



The Sabbath Sentinel

July-August
2021

Sunday Laws

in the

ROMAN EMPIRE?

*Ex libris
Joan. Pohl, s. l.*



*Hieronym. Christ.
jur. utr. Auditoris.*

FRANCOFURTI AD MOENUM

BSA — The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil?"

M. DC. LXXVIII.

GUB. REGISTRATUR.

The Sabbath Sentinel September-October, 2021

Volume 75, No. 5, Issue 610

FEATURES

- 3 Editorial “You Will Be Marked!”
by Dr. Royce Mitchell
- 5 President’s Corner—“Sunday Laws in the Roman Empire Part 2 of 2”
by Kelly McDonald, Jr.
- 8 “Many Are ... Deceived”
by Darl Arbogast
- 11 “Endtime Prophecy”
by Tommy Willis
- 14 “Two Trees and the Sabbath Singularity Versus Duality (Part 1 of 2)”
by Bill and Karen Bishop
- 16 “Revelations of a Seasoned Rockhound”
by Paul Syltje
- 22 Letters to the Editor
- Cover photo courtesy of pinterest.com.

The Sabbath Sentinel is published bimonthly by The Bible Sabbath Association, PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481. Copyright © 2020 by the Bible Sabbath Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Nonprofit bulk rate postage paid at San Dimas, California.

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

BSA’s Board of Directors for 2020-2023:

President: Kelly McDonald, Jr., kellymcdonald_lu08@hotmail.com

Vice President: Bill Lussenheide

Secretary: Prof. Dusti Howell

Treasurer: Bryan Burrell

Office Manager—Jacquelyn Guerrero

Directors at Large: Dr. Royce Mitchell, Dr. John Merritt, June Narber

Subscriptions: write to: The Bible Sabbath Association, PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481 or email to office@biblesabbath.org. The Sabbath Sentinel is sent free of charge to all who request it in the U.S. If you live outside of the U.S., please send us a donation of \$25 (US) to cover overseas postage. **Voluntary contributions to the Bible Sabbath Association make publication of The Sabbath Sentinel possible.**

Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible in the United States. Those who choose to voluntarily support this international work to promote the Sabbath and proclaim gospel of the kingdom of God are welcomed as contributors.

Annual membership contributions: **General memberships—**individual membership is \$35/year (or \$5/month); Family Membership is \$60/year (or \$7/month); Institutional membership is \$100/year (or \$10/month); International (non-US) membership is \$50; Life Membership is \$700 in any one year.

Participating memberships—Bridge Builder Membership is \$100/year (or \$10/month); Pillar Membership is \$200/year (or \$20/month). Participating members may also directly assist the BSA in its direct outreach programs related to the BSA mission. All memberships include an annual subscription to *The Sabbath Sentinel*. Make all checks, drafts and money orders payable to **The Bible Sabbath Association**. (Visa and MasterCard accepted).

The Bible Sabbath Association is dedicated to promoting the seventh day Sabbath. As a nonsectarian association for Sabbath-observing Christians, BSA accepts members who acknowledge Jesus Christ (Yeshua the Messiah) as their Savior, believe the Bible to be the Word of the Eternal God, and uphold the seventh day Sabbath. BSA takes no official position on other theological issues, and publishes *The Sabbath Sentinel* as a forum to promote understanding and to share items of interest with Sabbath observing groups and individuals.

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

BSA Worldwide Web Site: www.biblesabbath.org.

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

E-mail: office@biblesabbath.org.

Address Service Requested: If moving, please update your address.

Please come visit us on our Facebook

page which is located at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/biblesabbathassociation>

and www.facebook.com/SabbathSentinel.

Don’t forget to LIKE us!

If you’d like more information on the Sabbath Day, please visit

www.biblesabbath.org.

Also, visit our new blog at:

www.sabbathsentinel.org!



YOU WILL BE MARKED!

The Apostle John once wrote about an event that will most assuredly happen in the future. Indeed, it is likely happening right now unbeknownst to us. Here's what he wrote about that event:

Rev 14:9-11 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; ... and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

Much, over time, has been written about this "mark." Some have stated that it is literally "666" inscribed upon an individual's body. Some think it is a bar code. Almost universally it is presumed that something visible happens physically to those having this mark. But, is that what the scripture says?

