



The Sabbath Sentinel

May-June
2021

Bread lifted to the Lord



BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God."

The Sabbath Sentinel May-June, 2021

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Editor: Dr. Royce Mitchell, tsseditor@yahoo.com.

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Correspondence and manuscript submissions: Address all inquiries to: *The Sabbath Sentinel*, PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

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Pentecost: Count Me In!

An unusual Holy Day, one that is recognized by most, if not all, Christian sects is the Feast of Pentecost. Hidden within this Greek form of the name is how it is unusual. The word is derived from the Greek word "pentecoste" which literally means "fiftieth." Many of those who celebrate this day do not realize that it is a day that is found by counting to 50 from a starting point.

How is this day to be counted? A number of different ways of applying the count have been used over time. Even among the sects of the Jews there were at least two ways of counting to this date. To understand, let us see what the scripture has to say.

Lev 23:15-16 states: *"And you shall count to you from the next day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete. To the next day after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new food offering to Jehovah."* It is easy to see why the Church that continued on after Christ returned to the Father called that day "Pentecost," because you had to count 50 days find the day on which to keep this Holy Day.

Continuing, in Lev 23:21 we find: *"And you shall proclaim on the same day that it may be a holy convocation to you. You shall do no work of labor. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations."* So, this Holy Day is a commanded assembly (convocation), forever. Notice that in that day no laborious work is to be done. Does that sound familiar? It should because it is the same command given to us for the weekly Sabbath.

It is of interest to take note of the starting date of the counting. Notice above in vs 15 that starting date is given as *"you shall count to you from the next day after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering..."* The reasonable question would arise is, "Well, when did they bring the sheaf of the wave offering?" To find that answer, we have to back up a

few verses to Lev. 23:10-11 *"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah to be received for you. On the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it."*

The beginning date was marked by a ceremony that happened once a year in the spring. The FIRST sheaf of the grain was brought to the priest and he performed the ceremony. This was on the day after a Sabbath. If you count that day and count up to 50 you come to Day One, known as Sunday, 7 weeks later. However, that is not how Pentecost is being determined today. Indeed, it was not determined that way when Jesus/Yeshua walked the earth in human form.

Before we get into how most calculate it today, let's discuss how some others have calculated it. On two methods, a date 50 days from a fixed date, i.e., Nisan 16 or Nisan 21, is determined. Neither of these could have been right because the day of Pentecost would only fall on the day after the Sabbath about once in 7 years. To meet the scriptural definition, the day must fall on the day after the Sabbath.

The third method starts counting from the day of the wave sheaf method with Monday being day one. This one, also, is incorrect, because it has the Wave Sheaf falling on a Monday, not the day after the Sabbath.

The final method used today is one where the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread is used as the starting point, with the Day One Wave Sheaf offering having been assumed on the following day. This poses a problem because nowhere does God say to choose that day over the day the first sheaf was brought to the priest.

But, perhaps we can find some other way to see if God is satisfied with that method. Let's start with the day after Christ's resurrection. It was early in the

morning on Day One when the women went to the tomb to find that He was already risen. Jesus has stated unequivocally that He would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights (Matt 12:40). Since He was laid in the tomb right before the start of the High Day known as the first Day of Unleavened Bread, He had been raised up right before the end of the weekly Sabbath three days and three nights later. What is important to note is this: Mary had just been made to understand that Christ was standing before her raised to life. This is important because it would be safe to assume that out of her love for Him her first reaction would have been to try to embrace Him. But, notice what He says: Joh 20:17 *“Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father. But go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and Your Father, and to My God and your God.”* Remember our wave sheaf verse: only the priest could present the sheaf to God and it had to be before any other was eaten. Moreover, if you will remember, at Christ’s death, the veil separating the outer Temple from the Holy of Holies was ripped in half supernaturally, from top to bottom. This signified the end of the Levitical priesthood and the beginning of Christ’s role as our High Priest, who could present Himself to the Father. Christ, then, was the fulfillment of that ceremony.

Later that evening, Christ appeared to the disciples and gave no admonition to not touch Him. He must have presented Himself to the Father by that time and afterwards returned for that meeting. But, there is another event that helps us to see that the calculation used today is acceptable to God. We read about that event in Acts.

Act 2:1-4 *“And in the fulfilling of the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly a sound came out of the heaven as borne along by the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And tongues as of fire appeared to them, being distributed; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* How this confirms that counting from the weekly Sabbath within the Days of Unleavened Bread is acceptable to God is that the Apostles had to be in a specific place

on that specific date—a recognized High Day in the scriptures—one that was counted and 50 days later, and after the weekly Sabbath. On that date, counted from that same date that Christ appeared to Mary at the tomb, the Sunday within the Days of Unleavened Bread, the Holy Spirit descended on all of the disciples with mighty signs. Had there been another date derived from the waving of a sheaf of first fruits, the disciples might well have been in place on the wrong date. That would have been disastrous! But, the rest is history and it is generally recognized by those who understand whence Pentecost is counted that it originates in the Days of Unleavened Bread.

This presents a problem to most Christian sects who do not recognize the Days of Unleavened Bread as God’s Holy Days to be kept today. If you don’t know about those days, how do you know from where to count to 50 days? You don’t; so most are blissfully ignorant of how that day is derived.

The first century Church kept the Days of Unleavened Bread with its two attendant Holy Days: Acts 12:3, 20:6; 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. They also kept Pentecost: Acts 2:1, 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8. They also kept Passover: 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb 11:28, and if you will accept the corrected mistranslation of Passover as Easter, Acts 12:4.

These days point to powerful points of God’s plan. They begin with Passover symbolizing that Christ had to die as our sacrificial lamb for our forgiveness. Then the Days of Unleavened Bread which are accompanied by putting out leaven from the homes. Leaven is shown to be wrong attitude toward sinning so we learn to put sin out of our lives—repentance. Finally, Pentecost symbolizes that we then receive the Holy Spirit as disciples.

