearing a

mask—to reduce the “viral load” of virus we spread as we breathe in and out. So, as we think of this at a spiritual level, if the “viral load” is too much for our defenses, our defenses are overwhelmed, and we fall into line – succumbing to the infection and allowing it to proceed. Just as the Apostle Paul struggled to do what he willed to do, but he hates to do, he does. Knowing it is not he who does it, but sin who dwells within him (Romans 7:15-19).

Romans 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. (NKJV)

The viral DNA or RNA will provide a template, a template of a set of instructions for something that is foreign to our cells, to our own selves. These instructions will just seem to “sneak in” and do not destroy our cells initially. They do not even necessarily inhibit our own RNA. Our cells don’t even necessarily know it at first – or if they do, they may be helpless to resist it. These messages are designed to be deceitful, slipping past our defenses just as the wiles of the devil may (Ephesians 6:11). The parts of our cells will replicate the viral DNA, transcribe in and replicated it into more and more viral RNA. Our ribosomes (where translation occurs) simply follow the instructions they are given. Once a foreign message is present, instead of making our own proteins, our own ribosomes then start translating the viral RNA into increasing numbers of protein strands that then fold into the viral proteins or enzymes.

That viral protein then accumulates within our cells and contaminate our lives. So too we, in our spirit, when we don’t have a filter to sort out the messages we are being given, will just tend to accept them, to act upon them, without regard to what those messages really mean and what they will do to our spiritual health.

Slowly, but surely, our cells become overloaded with

these new viral proteins as they are produced in large quantities, as those viral proteins are assembled into new complete viruses. Those newly replicated viruses accumulate, and the cell then swells and burst. That cell then dies. Then another cell dies. Then the organ where that cell is begins to suffer and not function smoothly—disease begins to set in as these newly replicated viruses spread and replicate from cell to cell. Just as we, when we don’t resist evil, when we allow evil thoughts and messages to take over our lives, we are unable to live a healthy, true, and righteous life. We give in into the sins we have created from listening and following these viral messages. Our lives begin to suffer physically, emotionally, mentally, socially and spiritually.

These spiritual viral messages cause us to suffer sin. Sin will lead to death. Effects from the products of our dead actions create a surrounding climate of fear and illness. Just as our cells that have given into reproducing these viruses then lead our bodies to attack themselves—to create an inflammatory reaction. The inflammatory reaction is our bodies normal cellular response to that foreign viral substance, that foreign protein produced by a strange, sinful viral message.

Yes, we struggle against these spiritual viral messages, just as our bodies of flesh and blood struggle every day. Our battles are against the spiritual principalities and powers of this age, against the wickedness of these spiritual messages (Ephesians 6:12).

Inflammation from our destroyed cells further create a vicious cycle of increasing inflammation continuing to spread across cells and organs and then throughout the body. Leading to a systemic inflammation and even sepsis – a systematic inflammatory reaction throughout the body. When the infection reaches the blood, it begins to affect every cell and organ in our bodies.

So also, when a spiritual virus has successfully

attacked, entered, and overtaken us. We suffer spiritually. Our normal desired hopes to follow God are derailed with these messages. The wages of our sins are death (Romans 6:23). This sin will continue to grow and fester into an infection throughout our whole body. As an addiction will overcome the addict, as an infected toe can lead to sepsis of the entire body, and just as a cancerous cell transformed by a viral infection will replicate and the metastasize throughout the body. When one part of the body suffers, the whole will suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26 NKJV).

Conclusions

The virus is a curious look at part of life. The word virus comes from the Latin term for "poison". This is certainly a distinctive label for something so intricate and complex. A poison is designed to take life – and a virus will take the life of its host. So too we have to be aware and watching for the poisonous viruses in our lives. We attempt to build our defenses, to recognize the viral lies existing as we compare these with God's Word. Do these viral influences on our lives build us

up? Are these lies designed to "do what is best for the other person" in the light of God's Ahavah and Agape? Do they build righteousness, or do they lead to death from the works of the flesh?

One apt analogy of viruses is they have a "borrowed life". They do not have life in and of themselves but depend on the life of their host they infect (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/are-viruses-alive-2004/>). Just as well, the spiritual viral messages we encounter each day do not have life on their own, if we don't give way to let them in or respond to them at all. We need to build our defenses, to prepare to resist the influences of these spiritual messengers. Building our spiritual defenses in this world is critical to protect our faith, to build our hope, and help us walk in the life of our Savior.

More about our immune system, antibodies and T-cells, with their physical and spiritual implications in a future issue.



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Letters to the Editor



Am responding to your latest editorial. "Great." Excellent. And, hopefully, only the beginning of the story you have presented. However, you did make one small error. That being your words. "This article is too short to get into more detail." You hit the nail on the head. Adding to it will likely not change peoples minds, "If" they did not understand what you said in the first place. If

they did, then they will search, think, and strive for more Truth, which is their duty to perform.

The teacher can only educate to the degree that the student wishes to learn. And, as you point out, those in power have not only hidden things, but have "forced" the populace to follow their lies. And, sadly, far too many of the Sabbath are in the same mindset.

Have we not seen this mindset in WCG?