When we try to understand something as vital as this mark leading to such disastrous consequences, it is important that we do not put our own interpretations into the scripture. Indeed, scripture itself warns us not to do that!

Let's start with who gets the mark, which we read about above. Those who worship this "beast" get it. They get this mark in their "forehead" and "hand." This is an important point! To understand the point, we need to look at how scripture deals with those two terms. Anything associated with the head seems to indicate the will or desire. Anything associated with the hand seems to indicate action, such as the scripture "*Whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with all of your might.*" So, in order to receive this mark, one either has to agree with such worship or go along with it by actions. But, the scripture nowhere says that is something that we can see! However, it is something that God can see!

Notice what they, those who receive the mark, agree with or cooperate with: they worship the beast! Those of us who know the scriptures know that it is sin to worship any but God.

Could it really be that simple? After all that has been written about this "mark," is sin really the path to its receipt? Notice what Jesus said: Luke 16:13 *No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* Likewise, you cannot worship God and the Beast.

Further, Paul was inspired to write this: Rom 6:16 *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

Those who have the "mark" of the beast are cooperating with that beast through worship. Who are those who are NOT cooperating, who do NOT have that mark? Notice this: Rev 12:17 *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* Those who are NOT worshipping the beast are those who are keeping the commandments of God who testify that Jesus is the Savior, or who Jesus testifies are His to the Father. The context is not clear on that point. What is clear is that they are keeping the commandments of God, one of which is to worship none but Him. Failure to do so causes the beast's mark.

Is the mark a physical thing indicating who you are? First, we need to understand that, at the end, everyone gets a mark! It is not just the ones who worship the beast created by Satan, but also those who are keeping the commandments! In a prophecy concerning Israel in the last days we see this stated:

Eze 9:4-6 *And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and*

set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

Who else but those who are obedient to God would sigh and cry for the abominations done? It is clear that everyone will get a mark. There is one mark that we want and another that we don't want. But, those marks are indicated by actions and desires, not by something that is physically put onto us. How will we know which mark we have? It is not important to know what mark others have. It is important to know which mark we have! If we want to have God's mark, we need to be obeying His Commandments! Failure to do so will necessarily lead to the wrong mark.

You might ask how it is, if there is no physical, visible mark, that one can neither buy nor sell. That's a great question. To answer it, we have to reach beyond scripture. This means that I will be speculating going forward.

In the United States, and in many countries around the world, there is a war on cash going on. It has been sold to us under the guise that large amounts of cash are indicative of involvement in criminal activity. And, that is a true statement. But, Satan's goal is control. If you force all monetary transactions to be through numbered accounts, such as bank debit cards or credit cards, wire transfers, then you can control those who spend that way.

As an example, the USA has enacted abusive asset forfeiture laws based upon their stated desire to stop criminal activity. Those laws have been used to confiscate the cash carried by law-abiding merchants carrying cash to the bank. The weight of the federal legal system is brought to bear against these citizens, forcing them into the unenviable position of proving their innocence of crimes. Often, they are forced to sign documents stating that they will not

sue over the false arrest and unconstitutional taking of their money in order to get it back.

When I say that they bring the weight of the federal government, that includes batteries of attorneys whose job description is to protect the government interests. To say that our government has gotten out of control is to be laughably understated.

Once everyone has to fear to use cash, as is rapidly becoming the case around the world, then it is a simple matter to track all transactions. This is where it becomes important to us!

If you can monitor every transaction then you can control every transaction. If you have ever had a credit card transaction denied, rightfully or especially wrongfully, then you know that buying and selling can be interfered with. Once government is in control of those accounts then it is a simple thing to deny a buying or a selling by anyone who is not in the good graces of the government.

Looking forward from that point, it is easy to imagine how it is that the beast, which controls all the nations of the earth at the end, is able to prevent buying and selling. Satan understands the principle "By their fruits you will know them." He will find ways to cause everyone to show their mark through worship or at least fealty to his beast.

What is the mark of the beast? It is sin, specifically worshipping that which is not God. Indeed, ALL sin is the worship of something that is not God! Scripture is clear that many of us will be protected in the grave. Some of us will be martyred as Satan seeks to bring all under his control. Scripture is likewise clear that some will be alive and remain until Christ returns. But, this beast, and his mark, is coming. Everything is in place now for his move to begin. We who are alive, if awake, can see prophecy coming to pass. Let's resolve in our hearts and minds now to be obedient unto death so that glorious reward is ours.