This is not to call anyone into question who is not keeping these days. As we are told, we ought to be fully persuaded and that means looking into the matter ourselves and after prayerful study make a decision on what we think God is saying. What this is to do is to show everyone why some of your brethren keep those days as sacred as the weekly Sabbath. May this coming Pentecost be a blessed one for all of us Brothers in Christ.





The President's Corner

SABBATH LAWS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Kelly McDonald

Rome's first significant contact with Jewish people came in the mid-second century BC after the victory of the Maccabees over Antiochus Epiphanes. During this time, the Romans formally ratified a treaty with the Jewish people and recognized their state, which was ruled by the Hasmonean dynasty. After a civil war within this dynasty in the 60s BC, Rome took control of the Judean state and forced them to pay tribute. Jewish slaves were brought to Rome.

Biblical practices, such as keeping the Sabbath, also came with these slaves. Eventually a Jewish quarter was founded in the city. This led to a series of laws issued over hundreds of years to protect the right of the Jewish people to practice their faith.

In this edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, we will examine laws that protected Sabbath observance in the Roman Empire. The earliest of these laws are recorded by Josephus. However, these protections are also referenced in later Roman laws.

The time of Julius Caesar (approx. 46 BC) - Josephus, in his work *Antiquities of the Jews*, says that Julius Caesar was favorable towards Jewish people (idem, 14.10). He then gives a series of decrees issued by various cities that confirmed their rights to worship their God and keep the Sabbath. Among them are: Laodicea, Milesians, Halicarnassus, Sardians, and Ephesus (ibid, 14.10.20-25). Apparently, these cities were once hostile to Jewish practices.

Julius' Caesar's nephew, Octavian Augustus, became Roman Emperor about 31 BC. About 30 years into his reign, he issued a decree protecting Sabbath observance for Jewish people.

Edict of Augustus on Jewish Rights, approx. 1 BC – “2. *Cesar Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, and Tribune of the people ordains thus. Since*

the nation of the Jews has been found friendly to the Roman people, not only at this time, but in time past also, and especially Hyrcanus, the High Priest, under my father Cesar the Emperor, it has seemed good to me and my council, according to the wish and oath of the people of Rome, that the Jews should have liberty to follow their own customs, according to the law of their forefathers...and that they be not obliged to appear in court either on the Sabbath-day, or on the day of the preparation before it, after the ninth hour....” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 16.6.2).

This law gave more formal protection to Jewish practices, specifically the Sabbath. By this time, the Jewish people labeled Friday “Preparation Day” to signify that they prepared for the Sabbath on that day. The Jewish people



were free from legalities starting about 3 pm on Friday so that they could prepare to honor the Sabbath. Just over forty years later, the Emperor Claudius, issued a similar decree regarding Jewish religious practices.

“Tiberius Claudius Cesar, Augustus, Germanicus, Pontifex Maximus, tribune of the people, chosen consul the second time, ordains as follows. Upon the petition of King Agrippa, and King Herod, who are persons very dear to me, that I would grant the same rights and privileges should be preserved to the Jews throughout all the Roman Empire, as I have granted to the Jews of Alexandria, I very willingly comply therewith, not only to gratify my petitioners, but also judging those Jews for whom I have been petitioned worthy of such a favour, on account of their fidelity and friendship to the Romans. I think it also very just that no Greek city should be deprived of such rights and privileges: since they were preserved to them under the great Augustus. It is therefore right to permit the Jews throughout all our Empire to keep their ancient customs without let or hindrance...” (ibid, 19.5.3).

The importance of these initial laws cannot be overlooked. Other primary sources from this time confirm that such protections for Jewish people existed. Seneca, who lived between 4 BC and 65 AD, said that the *“...customs of that most accursed nation have gained such strength that they have been now received in all lands, the conquered have given laws to the conquerors....”* (preserved by Augustine, The City of God, 6.11).

Tacitus, writing about 110 AD wrote: *“... They are said to have devoted the seventh day to rest, because that day brought an end to their troubles. Later, finding idleness alluring, they gave up the seventh year as well to sloth. Others maintain that they do this in honour of Saturn... Whatever their origin, these rites are sanctioned by their antiquity...”* (The Histories, 5.4-5).

Dio Cassius, a Roman historian who lived between 155-235 AD confirmed that Jewish religious practices were protected; he also mentioned the great numbers of Jewish people at that time. *“...the country has been named Judea, and the people themselves Jews. I do not*

know how this title came to be given to them, but it applies also to all the rest of mankind, although of alien race, who affect their customs. This class exists even among the Romans, and though often repressed has increased to a very great extent and has won its way to the right of freedom in its observances” (Roman History, 37.16-17).

Constantine (313-337)

The next Emperor to protect Sabbath observance was Constantine (contrary to popular opinion). He continued the tradition began by other Emperors. In the correct translation of The Life of Constantine book 4, chapter 18, section 2, we learn this about Constantine *“... 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...”* (Cameron and Hall, p 159). We reviewed Constantine’s Sabbath protections in the September/October edition of The Sabbath Sentinel.

Codex Theodosianus (438/439)

The Codex Theodosianus was a code of laws issued during the reign of Theodosius II about 438/439 AD. It was a compilation of Roman laws from 311 to 438 AD. In it, we find three laws pertaining to the Sabbath that were issued between 409 and 412. I have listed two of them below (one is repeated in two places).

CT: 2.8.26 – *“... On the Sabbath Day called on all other days at the time when Jews observe the reverence of their own cult, We command that no one of them shall be compelled to do anything or be sued in any way, since it appears that the other days can suffice for fiscal advantages and for private litigation.”* (Etc.) – July 26, 409; 412. (Pharr, p 45). This law is repeated in CT: 8.8.8 (Pharr, p 210).

CT: 16.8.20.1 – *“... 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**** - July 26, 412 (Pharr, p 469; emphasis mine).

