



The Sabbath Sentinel

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2021

"Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths"

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days."

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The Time is Now!

As this edition is hitting mailboxes across the country, we are less than one month from the annual observance commanded by YHVH known as Passover. There is much symbolism in this observance that is important for the Christian to recognize.

One can read about the first Passover in Exodus 12. The Israelites were to take an unblemished lamb on the tenth day of the month and keep it safe until the 14th day of the month. On the 14th day, in the evening, they were to kill the lamb, take its blood and put it on the side posts and lintel to keep away the death of the first born by YHVH. Further, they were to roast the lamb whole, with fire, not boiled, and to eat all of it before the morning. If they could not finish it then the rest was to be burned up.

This entire ceremony pointed forward to the time when the Christ would come as Messiah, God's Lamb, the first time. Sadly, Israel as a whole never got the picture, preferring instead the image of the Messiah returning as a conquering King of Kings. But, the symbolism is abundantly clear for bible students with eyes to see.

We are told that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Just as the Israelites had to put the blood on their doors, we have to put the blood onto ourselves as the living temples of God. In order to have our lives spared, we must be under that blood when the end comes. The Israelites received a kind of mercy by not having their first born sons killed. We, too, receive mercy once we are under the blood through the graciousness of God, granting us a pardon that we have not earned. But, as Paul wrote, we can't use this graciousness of God as a license to go on sinning (Rom. 6:1-2).

These weeks preceding Passover become a time where we analyze our past year, examining ourselves (1 Cor. 22:28) to see whether we have contin-

ued on the path, improving in our walk in the light of the Law of God, or whether we have stagnated, or worse, slipped backward. If we are honest, we will find that we have not been perfect in our walk and will ask once again for God to be merciful to us as sinners. The context of that verse indicates that we examine ourselves in light of taking the Passover bread and wine so that we don't take it in an unworthy manner, i.e., that we have ourselves and our manner clearly in view recognizing the horrible death that Jesus had to endure for us to have that gracious mercy.

As I write this, it has become clear that our nation has refused national repentance, perhaps through the hardening of our hearts nationally. We had a chance to recognize that our nation has gone off the rails with respect to what God wants. We had a president, running for re-election, who worked toward ending our great national sin—abortion. Arguably, he did not accomplish all of the things he wished to do, but now we will never know what he would have accomplished given a second term.

Instead, we have elected a new president and given him control of both houses of Congress. This new president proclaims that he will undo all that the previous president did. He proclaims that women must be allowed to choose to put to death their unborn children. Arguably, the election was stolen through the antics of just 5 large cities, but nothing was done to stop this evil. And, so, we have a proponent of national murder in control of our nation.

But, there is still hope. Our nation was built as an association of states, or small nations, which came together to create a federation for their mutual protection. Those states created the Constitution for the united States of America. In that Constitution, the States retained all powers that were not explicitly granted to the federal government. A power that

was NOT granted was the power to allow murder to be legalized. We, as citizens, who are the creators of the states through each of our Constitutions, can act to end the murder ourselves by not committing such a horrendous act. We further can find and support servants in political office who are likewise in support of not allowing the murderous policy of abortion to continue legally. We can do only what we know to do and must rely on God to assist our efforts. We are told that we will be blessed if, when Christ returns, we are found doing that which He desires. What then does He desire?

Speaking to the House of Israel—who had disappeared into captivity over 100 years earlier—YHWH said this: *“Also in your skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents; I did not find them by breaking in, but on all these.”* (Jer. 2:34). God does not have to search to find the blood of innocents on us. It is all over our clothing, He says. We should be found demanding an end to this great national sin. However, because this nation has stooped to choosing a party to run this nation which accepts and promotes the death of the innocents, we must concern ourselves with what God says He will do if we do not repent, go the other direction, quit doing the evil.

If we continue to read past Jer. 2:34 it is clear that God rejects those who we have chosen who promote the blood guiltiness known as abortion. But, He also indicates that we will go out from our place with our hands on our heads, the classic symbol of being placed into captivity.

Some will say that it can't happen to our nation because we are too powerful. When Israel obeyed God, even imperfectly, it was one of the most powerful nations in existence at the time. But, both the Houses of Israel and Judah committed great sins and were taken into captivity by invaders after the hedge of protection was removed by God. One of those great sins was the murder of their children by sacrificing them to Molech, causing them to “pass through the fire,” to be roasted alive. Is this really any different than the torturous death today's unborn babies endure? If you can stand it, research how abortions are conducted.

With the election of the current administration, we may well have lost our last chance nationally to end the curse that comes with murdering of children and so we must turn to the states if this evil is to be undone, through repentance, crying out to God for help, and working with our state legislatures to end this evil.

What if we will not do this? God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). What He did to Israel for the murder of children He will most decidedly do to us for the same thing. We have already seen that the image of captivity is the result.

God makes it plain in Ezek. 16 what the result is going to be. He says that because of our whorish behavior, He is going to bring those nations with which our nation has played the whore, against us. The Chinese nation, and the Muslim countries, all hate us and are using us because of our power and wealth, both of which are being stolen away or given away, and which will now accelerate under an administration already known for whoring with them and selling out our nation. How can I know this? Again, it does not take a prophet to understand that God doesn't change and that when we perform the same evil that the ancient Houses of Israel and Judah did then we can expect the same reward. Speaking plainly, that means war, invasion and captivity if we do not repent, and quickly.

We are approaching the 50th year since the inception of our horrible national sin in 1973. It is not too late, yet, for our nation. We can still cry out to God for mercy while we work locally to end this madness, this sin-sickness which has driven our nation to the edge of the abyss. We are each an army of one, but collectively the army of God, Christian soldiers who must march as if to war, if there is any hope of saving this nation. I, for one, do not wish to see my children, grand-children and great grand-children exposed to the ravages of war and captivity. I'm sure that anyone reading this feels the same way. The time for action is now.





The President's Corner

FAILED ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE SEVEN DAY CYCLE

Kelly McDonald

In the very beginning of the Bible, we learn about creation and the establishment of the seven-day week. During the first six days, God worked to fashion creation. On the seventh day He rested; the day was blessed and set apart from the other six days.

Genesis 2:1-3 reads: *"1 And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made."* (ASV)

One of the proofs that God created everything is the seventh-day Sabbath and by extension, the seven-day cycle. The seventh day completed the first week of Creation. Knowledge of the seven-day weekly cycle continued after that time. It was understood in the days of Noah as explained in Genesis chapter 8.

"10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 and the dove came in to him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 12 And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more" (Gen 8:10-12).