There is much more that can be said about this but it will have to wait for a book that is in progress.





The President's Corner

SUNDAY LAWS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

PART 2 OF 2

Kelly McDonald

In the last edition of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, we reviewed the first five Sunday laws proclaimed in the Roman Empire. They were issued from 321 to as late as 373 AD. Two in 321, one at an unknown date, and two more between 368-373. The last two were regional. There would not be another one (that we know of) until 386 AD.

From 386 to 425, eleven laws were enacted that governed some sort of Sunday observance (including the annual observance of Pascha on Sunday). The sudden increase in Sunday laws during this time reflects the continued unification of the Roman Empire and Roman Church. Before we can review these laws, there is some necessary background information for us to review.

Theodosius became Emperor in 379. He heard the religious perspectives of various Christian groups and sided with the Roman Church. He was determined to make the Empire uniform in its view of God. The next year, he issued a decree to force subjects of the Empire to become Roman Catholic. We have an excerpt of this law below:

“To the residents of Constantinople: It is our will that all the peoples whom the government of our clemency rules shall follow that religion which a pious belief from Peter to the present declares the holy Peter delivered to the Romans, and which it is evident the Pontiff Damascus and Peter, bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic sanctity, follow; that is, that according to the apostolic discipline and evangelical doctrine we believe in the deity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit of equal majesty in a holy trinity. Those who follow this law we command shall be comprised under the name of Catholic Christians; but others, indeed, we require, as insane and raving, to bear the infamy of heretical teaching...” (CT:

16.1.2 [quoted from Ayers, pp 367-368]).

Notice that the issue of Sabbath and Sunday was never addressed in this law. As reviewed in the January-February 2020 issue of **The Sabbath Sentinel**, most Christians still kept the Sabbath at that time. The biggest issue which separated Roman Catholic Christians from others was the Trinity; this involved an ongoing argument at that time concerning the nature of God.

Keep in mind that people did not instantly comply with this decree. Laws in the ancient world took time to implement; it does not necessarily follow that people obeyed. Non-Trinitarian groups continued for many centuries inside and outside of the Roman Empire. Decrees such as these reflect Imperial views.

The laws of Theodosius' reign, such as the one above, appear draconian. However, they were not always enforced. Sozomen, a fourth century Christian historian, said that Theodosius did not enforce the terrible punishments prescribed in his laws (Church history, 7.12). Instead, he wanted to intimidate people into changing their religious views so that there would be greater uniformity. Later in this same work, Sozomen mentioned that most Christians in his time kept the Sabbath (ibid, 7.19). As discussed in the May-June edition of **The Sabbath Sentinel**, Roman law protected Sabbath observance.

Theodosius completed the merger of the Roman Church and State which began years before under Constantine. This facilitated a series of Sunday laws with Christian meaning to be enacted during his reign; the first one dates to the year 386.

“The same Augustuses (Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius Augustuses) to Principius, Praetorian Prefect. On the Day of the Sun (Sunday), which our ancestors rightly called

the Lord's Day*, the prosecution of all litigation and actions shall entirely cease. No person shall demand payment of either a public or private debt. There shall be no cognizance of any contention, even before arbitrators, whether these arbitrators be demanded in court of voluntarily chosen. If any person should turn aside from the inspiration and ritual of holy religion, he shall be adjudged not only infamous but also sacrilegious" (CT: 11.7.13; Nov. 3, 386) (Pharr, p 300).

*The underlying Latin translated as "our ancestors rightly called the Lord's Day" is *quem dominicam rite dixere maiores* (Haenel, 1071). By that time, *dominicam* had come to be known as 'Lord's Day.' *Rite* means a duty according to religious observance. *Dixere* means called or said and *maiores* means ancestors or forefathers. The use of the term *maiores* does not indicate length of time.

Notice that these Emperors attributed the usage of the term 'Lord's Day' to their forefathers, not God or the Bible. It was common for Roman Catholic writers to do the same (see Eusebius, Exposition on Psalm 93 in Odom, p 292). This is the first Roman law where Sunday is called 'The Lord's Day,' and the first one to ascribe direct Christian meaning to Sunday. It reiterated some of the details from Constantine's law on July 3, 321 (CT: 2.8.1 – for this law, see the previous issue of **The Sabbath Sentinel**).