***This law referenced earlier “constitutions” (plural) made by other emperors (plural). This law and the statement which concludes it is further proof that previous emperors provided protections for Sabbath observance. At the very least this law refers to the decrees of Augustus, Claudius, and Constantine. There may have been other Emperors who protected the Sabbath.

Codex Justinus (520s/530s AD)

The Codex Justinus was composed by the command of the Emperor Justinian. In it, we find CT: 16.8.20 repeated as CJ: 1.9.13, which means that he continued the same protections as earlier Emperors.

Conclusion

The Sabbath was protected by Roman rulers as early as Julius Caesar. This custom was retained by other Emperors until at least the time of Justinian. While these laws specifically granted privileges to Jewish people, they were also extended to Christians as well. There are two ways to know this was the case.

First, since the late second century AD, many leaders in the Roman Church labeled the Sabbath a Jewish institution. They attempted to lump Sabbath keeping Christians and Jews together. For some examples of this practice, see the following sources: Tertullian, *Against the Nations*, 1.13, John Chrysostom, *Eight Homilies Against the Jews and Comm. on Galatians* 1:7; Epiphanius, *Against All Heresies*, 29.1-7, 69.63; Athanasius, *Against Arianism*, 3.29.55; Council of Laodicea canons 29, 37, 38; Augustine, *Letter 36*. Dio Cassius wrote that people from other nations were considered Jewish if they practiced things considered Jewish (Roman History, 37:16-17 – quoted above).

Secondly, Christian sources confirm this finding. During the first four centuries after the time of Christ, most Christians still honored the Sabbath. In the January-February 2020 edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, we reviewed some of the primary sources that discuss this fact. Eusebius’ comment above about Constan-

tine bolsters this point.

In the next edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, we will start a multi-part series on Sunday laws in the Roman Empire. At the end of that two-part series, we will compare and contrast Sabbath and Sunday laws in the Roman Empire. To read more about this subject, download our free booklet *Sabbath and Sunday Laws in the Roman Empire* from the “Free Resources” page on www.sabbath.blog.

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THE SABBATH CALENDAR IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND THE BIBLE

(ARTICLE 3 OF 3)

Bill and Karen Bishop

The calendar that was found among numerous documents in the Dead Sea Scrolls is formed around and focused on ceaseless, perpetual observance of the seven-day week, with the focus on Sabbath – a Sabbath calendar.

There are many ways of trying to determine the Hebrew calendar. In this, our concluding article on the subject, we hope to bring further clarity. We'll start in the beginning. In the quests for the perfect calendar, the must-go-to verse seems to be Genesis 1:14:

Genesis 1:14

(14) And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

The word "signs" here is the Hebrew word Strong's H226 ('owth) – sign, marker, signal, banner, token, ensign, standard. When we really begin to discern the impact of this verse to the calendar, it becomes more and more apparent that Yah designed the lights in our sky as time-keeping markers or signs. He says nothing here about using any other criteria. The lights in the sky are fixed by Him and unaffected by external criterion. But how does this work?

According to this verse, these Heavenly time-keeping lights are signs, and these signs apply to precisely three aspects of time: seasons, days, and years. The word for "seasons" here has a diversity of meanings, but a primary meaning actually does indicate the "seasons" as we know them – spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Simply put, we believe these lights are signs or markers that tell us when to transition from one day to the next, one season to the next, and one year to the next. The interesting factor in this analysis is that the fourth segment of time (months) is not a part of this listing of light-appointed times. In working through this,

questions regarding the moon invariably enter the discussion. Let's see how all of this works in the Hebrew tongue.

The Hebrew word commonly thought to convey the transition from one month to the next or one moon to the next is "chodesh" (or "chodeshim" in its plural form). This word is almost always translated as either "new moon" or "month" depending on the location in our text. That is likely why it is believed that the new month is determined by the phases of the moon. However, the Hebrew word for the actual "moon" is something else entirely: Strong's H3394 - (yareach). So - let's dig a little bit deeper!

Hebrew letters have meanings. The etymology of Hebrew words involves the analysis of each individual letter of the word to incorporate their meanings within the word. This, in turn, provides insight about the meaning and Yah-inspired intention of the word as a whole. Here is an abbreviated analysis of the Hebrew word "chodesh":

Its letter structure is chet, dalet, shin.

The letter "chet" means: the new beginning of transcendent life, chamber, private, separate, outside, divide, half.

The letter "dalet" means: the way of the open door, move, hang, enter.

The letter "shin" means: divine providence, full cycle, consume, destroy, fire, sharp, press, eat, two.

The English language is built around nouns, but the Hebrew language is built around action. When viewing the letters that compose this word, we see an action represented: progression through a door from the end of a cycle to enter into the beginning of a new cycle. This transition through the revolving door will repeat at the conclusion of each cycle in order to bring periodic renewals.

“Chodesh” stems from the root word Strong's H2318 (chadash) - to be new, renew, repair; to renew, make anew. This too shows the process of the cycle, with the renewal of the process on a regular basis. Another related Hebrew word is Strong's H2319 (chadash) - new, new thing, fresh. It has the same transliterated spelling as H2318. All three words are tightly related.

We have found that the Hebrew etymology for “chodesh” in Yah’s time-keeping process more realistically signifies the transitions of the seasons at the equinox and solstice markers. These are appointed signs or signals based on the movement of the sun from our vantage point. This type signal is implied in Psalms 19:4 and other Scriptures that designate the quarterly seasonal transitions. Each of these quarterly markers signifies the completion of a cycle of time (Genesis 8:22) and the beginning of a new one. The Hebrew term “chodesh” is, at the core of its etymology, simply that – the transition into a renewed cycle.

Lunar reckoning in the calendar dating process causes the need for periodic additions of an entire month in the year, whereas there is only a week added periodically to the Sabbath calendar’s year.

Being conscious of space in this article, we can pre-

sent only a very brief introduction that may seem inconclusive if you are used to lunar observation. However, our book [The Biblical Calendar Then and Now](#) brings considerable perspective to all this. It compares and contrasts the Biblical text with the Dead Sea Scrolls to provide complete, unified harmony between the two. You can also find more information on our website: returningtothegarden.com.