A further proof that God is the Creator is that there has been a continuous seventh-day cycle from Genesis 1 and 2 until the present.

Did you know that there have been attempts to change the seven-day cycle? ALL of them have resulted in failure! This means there have al-

ways been humans observing this cycle despite these attempts. God will not let us forget that the seven-day cycle, culminating with the Sabbath, points us back to the Creator!

We will take a look at some of these failed attempts. It is a valuable lesson for us all to remember.

Among the first attempts to force people to break the seven-day weekly cycle was by the ancient Babylonians. They observed lunar weeks. This means that they waited for the new moon to appear and re-started the week accordingly. They kept a sort of lunar Sabbaths with periodic sabbaths every seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty first, and twenty eighth days of the month (Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, p 74). The problem with this reckoning of time is that their Sabbath fell on different days of the week every month! It also creates weeks that are longer than seven days (because the lunar month is more than 28 days).

Well, this scheme fell apart at some point in history. The Babylonians eventually went back to the seven-day weekly cycle that was started in Genesis. Unfortunately, the lunar Sabbath has made a comeback in recent decades. It is a heretical viewpoint that causes a complete disconnect from God's seven-day weekly cycle. Anyone who follows this viewpoint is literally going back to Babylon.

Another attempt to deviate from God's original weekly cycle occurred in ancient Egypt. The Israelites dwelt there for four hundred years; they were enslaved for the last portion of their

time in that land. During their stay, they became acclimated to some Egyptian ways, which included a 10-day week (Fagan, p 476). This explains why God had to reveal to the Israelites the Sabbath through the giving of the manna (Ex. 16). Eventually, the Egyptians went back to the seven-day week. The Greek peoples would also try the ten-day week without success.

Going back as far as the eight century BC, the ancient Romans used the eight-day week. Every eighth day was called *nundinae* or market day. By the first century BC, the seven-day week increased in popularity. They had a dual system of reckoning weeks for a time! By the fifth century, only the seven-day cycle was used.

In modern times, humanity has tended to look upon ancient peoples with condescension. To sober ourselves from this thought on this subject, I will provide you with some modern examples where humans tried to deviate from God's weekly cycle.

In 1788, the Frenchman Pierre-Sylvain Maréchal developed a new calendar. It had a much different reckoning of time than the Gregorian Calendar. A ten-day week was recommended with three weeks making one month. Each month was renamed to fit the season in which it occurred. It was instituted in 1793 and is commonly called the French republican calendar. It lasted until Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor in 1806; the seven-day week was re-instituted.

Note: The French word for Saturday is Samedi; it comes from the vulgar Latin word *sambati dies*, meaning Sabbath day.

In 1929, the USSR instituted a five-day work week. The goal was two-fold. First, the Soviets wanted to maximize their work force and keep machines running non-stop. People were assigned random rest periods during these five days. The second goal was to make religious adherence to any Sabbath by Christians,

Jews, or Muslims impossible. Neither goal was met; machines broke down and people were not always off work at the same time as other family and friends. This caused people to experience a social disconnect with friends and family and thus a type of social disintegration began. This decreased productivity. After two years they moved to a six-day work week. By 1940, they abandoned the project and re-instituted the original seven-day week (Frost).

Note: the Russian word for Saturday is *subбота*, which means Sabbath.

These historical examples show attempts by mankind to disconnect humanity from our Creator. God instituted the seven-day weekly cycle and the Sabbath in Genesis. It was established by HIM, so any attempts to go contrary to it will result in failure. Furthermore, these examples show us that God will never allow us to fully separate from His timing; our way does not work. Every seven days we are reminded that God created all things, including time itself.

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THE SABBATH CALENDAR

(ARTICLE 2 OF 3)

Bill and Karen Bishop

We can all appreciate Father's patterning of the week of creation: six days of work, and ending in a day of rest. The seventh day was the conclusion of all that had preceded it – the moment of glory when our Heavenly Father could stand back to observe all that He had done and say that it was finished and it was very good. He then hallowed that seventh day and made it a special time for us to come together in fellowship with Him – a day for us to rest as He did, so we can depart from our worldly endeavors and spend precious uninterrupted time with Him. This measure of time (the completion of seven days) is repeated throughout the ages of humanity. On each and every seventh day without ceasing, we are to stop, breathe in the Creator's majesty, and embrace the blessing of His outstretched arms with grateful hearts. Do we not begin to taste the grandeur of this seven-day span of time – the building block of His creation?

This primary number (seven) would prove to be the cornerstone of His creative work; and the very calendar that many believe He put in place to mark the time in His creation utilizes this cornerstone mightily. Since the seventh day of His week of creation is called the Sabbath, what we have come to view as His calendar is called a Sabbath calendar. It is with good reason. The seven-day weeks, and the seven-year spans to mark Shemitah in Leviticus 25, as well as the seven weeks from the waving of the sheaf to Shavuot, and the seven weeks of years to count to the Jubilee year are all integral time-keeping segments of sevens for Yah.

This calendar was found among numerous documents in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is formed around and focuses on ceaseless, perpetual observance of the seven-day week. This perpetual count of 7 seems to be sacred to Father, and we will see that it plays into the entirety of the calendar system in a

very meaningful way. The number of days in the calendar year is always divisible by seven. This ensures that every year has only completed weeks before the next year begins. This preserves the sacredness of the six days of work and one day of rest for each week in this calendar, and there is never a fragment of a week left dangling when the year transitions.

This sacred 7 patterning of Yah is not only found in the 7-day week. There are 7 branches of the Menorah; the New Testament records that the number for forgiveness of sins should be 70 X 7; and there is a 7-day consecration period for the priesthood. Likewise, in Revelation there are 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 vials/bowls, as well as multiple mentions of the 7 spirits of God. There are so many references to 7 in the Word that it makes one's head spin.

It is even the count of 7 that will conclude time itself at the end of the 7th "millennial day" of time. There are 7 "millennial days" (seven 1000-year periods) of time presented in the Bible, and the 7th is a "millennial day" (1000-year period) of rest. This is the patterning that the sacred 7-day week of creation foreshadows with its 6 days of work followed by the 7th day of rest. Yahweh has replicated this "week" over and over again so we could begin to grasp the sacred nature of it and the patterning of the number 7 that comprises it.

The beauty of the Sabbath calendar is the uniformity of 52 EXACT 7-day weeks in the typical year, each containing a Sabbath. Likewise, each quarter (season) contains 13 EXACT 7-day weeks, each containing a Sabbath. Let no person deceive you about how important Yahweh's Sabbaths are to Him! This sacredness is derived from His very act of creation in His 7-day week. He didn't hallow the 5th day, the 6th, or the 1st. It was only and specifically to be the 7th day throughout time - His Divine mark of sig-

THE BIBLICAL CALENDAR THEN AND NOW



Will the REAL Calendar Please Stand UP?