This law was repeated as CT: 2.8.18 and 8.8.3 in the same month and year (Nov. 386); it was later repeated in the Code of Justinian (CJ: 3.12.6). Just three years later, another law will better demonstrate the one result of the Roman State/Church union.

"Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius Augustuses to Albinus, Prefect of the City. We order all days to be court days. It shall be lawful for only those days to remain as holidays which throughout two months a very indulgent year has recognized as a respite from toil for the mitigation of summer heat and for the harvesting of the autumn crops. 1. We also set aside the kalends of January (January 1) as a customary rest day. 2. To the aforementioned days We add the natal days of the greatest cities, Rome (April 21) and Constantinople (May 11),* to which the law ought to defer, since it also was born of

them.** 3. We count the same category the holy Paschal days (Latin: *sacros quoque paschae dies*), of which seven follow Easter; likewise the Days of the Sun*** which revolve upon themselves at regular intervals. 4. It is necessary for Our anniversaries also to be held in equal reverence, that is, both the day which brought forth the auspicious beginning of Our life and the day which produced the beginning of Our imperial power. – August 7, 389 (CT: 2.8.19; Pharr, p 44; Latin: Haenel, p 210).

*This law provides us with an overview of the holidays allowed by the merger of Roman Church and Roman State. In it, we can see a mix of the older pagan holidays, such as the summer/autumn rest days, January 1, the founding of Rome and Constantinople, Sunday, and the Imperial birthdays/anniversaries with newer Roman Catholic days, such as the Paschal days.

**The term 'Easter' or an equivalent term was not used at this time. The Latin word used in the sentence is *Paschae*, which means Passover. The Roman Catholic Church celebrated it on a Sunday. Sunday was not called the Lord's Day, but *dies solis*.

A controversy that arose during this time was whether contests in the Circuses should be allowed on the birthdays of the Emperors, even if their birthdays occurred on Sunday. The Circus Maximus was dedicated to the sun; horse races often occurred there (See Tertullian, **De Spectaculis**, 7-8).

"The same Augustuses to Proculus, Perfect of the City. Contests in the circuses shall be prohibited on the festal Days of the Sun [Latin: *Festis solis diebus*], except on the birthdays of Our Clemency, in order that no concourse of people to the spectacles may divert men from the reverend mysteries of the Christian law*" – April 17, 392 (CT: 2.8.20; English: Pharr, p 44; Latin: Haenel, p 211).

*This decree contains a clear reference to Christian law (Latin: *Christianae legis*). During the reign of Theodosius, the term 'Christian' was defined as Roman Catholic (see CT: 16.1.2 above). The law allows us to see that the birthdays of the Imperial reign were considered more important than Sunday rest. Just seven years later, another law affirmed this ruling (CT: 2.8.23). However, just

ten years later, the Imperial attitude towards this subject changed.

“Emperors Honorius and Theodosius (II) Augustuses to Jovius, Praetorian Prefect. On the Lord’s Day, which is commonly called the Day of the Sun, We permit absolutely no amusements to be produced, even if by chance as the ends of the years return upon themselves the day should be the anniversary of the day when the beginning of Our reign shone forth, or if it should be the day to which are assigned the solemn rites that are due to the birthday” – April 1, 409 (CT: 2.8.25; Pharr, p 45).

In this law, no amusements or spectacles were allowed to be produced on Sunday even if the anniversaries of the Emperors’ reigns fall on Sunday or their birthdays. This shows us that the concept of Sunday rest had even greater weight than it did years before.

Other Sunday laws were adopted which governed human behavior. In 425, the first Roman law was promulgated that labeled Sunday the first day of the week. It also commanded people to worship on certain days each year, including Sunday, the birthday of Christ, Epiphany, Roman Passover, and Pentecost (CT: 15.5.5). More rules governing Sunday observance were enacted in 469 (CJ: 3.12.9); this last Roman law imposed harsher penalties for violations of Sunday rest.

Conclusion about Sabbath and Sunday Laws

Sabbath laws in the Roman Empire protected the existing practice of Sabbath observance for the Jewish people (and by extension Christians). It was not imposed on other people. Furthermore, there was no need for a body of laws to define what keeping the Sabbath really meant – the Bible already provided this instruction.