We are not saying that “chodesh” cannot indicate other transitions as well, even the lunar cycles. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls do not subscribe the lunar cycles as having anything to do with the basic calendar and festival cycles.

Lunar reckoning in the calendar dating process causes the need for periodic additions of an entire month in the year, whereas there is only a week added periodically to the Sabbath calendar’s year. This large fluctuation of an entire month from one year to the next with the lunar system often results in the annual Sabbaths being too early or too late to deal properly with their associated harvests. In some cases, observances of these feasts have even been in the wrong seasons. Leviticus indicates that this should not be:

Leviticus 23:4

(4) These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.

There is actually an admonition in The Book of Jubilees that observing lunar cycles leads to confusion and observation of Yah’s Holy Days on common days, which is viewed as being offensive to Him. That was hard for us to comprehend until we studied more thoroughly. We hope you will take up the challenge and do likewise.

Our intent is surely NOT to cause strife in the body, but rather to provide a platform for study which might ultimately bring unity to the body of Messiah. We pray you will be blessed as you consider Yah’s fuller picture of His Holy Days integrated with His work of creation.



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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Corona Virus, Fear & Scripture

D.J. Wellington

In these troubled times we live in with the extremely contagious coronavirus spreading and advancing throughout the world, fear and anxiety has gripped so many people. Many people have never experienced the fears they are suffering now perhaps due to being quarantined or locked in such as in nursing homes and senior facilities.

If you look at YOURSELF as being one of the Almighty's people, regardless of anyone else's thoughts (only our Father and His Son have the authority to judge concerning belief because only they know you inside and out), then you SHOULD BE turning to scripture, not away from it!

How many times I've heard gatherings of those who think themselves to be His people, cancelled of late! Doesn't He want HIS PEOPLE to be together? To call upon His Name together?

People have used Isaiah 26:20 to justify staying separate and apart during this time of uncertainty and fear. However, does scripture truly support that idea for this time? There are many scriptures pertaining to gathering, calling on His name as "a people" and fear. We must sum up the totality of scriptures to make that decision.

Folks are also using Leviticus 13 to justify not gathering on His set-apart times coming up (i.e., for the Passover Memorial and Feast of Unleavened Bread). This is a stretch because scripture here is talking about someone HAVING an infectious disease, not all of Israel!

We're going to look at some verses on calling on His Name as a group and then look at some for protection and addressing fear.

Very early on, in Exodus, Yahuweh told Moses to gather all the elders at times and all the children of Israel at other times to hear His words/instructions

(Exodus 3:16; 19:18; Leviticus 8:4; Deuteronomy 31:12 and many, many more).

The whole congregation was together on many occasions such as in Joshua 18:1 because they were traveling together unlike today where His people are intermingled among the nations. It seems like that makes His set-apart times even more important to gather together, ESPECIALLY in times such as these.

Exodus 32:26 reads how Moses said whoever is for Yahuweh to join him and that is when the sons of Levi were further set apart to our Father.

This is an interesting verse in today's turmoil—if you are on Yahuweh's side, shouldn't you be joining together?

In Ezra 3, the children were in the cities when the seventh month came (first day of which is a special day to Yahuweh), and they all gathered as one in Jerusalem (not that we need to go to Jerusalem now, that is a different issue). And in Ezra 10:7, a proclamation was made to all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together. There is power in prayer and to pray as a group is even more powerful!

In Psalm 31:13-14, David talks about fear being on every side of him, yet "as for me, I trust in Thee, O Yahuweh." That is pretty direct in how David dealt with fear.

Psalm 47:9, *The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the Elohim of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto Elohim: he is greatly exalted.* [Who is our shield in times of trouble?]

Psalm 50:5, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." [This is Yahuweh speaking here. Have you and the folks you would generally meet with made a covenant with Him?] The entire Psalm 102 appears to read

like a cry of one afflicted, or fearful, and references “when the people are gathered together” (verse 22).

Think about this one. When you are with others of like faith, doesn't it bring comfort to talk together before our Father, alleviating the fears that so often creep into our minds?

Chapter 43 of Isaiah speaks to Israel being re-deemed but verse 5 says very specifically, “Do not fear, for I am with you.” Remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego who refused to bow down to the king (i.e., violate the Father's instructions) and were thrown into the fire? And they told King Nebuchadnezzar that if it be so, their Elohim would protect them and IF NOT, let it be known they would not violate His words!

Read it yourselves in Daniel 3:15-18! This is very pertinent because at this point in our world, His year will be starting very soon (at the initial writing of this) and His instructions are to gather on three special days/times a year, the first of which is the 14th day of His 1st month. Will fear keep folks apart during this time?

Isaiah does have some excellent scriptures on fear such as Isaiah 8:11-13, “For thus YAHUWEH spoke to me with mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, ‘You are not to say, “It is a conspiracy!” in regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, and you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is YAHUWEH of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread.” His people are NOT to walk in the way of the world or to FEAR what the people of the world fear!

Yahuweh will NOT permit His people to violate one instruction to keep another. In our times, for instance, you cannot go shopping on Shabbat under the premise of being able to witness there!

So if Yahuweh directed His people to gather three times a year, should fear keep you apart?

Several times Yahuweh says that IF we obey His instructions, He will NOT put the diseases of Egypt upon us! This is stated directly in Exodus 15:26 and Deuteronomy 7:15. On the flip side, read Deuteronomy

28:58-60 (if you are not careful to obey, He will bring BACK all the diseases of Egypt). Could that be relevant for this pandemic of today? Only Yahuweh knows for certain, we can only watch and be prepared.

