



The Sabbath Sentinel

Sep.-Oct.

2020

Every Eye

Shall See Him!

BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is at hand."

The Sabbath Sentinel September-October, 2020

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God's Incredible Plan for Man!

One of the purposes of this magazine is to help the various Sabbath keeping groups to understand why it is that some of the brethren do certain things.

As this magazine is arriving in mailboxes all over the country, we are reaching a time of year that is celebrated by brethren and practitioners of the Jewish religion. It is a time that begins with Rosh Hashana, the Feast of Trumpets. From there, the next celebration is the Day of Atonement. A short 4 days later, the Feast of Tabernacles, or Sukkot, begins and runs 7 days. At the end of the seven days, another day is added. It is the day called "that great day of the feast" in John 7:37.

While some will say, including our brethren in other Sabbath keeping groups, that these days were fulfilled in Jesus, or Yeshua, it would be advantageous for us to consider whether the bible actually says that.

In Lev. 23, the entire chapter, we find all of those aforementioned days, as well as the early and late spring High Sabbath days listed for us.

As we read that chapter, we find that those days are called "my Feasts" by YHVH, or LORD, speaking to Moses. They are called "holy convocations" by that same LORD. A convocation is a commanded assembly that is holy, i.e., of God.

YHVH begins with the Sabbath Day then goes from there into all of the festival days from Passover through that "great day of the feast," which we have come to know as the Last Great Day. The days which are upon us as this goes to press are listed above and are collectively known as the fall High Sabbaths, or Holy Days.

Verse 41 shows God commanding that we should keep them forever, not until Jesus/Yeshua, but forever. In Ex. 31:13 God rehearses that His Sabbaths were to be kept forever. Some will say that the con-

text indicates only the weekly Sabbath. However, when we resort back to Lev. 23, we find the weekly Sabbath listed with the High Sabbaths, and all of them called God's Sabbaths.

When we come forward to the days when the Christ walked as a man, He gave a command just before He went back to the Father. You can find it in Matt. 28:20 where He commands the apostles to do all things that He commanded. What we never find in the life of Christ is a command that the annual Sabbaths pointed to His first coming and therefore need not any longer be kept. What we DO find is that the Christ went to the Temple on High Sabbaths, as was His custom (Luke 4:16). Everyone knew it was the Christ's custom to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles every year (John 7:2-14). It was so much a custom that people were searching to find Him, including those who intended to do Him harm.

If we appeal to Paul, we find that he wrote in Romans 11 that we are the "wild olive tree" and as such must be grafted onto the natural, holy olive tree whose root IS Jesus—Yeshua, if you prefer. That means we must be grafted onto Israel, and the requirement for Israel that we read was to keep God's Sabbaths forever.

If the Christ kept those days for us, why then are those days understood to be looking forward to a time when the Christ will return? For instance, the Feast of Trumpets is well known to be a foreteller of a day when the Christ will return at the last trumpet sounding (1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 11:15). This is a yet-future event!

The symbolism is unclear as it relates to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, except that it is a day of forgiveness. Perhaps, since the Christ will have returned and taken His Throne, it is symbolic of God's granting forgiveness to those who live past the great destruction that comes just before the glorious re-

turn of the Messiah. Perhaps we can get a glimpse into this in Jer. 50:20 where God says, as He regathers Israel to Him, that "He will pardon those whom He reserves." This would be a spectacular future meaning to be ascribed to that High Sabbath.

Going further, the next High Sabbath, the Feast of Tabernacles pictures a time when all nations shall come up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast (Zech. 14). It pictures a time when there will be no more war, and all nations will live in peace, either by choice or by the rod of iron wielded by the King of Kings. It pictures a time when those who refuse to come up are chastised in love, and who then decide to go up every year to keep the Feast.

Finally, that Last Great Day of the Feast (John 7:37; Lev. 23:36, 39) which must symbolize something even beyond the Kingdom of God, and it does. We can read about it in Ezek. 37 where a physical resurrection to life occurs. Isa 65:20 seems to hint that this resurrection to physical life lasts 100 years.

Those resurrected were those who were not changed at the return of Christ, and not those who lived over past the return and were forgiven and had their minds opened to God's ways. They are those who were raised after the 1000 years are over (Rev. 20:5). Those are given God's spirit and that time, which appears to be 100 years, to be judged.

There's nothing new about this type of judgment. Even now, judgment has begun at the Church of God (1 Pet. 4:17). We in the Church are even now being judged, just as those who are resurrected in that time will be. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Since He is judging the Church now, and will judge the rest of the dead after the 1000 years are over (Rev. 20:5), it is clear that those who live over, who are pardoned after the Return of Christ, will likewise be given God's Spirit and judged from that point forward.

What a glorious plan that our God has laid out for us in His Holy Day schedule! It is a plan that points to the future, not one that was done "for us" by the Christ, or fulfilled in Christ. These things are clearly symbolic of future events. God gave us these days to keep us reminded annually of His glorious plan

for all of men, most of whom have never heard the only name by which men can be saved!

So, no, your brethren keep those days annually because they point forward to future glorious events as God sets His hand to save ALL of mankind who desire (proved by their acts) to be saved. They do not point backward to being "fulfilled by Christ."

All of that being said, we are told to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Many of our Sabbath keeping brethren sincerely believe that they are not required to keep those annual Sabbaths. This is not written to convince anyone to change or to convict anyone of sin. We are to be fully persuaded (Rom. 14:5) with heartfelt bible study, setting aside the ideas of men and allowing the Word of God to enlighten us through the leading of the Holy Spirit. We must do what we believe is the right thing to do because to NOT do so is sin (Jas. 4:17).

This is written so that all can understand that the brethren who keep these days are not doing so to point out some deficiency in the Walk of other brethren. Indeed, we all come into the truth as God leads us. All of us walked in ways that were contrary to God in the past and then changed, repented, as God showed us a better way.

Coming to the knowledge of all truth is a gift given to us by God through the Spirit. What's important is that we don't give up trying to learn more perfectly the Way of God, wherever that leads us. We cannot become like the Church in Laodicea who were neither hot nor cold for God's ways, who believed that they were spiritually rich and needed nothing. God says of them that He will spew them out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16).

If anything can be taken from this article, it is that God laid out a system of annual Sabbaths so that we could keep in mind what His plan for mankind is. Surely it is a common desire that our Lord and Savior come back soon to end this present evil world.





Breakthrough Discovery on Constantine and the Sabbath

Kelly McDonald

In the various articles and books written about Sabbath history, the Roman Emperor Constantine is among the most mentioned individuals. Some claim that he tried to change the Sabbath to Sunday or even persecute Sabbath keepers. As we have pointed out in other articles, neither claim is true. Not a single early Church writing or piece of legislation from his reign ever hints at a direct attack upon the Biblical Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset).

More recent research into writings about Constantine's life combined with a study of Roman law have produced a breakthrough discovery in understanding the relationship between his reign and the Sabbath.

A very important writing on this subject comes from Eusebius. He was a pro-Roman Church writer in the 300s AD. He wrote a work called The Life of Constantine; it is one of the primary sources about the ruler's life.

The traditional translation of The Life of Constantine, book 4, chapter 18, section 2 is:

"...his earnest desire being gradually to lead all mankind to the worship of God. Accordingly he enjoined on all the subjects of the Roman empire to observe the Lord's day, as a day of rest, and also to honor the day which precedes the Sabbath; in memory, I suppose, of what the Saviour of mankind is recorded to have achieved on that day."