Comparing and Contrasting
Holy Scripture to the Dead Sea Scrolls

BILL AND KAREN BISHOP

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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nificance to that number in His creative work and time-keeping process:

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

It is hard not to see that this “sacred 7” principle is Father’s foundation for time and all that is related to it. Likewise, the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal that His 7-day week may well be the framework for His calendar that is intended to relate His time to His people! The use of 12’s in Yah’s patterning is vital as well. It appears often. For instance, there are 12 manners of fruit on the Tree of Life – one for each month. (Is there no fruit for a whole month every time the lunar calendar reckoning requires a 13th month?)

Historical records verify the legitimate authenticity and validity of this calendar. We provide a historical and Scriptural context in our book *The Biblical Calendar Then and Now* to bring clarity regarding how the transition to our present-day religious calendar versions appears to have occurred. It compares and contrasts the Dead Sea Scrolls to our Biblical text in order to find unified harmony between the two, and brings clarity to the translation issues that cause confusion today.

Our space here is limited, but in the next installment we will try to present a brief explanation regarding some of this confusion. Until then, we look forward to your visits and comments at our website: returningtothegarden.com.



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A Subjective Sabbath

Blake Silverstein

What precisely is the Sabbath? If you ask Google, it spits out about 63,600,000 results (give or take a few thousand) and an interesting definition at the top of the page from Oxford. It states the following;

sab·bath /əˈsabəTH/ noun

1. a day of religious observance and abstinence from work, kept by Jews from Friday evening to Saturday evening, and by most Christians on Sunday.

Type it in for yourself and see. Some of the first couple of web pages listed are, “Sabbath – Wikipedia”, “Sabbath Truth: What day is the Sabbath and does it matter?” and “Sabbath | Judaism | Britannica”. Not one website on the first page of results references the delight the Sabbath day is—only arguments.

I jumped over to YouTube and typed in “Sabbath” and it was even more pronounced. The top results were all proponents of the Sabbath day being on Saturday, (which is good) but again they seem to only focus on the Saturday vs. Sunday argument. One such page, “Hope Through Prophecy” stated, “Many sincere Christians have been deceived into accepting a false Sabbath that was never endorsed by the Bible.” The man goes on at some length to make the point that anyone who doesn’t “keep the right day” will not enter the Kingdom. Whether you agree or not, to declare someone will not inherit the Kingdom of God for any reason not specifically identified in Scripture (1Co 6:9 *Know ye not that*

the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.) smacks of breaking the third commandment.

This isn’t an article on what day the Sabbath is or how it was or wasn’t changed. Smarter minds than mine have unequivocally answered that question in the form of big books, doctoral theses, and ecumenical conferences. This is an article about how we go about sharing it and its purposefully subjective nature.

I’ll start by asking you one simple question: Why do you keep the Sabbath? Besides the standard reply of, “Because it is commanded,” I am curious as to the deeper meaning of why we keep the Sabbath holy. People give some of the most interesting and revealing answers to this question. They range from, “I keep the Sabbath because I am made in the image of God” to “Because the creator of the universe set aside that day to be holy and set apart for rest and worship, picturing the ultimate rest of His kingdom.” One of my favorite answers was, “I keep the Sabbath because it’s an anchor for my life and helps to keep the flow of my life intact.”

I love how poetic people become when describing the Sabbath. Their eyes light up and the language they use conveys emotion through allusions, analogies and metaphors. You can feel how much the

Ezekiel 20:12 "Also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them."

"And I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, to know that I am יידי' that sets them apart"

this relativistic look at the Sabbath permits considerable moral latitude in how to comply with keeping the Sabbath, it also makes it more precise and binding—not my pleasure, but yet still must be a pleasure and delight. We, His children, must determine how we are to make it a delight.

What's interesting about the second "delight" in verse 14(עֲנָג) is its meaning—which means "to be soft or pliable." Keeping the Sabbath makes you pliable to the LORD. I find that to be fascinating. The Sabbath is sup-

posed to assist God in changing what we find a delight—"to delight in the Lord" and not just in other things.

There are some pretty clear-cut guidelines as to what the Sabbath is not. It's described in Deuteronomy 5:14 (KJV), *"But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work (.)"*

As clear as this is, there is still some play in it. For instance, one fine Sabbath morning I was setting up for services at our church. One of the early birds was talking with me about a new power tool he just purchased. This power tool got me thinking about my business and how I could use one to do more work in less time, improving our bottom line. I told my friend, "I better stop thinking about this, because now I'm working". He replied, "How is thinking about work, working?" To which I quipped, "You kidding me? Thinking is some of my best work!"

We both laughed, and got back to laboriously moving chairs and tables for services. This is why I chuckle at red-faced legalists who argue with brethren on the specifics of Sabbath-keeping. The only

Sabbath means to them. It's important to them not only because it's a commandment, but because of reasons that are unique to them. Their Sabbath is something personal and sometimes its meaning can only be put into words via poetic language—not prose.

There are some interesting ideas about the Sabbath revealed in Isaiah 58:13-14, *"If you keep from desecrating the Sabbath, from doing whatever you want on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, seeking your own pleasure, or talking business; 14 then you will delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride over the heights of the land, and let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

The first Hebrew word for "delight" used here is, "עֲנָג" and it also means pleasant. Please tell me what is delightful or pleasant? I venture the answers to this question are myriad and yet singular to the individual. What is delightful or pleasant to you might not be the same for your brother or sister. I'm reminded of the aphorism, "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder." Paradoxically, although

thing we seemed to really have nailed down is when it starts, and even that has come into question lately (sunset v. dark). So forgive me if I tread lightly when explaining the Sabbath to the curious.

To those interested in drawing lines, remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees about the disciples breaching the Sabbath? You can find it in Matthew 12:1-8. In verses 5-8 he states, *“Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.”*

Jesus is telling them that technically the priests are “breaking the Sabbath” yet are blameless. I am reading into this account that Jesus looks into the heart of the individual, then judges whether they are complying with his commandment. He sees you making a judgment call on how to call the Sabbath a delight, and I have good news for you; He wants mercy not sacrifice. The One greater than the temple has last say in the matter and states in Mark 2:27, *“The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.”*

When I am in a situation that is questionable in regards to Sabbath-keeping (or anything for that matter) I pray for wisdom and guidance—immediately. I think taking the time to quickly call out to God not only proves your sincerity, but is literally one of the only things you can do.