Below are some verses I pray will bring comfort to those who believe they are Yahuweh's people, yet are fearful and anxious at this time in our nation:

Psalm 112:6-7, *For he will never be shaken; The righteous will be remembered forever. He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in YAHUWEH.*

Philippians 4:6-7, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to Yahuweh. And the peace of Yahuweh, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yahushua.*

Psalm 18:30, *As for Elohim, His way is blameless; The word of YAHUWEH is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*

Psalms 33:20-22, *Our soul waits for YAHUWEH; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Your lovingkindness, O YAHUWEH, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.*

[Does our soul wait for Him? Of course, so we should actually be rejoicing if we believe this is the beginning of the end of the world as we've known it!]

Job 5:17-24, [Read in its entirety, this represents bits] *Behold, how happy is the man whom Elohim reproves, ...In famine He will redeem you from death, ... you will not be afraid of violence when it comes.... You will know that your tent is secure.*

Matthew 6:25 (Yahushua speaking), *For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Also see Luke 12:22-31)*

Scripture also indicates that Yahuweh puts fear in the nations to show they are but men (Psalm 9:20)

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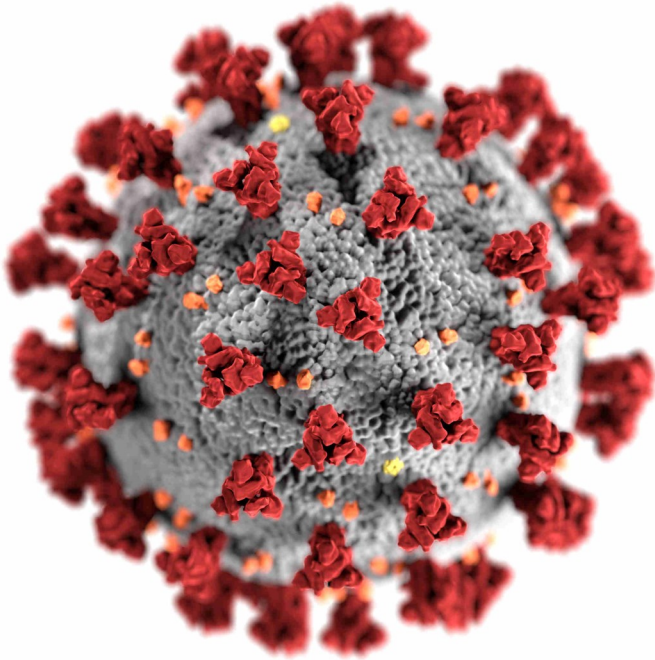
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and, in many places, to show His power and glory!

A very popular, well-known set of scriptures is also very pointed to what is going on in our world today: Psalm 23. What comforts us? His rod and His staff. *"I will fear no evil, for He is with me."*

As it says in Psalm 49:5, *Why should I fear in days of adversity?* It is my earnest prayer that people all over the world will repent and turn to HIM because He gives us a promise in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 that He will heal the land!

2 Chronicles 7:13-14, *"If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

"Thus says YAHUWEH of hosts, 'Return to Me,' declares YAHUWEH of hosts, "that I may return to you," says YAHUWEH of hosts, Zechariah 1:3.

HalleluYAH and may all glory, honor and praise be to our Father!



FREEDOM FROM FEAR IS IN KNOWING THE LIVING LIBERATOR!

Tommy Tillis

As the chaos grows in the world, I hear more and more people talk about fear of the unknown. Even with the Coronavirus, I've heard many say: "There's so much we don't know about this virus." So, even with the virus, the unknown increases the fear. And as the chaos increases in the nation, many are apprehensive about what is ahead. Many are more on edge and jumpy than I've ever seen in my lifetime; and the unknown of what lies ahead is what often frightens them the most. We should be careful with the virus and take precaution, wash our hands, wear masks if necessary, etc. But we should not fear it.

We all have our real problems; and God has given us a way to get the help we need. But like a hamster on a treadmill, too often we squander our time with fear and worry, by running the problems over and over in our mind. This stops us from living life fully. Fear is not a part of God's plan for us. Paul was concerned about Timothy, and wrote to him about not having fear: *"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."* (2 Tim 1:6-7) NKJV.

Even Elijah, after he was used by God powerfully as His prophet, allowed fear to come in when Jezebel said she would have him killed; and he ran for his life. He became depressed and wanted to die. Fear had caused him to get out of focus, even soon after being used powerfully by God! Fear can get to any of us if we allow it to. (1 King 19).

It has become a real problem even for many Christians as fear increases across the land. But God has

laid out biblical principles that if we follow them, will have us deal with our fears. When we allow fear to enter our minds, it can work just like a poison. And in certain cases fear can destroy us if not dealt with. God gave us a good example of dealing with our fears through King David: Psalm 34:4 *"I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears."* The best thing you can do is take the fear to God, and talk with Him about it, letting Him lead you to come out of the fear. David had fears like we all do, but he took positive action to do something about the fear, and as he sought out God in prayer. He was delivered from all his fears! That's a wonderful example for us all.

Over the years I would pass a problem over and over in my mind until I was miserable. As God taught me more of the lesson of Philippians 4:6-7, which tells us not to worry about anything, but instead to take it to God in thankful prayer, and the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Then I began to have more peace in my life. Sometimes when I begin to worry and have fear now, I have found that happens only when I'm not praying as I should and not staying as close to God as I should. And if I take it to God in prayer, the fear clears up. It is dangerous for us not to stay close to God, so my prayers are that I would not drift like this anymore. It is very important that we stay close to our Father and Jesus Christ.

The two Scriptures mentioned above are good ones to learn to apply. And we can go over dozens of Scriptures about fear; but if we don't apply them, then the fears will often continue to return, and our misery will stay. I share this because over the years, as I learned to

read these scriptures and go over and over them, I often knew of them intellectually and could quote them; but I was not applying them. I had to learn to meditate on them to let them sink in; the problem was I often gave them lip service without applying these biblical principles. And I often found the fear returning. Read these scriptures a hundred times if you need to! Take it to God in prayer. Read them over and over and ask God to help you apply them. Because, as I grew in my faith, I learned to apply them better as God gave me His grace. And the fears became less and less.