Eusebius refers to the first day of the week as "The Lord's Day" and notes that Constantine enjoined subjects of the Empire to rest on that day. In 321 AD, Constantine issued two Sun-

day rest laws. Both were civil and had no Christian meaning attached to them. Constantine never called them the 'Lord's Day', but instead used the Latin phrase 'dies solis.' This makes sense considering his sun-worshipping tendencies. Neither law impacted the true Sabbath, but they did introduce an imitation day of rest beside the one established by God.

Eusebius also mentioned that Constantine caused people to rest on the day which proceeds the Sabbath, which is Friday. This statement is strange; not a single Roman law of any time period agrees with it.

One thing to keep in mind is that many English translations of early church works were written in the 1700s or 1800s. Most of them have NOT been critically reviewed to make sure the translation and original manuscripts are in agreement with each other.

In the late 1990s, the first and (to my knowledge) only critical edition of the Life of Constantine was translated by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (who were at King's College in London). Several other Universities and scholars contributed to this monumental work.

Among their findings is that the first translations of The Life of Constantine bk 4, ch 18, sec 2 included an added word which changed the meaning of the sentence. I have researched their statements about this subject myself and found that the assertion is true! I will show you their translation and then I will show you the explanation from the original documents. I will also show you corroborating evidence

from before and after Constantine's time to reaffirm the correct manuscript translation.

Here is the translation provided by Stuart and Hall of The Life of Constantine, 4.18.2. "The Blessed One urged all men also to do the same, as if by encouraging this he might gently bring all men to piety. He therefore decreed that all those under Roman government should rest on the days named after the Saviour, and similarly that they should honour the days of the Sabbath, in memory, I suppose, of the things recorded as done by the universal Saviour on those days" (Stuart and Hall, p 159).

The accurate translation of this section conveys that Constantine provided protection for Sabbath observance. This refers to the seventh day of the week (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset).

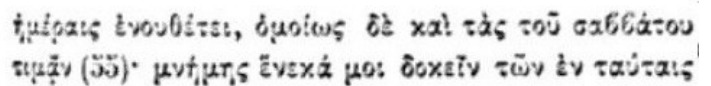
I have done my own independent research on this subject and agree with the translation. I will now provide for you the evidence from the original manuscripts to show you how this error occurred in the 1800s.

First, a little history: In the 1800s, J.P. Migne, a priest in the Catholic Church, made copies of existing manuscripts of the early Church writings. These early manuscripts were written in either Greek or Latin. The works composed in Greek had a Latin translation placed beside them on a page so that the Roman priests could read them in the language of the Roman Church (Latin).

The works of Eusebius were written in Greek. In the Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, Vol 20, published in 1857, we find Eusebius' work, Life of Constantine, copied from the original manuscripts in Greek. We also find a Latin translation beside it.

On Page 1165, we find the copy of the original Greek for chapter 18 from this work. Below is a picture from this page which has the sentence in question.

Picture 1:



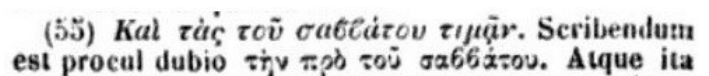
ἡμέραις ἐνουθέτει, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰς τοῦ σαββάτου
τιμᾶν (55)· μνήμης ἕνεκά μοι δοκεῖν τῶν ἐν ταύταις

From the first comma, the Greek transliteration reads: ,OMOIOS DE KAI TAS TOU SABBATOU TIMAN (55).

A rough English translation would be: ,and similarly honor they the days of the Sabbath,

Notice in the picture above that there is a (55) after this excerpt from the Greek text. This is a footnote made by the copyist. The footnote, which is on page 1166, is in the picture below:

Picture 2:



(55) Καὶ τὰς τοῦ σαββάτου τιμᾶν. Scribendum est procul dubio τὴν πρὸ τοῦ σαββάτου. Atque ita

The footnote starts out with the Greek phrase: "DE KAI TAS TOU SABBATOU TIMAN" which was apart of the original text. The copyist then adds a note in Latin which says: "Scribendum est procul dubio" which is roughly translated as "It would be far from doubtful to write" then he gives an edited version of the original Greek phrase. It now says, "TEN PRO TOU SABBATOU"

The scribe has confessed to adding in the Greek word PRO. In English, this word means before (in time, position, rank, etc). This one additional word would change the meaning of the sentence to say that Constantine enjoined Roman subjects to close on FRIDAY (before the Sabbath), which is NOT CORRECT!

The copy of the original Greek manuscript on Page 1165 (see Picture #1 above), does NOT have "PRO!" What's also interesting is that the copyist added the word "pridie" in the Latin translation, which makes the Latin now

say “est pridie sabbati...” or in English “the day before the Sabbath.”

Thus, the correct translation is that Constantine protected Sabbath observance in the Roman Empire. Does this corroborate with other primary sources? YES.

The first group of primary sources are eyewitness accounts that say two things about the 200s, 300s and 400s AD: 1) that the Sabbath was still observed and that 2) most Christians still honored it.

Primary sources which affirm this include Augustine (Letters 36, 82), John Cassian (Institutes, 3.9), Epiphanius (De fide, sec. 22, 24), Socrates (Church History, 5.22), and Sozomen (Church History, 7.19).

The second group of sources which confirm this finding would be Roman Law. In the Codex Theodosianus, we find three laws which protect Sabbath observance for Jewish people (CT: 2.8.26, 8.8.8, and 16.8.20). The dates for these laws are 409 and 412 AD. They are repeated in the Code of Justinian (CJ: 1.9.13), which means Justinian extended the same protections.

Of these laws, CT: 16.8.20 referenced rulings of earlier Roman Emperors that protected Sabbath observance. The law, which was issued by Honorius and Theodosius, reads:

“1. Moreover, since indeed ancient custom and practice have preserved for the aforesaid Jewish people the consecrated day of the Sabbath, We also decree that it shall be forbidden that any man of the aforesaid faith should be constrained by any summons on that day, under the pre-text of public or private business, since all the remaining time appears sufficient to satisfy the public laws, and since it is most worthy of the moderation of Our time that the privileges granted should not be violated although sufficient provision appears to have been made with reference to the aforesaid matter by general constitutions of earlier Emperors” (Pharr’s translation, p 469).

Notice that the law mentioned the constitutions of earlier emperors (plural). The earliest mention of protections for Sabbath observance dates to the time of Julius Caesar and Octavian Augustus. Octavian gave the Jewish people freedom to keep the Sabbath from Friday at 3 pm until the Sabbath ended (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 16.6.2). Claudius apparently had the same ruling (ibid, 19.5.3).

The 409 and 412 laws do not mention that the Sabbath law was re-instituted, but simply a continuation of previous imperial policy. With the correct translation of The Life of Constantine, we can now add Constantine to the list of Emperors that protected Sabbath observance.

Eusebius’ adds an interesting statement to the end of 4.18.2: “...in memory, I suppose, of what the Saviour of mankind is recorded to have achieved on that day.” Eusebius added a Christian meaning to the protection granted for Sabbath rest.

Conclusion: As we survey all the primary sources presented in this article, we can see that Constantine protected Sabbath observance. He continued the protections started by earlier rulers such as Augustus and those protections continued to be protected by later Emperors such as Theodosius II and Justinian. These protections had to be extended in some form or fashion to Christians who observed the Sabbath; as noted the majority of Christians at this time still observed the seventh day. This finding further emphasizes that neither Constantine nor any Roman Emperor in a similar time frame hindered any observance of the Sabbath.