Conversely, Sunday laws in the Roman Empire were imposed on everyone else. If anything, these laws refute the notion that Sunday observance/rest was an entrenched, established, and developed practice in the fourth century. If the greatest portion of Christians in the Roman world were already keeping ‘Sunday’, then why were rules for its observance constantly adjusted over a hundred-year period and subsequently imposed on others? Because it was not universally observed by Christians.

The whole concept of Sunday as a rest day for Christian gathering is not found in the New Testament. These Roman Sunday laws are proof that it took time to develop the idea of what it really meant to keep Sunday – was it a day of leisure, rest, celebration, or all the above? The Roman church developed this concept partly using Roman law (Catholic Encyclopedia: Canon Law). The Sabbath continued to be observed by most Christians in the East for centuries in the future.

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.

Sources Cited:

Catholic Encyclopedia. Article: Canon Law.

Codex Justinian. English. Blume, Fred. Ed. Bruce W. Frier. The Codex Justinian. Vol. 1. Cambridge University Press. 2016. pp 645-647.

Codex Theodosianus. English. Translated by Joseph Cullen Ayers. A Source Book For Ancient Church History. New York. Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913. pp 367-368.

Codex Theodosianus. English. Translated by Clyde Pharr. The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions. Princeton University, 1952. pp 44, 45, 209, 229-230, 300, 432, 433.

Codex Theodosianus. Latin. Edited by Gustavus Haenel. Novellae Constitutiones Imperatorum Theodosii II., Valentinianii III., Maximi, Severi, Anthemii. Ad XLII Librorum Manuscriptorum Et Priorum Editionum Fidem Recognovit Et Annotatione Critica Instuxit. Lipsiensis, 1841-1842. Vol 2: pp 210, 211. Vol 3: p 1071.

Odom, Robert L. Sabbath and Sunday in Early Christianity. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association. 1977. p 292.

Sozomen. Church History, 7.12, 18-19. Translated by Chester D. Hartranft. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second series, Vol. 2. Buffalo, NY: The Christian Literature Co., 1890. p 383.



MANY ARE ...

DECEIVED

Darl Arbogast

Many people have above average love for others as they give aid to them: specifically for the poor, the down trodden, those that are neglected and have health problems, etc. However, for example, many do not rise to the level of Mother Teresa. She gave service to humanity well above the care-giving clinics and she made no claims of being Christian. Matthew 7:11 NKJ – Jesus said, *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

In contrast our President, Joe Biden, and his views on caring for humanity and human rights are apparently nonexistent. Joe tells us he is a devout Catholic but supports baby killing (abortion). His church has denied Joe of taking Communion because of his funding for the slaughter of babies. Joe has deceived himself, ignoring his conscience, heart and mind into his very soul snubbing God's sixth Commandment. Deuteronomy 5:17 NKJ - *'you shall not murder.'*

In my opinion, Covid-19 is God's judgment on the world for murdering the unborn. Every Country is involved in this horrendous act for whatever reason.

Donald Trump and Mike Pence are both against abortion and God allowed them to proceed with a vaccine developed to curb this dreadful disease thereby helping the whole world.

Now we have turned the page and Joe Biden is in the White House eagerly opening the southern border for illegal migrants to come into our land. This man, in my opinion, is insane with his funding of murdering babies and opening up our land for more drugs, more crime, more cost for the taxpayers, allowing as much destruction and lawlessness

to be visited upon the American people as possible.

God judges nations by their leaders; God help us Christians as we pray for mercy for our nation.

As written in Psalms 139:13,14 NKJ - *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.*

When a human sperm touches an egg in the body of a woman there is a bolt of electricity that occurs and knocks a hole in the egg the size of the point of a needle, large enough to allow the sperm to go inside. The hole closes as the sperm enters the egg, this begins a process known as conception. From that point on any outside interference to terminate this process is robbing a life; even the pill called 'morning after pill' is considered the same. God calls it murder, no excuses and no exceptions.