Suffering has increased with what we are going through with the Coronavirus. But God tells us that there is no reason to fear the suffering. He tells us this because He has everything under control. God will not let us be tempted above what we are able to endure (1 Cor 10:13). We can depend on His promise to pull us through all problems. He knows just the kind of trial each child needs; so if He allows it to come upon us then He sees we need it; let us learn to rely on His provision to learn to trust Him. The next time fear tries to enter your heart, think of these wonderful scriptures and learn to apply them. God has given us a way to deal with the fear, let us go to Him in prayer and stay there to get the help we need. I've seen so many, including myself, go through so much turmoil because we don't apply ourselves in prayer. Won't you please try?

I often think of the disciples who ran in fear when Jesus was arrested. The Scriptures say they all forsook Him and fled. Then just fifty days later, men who had acted like cowards went on to astound the world with courage, because now the One who bled and died for us was in them to produce! Wow, what a difference.

Fear filled my heart and mind a few years ago while caring for my invalid dad, because I have had my own health problems for decades, and I thought the stress of caring for my dad was going to kill me, and

God led me to cry out in prayer. In this process God showed me I had drifted from Him, and He used the scripture in Rev 3:18-20 to get my attention and bring me to repentance; and the fear left, and then I was able to serve my dad at peace. As God delivered me from all fear, I went on to serve my dad with joy. I thank God for His mercy. When Jesus Christ does the work in us, then we will be astounded

The situation with the Coronavirus relates to our fear of death. Death is on people's mind a lot because they are reminded of death so much; and of course this increases the fear. Just the fact that most people are going around with masks reminds most of suffering and death continually.

As Christians, we need not fear death or suffering. God promises not to allow us to go through more than we can handle. Let us keep in mind that there is a reason Scripture reminds us that we are here for just a short time:

"Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" (James 4:14-15) NIV.

"Show me, Lord, my life's end; and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is." (Ps 39:4) NIV.

So, Scripture reminds us that life is short, but even with death, we should not fear it. God has given us a way to deal with the fear of death also.

We all have an appointment with death. But death is a part of life. God does not promise us tomorrow--like the above scripture says we are just a mist here for a little while.

But this is no reason to be gloomy or fearful. God has made it possible for us to face death unafraid. You and I can be free from fear of death if we will trust in God. Paul enjoyed life and he also realized that death

would be a promotion to something even better. He wrote:

"For to me, living means opportunities for Christ, and dying—well, that's better yet! But if living will give me more opportunities to win people to Christ, then I really don't know which is better, to live or die! Sometimes I want to live, and at other times I don't, for I long to go and be with Christ. How much happier for me than being here!" (Phil 1:21-23) TLB. I'm not trying to suggest we seek death, because life is a blessing, and God has a work for us to finish; but we need to realize even death is a promotion to something better. We should not fear it. Paul didn't.

I realized how much Paul's words relate to the fear people have with the Coronavirus. Just like we live in denial of death; we also often don't realize how much we are in denial of how much we fear death. I feel they both connect, the fear and the denial, that it's a psychological matter; probably even a subconscious one that we often don't realize.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." (Job 14:1-2) KJV. The words "A few days and full of trouble"--reminds me of the trials of life we all face, and how they have even increased with the Coronavirus; and how the world will constantly throw things at us; our only safe ground and to have the peace necessary is to seek out God and stay with Him. Most of us get a fair amount of fun out of life; and that's the way it should be; life is a blessing; but let us also keep in mind that we are not here just to have fun, because much tribulation could lay ahead. And we will need much prayer to stay in focus; Jesus said: *"Be on watch and pray always that you will have the strength to go safely through all those things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man."* (Luke 21:36) GNT.

Fear of the Unknown?

We often talk about "fear the unknown." But as Christians, what is unknown to us? If we know there is a God; and we know He cares for us; then he has everything under control; and therefore, nothing around should make us afraid. Because God wants us to get to know Him, so that we will trust Him as we should. Take a simple example of someone who has told you they will start picking you up at 6 p.m. for a night class you are taking. When they don't show up time after time; you certainly won't get to trust that person as being reliable. But a friend starts to pick you up for the class, and time after time they have been reliable. You get to know that friend and that he will be on time and that you can depend on him because you know him. It's the same with God; as we get to know Him we will learn that He can be depended on, and that He will not fail us. Our problem with much of our fear is we don't know God. As we learn to seek Him as we should, we will get to know Him, and we will learn to trust Him and all fears will be driven out.

We need to ask ourselves: How much do I trust Him?" and "How is my personal relationship with Jesus Christ?"

Boldly Seeking God

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16) (NKJV). Do you have needs and fears? All of us have our real problems; and here is the way that God set up for us to get the help we need. Won't you please try? God has made a way for us to deal with our fears. Let us grow to know Him and how much He cares for us, so that we will learn to trust Him with every fiber of our being. Freedom from fear is in knowing the Living Liberator

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Pet 5:7) NIV.



WHAT IS FOREVER FOR?

Darl Arbogast

I believe I have learned more since departing the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) than I did while I was there. Of course, that is a hard thing to judge.

Hebrews 5:12-14 (NKJ throughout unless otherwise stated) we see the following: *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

Reading these verses I have been able to put a few absolutes together.

Reaching back in years, we read in Isaiah 65:20 *"No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed."*

As I write this article I considered the time of God's 'Feast of Tabernacles' and the 'Great Last Day' the feast of the year 2020 C.E.

Elaborating on some possibilities in this word 'accursed' #7043 in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance; one thing 'accursed' means is to bring into contempt or to be despised which is to be despicable or to be reviled upon by others.

I found out years ago that the word 'accursed' in the KJV is rendered 'despised' in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #7043; this changed the whole concept WCG taught us that anyone living through this period of judgement and not repenting would be thrown into a 'lake of fire.'

By realizing the *modus operandi* of Christ, our Sav-

ior is justice, mercy and faith; adding to that Christ said many times He planned to save all. That is a reason for a resurrection to judgment; to get everyone saved!