It is one thing to provide scripture (meekly) that helps support individuals to see their behavior as destructive or against what is written in the Bible, but too often I find individuals hatefully attacking well-meaning Christians about the “truth of the

Sabbath.” This attack is usually a half-baked history lesson containing Constantine, the Council of Nicaea, and some references to vagaries in the church through history. Both usually walk away confused and in disbelief—one, why the other couldn’t understand something so simple; the other, why some place so much importance on the day they choose to worship God.

The more we try to objectify the Sabbath, the more we miss its point. This could be a test commandment to see how we internalize this highly subjective law.

I hope you don't think I'm trying to be clever or cute about keeping the Fourth Commandment. To be clear, I am not advocating to keep the Sabbath any other time (its sunset Friday to sunset Saturday), or day (its the seventh day, Saturday), and its a holy day, we are to rest—not work. I only mean to point out the more we try to objectify the Sabbath, the more we seem to miss its higher purpose. This could be a test commandment to see how we internalize this highly subjective law. I believe by you choosing to adopt His ways as your ways is the best demonstration of your love for Him (John 14:15).

If our ultimate aim is to lead others to Christ, we must consider how we deliver our communications. As Ron Dart said, “Christianity isn’t an argument. It’s a way of life.” Describe to people your way of life—how much peace you feel keeping the Sabbath and the joy you experience from honoring His ways. Let your eyes light up and your enthusiasm spill over until they ask themselves the question, “I wonder if they’re for real?” They might just chase that question into a seat at your local congregation.



STAYING HOME ON THE SABBATH

Daniel Shabbatnik aka Daniel Botkin

Some people think like Emily Dickinson. They want to keep the Sabbath by just staying home. However, people who keep the Sabbath without a holy convocation are not really keeping the Sabbath. They may be abstaining from working and from buying and selling, which is good. However, abstinence from working and buying and selling is not the only thing required to keep a Biblical Sabbath. According to the Bible, Sabbath-keeping also requires the assembling of ourselves together with others for a holy convocation. The Bible makes this very clear in Leviticus 23: *“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of Yahweh, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings”* (Lev. 23:2f).

HEBREW & GREEK WORD STUDY

In the KJV, the Hebrew word *mikra* is translated “convocation.” In modern English the word convocation evokes visions of formal, solemn, high-church assemblies in Episcopal churches. However, the general, primary meaning of convocation is “the act or process of convoking.” The verb convoke simply means to call people to assemble together for a meeting. The con- prefix (“with” or “together”) provides the “togetherness,” and the -voke (related to words such as vocal and voice) provides the “calling.”

Therefore a convocation is an assembly of people who have been called together for a specific purpose. In the context of the Sabbath, that purpose is for congregational worship.

The word convocation, though rarely used in modern English, is an excellent choice for translating the Hebrew word *mikra*. The stem of *mikra* is the verb K-R-A, which means “to

call,” often in the sense of proclaiming or calling out. The verb is used in the well-known phrase “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” This is why Strong’s Concordance correctly defines *mikra* as “something called out, i.e. a public meeting...”

The Greek New Testament word translated “church” also carries the idea of calling. The church is the *ekklesia*, the “called out” assembly. The ek- prefix means “out of” and the -klesia part of the word, derived from the verb *kaleo*, “to call,” provides the “calling.” We are a called-out people who have been called to assemble together every Sabbath for worship. The lexicon in the Strong’s Strongest makes this even more emphatic. It defines *kaleo* as “to invite or summon.” What is the difference between an invitation and a summons? The Strong’s Strongest explains it this way: “friends invite; kings summon.”

Your call to assemble for worship on the Sabbath is not an invitation from your friends. It is a summons from the King of kings. If you ignore a summons to appear in an earthly court, you will get into serious trouble. Yet people imagine they can ignore their summons to appear in the heavenly courts of the King of kings on the Sabbath and not suffer any consequences.

The New Testament Scriptures warn us about “*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is*” (Heb. 10:25). Assembling together for worship and fellowship can be done on any day of the week, but the Sabbath is the one day of the week on which we are required to assemble together. The Book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew disciples. That’s why it is called Hebrews. These Jewish believers had been familiar with Sabbath-keeping all their lives. They knew which day of the week it was, and they knew that Sabbath-keeping required assembling with others for worship at the synagogue. The word synagogue can even be seen in this command to assemble in Hebrews 10:25. The Greek word



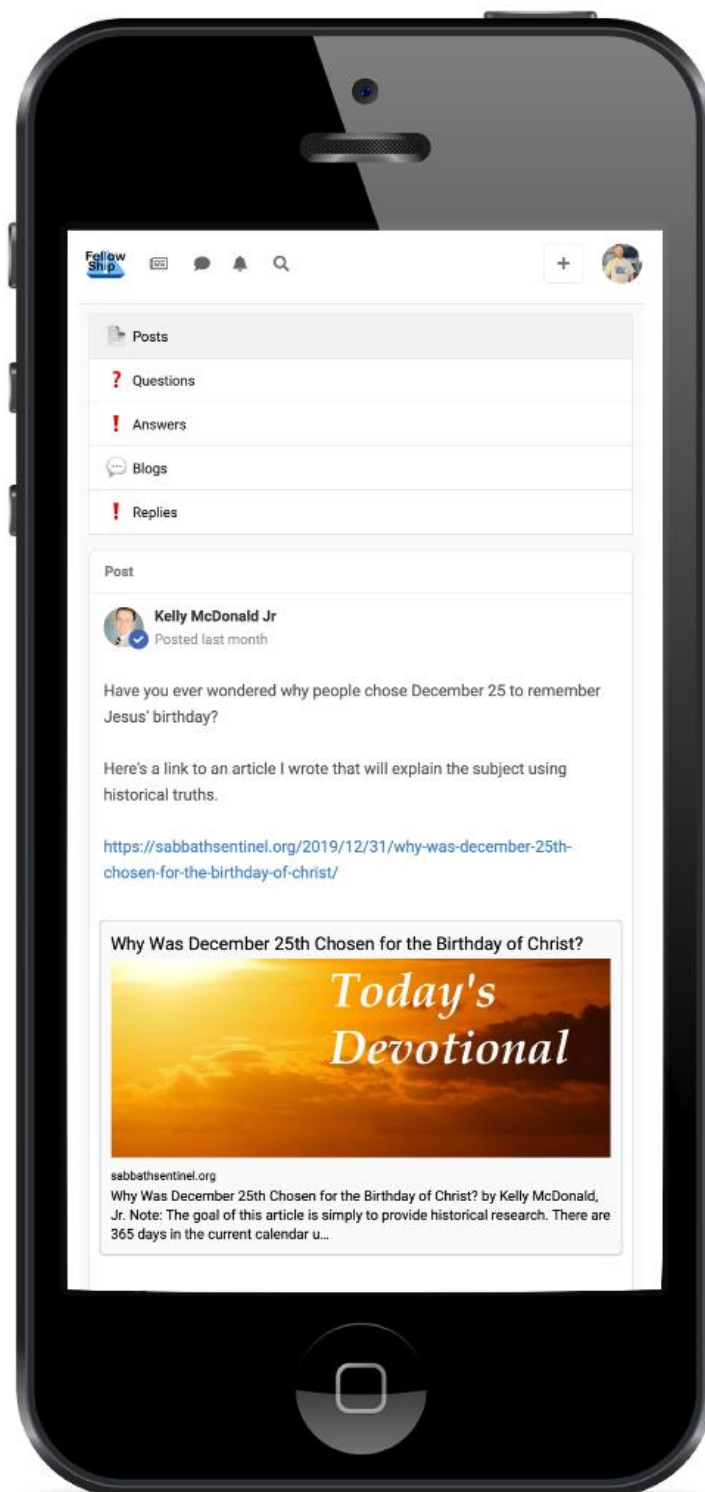
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translated “assembling” is *episunagoge*. The epi- prefix is the preposition which points us in the direction of our destination, and the sunagoge tells us where our destination is: in the synagogue, the place of worship.