It makes me sick at heart knowing thousands, even millions of our people are deceived into performing abortions, killing millions of our babies in our country alone. 55,000,000 babies have been aborted since 1973, these are the ones we know of! What does God think of our nation? On judgment day what will it be like to stand before Christ guilty of what has been done, we can't go back and undo murder. 2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJ - *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

Jeremiah 32:35 NKJ - *And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Judah was taken to Babylon for 70 years as judgment for passing their children*

through the fire to Molech).

People have been deceived regarding abortion, which makes one wonder what other deceptions have been believed? We have all been deceived and were oblivious at one time regarding the actual truths of God's Word. Because of lack of knowledge people are oblivious of what God wants them to do; most of the time they do the opposite of what the Commandments say.

For example it is written in Jeremiah chapter 10 that God commands us not to learn the ways or customs of the heathen. Jeremiah 10:1 thru 5 NKJ - *Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the heathen; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple. They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good."*

How many professing Christians do you know that actually practice this heathen custom? Nearly all Catholics and Protestants defy these God given instructions.

How many professing Christians do you know that practice and obey the fourth commandment? Exodus 20:8 thru 11 NKJ - *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

Exodus 23:12 NKJ - *Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.*

Exodus 31:13 thru 17 NKJ - *"Speak also to the chil-*

Interested in Membership?

BSA membership carries with it the privilege of electing BSA Officers. Members are also entitled to free postage on all orders for literature.

Supporting the Bible Sabbath Association through your membership helps promote the Sabbath, and co-operation among Sabbath-keeping groups.

Following are the membership levels:

- (1) **Regular Members** (annual membership fee is \$35 for an individual or \$60 for a family),
- (2) **Institution membership**, (\$100 fee),
- (3) **Lifetime Members** (those who have contributed at least \$700 in one year and request a life membership),
- (4) **Bridge Builder Membership**, (\$100 fee),
- (5) **Pillar Membership**, (\$200 fee).

Bridge Builder and Pillar Membership bring with them the opportunity to participate in other of the Bible Sabbath Association's goals of promoting God's Sabbaths and fellowship between Sabbath Keeping Brethren.

Contact BSA via e-mail at office@biblesabbath.org for more information.

You can also pay for membership at our web site, www.biblesabbath.org, using credit cards (handled by PayPal) or by writing to us at PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

Please join us in our efforts to spread the message of God's Sabbath rest and mutual cooperation of the brethren to the rest of the world.



should tell us to keep the Commandments of God. I John 3:4 NKJ - *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.* Romans 4:15 NKJ - *because the law brings about wrath (punishment); for where there is no law there is no transgression.*

How many professing Christians believe they are going to heaven when they die? Most if not all Catholics and Protestants have that belief in defiance of what is written in John 3:13 NKJ - *No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is,*

the Son of Man who is in heaven.

It is written in Acts 24:15 NKJ - *I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.* In John 5:28,29 NKJ - *Jesus said, Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.* Daniel 12:2 NKJ - *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Genesis 2:7 NKJ - *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.* Genesis 3:19 NKJ - *In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."*

Read Ezekiel 37 for more understanding. If a person is in heaven as many claim, how could that person be resurrected out of the ground as stated in scripture?



dren of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"

One major sin is transgressing the Sabbath law — the fourth commandment.

Nearly all Catholics and Protestants defy God's fourth commandment and assemble for worship on the first day of the week. Do they believe they can force God to accept that rebellious behavior?

There is enough information by just reading the Ten Commandments that our nation has a lot to repent of; years ago our nation lost its way. Even if God did not call some of us right now common sense

End Time *Prophecy*

Tommy Willis

Many students of end-times prophecy are having chills down their spine as the current events unfold. The global scenario drifts into more unrest. Some feel we are moving toward a one world government, and one world economy. Prophetic speculation is running wild. Others feel more serious catastrophes are looming. There's often a theme of three things with those who write about history: internal turmoil, economic chaos, and war. After the atomic bomb was used, Albert Einstein said: "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe." He saw the danger mankind is in because human nature hasn't changed; and knew it was just a matter of time. The coronavirus has many talking about more serious plagues, nuclear war, or some other catastrophe. As certain prophecies seem relevant, many Christians are wondering if we are approaching the "birth pains."