THE SABBATH AND THE FIRST DAY— IN GENESIS AND EXODUS

Bryant C. Buck

In a series of four articles we will look at the Biblical doctrine of the Sabbath. First, we will look at the Sabbath in Genesis and Exodus. Second, we will look at the Sabbath from Leviticus through the gospel of John. Third, we will look at the Sabbath in the book of Acts. Finally, we will look at the Sabbath in the Epistles and Revelation.

We will take this approach because if we find that the Sabbath was observed by New Testament believers throughout Acts, then the epistles which were written to those same New Testament believers cannot be interpreted to say that the Sabbath was done away with in the New Testament after Acts.

Along the way we will look at the few Biblical references to the first day of the week to see if there is any Biblical evidence that the Sabbath was changed from the seventh day to the first day before the end of Acts. We will also look at the first day references in the epistles to show that when correctly interpreted, they stand in agreement with the historical record in Acts.

We will begin our study by establishing what a day is in the Bible. For us a day is a twenty-four-hour time period from one midnight to the next midnight. In the Bible a day is also a twenty-four-hour time period, but it does not go from one midnight to the next midnight. *“And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.”* (Genesis 1:5b) *“And there was evening, and there was morning – the second day.”* (Genesis 1:8b)

This phrase is repeated for every one of the six days of the creation week. God’s day is from the start of one evening to the start of the next evening – in other words, from sundown to sundown. So on the average God’s day starts 6 hours before the start of our Gregorian calendar day. There is no evidence

anywhere in the Bible that God ever changed the reckoning of the start of the day from sundown to midnight.

Many modern scholars try to equate Biblical days with Gregorian calendar days. This cannot be done because Biblical days and Gregorian calendar days do not cover exactly the same time period. For example, many modern scholars equate Biblical first-day references with Gregorian Sundays. However, if an event occurred between 6 PM and midnight on the Biblical first day of the week, then it did not occur on the Gregorian Sunday because the Gregorian Sunday does not begin until midnight. An event between 6 PM and midnight on the Biblical first day of the week occurred on Saturday evening on the Gregorian calendar. This point will be of particular relevance to us later on in these studies when we examine the only reference to the first day of the week found in the book of Acts.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.” (Genesis 2:1-3 NAS) This is the first mention of the seventh day in the Bible. From this passage we learn that God rested on the seventh day after spending six days creating the earth and everything on it. Since the sixth day ended at sundown (see Genesis 1:31), the seventh day started at sundown. In consequence, the seventh day is like all the other days of the week in God’s reckoning of time – from sundown to sundown. In our Gregorian reckoning of time that means the Biblical seventh day goes from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. From this passage we also learn that God ended His work of creating by resting on the seventh day.

Now think about this: Was the Almighty God so

tired out from creating the world that He needed to rest for a day? In Psalm 121:4 (NAS) we read: *"Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."* The Bible is clear that the Almighty God didn't need to rest for a day. However, God created us with the need to rest. There have been societies that have tried working people more than six days before giving them a day off. Inevitably the over-worked people in those societies have experienced more sickness and disease. The human body simply wasn't made to work for more than six days without getting a day to rest. So I believe the reason that God rested on the seventh day was to set an example for us to do likewise.

The first use of the word "Sabbath" in the Scriptures is found in the 16th chapter of Exodus. When Yahweh rained down manna from heaven on the children of Israel in the wilderness, we read the following account: *"Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them, 'This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.' So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it*

did not become foul nor was there any worm in it. Moses said, 'Eat it today, for today is a sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the sabbath, there will be none.' It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. Then the LORD said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? See, the LORD has given you the sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.' So the people rested on the seventh day." (Exodus 16:22-30 NAS).

From this account we learn the following truths about the Sabbath. First, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. When Moses spoke to the children of Israel on the sixth day of the week, he proclaimed: *"Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sab-*

bath to the LORD." Since Moses made this proclamation on the sixth day of the week, "tomorrow" had to be the seventh day of the week. Moses called the seventh day *"a holy sabbath to the LORD."* Second, Yahweh provided a miracle of physical sustenance to those who observed the Sabbath as a day of rest.

Read through the whole account in Exodus 16 and you will see that on every other day of the week Yahweh provided just enough manna for one day's eating for each Israelite. However, on the sixth day of the week He provided enough manna for two days' eating for each Israelite. In consequence, the children of Israel didn't have to go out to gather manna on the seventh day of the week. The truth that Yahweh establishes here is that for those who keep the Sabbath holy as a day of rest Yahweh will provide enough for their physical sustenance from their labor the other six days of the week.

I will illustrate this truth with an example from my own life. Until I retired, I was an insurance agent by occupation. During my career as an insurance agent I worked for three different insurance companies. All of them encouraged their agents to work on Saturday; the last one required Saturday work. I almost didn't get hired at this last insurance company until the sales manager (whom I had worked with previously at another company) intervened and persuaded the manager to make an exception in my case. In consequence, the Saturday work which was required of all the other agents at this last insurance company wasn't required of me.

So how did not working on the Sabbath turn out for me during my insurance career when almost all of my fellow agents were working six days per week (Monday through Saturday) while I was working only five days per week (Monday through Friday)? At every company I was always one of the top agents; I repeatedly sold more insurance in five days than most other agents did in six days. I repeatedly qualified for company conventions working five days while most agents working six days didn't qualify for these conventions. Plus, I repeatedly saw six-day agents fail and leave for other careers while this five-day agent continued to succeed. In fact, one experience during my career is particu-

larly noteworthy. At my second insurance company there was an agent who had been the office leader for more than 10 years. Although I consistently out-sold other agents with this company, I rarely out-sold this agent. In July and August of each year this company had an annual sales contest. This guy who had been there for years always led our office in sales during this sales contest. When the last week of the sales contest came, the contest always ended on Saturday. This guy who led the office year after year always worked on Saturday and typically had a great sales day on the last day of the sales contest. But I wouldn't work on Yahweh's holy day.

In my fifth year with this company I made a determined effort to beat this perennial office leader in the annual sales contest. Going into the last week of the contest, I led my opponent by about \$1,000 in annual premium. That sounds like a big lead until you understand that this guy typically sold \$3,000 or more of annual premium during the last week of this contest. (At that time a good week of insurance sales was \$1,000 in annual premium.) On the last Friday morning of the contest I had increased my lead over my opponent to almost \$2,000 of annual premium. However, since he worked Saturdays and I didn't, he had two days left to sell while I had only one. I had 10 sales interviews set up for that last Friday of the sales contest – the most appointments I had ever set up for one day. Since my closing rate was about 50% at the time, I had a reasonable expectation of selling 5 policies. Since the average policy I sold was around \$200 of annual premium, I had a reasonable expectation of selling \$1,000 of annual premium.

What I didn't know was that because of my faithfulness to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest Yahweh was about to rain down manna from heaven on my sales production. On that sixth day of the week I sold 12 policies for over \$2,000 in annual premium. At 6 of my 10 interviews I sold 1 policy and at 3 of my 10 interviews I sold 2 policies for a total of 12 policies. (There was only one interview at which I didn't make a sale.) That same Friday and the following Saturday my opponent sold less than \$2,000 in annual premium. So I won the sales contest going

away. Because of my faithfulness to keep the Sabbath, Yahweh gave me two weeks worth of sales production in one day! My sales manager at the time said that it was the single greatest sales day he had ever seen. Yahweh is still in the business of making miraculous provision for those who observe the seventh day Sabbath as a day of rest.

We find the Sabbath again in Exodus 20.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:8-11 NAS). In the context of Exodus 20 this is the fourth of the Ten Commandments. It is the only commandment that starts with the word "remember." Evidently God foresaw that this is the commandment His people were most likely to forget. Moreover, God wanted His people to keep this day "holy" – that is, set apart from the other days of the week. They were to keep the Sabbath holy by resting on it rather than working on it. In fact, part of the Sabbath commandment is to work on the other six days of the week.