Unlike these first century Messianic Hebrew disciples, most people in today’s Messianic community did not grow up keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. Most of us came out of the Sunday church system. Because we did not learn Biblical Sabbath-keeping in our childhood, we have to learn it as adults. Learning to keep the Sabbath is like learning a foreign language. It is more difficult for adults than it is for children. This is because adults have already established regular modes of thinking and habitual patterns of behavior from years of experience. Adults become set in their ways, or, to put it in linguistic terms, “fossilized.”

INTERFERENCE & TRANSFER OF PREVIOUSLY LEARNED HABITS

Foreign language (FL) learning can show us some things about learning to keep the Sabbath. Linguists who study how people learn a FL point out that one of the things that makes FL learning so difficult for adults is Native Language (NL) interference (also called NL transfer). A young child who has spoken his Native Language for only a few years can learn a Foreign Language as easily as he learned his Native Language (if he is equally exposed to the FL), because the young child’s mind has not yet fossilized. An adult, on the other hand, has already established linguistic patterns in his mind. His mind has unconsciously locked into the linguistic rules that govern his Native Language. When he tries to learn a Foreign Language, he discovers that the FL (or TL, Target Language) is not always governed by the same linguistic rules of grammar, word order, sentence structure, inflection, etc. If he wants to learn to speak the TL, he must try to ignore the rules that govern his NL. This is easier said than done. An English-speaking adult who has always placed adjectives before nouns may find it difficult when he is told that the TL requires him to place the adjective after the noun - and to also make sure the adjective form agrees in number and gender with the noun that it modifies (something that English does not require).

Our NL interferes with our learning of a FL when we transfer the linguistic rules of our NL to the TL. A similar phenomenon occurs in learning to keep the Sabbath. If we grew up going to church on Sunday (our NS, “Native Sabbath”), we are apt to transfer the rules of Sunday-keeping to the seventh-day Sabbath (our TS, “Target Sabbath”). In other words, we will view Saturday in much the same way that we formerly viewed Sunday, and we will conclude (usually erroneously) that we are keeping the seventh-day Sabbath - just like some foreign students I have met who thought they were speaking English.

If the only thing we have done is transfer a half-hearted allegiance from one day of the week to another day of the week, we are not keeping the Sabbath. This is not to imply that all Sunday Christians are half-hearted in their faith. They are not. However, most Sunday Christians are half-hearted in their observance of Sunday as the Sabbath. Sunday is viewed as the one day of the week when a good Christian ought to go to church, but if he occasionally misses for some minor, petty reason, it’s no big deal. And if he works or buys or sells after the Sunday morning church service, no one accuses him of Sabbath-breaking. That would be considered legalistic. Besides, most Christians see nothing wrong with buying or selling or even working on Sunday, as long as the person attends a Sunday church service. The fact that restaurants are crowded with church people every Sunday afternoon speaks volumes about the contemporary Christian view of Sunday.

Many, probably most, Messianic believers came out of churches that view Sunday in this way. After coming out of the Sunday church, they transfer the rules of their NS (“Native Sabbath,” i.e., Sunday) to their TS (“Target Sabbath,” i.e., Saturday). They think it’s okay to buy and sell after the Saturday morning service. And they think it’s not necessary to attend a holy convocation every Sabbath. They think that attending once in a while is sufficient, just enough so they still “feel connected” to the local body. This is not Sabbath-keeping. It is Sabbath-breaking, because it ignores the commandment about having a holy convocation.

There are times when unforeseen circumstances of an urgent

nature come up, of course. Things like sickness, infirmity, bad weather, and family emergencies sometimes prevent us from attending the holy convocation. In a serious emergency, we might even have to buy something. If the ox falls in a ditch on the Sabbath, it is not a sin to get it out. These are the exceptions, though, and we are not talking about the exceptions. We are talking about people who stay home on the Sabbath when they could attend a holy convocation in a local assembly in their area.

THE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SUNDAY & ITS INFLUENCE ON SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH-KEEPERS

Seventh-day Sabbath-keepers of previous generations probably did not have to deal with this problem of NS (“Native Sabbath”) transfer as much as we do, because faithful Sunday Christians of past generations actually treated Sunday as a Sabbath. Until a few decades ago, virtually all Bible-believing Christians were in universal agreement that God wanted Christians to keep the Sabbath. They were not in universal agreement about which day (Saturday or Sunday), but they all agreed that Christians should keep the Sabbath. Even if they called it “the Lord’s Day” instead of “the Sabbath,” they still believed that the principles of Sabbath-keeping should be transferred to Sunday.

The proof of this is in the many “blue laws” in America’s history. These were laws that restricted the sale of certain products and services on Sundays. They were called “blue laws” because they were bound in blue paper.

Many of the blue laws were established in early colonial America. The Virginia militia was given legal authority to force colonists to go to church on Sundays. Virginians who failed to attend Sunday church services were fined.