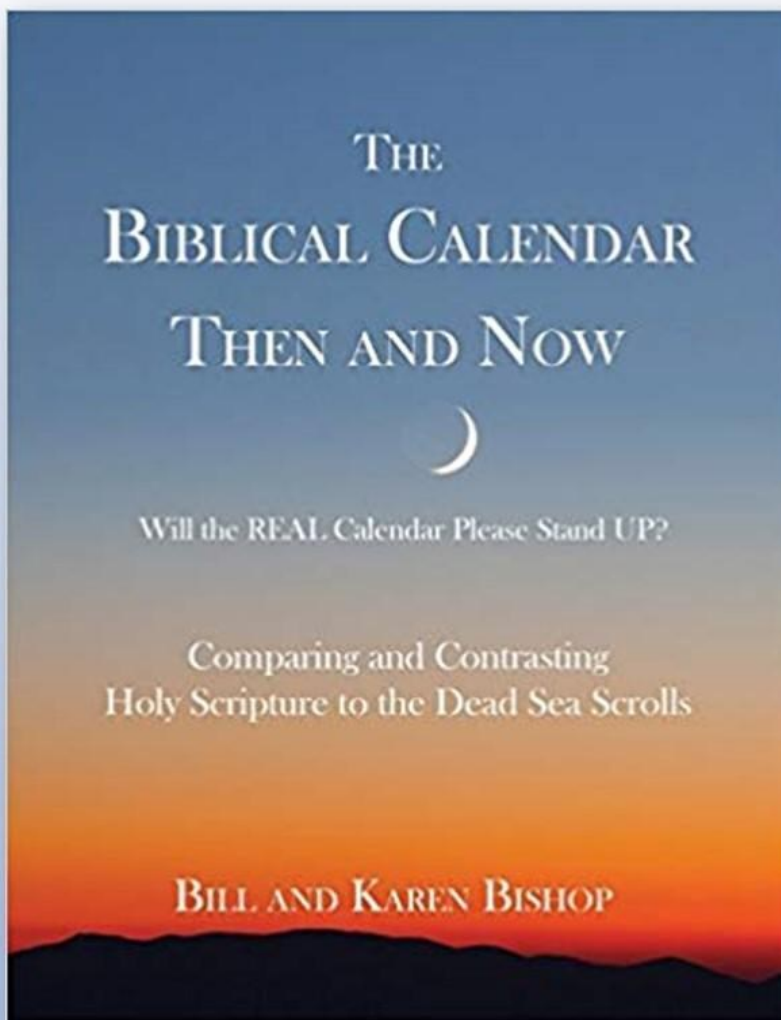
Though, it was not HWA's fault so much, as it was the fact that it was "not his, or WCG's time." But, it is now extremely close to "our time." I hope you can see what I mean by those words: "Our time." Or, those that, with the Truths you presented, continue in proving said lies for themselves. And then, joining with you, and hopefully me, in expanding on Truth.

RD

Thank you for your kind words. The editorial was only meant to show that we are facing an evil that we don't recognize because Satan is so adept at his deception. There are many who are ignorant of his devices, but we should not be.

Satan's goal is to destroy God's children. He can do that by getting us to abandon His Way. He can do that by putting evil people in place who will destroy what God has wrought in this great nation through the debasement of our currency and destruction of our God-given right to worship Him as He decrees. If he kills the body, he thinks he wins. If he gets us to abandon the Way, he definitely wins. We need to be aware of this great evil rising up around us so we are prepared for what God will do to save us. For some of us, that will be in the rest of the grave. For some of us, God will supernaturally act. Let's stay aware and listen for His voice.

Ed



Jeremiah 8:7 (KJV)

"Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD."

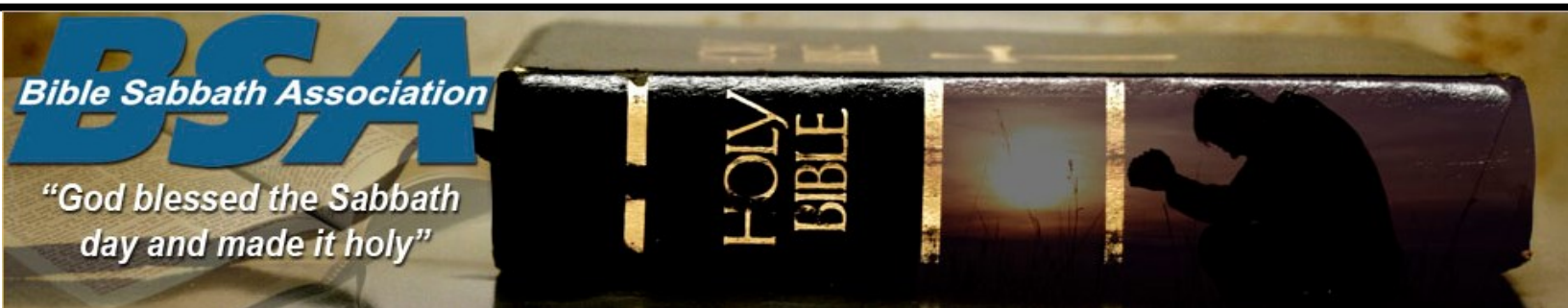
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