As in Exodus 16, so in Exodus 20 we see that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. This is important because much of Christianity today believes that the Sabbath is the first day of the week. However, there is no statement anywhere in Scripture where the Sabbath is declared to be the first day of the week. Nor is there any statement in the New Testament where it is declared that God's pronouncement to keep the Sabbath day holy has been transferred from the seventh day to the first day of the week.

Finally, in the giving of the Sabbath commandment Yahweh relates it directly to the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 where He created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. *"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth... and rested on the seventh day."* (Exodus 20:11)

Some people have asserted that the seventh day after the creation week was the only time when God rested. However, the fact that God Himself relates the Sabbath commandment to His resting on the seventh day implies that He continues to rest every seventh day.

There is only one reference to the first day of the week in Genesis and Exodus. *“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.”* (Genesis 1:2-5 NIV). This is the first day of the first week when God created the earth and everything on it. In this first mention of the first day of the week, God neither calls the first day of the week a day of rest nor gives any indication that He would later call it a day of rest. However, at the end of this first week God clearly indicates that the seventh day of the week is to be set apart as a day of rest.

What then are our major conclusions concerning the Sabbath from Genesis and Exodus? Yahweh established the seventh day of the week as a day of rest immediately after creating the earth. Yahweh showed the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath in His miraculous provision to the children of Israel in the wilderness; on the sixth day of each week during the miracle of the manna Yahweh provided enough manna so that the children of Israel didn't have to gather any of it on the seventh day of the week. Finally, Yahweh included the seventh-day Sabbath in the Ten Commandments. God has never changed His mind about the Ten Commandments; they continue to be His standard for righteous behavior up to the present day. Although we do not become righteous through keeping His commandments, once Yahweh has made us righteous through faith in the blood of His Son Yeshua, He leads us by His Spirit to keep His commandments. The seventh-day Sabbath is the fourth of the Ten Commandments; it is a commandment – not a suggestion.



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GREEN, SEED-BEARING PLANTS AND MUSHROOMS

D.J. Wellington

First of all, are/were all “green” plants given to us for food? Genesis 1:11-12 speak of plants yielding seed and fruit. But Genesis 1:29-30 may clarify it a bit:

(New American Standard w/Strong’s):

Gen 1:29 Then Elohim⁴³⁰ said⁵⁵⁹, "Behold²⁰⁰⁹, I have given⁵⁴¹⁴ you every³⁶⁰⁵ plant^{6212a} yielding²²³² seed²²³³ that is on the surface⁶⁴⁴⁰ of all³⁶⁰⁵ the earth⁷⁷⁶, and every³⁶⁰⁵ tree⁶⁰⁸⁶ which⁸³⁴ has fruit⁶⁵²⁹ yielding²²³² seed²²³³; it shall be food⁴⁰² for you;

Gen 1:30 and to every³⁶⁰⁵ beast^{2421b} of the earth⁷⁷⁶ and to every³⁶⁰⁵ bird⁵⁷⁷⁵ of the sky⁸⁰⁶⁴ and to every³⁶⁰⁵ thing³⁶⁰⁵ that moves⁷⁴³⁰ on the earth⁷⁷⁶ which⁸³⁴ has life⁵³¹⁵, ^{2421b}, I have given every³⁶⁰⁵ green³⁴¹⁸ plant^{6212a} for food⁴⁰²"; and it was so³⁶⁵¹.

(The Scriptures):

Gen 1:29 *And Elohim said, "See, I have given you every plant that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed, to you it is for food.*

Gen 1:30 *"And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to every creeping creature on the earth, in which there is life, every green plant is for food." And it came to be so.*

Verse 29 clearly says Yahweh gave every plant that yields seed to us. However, verse 30 says "to every beast of the earth, and to every bird,..." that every green plant was given for food. So, perhaps, all green plants were never intended for human consumption? Lettuce comes from seed, cabbages from seed; but does poison ivy have seeds? I think they have

those root-like things (rootlets) as opposed to “seeds”; you grow them by “cuttings” also - that is why it is so hard to destroy, I believe. Having had billy goats, they love poison ivy and wild roses (same growing pattern; not seeds) and have no difficulty eating them. Other things that seem to grow like poison (and other) ivy include grapes and strawberries, but they bear fruit so according to Genesis 1:29 they are clean to eat, right? Mint grows very similar also but, left to its own, turns to seed which the wind blows off and it spreads.

I found one other verse on eating green plants, that is Genesis 9:3: "Every³⁶⁰⁵ moving⁷⁴³¹ thing⁷⁴³¹ that is alive^{2416a} shall be food⁴⁰² for you; I give⁵⁴¹⁴ all³⁶⁰⁵ to you, as I gave the green³⁴¹⁸ plant^{6212a}," (NAS) or "Every moving creature that lives is food for you. I have given you all, as I gave the green plants," (The Scriptures). If someone says that means “all” green plants are clean, then by its own wording all moving creatures are also clean, right?

Now MUSHROOMS – Are they clean? Some true believers in the Word say “yes” and some true believers in the Word say “no.” Does it matter? I guess if you strive to keep His laws it does. Is it salvational – probably not unless you find it is wrong and still do it? Could it become a salvational issue? I’m certainly no expert but let’s see if I can determine something a little more concrete than “probably.”

Let’s start with Scripture:

(New American Standard w/Strong’s):

Gen 1:11 Then Elohim⁴³⁰ said⁵⁵⁹, "Let the earth⁷⁷⁶ sprout¹⁸⁷⁶ vegetation¹⁸⁷⁷, plants^{6212a} yielding²²³² seed²²³³, and fruit⁶⁵²⁹ trees⁶⁰⁸⁶ on the earth⁷⁷⁶ bearing^{6213a} fruit⁶⁵²⁹ after their kind⁴³²⁷

with seed²²³³ in them"; and it was so³⁶⁵¹.

Gen 1:12 The earth⁷⁷⁶ brought³³¹⁸ forth³³¹⁸ vegetation¹⁸⁷⁷, plants^{6212a} yielding²²³² seed²²³³ after their kind⁴³²⁷, and trees⁶⁰⁸⁶ bearing^{6213a} fruit⁶⁵²⁹ with seed²²³³ in them, after their kind⁴³²⁷; and Elohim⁴³⁰ saw⁷²⁰⁰ that it was good^{2896a}.

(The Scriptures):

Gen 1:11 *And Elohim said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the plant that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth." And it came to be so.*

Gen 1:12 *And the earth brought forth grass, the plant that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And Elohim saw that it was good.*

Right on the surface, mushrooms are not "seed-bearing," they are "spores;" "fungus." So, I've learned is yeast. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, yeast is "any of various unicellular fungi of the genus *Sacharomyces* and related genera, reproducing by budding and capable of fermenting carbohydrates." Now, "mushroom," also according to American Heritage, is "any of various fleshy fungi of the class *Basidiomycetes*, characteristically having an umbrella-shaped cap borne on a stalk;..."

Definitions (both from MSN Encarta Dictionary):

Sacharomyces: a single-celled yeast fungi that has no mycelium, reproduces asexually and ferments sugar.

Basidiomycetes: a fungus that produces its spores in a characteristic club-shaped cell.

There is definitely a big difference between yeast and mushrooms, albeit they are both "fungi." They are two totally different types with different characteristics and I did not find any evidence that yeast is poisonous (not to say there isn't any, I just did not find any evidence of that fact). Now we already read what scripture says, so what can we find out about mushrooms?