Jesus (Yeshua) would assign a task force to work with such a person and help them see the light and repent and be converted if that scenario actually were to happen. Besides that at that point in time there would be no 'lake of fire;' it disappeared in 70 C.E. when the sacrifices ceased at the Temple. The Lake of Fire is used metaphorically five times by the Apostle John but some folks take it quite literally today.

At that point in time death and the grave have ceased to exist. Which means that if there is no death and no grave and no lake of fire then there is only one other option. Isaiah 65:20 is a hypothetical statement and actually will not happen.

Matthew 22:14 is real and Jesus spoke these words: Jesus said, *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

A few have been and are still being chosen from every generation since the church began.

There are stages to being called. In 1 Corinthians 15:26, 2 Timothy 1:10 and Revelation 20:5, we pick up more pieces of the narrative but these are not nearly all of them. Death and the grave will be abolished.

***That is a reason
for a resurrection
to judgment; to get
everyone saved!***

In God's plan some of us will live twice, once in the flesh and once in the spirit; no one dies twice.

Revelation 20:14 *"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire (the lake of fire here is metaphorical). This is the second death."*

Such people if there are still unrepentant people at the end of this judgment period, will be kept alive until they can be judged ready to receive immortality, the immortals and angels will assist them until they become worthy of immortality.

It is God's desire not to lose any and He will not; this is the fulfillment of faith, hope and love but the greatest of these is love; God will not fail.

The one who has sinned most has the most to repent of and is the most grateful when forgiveness is granted. Remember the Apostle Paul.

In John 6:39 we read that Jesus said, *"This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."*

God has given Christ all of us to save so it will happen.

In Ephesians 1:5 we read the following: *"having predestined us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His own will."*

Random House College Dictionary gives a good rendering of the words "hypothetical and immortal" maybe we should review them occasionally. *"Oh death where is your sting?" "Oh grave where is your victory?"*

There is no incorrigibly wicked mentioned in connection to this scripture of Isaiah 65:20.



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John Weidner

The son of a Dutch Seventh-day Adventist minister, John Weidner (1912-1994) publicly credited his Sabbath Keeping faith with giving him the moral courage to resist the Nazis during World War II.

John was the oldest of four children and his father taught Latin and Greek at a Seventh Day Adventist Seminary. John himself attended courses at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Collonges-sous-Salève, near Geneva. It was hoped that young John would follow in his father's footsteps in ministerial service. To his father's regret, he decided to go into business, and in 1935 he established a textile import/export business in Paris, France. However, God had other important plans for John Weidner, and used this decision for his profound purposes!

At the outbreak of World War II John was living in Paris. With the subsequent German occupation of France he fled with several others to the unoccupied part of France. Because he had to abandon his Parisian business, he began a new business in Lyon. In 1941, John founded "Dutch-Paris", an underground network of which the location of his Lyonaise textile business soon became its headquarters. In order to get passes to go in and out of the Swiss frontier zone, he set up a second textile shop in Annecy, near Switzerland at the end of 1942.

"Dutch-Paris" became one of the largest and most successful underground networks for people persecuted for faith or race. Allied pilots, and persons of great Dutch importance, were helped to escape via Switzerland and also to Spain. This escape route was also used for smuggling important secret documents. In the Netherlands this message line was also known as "The Swiss Way".

The operation was one of the largest and most successful of its type, in all of World War II, and saved more than one thousand lives (comparable to Oskar



Schindler) including more than 800 Dutch Jews and 100 downed airmen.

In February 1944, a young female courier was arrested by the French police and extradited to the Gestapo. Against all rules, she had a notebook with her containing names and addresses of Dutch-Paris members. She was brutally interrogated by the Nazis, including holding her head under cold water until she nearly drowned. Under torture she revealed many names of key members of the underground network. As a result, a large number of Dutch-Paris members were arrested.

Exposed by this, Weidner's sister was captured by the Nazis and died in Ravensbrück after being imprisoned. John Weidner too, was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to a concentration camp but managed to escape by jumping from a train that was bound for Germany.

After the Liberation of France, John Weidner was invited to London by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, to come to tell her about the "Dutch-Paris" escape route, and the situation of Dutch civil-



ians in France and Belgium

For his War efforts, Weidner was awarded the United States Medal of Freedom with Gold Palm, made an Honorary Officer of the Order of the British Empire, an Officer in the Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau. The French Government honored him with the Croix de Guerre and Médaille de la Résistance and the Legion of Honor. The Belgian Government made him an Officer of the Order of Leopold.

At the 1993 opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. he was one of seven persons chosen to light candles recognizing the rescuers. The Israeli government honored Weidner as one of the gentiles designated as "Righteous Among the Nations," an honor given to non-Jews who risked their lives during the holocaust to save Jews, at Israel's national Holocaust Memorial. Yad Vashem is where a grove of trees was planted in his name on the Hill of Remembrance along the Avenue of the Righteous.

John 15:13 reads Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John Weidner's faith, courage and love of others certainly qualifies him as a "Sabbath Keeper Who Made A Difference"!

Author Bill Lussenheide serves as Vice President of the Bible Sabbath Association, and has been a Sabbath Keeper since his calling at age 17, in 1975. He resides with his wife, in the Bitterroot Valley, Montana.



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A Promise to Claim

L.W. Johnson

It was February 9, 1981, when the silence was pierced by the attention signal from the Tri-Community Volunteer Department Scanner located in the outer office. Several members of my staff were Volunteer Firemen and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's). "Pedestrian struck, Ooltewah High School. Be advised EMT required, time, 11:10 eastern standard time."

A cold chill engulfed me, as I headed out of my office past my secretary. "I am taking an early lunch," I said, "I may be late getting back."

I drove the three miles to my house, as fast as I could. When I pulled into the driveway, my wife was coming out the door.

The look on her face verified what I had suspected; it was one of our sons. "Lance has been run over by a school bus," she said, "they are taking him to the Hospital." We rushed out of the drive and down the narrow winding Road, to the main highway as fast as we could.