Other blue laws in colonial times prohibited all sorts of activities on Sundays: work, travel, recreation, cooking, wearing lace or precious metals, cutting hair, shaving, sweeping, making beds, and even having sexual intercourse. The Puritans believed a child was born on whichever day of the week it was conceived. As a result, if a mother gave birth on a Sun-

day, she was fined for breaking the law nine months earlier. Sarah Edwards, the wife of the famous Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards, gave birth to eleven children. Six of them were born on Sundays, causing tongues to wag. (For more information about blue laws, see Don Voorhees, *The Book of Totally Useless Information* [New York: MJF Books, 1993], p. 151f.) Eventually many of the blue laws were either removed from the books, or simply no longer enforced. Some of them are still on the books and still enforced. Even here in my town, customers cannot buy alcoholic beverages on Sunday mornings, not even in grocery stores.

I mention these blue laws not because I think they were all good laws, but to demonstrate how seriously Christians viewed Sunday Sabbath-keeping in past generations. I once read a statement that further illustrates this:

“Our great-grandparents called it The Holy Sabbath. Our grandparents called it The Sabbath. Our parents called it Sunday. We call it the weekend.”

I am old enough to remember a time when virtually all businesses and stores and restaurants were closed on Sundays. Everything, even gas stations, closed down for the (Sunday) Sabbath.

I believe the reason the church has gotten away from keeping Sunday as the Sabbath is because there is no Biblical basis for keeping Sunday as the Sabbath. Preachers have to really twist the Scriptures and yank them out of context to present the case for a Sunday Sabbath. Even with their twisted Scriptures, they can only present it as an alleged custom, not as a commandment, because there is no Biblical authority for a Sunday Sabbath.

The positive result of this is that more and more Christians are coming to realize that the seventh day of the week is the only possible day that can rightly be called the Sabbath. The negative result is sloppy Sunday-keeping, which results in sloppy seventh-day Sabbath-keeping. People decide to start keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, but they treat Saturday no differently than they formerly treated Sunday. If they bought and sold on Sunday, they buy and sell on Saturday. If they attended

Sunday morning services sporadically, they attend the Saturday holy convocation sporadically. If they sometimes stayed home from Sunday services because they were tired, or because they wanted to clean their garage, or wanted to watch a football game on TV, they will stay home from the Sabbath services for these same reasons.

If we truly believe in keeping the Sabbath, we are obligated to keep it as the Sabbath. This means not only abstaining from working, buying, and selling. It also means attending a holy convocation.

Even if we are out of town on the Sabbath, we are still obligated to honor the Sabbath. I tell people in our congregation that if they are out of town on a Sabbath, they should try to find a Sabbath-keeping congregation and attend their convocation. Messianic and Sabbath-keeping directories (in printed form or online) can help you find fellowship on the Sabbath. If no congregation can be found in your area, at least gather your family together in the motel room (or wherever you are) and have a time of prayer, Bible reading, singing, etc. Regardless of where we are, we should at the very least have a time of worship and fellowship every Sabbath. Many families who live in rural areas, isolated from other believers, have learned to do this. Modern technology also makes it possible for isolated people to use teaching CDs and DVDs or to go online for fellowship. It's not as good as fellowshiping in person, but it's better than nothing.

WHAT ABOUT EXODUS 16:29?

Some seventh-day people stay home on the Sabbath not out of rebellion or laziness, but because of a sincere but erroneous understanding of Exodus 16:29. "See, for that Yahweh hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

Some people believe that the above verse requires them to stay home on the Sabbath. There are several reasons why this understanding is erroneous. Let's look at some of these reasons.

First of all, we must remember that in order to understand the

Biblical view of any particular subject, we must look at everything the Bible says about that particular subject. We must get "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). If we base our understanding of a topic on one single verse, isolated and divorced from its context, and ignore everything else the Bible says about that topic, we are almost certain to come to an erroneous conclusion about that topic.

If Exodus 16:29 were the only thing the Bible said about the Sabbath, one might have an argument for staying home on the Sabbath. However, that is not the case. The Bible contains approximately 150 verses about the Sabbath, and these verses must be taken into consideration if we want a Biblical understanding of what God expects of His people on the Sabbath.

The Bible must be interpreted in a way that makes different passages harmonize with one another and not contradict one another. If Exodus 16:29 is viewed as a commandment for everyone to stay home on the Sabbath, then we have a major problem with contradictions.

First of all, this view contradicts God's command to have a holy convocation on the Sabbath (Lev. 23). If everyone just stays home, it is obvious that there can be no community gathering for congregational worship.

Secondly, it is obvious from the Scriptures that God's people did not stay home on the Sabbath. They left their homes and went to the synagogues to worship. In the Gospels, Yeshua (Jesus) went to the synagogue every Sabbath "as was His custom" (Luke 4:16). In the Book of Acts, the Apostles went to synagogue every Sabbath, and they even expected Gentile believers to do so. (See Acts 15:21 in context.) Even where there was no synagogue building available, Jews left their homes and gathered in public places on the Sabbath: "And on the sabbath, we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that resorted thither" (Acts 16:13). Also in Old Testament times people left their homes and gathered for worship on the Sabbath. This can be inferred from the statement made by the husband of the Shunammite woman as she was leaving to go see the Prophet Elisha. Her husband said, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath" (2 Kings 4:23).

This is clear evidence that it was normal for people to leave their homes and assemble with others on new moons and the Sabbath.

To arrive at the correct understanding of Exodus 16:29, we must consider two things. First, we must realize that it cannot be understood as a commandment to stay home on the Sabbath, because this view contradicts many other Bible passages about the Sabbath. This view even makes Yeshua into a Sabbath-breaker, because He did not stay home on the Sabbath. It was His custom to leave home and go to the synagogue.

Secondly, we must look at the context of Exodus 16:29. God had just started giving manna to the children of Israel. They had gone out and gathered manna six days in a row, gathering a double portion on the sixth day of this first week of miraculous provision. On the seventh day, Moses warned them not to go out looking for manna, telling them, "Today ye shall not find it in the field." Some people went out manna hunting anyway, which angered the Lord. It was in this context that Yahweh ordered the people to "abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

The obvious meaning (and the only one that does not contradict the rest of Scripture and make the Messiah into a Sabbath-breaker) is that the people were not supposed to leave their tents to go looking for manna. But they could certainly leave their tents to assemble for worship after the Tabernacle had been constructed and set up. In the same way, we should not leave our homes on the Sabbath for the purpose of earning our daily bread. But we can and should leave our homes to assemble with others for worship. God's people have done this since Biblical times, and if we want to keep the Sabbath wholly holy, we will do the same.

See Daniel Botkin's website at www.gatesofeden.online.