According to the Mushroom Council, they "grow

from microscopic spores, not seeds. Plants growing from spores are called fungi. A mature mushroom will drop as many as 16 billion spores. Spores must be collected in the nearly sterile environment of a laboratory and then used to inoculate grains or seeds to produce a product called spawn (the mushroom farmer's equivalent of seed)," (see mushroominfo.com/grow/grow.html).

According to the California Poison Control System, "every year across the United States, more than 9,000 cases of mushroom ingestions are reported to the American Association of Poison Control Centers. Many hundreds of cases of mushroom ingestions occur each year in California. Children under the age of 6 years account for a majority of these cases. The consequences of mushroom poisoning can be severe." Now, using some common sense, would Yahweh's clean food be subject to this? Other "facts" regarding mushrooms, according to the same source, include, quoting from the California Poison Control System's website:

⊙ Some people can eat mushrooms with no problems, while other people eating the same mushroom will experience severe vomiting and diarrhea. [Granted people have various food 'allergies,' but they are not saying that mushrooms fall into the common food 'allergy' group.]

⊙ Some people can have allergic reactions to eating "safe" mushrooms. [Here's where the allergy part comes in, could be said the same with peanuts.]

⊙ Some mushrooms are only poisonous if eaten in large quantities. [Gee, if I eat just a 'little' pork, it may not make me sick?]

⊙ Some mushrooms are poisonous when raw but become harmless when parboiled and thoroughly cooked. [Again, sounds remarkably similar to the things we hear of pork, always cook extra well.]

⊙ Some mushrooms are poisonous regardless of how they are cooked or prepared.

⊙ Some mushrooms are poisonous only if eaten with alcoholic beverages. [So, some are poison-

ous when consumed with a glass of wine, perhaps?]

© Some mushrooms are classified as poisonous because they are hallucinogenic.

(Their website is: <http://calpoisonorg/public/mushrooms.html>)

To continue with facts from the above Poison Center: "Ideally, people and animals should never eat mushrooms that have not been identified by an expert or bought at the store. Unfortunately, many mushrooms are difficult to identify even for a

trained mycologist, a biologist trained in the study of mushrooms."

Last, but not least from this source, it is stated: "There is NO antidote for mushroom poisoning? All mushrooms not bought at the grocery store are considered to be potentially dangerous."

The above are just facts that were gleaned from a group bible study with others. I would like to have any input from others pertaining to anything I missed, be it scripturally or otherwise.



SCRIPTURE NEWS 2 USE

There is a new website out there dedicated to two purposes. First, to have the books of the

Bible in form that even younger people can understand. It is beneficial for home-schoolers as well as useful for Sabbath lessons.

<https://scripturenews2use.org/bible-books>

The other purpose is to encourage all people to read their Bibles to "prove" what is true and what is not, challenging for themselves what is commonly taught.

<https://scripturenews2use.org>

The time is shorter than we may think!
May our Heavenly Father guide and direct all to draw them closer to Him!

There Is Nothing Too Hard For God

Joy Miller Walter

I watched out the window as my younger sister and brother got on the school bus and it pulled away. Dad and mom had already left for work. What an empty feeling! What would I do with myself all day long in the house alone?

I was home from having attended Midwest Bible College the previous year. I had decided to stay home this year because I had gotten so homesick for home and the beautiful state of Maine where I grew up. Besides, I did not have enough money to return to the college. But, home was not the same as when I left. At home there was no Church of God (Seventh-Day) to attend. I missed it deeply. I missed being with other young people of like faith. Dad and Mom had just moved to Paris, Maine where my mother had been hired as a teacher. I knew no one else in the area. Everything was strange and different to me. I didn't really belong anywhere. It didn't take me long to realize I was still homesick. I was homesick for Midwest Bible College, homesick for my Christian friends and homesick for our Sabbath-observing church services.

I decided I would find a job and save my money so I could return to Midwest Bible College in December for the second semester. There was a shoe factory in town within walking distance. So, I gathered up my courage and went to apply for a job. I was hired immediately on a Friday morning. I was thrilled!

I had worked in a shoe factory before going to college. I remember hating the loud noises and the dirty talking. But I would endure it somehow, just until I

had saved enough money to go back to Midwest.

That very morning the foreman came and told me, "You are to work tomorrow morning."

"O I can't," I stammered, "I do not work on Saturdays. That is my day of rest."

The foreman shouted loudly, "I said, report for work tomorrow or lose your job!" Then he turned and walked away.

I sat there shaken and afraid. I needed this job. But, I had never worked on the Sabbath day before. I didn't intend to do so now. "Oh, dear God, please help me," I whispered. God must have given me the idea to go and talk with the main boss. All the way up to the office the foreman's words kept ringing in my ears, "Report for work tomorrow morning or lose your job!" I entered the boss' office. I told him that I didn't know they worked on Saturdays when I applied for the job or I would have told them then that I didn't believe in working from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. I told him I couldn't work on God's Sabbath, even if it meant I would lose my job.

The boss was very kind to me. "That's alright," he said, "We have other Sabbath keepers working here. When the sun goes down on Fridays you just clock out." In the winter in Maine the earliest the sun sets is 3:45 pm and the factory closes at 5:00.

Was I ever happy! I felt like doing cartwheels! I thought, "Hurray! Old Satan, you didn't win, did you!"

The foreman was rather angered at me. He never did speak to me unless he had to. So I kept my job, saved

my money and went back to Midwest Bible College. That was in the early 1960s. I am seventy-four now. I have always believed that God will always be with you so that you never have to work on God's Holy Sabbath Day. If you lose your job, God will give you another one. So, no matter what the circumstances

may be, if we never work on God's Sabbath Day, God will bless us for it and will provide. Just remember that there's nothing, absolutely nothing, too hard for God. Just put your faith in God. He will never let you down!



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Did you know...?

that you can aid the BSA effort to promote the Sabbath and a Spirit of brother-hood among all who keep God's Sabbath by becoming a BRIDGE BUILDER or a PILLAR with the BSA? Besides the monthly or annual membership dues which you can find inside the front cover, you can also help with various functions designed to help bring a fellowship of brethren across denominational

lines. Some of the opportunities are: Advise and/or consult with the BSA Board of Directors; visiting and interacting with other Sabbatarian fellowships; speaking on behalf of the BSA; Promotion and/or distribution of BSA materials and services; and assisting with this magazine, the BSA Facebook page, Twitter and other social media on projects defined by the Board of Directors.

Harping on the Sabbath

Daniel Shabbatnik aka Botkin

Some years ago a brother named Ed told me how God used an atheist to turn him into a seventh-day Sabbath keeper. Ed was a zealous Christian and had been sharing the gospel with his atheist co-worker. The two of them worked together every night, seven days a week, and while they worked they were able to talk. They had been having lively conversations about God and the Bible for quite some time. One night Ed's co-worker asked him a question.

"Tell me something, Ed," the atheist said. "Which day of the week is the Sabbath?"

Ed was blindsided by this simple question and was not sure how to respond.

After an awkward pause, the atheist said, "But I guess it doesn't matter. Whether the Sabbath is Sunday, or Saturday, or some other day of the week, whichever day it is, you don't keep it, because we both work here seven days a week."

As a result of this atheist's comment, Ed looked into the Sabbath question and discovered that God's people should keep the Sabbath that God ordained at creation, when He *"blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it"* (Gen. 2:3). That's how God used an atheist to bring a Christian to the Sabbath.

Some people might wonder why I harp on the Sabbath so much. The reason I harp on the Sabbath so much is because so many Christians ignore it.