When we arrived we were greeted by a nurse who tried to comfort us by saying "Doctor Rowe is with him, he is the best surgeon on our staff." She appeared visibly shaken, as if she was need of comforting herself. A blurry series of activities happened over the next several minutes that neither my wife nor I can remember very well. We heard the doctor say "He is injured very badly. We are going to take him to surgery and see what we can do. Those large rear tandem wheels ran over his mid section."

The doctor said "Mr. Johnson, we don't usually work on people who are hurt this badly, because they are dead before they get here. But he is alive now - why I don't know - but I am going to take him up and see what I can do."

The surgery took six hours. I have very little recollection of where the day went but I noticed it was dark outside when a tearful, trembling man approached us, and announced that he was driving the bus when the accident occurred. Sharon and I hugged him and we cried together.

Throughout the evening people came in to sit with us. Friends and church members came to pray and offer comfort. The word was out, that it would take a miracle from God for Lance to survive.

Finally, we were told that he was out of surgery and in intensive care. A team of elders prayed and anointed Lance. In the blur and murkiness of those events we vaguely remember our friends and family escorting us out of the hospital and taking us home for the night.

The next morning, we were at the hospital at 6:30. The sight of our son in those conditions was almost more than we could bear. We tried not to show our horror as we stood there. He was connected to hoses and monitors, with his legs hanging by straps from bed hangers.

Here I was fighting with God, but oddly enough I have never felt so close to him as I did when I was angry with Him. Finally, I fell silent. I knelt next to my son's bed exhausted and despondent. I had not prevailed with God. He gave me no encouragement. Fear and anxiety blurred my thinking.



The doctor was straightforward about the situation. "He could die at any minute," He announced solemnly. "If he lives, he will never get out of bed. He will never walk; he will always wear a catheter, and maybe a colostomy. He may not be capable of getting married or having children."

I needed to be alone. I needed to talk to God about this. I went home.

For the next several hours I wrestled with God. I began my petition on my knees. Later I paced for a while as I prayed, sometimes I bowed my head, I knelt, I stood and stared out the window. I begged. I pleaded. I threatened. I negotiated, and I shook my fist in God's face. Hot tears burned my cheeks, sweat soaked my clothing. I wanted to recall a promise from the Bible that I could claim. But no verse came to mind.

Here I was fighting with God, but oddly enough I have never felt so close to him as I did when I was angry with Him. Finally, I fell silent. I knelt next to my son's bed exhausted and despondent. I had not prevailed with God. He gave me no encouragement. Fear and anxiety blurred my thinking.

Out of the silence, Malachi 3:10 and 11 came to mind. Suddenly I was filled with horror. I thought out loud, "Will a man rob God?" NO! No Lord, if I have robbed you take me; don't take my son. Is this from you? Is this a warning that my son will not live because I have robbed you?

"Read it." Said a still small voice.

I reached for Lance's Bible on the nightstand. I opened to the passage that came to my mind. Mala-

chi 3:10. I read. "Bring ye all the tithes into the store house... and prove me here with, said the Lord of hosts, If I will not open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that will be so great that you will not have room enough to receive it."

"Father," I prayed, "I have returned the tithe since I was nine years old. Even in those economically depressed days, I returned the tithe." This is the promise I needed. In a million years, I would have never thought of Malachi 3:10 as a verse that I could claim to save some one's life.

"I claim the promise of Malachi 3:10," I prayed. "Open up the windows of heaven and give me the life of my son. There is no greater blessing just now."

I felt a great relief. Lance was going to live! I knew it. I was weak, but I was sure that his life would be spared. No matter that he may never get out of bed, he would live and that was enough for me.

Then I remembered He said Malachi 3:10 and 11 was the message I heard. I picked up Lance's Bible and found verse 11: "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, said the Lord of hosts." You have my word on it!

On a sunny day in late July 1995 I thought about what the doctors said. I thought about what the doctors had said at the time of the accident. I held Lance's daughter and watched with his wife and mother, as he received the trophy for the most stolen bases in his church softball league.

Lance's brother, Mark, was 11 years old at the time of the accident. He was so impressed with the series of events surrounding Lance's recovery that he decided to become a physician. While in medical school Mark worked with Doctor Rowe for several months, the one who had said he did not believe in prayer. Mark witnessed this great physician offer prayer before all his surgeries. He said he saw firsthand the power of prayer in Lance's case, and it changed his life.





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

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<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.

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



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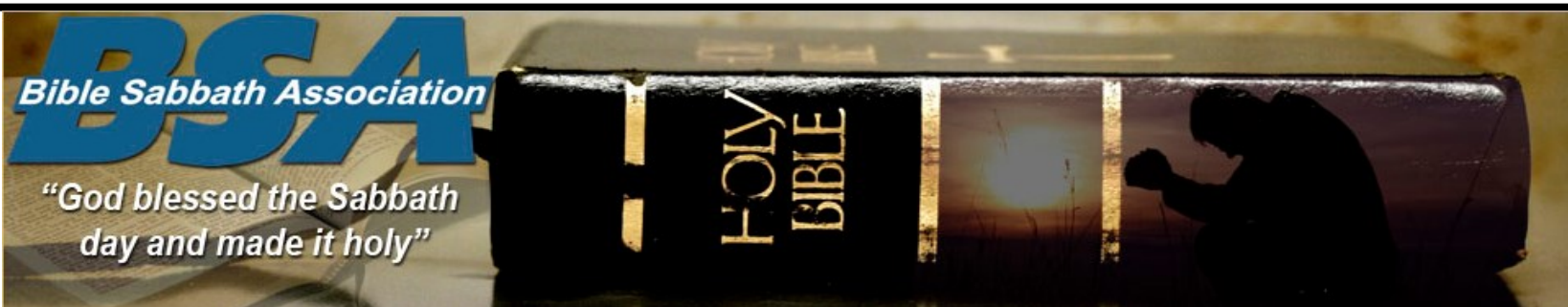
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