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THE SABBATH AND THE FIRST DAY IN THE EPISTLES AND REVELATION

Bryant Buck

In our previous study we showed that the early disciples kept the Sabbath throughout Acts. The epistles that follow Acts were written to the early disciples who lived Acts. Therefore, the Scriptures on the Sabbath and the first day in the epistles must be interpreted in agreement with the historical record in Acts.

We will start with the few Scriptures in Paul's epistles in which he spoke of the Sabbath or the first day. But first remember from Acts 17:2 and Acts 18:4 that the historical record shows that Paul kept the seventh-day Sabbath. So what Paul wrote in his letters must be interpreted in the light of the historical record that he faithfully observed the Sabbath.

In Romans 14 Paul discussed principles of conscience in regard to eating certain foods or observing certain days. In Romans 14:5 (NAS) Paul wrote: *"One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind."* Many who believe that the seventh-day Sabbath is no longer God's weekly holy day quote this verse to affirm that we can keep whatever day holy that we like. But we already know that Paul kept the seventh-day Sabbath holy; so he wasn't discussing the Sabbath here. Rather, what Paul was discussing were the national holidays and local festivals that many new believers brought with them into the Christian church. So long as the national holidays or local festivals weren't directed to the worship of other deities, Paul wasn't concerned whether his fellow believers observed those days or not. Neither the Sabbath nor the first day was under discussion here; to read either day into this passage can only misconstrue Paul's intent.

Paul addressed the keeping of days devoted to deities other than Yahweh in another passage. *"You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in*

vain." (Galatians 4:10-11 NAS) Days and months devoted to other deities were not for Christians. The fact that many in the Galatian church still observed those days caused Paul to state: *"I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain."*

I Corinthians 16:2 (NAS) is often quoted by Sunday keepers to defend Sunday as God's weekly holy day. In this verse Paul wrote: *"On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come."* Here's what Paul did when he started the church in Corinth.

"After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tentmakers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks." (Acts 18:1-4 NAS) When Paul started the church in Corinth, he met with Jews and Greeks *"every Sabbath."* There is no mention that he ever met with the Corinthians on the first day of the week. Moreover, there is no mention that he ever met with the Greek believers on the first day of the week. In consequence, the Scripture in I Corinthians 16: 2 cannot be interpreted in defense of Sunday or first day meetings contrary to the Sabbath which the historical record clearly shows that Paul observed.

So what was Paul saying in I Corinthians 16:2? From the scant historical records we have it seems that most servants and household workers in the Roman Empire were paid on a daily or weekly basis. Since Sunday was the venerable day of the sun for the Romans, those who were paid on a weekly basis were most likely paid on Saturday. So Sunday was the day on which those servants and household workers would have had the most money in their possession. What Paul was recommending here was that before

Christians went out and spent their money on everything else, they set aside some of their money to give to God's work. I add that the verse in I Corinthians 16:2 makes no mention of any meeting. Those who read a meeting into this verse are simply reading in something that isn't there.

Another passage from Paul's epistles that is often cited to affirm that the Sabbath has been done away with is Colossians 2:16-17 (NAS). In these verses Paul wrote: *"Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day – things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."* (The word *mere* in Colossians 2:17 is in italics because it is not in the original Greek; it is simply the unsubstantiated bias of the translators.) Since we already know from the historical record in Acts that Paul kept the Sabbath day, to interpret this passage to mean that Paul was then doing away with the Sabbath day is absurd. Moreover, the expression "a Sabbath day" at the end of verse 16 doesn't refer to the weekly Sabbath day at all, but to the annual Sabbath days observed during the Biblical feasts. (See Leviticus 23 for a listing of the Biblical feasts and their annual Sabbath days.) The phrase "a Sabbath day" fits with the phrases "a festival" and "a new moon" immediately before. (The King James Version renders "a festival" "an holyday.")

The Greek word *heorte* translated "festival" in the NAS and "holyday" in the KJV is used 27 times in the New Testament. In the KJV it is translated "feast" 24 times, "feast day" 2 times, and "holyday" once. Clearly the festivals of which Paul spoke in Colossians 2:16-17 are the Biblical feast days. In context, then, the Sabbath days of which he spoke in the same passage are the annual Sabbath days of the Biblical feasts. In consequence, this passage has nothing to do with God's weekly Sabbath day.

I add that Colossians 2:16-17 doesn't even prove that God's annual Sabbath days are done away with. Paul wrote the epistle to the Colossians. In the historical record in Acts we find that Paul observed both the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Acts 20:6) and Pentecost (Acts 20:16). In I Corinthians 5:7-8 (NAS) he exhorted the primarily Gentile believers in Corinth to observe Passover: *"Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a*

new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Since we know that Paul kept the Biblical feasts and encouraged other Gentile believers to do likewise, he would not be instructing the Colossians to do away with them.

Paul wrote Colossians 2:16-17 as one who observed the Biblical feasts. With the new understanding that "the substance" of the feasts "belongs to Christ," Paul was simply instructing the Colossians not to let other believers judge their feast observance if they didn't do it exactly the same way. In the Old Testament the Jews were exhorted to observe the feasts at the place which God would choose. (See Deuteronomy 16:16.) Later they understood that place to be Jerusalem. Possibly some Jewish believers at Colossae were judging Gentile believers there for not going to Jerusalem for the feasts. If that were the case, Paul was exhorting the Gentile believers at Colossae not to let the Jewish believers there judge them for the fact that they didn't keep the feasts exactly the same way. Moreover, there may have been other differences at Colossae as to how the feasts should be observed. Paul wrote Colossians 2:16-17 to make sure that with Christ being "the substance" of the feasts, the Colossians didn't judge one another as to their differences in how the feasts should be kept.

In the epistle to the Hebrews the Sabbath is discussed in chapter 4. Whether or not Paul actually wrote this letter is debated by Biblical scholars. However, since all the books of the New Testament were written by Hebrew disciples of Christ who observed the seventh-day Sabbath (as shown by the historical record in Acts), a book addressed to Hebrews was certainly written by a Hebrew. I don't believe that you can find a Biblical scholar anywhere who believes that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by a Gentile.

"Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, 'AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL

NOT ENTER MY REST,' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: 'AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS'; and again in this passage, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.' Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, 'TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.' For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God." (Hebrews 4:1-9 NAS).

The common misinterpretation of this passage is that in the New Testament era God replaced the physical Sabbath day of rest with an eternal rest in His Spirit. As already noted, that common misinterpretation flies in the face of the fact that Hebrews was written by one seventh-day Sabbath keeper to many seventh-day Sabbath keepers. If the writer of Hebrews was doing away with the physical sabbath day of rest here, Hebrews never would have been included in the canon of the New Testament. What then is the correct understanding of the passage in Hebrews 4:1-9?