Some people say: "If the Sabbath is so important, then why didn't Jesus tell people to keep the Sabbath? He didn't harp on it like you seventh-day Sabbatharians do."

Yeshua did not have to harp on the Sabbath. Yeshua harped on things that the Jews were neglecting. They were not neglecting the Sabbath. On the

contrary, they went overboard in strictly keeping it. If they had neglected the Sabbath, He would have said something about the importance of keeping it.

In the Christian world today, the tables are turned. Unlike the Jews of Yeshua's time, Christians today neglect the Sabbath. Very few Christians, percentage wise, even keep Sunday as a sabbath. When I was a kid, most businesses were closed on Sundays. They were keeping the Sabbath on the wrong day, but at least there was an awareness of sacred time, an awareness that people should set apart one day of the week to focus on God instead of continuing to pursue money and possessions.

Until recent years, even Wal-Mart stores were closed on Sunday mornings. Apparently Sam Walton did not want people shopping at Wal-Mart when they should be in church, so Wal-Mart stores did not open on Sundays until sometime in the afternoon, after Sunday morning church meetings were over. Sam Walton is dead, so now Wal-Mart stores are open all day Sundays. Now about the only national chain stores that are closed on Sundays for religious reasons are Chik-fil-A and Hobby Lobby.

Some Christians say: "I don't like all this Torah talk and Sabbath stuff. I just want to follow Jesus."

I say, Amen. That's all I expect you to do. Follow Jesus. Follow His example and follow Him all the way to the synagogue every Sabbath, as it is written, *"as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day"* (Luke 4:16).

"Following Jesus" is not just having warm fuzzy feelings when you hear or say the name "Jesus" or "Yeshua." Following Jesus is more than sappy, syrupy, sentimental feelings. Following Him means following His example. It means following His commandments, as it is written, *"If ye love Me, keep*

My commandments” and “he that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (John 14:15 & 21).

One of God’s commandments is to keep the Sabbath, and part of keeping the Sabbath is having a mikra’ kodesh, a holy convocation. (See Leviticus 23:3.) The English word convocation is a bit archaic, but it is an excellent translation of the word mikra’. The K-R-’ root of mikra’ comes from the verb “to call.” A convocation is a gathering of people who have been called to assemble together. You can see the “together” part in the con- prefix (compare context or Spanish con, “with”), and the “call” part in the voc- root (compare vocal, vocalize, voice, etc.).

A convocation is an assembly of people who have been called to assemble together for a purpose. In the context of the Sabbath, the convocation is for the purpose of congregational worship and fellowship with the brethren.

The call to assemble together for worship and fellowship can even be seen in the Greek word for “church,” ekklesia. The Greek prefix ek- (or ex-) means “out of” (compare exit, extraordinary, etc.). The -klesia part comes from the Greek verb kaleo, which means “to call: invite or summon.”

An invitation is optional; a summons is not optional. Is our call to come out of our normal weekday routine and assemble with the saints on the Sabbath an invitation or a summons? According to the Greek lexicon in the Strong’s Strongest, “the authority of the speaker dictates the nature of the calling: friends invite; kings summon.”

The call for you to come out of your normal weekday routine and assemble together with other believers is not an invitation from your friend Daniel. It is a summons from the King of kings. As the lexicon explains, “friends invite; kings summon.”

If you get a summons from an earthly court, you had better show up. If you do not show up, you had better have a legitimate explanation for why you could not be there. If you just ignore a summons from an earthly court, there will be negative consequences. How much more severe will the consequences be if you ignore a summons from the

King of kings?

Yes, I guess I do kind of harp on the Sabbath. But if the Sabbath were not neglected by so many Christians, I would not need to harp on it as if it were one of my pet doctrines. So until Christians start keeping the Sabbath, I will probably continue to harp on it.

You may have noticed that for this article I used a pen name, Daniel Shabbatnik. Let me explain why.

I have long known that the surname Botkin is a Russian name. A few years ago my sister met a woman from Russia. My sister mentioned to the woman that her maiden name was Botkin, a Russian name. The Russian lady told my sister that in Russia the name Botkin was formerly Botnik, and the -nik suffix somehow metathesized to -kin.

The -nik suffix is normally used to identify someone as belonging to a particular group. We see this not only in Russian, but also in Hebrew, Yiddish, and even in English: beatnik, peacenik, neatnik, kibbutznik, nudnik, etc. The Russian woman told my sister that the Russian name Botnik is a shortened form of Subbotnik. Subbota is the Russian word for Saturday. The Subbotniks were (and are) seventh-day Sabbath keepers in Russia. There are many interesting articles about the Subbotniks online. Google it.

Because the Russian word for Saturday, Subbota, is an obvious cognate of the Hebrew word Shabbat, I decided to re-Hebraize the name and call myself Daniel Shabbatnik (“Daniel the Sabbath Keeper,” or “Daniel the Sabbatarian”) whenever I write articles about the Sabbath - not because I think the Sabbath is the most important of all God’s commandments, but because that is what my ancestral family name originally meant.



A SHORT BIBLE STUDY: IMMANUEL

Ray Daly

Mat. 1:23. "And they shall call his name Immanuel."

As shown in my previous study, this Scripture refers to the OT prophecy of the birth of Immanuel. Which name was given to him by his virgin mother. It was also shown in said Study, that by virtue of being taken captive by the Syrian Aramite king Rezin, Immanuel and his mother ended up being settled in Babylon, by an Assyrian army that had defeated Rezin.

While the exact age of Immanuel when he went into captivity is not known for certain, what can be shown is, that at the age of thirty, he began a ministry within the nation of Babylon. A work that caused the formerly Baal worshipping Babylonians, to change to the worship of Immanuel himself. What follows is generally known by most students of Scripture, that also use history as a part of their studies.

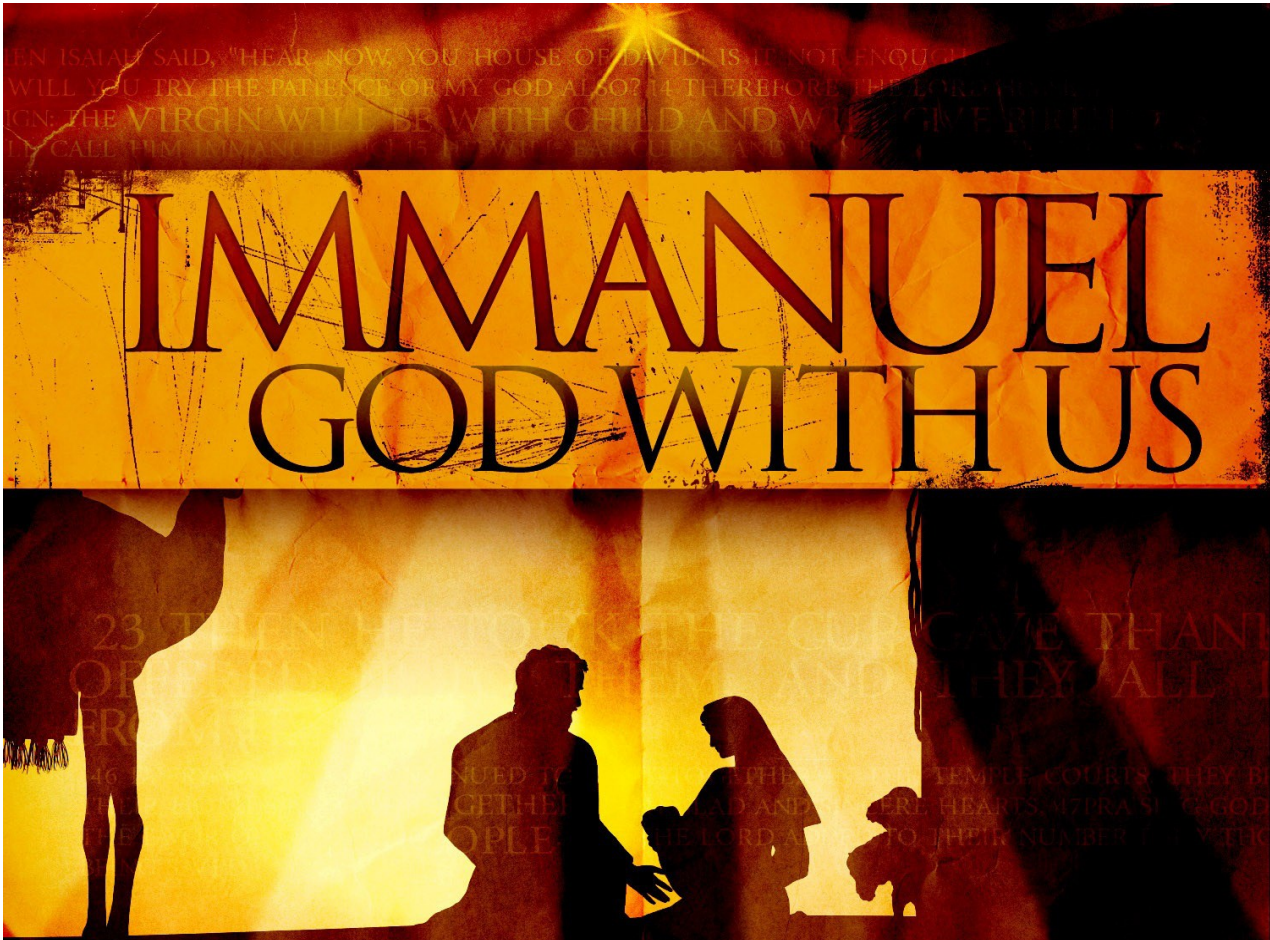
It was Immanuel that was born in Bethlehem of Judah in the winter. Around the time that Sunday observing Christians celebrate Christmas as his birthday. He was born in a cave. Which today we might better recognize as a "barn". There were animals in the cave, since it was winter. While he was still in the cave, three Magi came from the east, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Each of which were representative of the future outer room of the Temple built by Solomon.

Compare this to Jesus birth, which was not in a cave, nor even in a "barn.". Jesus was almost certainly born on the day of the fall Feast of Trumpets. And, his mother only put him into a manger, because at the feasts, the Israelites did a lot of celebrating—singing, dancing, and general noise. There were likely no animals at all in the "barn," as

said animals were still out in the pastures. And, as far as the Magi are concerned, the story is quite different from that of Immanuel. For Jesus may have been a "youngster" by the time the Magi came. Living in "a house." As well, there were likely "twelve" Magi. One for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. And they brought "much gold, frankincense, and myrrh." History says in one report, that there was a small "army" attending to the riches carried on many animals. The reader can look up 2 Cor. 8:9 as to Jesus being referred to at one time being "rich."

The "ministry" of Immanuel was an "almost mirror image of Jesus ministry." He preached a message, and did many mighty miracles—healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, giving hearing to the deaf, and sight to the blind. In this latter case, the blind, there is an interesting story in the NT. In John 9, Jesus encounters a man that was "born blind." The man is given his sight, and returns home to his parents and neighbors. He explains to them that "a man" gave him his sight. But he is not believed. He is taken to the Pharisees who do not believe either, and keep questioning him. Finally the man says in V.32. "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind." In a sense, this is the only difference between Immanuel's miracles, and those of Jesus.

Immanuel, like Jesus, had twelve disciples. And there came a time when he held a "last Passover meal" with them. He explained to them that the next morning he would be taken, and killed by hanging on a cross. But, he was not killed by any of the Babylonians, rather by some of the other Jews that were taken captive by the Assyrians. I am going to jump ahead some thousand years. In the 300's AD, the Romans were still worshippers of Immanuel, but by a different name, which I will men-



tion later. In 325 AD, Emperor Constantine called a meeting of religious leaders in which he officially changed the Roman day of observance from the seventh day to the first day. At the meeting he made this statement. "The Jews crucified our Lord". Almost all believe he was speaking of the Jews of Jerusalem killing Jesus, though it was actually the Roman guards. However, Constantine was actually referring to the Jews at Babylon killing Immanuel.

As Immanuel told his disciples, the next day, the Jews did indeed crucify him. This was on today's "Good Friday". They buried him in a tomb, and he was resurrected at sunrise Sunday morning. (Note: Immanuel was almost certainly resurrected to his former "flesh, bone, and blood" body. But that is for another spot.

In my studies on this topic, I do not recall reading where any baptism by total body immersion was practiced. Nor do I find Immanuel washing/ baptizing his disciples feet. Though the wine and bread are said to have been given them.

The above will end this Study, with the following conclusion.

The ministry of Immanuel caused a war to ensue with the still Baal worshipping Assyrians. It took the good part of a century for the Babylonians to come out winners. But the main reason for the war in the first place, was the fact that the Babylonians began worshipping on the Sabbath, as opposed to the Assyrians Sunday observance. (In the future, this was to be a continuing source of friction between Rome and the Germanic peoples to the north. As it will once again in the not too distant future.) Note that, when the Medo-Persian empire defeated Babylon, many, if not most of the Babylonian citizens migrated to southern Europe. Many to Italy and Rome.

I mentioned that I would give a different name for Immanuel. For those that would like to research the topic. The info I gave regarding much of Immanuel's works can be found under his "Persian name Mithras."

Why I Do Not Celebrate Christmas

Mary Dell Wallace

When I was very young my Father read the Bible to us each evening. We went to Church on Sunday, kept Christmas with a Christmas tree and all, and were pretty much the average American family.

Then my first baby brother died at 11 months of age from pneumonia. My Father started studying the Bible. At that point he wanted to know what the Bible had to say about death. He then studied other things from the Bible which were not mentioned by the minister of the Church we attended, including which day to keep as the Sabbath. He had been raised a nominal Presbyterian, having ancestors who were Presbyterian ministers.

He came to the conclusion that there should be a Church named the Church of God that kept Saturday as the Sabbath. He went to the public library in Bend, OR and found a book listing Churches with their addresses, etc. He contacted The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters in Salem, WV. They, in turn, contacted Pastor Ed Severson, a minister from Harrisburg, OR, to study with Dad.

While Dad was learning about this Church and its doctrines, he set me down one day with the Bible. At that time I was seven years old. He asked me to read aloud Jeremiah 10:1-5. When I had finished reading, he asked me if we did anything like that. From that day on our family did not celebrate Christmas nor have a tree in our home. I vaguely remember the last Christmas and one of the gifts my sister and I received at that time—metal banks in which to save our coins.

As I grew up I attended public schools in various parts of this nation, but I never felt deprived for not celebrating in December. After the holiday, when the stores had marked down the prices, Dad would take us to town to buy some toys. One thing I do remember was a carob board, complete with checkers.

I am writing this from my perspective. My siblings may have a completely different outlook on all of this. I was not a rebellious teenager, but I did things I regret in my early 20's. I caused myself and my parents a lot of grief at that time. But I became an adult who was convinced of her own beliefs after the sad experiences.

I do believe in the Messiah, our Savior. But I do not believe he was born on December 25. Nor do I see any command in the Bible to celebrate His birthday. There are other days that we are commanded to keep, including the seventh day Sabbath. The only birthday celebrations mentioned in the Bible were for Pharaoh (Genesis 40:20) and for Herod (Matthew 14:6 and Mark 6:21).