Please note verse 4 in this passage: "For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS." The somewhere where God said this was Genesis 2:2 (NAS): "And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." Did this occur before He commanded the Sabbath day as part of the Ten Commandments? Definitely yes. Then the fact that God rested on the Sabbath day does not mean that His spiritual rest on the Sabbath day replaced the physical rest on the Sabbath day which He later commanded in the Ten Commandments. The writer to the Hebrews was simply showing his readers that the Sabbath spoke of a spiritual rest as well as a physical day of rest.

In verse 5 the writer added: "and again in this passage, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.' Did the author of Genesis make such a statement in Genesis 2? No. The statement "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY

REST" was a quote from Psalm 95:11. Read Psalm 95 and you will not find the Sabbath mentioned there. So when the author of Hebrews declared "and again in this passage," he was actually referring back to Hebrews 3 where he first quoted Psalm 95:11. Read Hebrews 3 and 4 together and you will see that the author's primary thrust was that God's people could only enter His rest if they lived by faith. In context, then, the Sabbath was brought up as an example of living by faith. The author concluded his argument: "So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God." (Hebrews 4:9 NAS) Beyond the physical seventh-day Sabbath which the writer of Hebrews and all his readers kept, there remained for them a rest in the Spirit which could only be attained by faith.

There is one Scripture in Revelation which those who believe that Sunday is God's weekly holy day use to defend their position. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet." (Revelation 1:10 NAS) Since Sunday keepers believe that the Lord's day is the first day of the week, they believe that Revelation 1:10 proves that the early church met on Sunday. However, we have already seen from our study of Acts that the early church met on the Sabbath. So Revelation 1:10 cannot be used as evidence to the contrary of what the 1st Century Christian believers actually did. Moreover, there is no reference in any Christian literature to the Lord's day being Sunday until the middle of the 2nd Century. Between the death of the apostle John and the writing of Justin Martyr the Roman Church departed from the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath.

So what does the expression "the Lord's day" really mean? Actually it has nothing to do with either the first day or the seventh day of the week. Throughout the rest of the Bible this expression is translated "the day of the Lord." The following Scriptures are a just a partial listing of where the expression "the day of the Lord" is found in the Bible: Isaiah 13:9, Jeremiah 46:10, Ezekiel 13:5, Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, & 31, and 3:14, Amos 5:18 & 20, Obadiah 1:15, Zephaniah 1:14-15 and 2:2-3, Malachi 4:5, and Acts 2:20. In fact, virtually the whole books of Joel, Obadiah, and Zephaniah are devoted to "the day of the Lord."

Rather than quoting all the Scriptures listed above, I shall just quote a few of them from Joel, Obadiah, and

Zephaniah. *“Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and it will come as a destruction from the Almighty.”* (Joel 1:15 NAS) *“Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; surely it is near.... The LORD utters His voice before His army; surely His camp is very great, for strong is he who carries out His word. The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it?... The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.”* (Joel 2:1,11, & 31 NAS) *“For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.”* (Obadiah 1:15 NAS) *“Near is the great day of the LORD, near and coming very quickly; listen, the day of the LORD! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.”* (Zephaniah 1:14-15 NAS) .

The Scriptures are very clear: “the day of the Lord” (translated “the Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10) refers to the day of judgment and the end of the world. It has nothing to do with either the first day or

the seventh day of the week. In fact, what is the subject of Revelation but the day of judgment and the end of the world? Arguing that “the Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10 refers to Sunday goes against both the context of Revelation (the day of judgment and the end of the world) and the comparison with all the other Scriptures on the subject (which all speak of the day of judgment and the end of the world).

To conclude this study, we look beyond the Scriptures briefly. The error of replacing the seventh-day Sabbath with the first day of the week was made early in the 2nd Century AD by the Western church. The historical evidence suggests that this error occurred during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 AD). It was the first major error of the Christian church. However, the Eastern church for the most part remained faithful to the seventh-day Sabbath until the 4th Century AD. Sadly, with the Reformation and all that God has done to bring His people back to all the truth of the Scriptures, for most Christians the error of Sunday being God’s weekly holy day remains to this day.



Letters to the Editor



I am getting ready to start an article for your review in a future issue.

I believe God will provide funding to keep the TSS going as we are doing His work. I am glad I’m on the TSS team keeping the faith He has given and using it for His good!

Darl Arbogast

Thanks, Darl! We look forward to seeing your articles.

We agree that if this Work is of God then God will make sure it is funded. That said, we are often the “hand of God” to provide for others. It is vitally important that the BSA be supported if our efforts to promote fellowship across corpo-

rate distinctions as well as preach Jesus and His Command to keep the commandments is to continue!

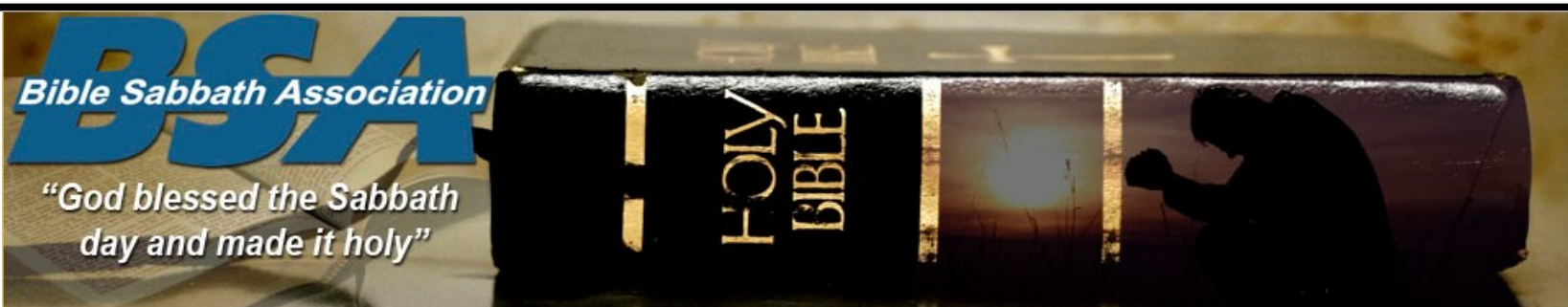
As you probably know, all of the positions, save one (we pay for part-time office help—and are getting a great deal), at the BSA are operated on a volunteer basis, including this magazine. We believe in this mission so much that we are willing to donate our time and efforts. We on the Board have made many changes over the past year to cut expenses without, hopefully, diminishing the quality of services we provide to the brethren. The rest is in the Hands of God!

Ed.

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