There is much recorded in history about the origins of the celebration and the meanings of the symbols. The traditions have become firmly embedded in our current society. As an adult, I have done my own studying and my own research. Because of what I read in the Bible and in history, I choose not to celebrate this holiday in any fashion.



My Story!

Richard McCoy

In 1984, 10 years into my 33 years as a long distance, over the road, truck driver, I was listening to the “World Tomorrow” broadcast by Herbert Armstrong on the radio at nights. I was also picking up the “Plain Truth” magazines at different truck stops.

It took me months before I put these two together as both coming from the Worldwide Church of God. From Mr. Armstrong’s speakings and writings I learned the foundations to the 7th Day Sabbaths and the 7 annual Holy Days.

So, on the first weekend in 1985 I kept both the Sabbath and Sunday! But since that time until now I have been keeping only the “real Sabbath” and the 7 annual Holy Days. Every year has brought more understanding as I was able to visit 167 different “Worldwide” churches across this nation with numerous repeat visits over the years.

After Mr. Armstrong’s death in 1986, the Worldwide Church of God began slowly to go a different direction under new leadership until a number of years ago they left the Sabbath and Holy days, and fell into “Sunday Keepers” kicking our little congregation out for not leaving the Sabbath!

So, we eventually became the “Celebration Church of God” in Ontario, OR. Maintaining and growing in understanding of God’s Sabbaths and Holy Days—and so much more about God’s Plan for His people both now and on into His coming Kingdom here on earth. This has been and continues to be “my story,” and I’m sticking to it!



Thank you for your delightful story, Richard. I’ve had the distinct honor of speaking at both the Celebration Church of God festival site in McCall, ID, as well as the local congregation on several occasions—and I’ve probably met you! I always come away from there having felt loved as a brother. Truly, your group is a wonderful example of the Way of Life that our Father has blessed us with! It is inspiring to see the brethren hang onto what God has commanded while giving man’s commands their “due” respect!

—Ed.

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Letters to the Editor



Thank you so much for the editorial in the May-June issue of T.S.S. This is the kind of message that needed to be read by all the old 'World Widens.'

I had to learn that doctrine is a teaching and it is not always true and accurate, hence all the variance among Sabbatarians today. Handed down for decades or generations they became traditions, beliefs, customs etc. but truth is always the actual state of a matter.

Whatever a person grows up believing it is very hard for them to change unless they can actually get at the truth and prove it to their satisfaction.

Being able to articulate when trying to explain it is a major challenge to some folks based on their speaking skills and education.

Perception then comes into play. Words are received according to a person's perception based on their experience and knowledge of the scriptures.

In thinking of those who might attempt trying to force their understanding on others I am reminded of the old adage we used to hear, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

As most older Christians do, I have come to realize that differing cultures from far away places bring differing traditions and most of that is a good thing we are still learning as Ross Perot once said 'I'm all ears.'

Darl Arbogast

In the article "Christian Persecution in America" in the March-April 2019 edition of The Sabbath Sentinel, Aubrey Duncan argues that the United States of America is the second beast of Revelation 13:11-12. Can this be so? If one reads Revelation 13 then one will see that the beast powers take away all religious and political freedom. Yet the United States has given more people more religious and political freedom than any nation in the history of the world. There is nothing in the current political climate that indicates that this religious liberty will be affected by anything that can be, or is being, done. Some people see themselves as the sole correct interpreters of Biblical prophecy. Because of this penchant, they speak or write dogmatically about prophecy. The Bible, on the other hand, states: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." (II Peter 1:20). I have looked at many interpretations of Bible prophecy and only a few groups make the claim that the Roman papacy received its deadly wound in 1798. I could take you through their whole argument on this belief, but again "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" and few scholars have this interpretation as to the year in which the Roman papacy died. The truth is that the Roman papacy lost political

power throughout the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries, but still maintains, to this day, its religious power over practicing Roman Catholics.

The most unfortunate statement in Mr. Duncan's article comes in his last two paragraphs. "In discussing the Trump administration love affair with the Evangelical/ Catholic Religious Right, here is what one very perceptive political commentator had to say about this issue, 'The conservative Christian alliance is challenging a century or more of social advances and many of the premises of the Enlightenment underlying the very definition of religious liberty in the United States. Its long-range goal is to impose a conservative Christian social order inspired by religious law, in part by eroding pillars of undergirding religious pluralism that are integral to our constitutional democracy.'" Does Mr. Duncan's source realize that there are Evangelical Sabbath keepers, or that such a statement is not only false, but is an insult to Evangelicals of all groups? I am one of them and I don't know of any Evangelical - Sunday keeper or Sabbath keeper - who is trying "to impose a conservative Christian social order" on anybody, much less American society. Most Evangelicals are simply trying to keep our society from being overwhelmed by the flood of ungodliness impinging on our social order.

It seems to me that some Sabbath keepers have to manufacture a Sunday bogeyman to prop up their perceived religious position as "the true defenders" of the Christian faith. "This conservative Christian alliance" as a threat to the religious freedom of Sabbath keepers is a bogeyman of someone's imagination. It may exist among Roman Catholics, but it does not exist amongst Evangelical Christians. If one is looking for a ghost in the closet, one may well find one. But the truth is that this particular ghost doesn't exist.

Bryant

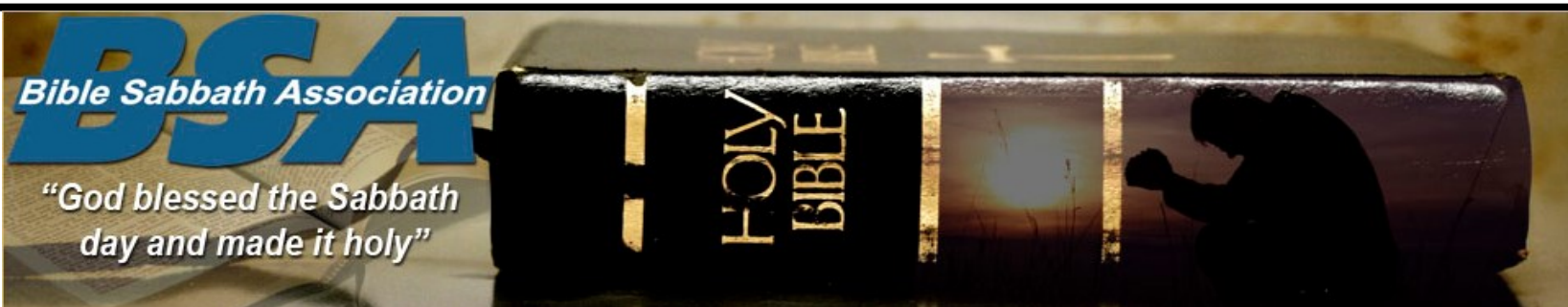
As you must know by now, Bryant, we publish articles from all different sections of Sabbath keepers. We have a variety of views on prophecy. I'm sure that Mr. Duncan meant no disrespect to you or any other Evangelical. That said, I too have wondered whether the USA could not be the beast power, moreso since I've seen religious liberties begin to be trampled under the feet of government expedience via Covid. Jesus said we should watch. I suspect that is still good advice. For all of our "understanding" of prophecy, I suspect the disaster will come from a direction we don't suspect, and we will only come to understand because God will not do anything unless He first tells His prophets. We still need to filter anything any prophet says through the Word of God, being like the noble Bereans, willing to listen/read, but searching the scriptures daily whether those things we heard/read are so.

—Ed.

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