Catastrophes can often help us see all our petty differences for what they are. We get down to matters of life and death. All the finger pointing can be seen for what it is. But what is the big picture? We all die. All will stand before judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10). And then we won't be pointing the finger of judgment at others. But we make this mistake too often today. We have to learn what Jesus said: "He who is without sin can cast the first stone." Once you find out can't throw stones, you will stop picking them up. I had to learn this the hard way. We need to come to see the biggest enemy is when we look in the mirror, not some outside threat, because once you are walking with God, and stay with Him, you are safe, even if you lose your physical life.

Even in normal times, we don't have long; a few

short decades, and many of us before that, in a few short years or days, because God does not promise us tomorrow. We fail to see the vanity of it all. That's why when we focus on how the Bible tells us we are like mist that is soon gone; we can then focus on what's most important. Catastrophe can have a way to help us focus.

As turmoil builds in the world, and we try to make the link to prophecy we feel is valid, we often talk about what will happen a year or two from now, when we don't even know if our city or nation is going to remain intact a few weeks from now. As one who lived through Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, I became more aware of how fragile and temporary civilization is. My home was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. One day I had a home; the next day my home and most of the city was under water. I saw houses in the middle of the street. Some houses were a block from where they once stood. Others were completely gone. I could spend a page on the catastrophic scenes that I saw.

To make a long story short, I wound up buying a small tent at Walmart, and this was my home for the next three months. And what I went through with Katrina was minor compared to what many had to deal with. Some people spent months sleeping in their cars. Suicide rates went up. And they were still finding bodies in New Orleans weeks and even months after the storm. Your whole city can be wiped out before you know it. God does not promise us tomorrow. It makes me think of the Scripture that says: "Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 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 4:13-15) NIV.

Years ago I had an End Time conversation with a brother in Christ; and we both agreed that time was short, and that the end of the age was drawing near, because we felt all the signs were there. About a year and a half after that conversation, he found out he had cancer, and he only lived a few months more before passing on. Time is short for us all. We look to what will happen concerning the end time; and we should be aware of that. But our personal "end time" could happen soon. I've known other brethren who have died with cancer at an early age. Others have died in car accidents. How can you not think about the brevity of life and our soon coming "end-time" when you meditate on these matters? Yet, many do their best to not think about it. But scripture says: "*LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered — how fleeting my life is.*" (Ps 39:4) NLT.

Therefore, Scripture reminds us about how it will all be over soon. Like the above Scriptures tell us, we are merely a mist, we will soon be gone. But we seem live in denial of death to one degree or another. There is a reason that Scripture tells us to be aware of this, so that we will focus on what is important with this brief life—so that we will spend that brief time drawing closer to God. (James 4:8).

I became even more aware of the brevity of life because of being caretaker for my invalid dad. And for me, it was something that God used to bring me back from drifting from Him; because in the years right before I was moved to take care of my dad, I had drifted from God. And during the time I took care of my dad at home, as his dementia got worse, and was bedridden in diapers, I was under so much stress with my own health problems, that I thought I was going to die. I became very aware of not only my dad's soon coming demise, but my own as well. I kept increasing my heart medications to slow my heart rate down. It was the most agonizing situation I had ever experienced. Here I was facing my own "catastrophe", and it was used to help me focus on what is most important—my relationship with Jesus Christ.

I pleaded with God. And He used the scripture in Revelation 3:18-20, to have me come to see that I had become lukewarm. And through repentance, God restored me to a proper prayer life and a restored me to a better relationship with Jesus Christ. These messages to the churches are for us today also.

Brethren, please take the time to examine your life in the light of these Scriptures. I'm not sharing with you something that I haven't been guilty of failure with myself; and God had to use these same messages to the churches, along with suffering, to get my attention. You may have things happen in your life like I did, with suffering to get your attention. Since our hearts are very deceitful, we often think we are someplace we are not. You may even be very busy with your religious pursuits in thinking you are doing God's work, when in reality, you may have lost your first love and will need to repent and get back to God (Rev 2:3-5). And we often stay busy with religious activity to keep from ex-



aming ourselves. Slow down. Spend time with God.

It was when I realized God was with my dad and me, was when I had joy in serving my dad. Even though the physical ailments stayed, God's peace had me rise above the physical torments to serve my dad with joy, as spiritual healing took place; the fire within healed me spiritually.

The looming catastrophic events that some are now voicing could come soon. Let us keep in mind what Jesus said: *"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."* (Luke 21:36) KJV.

When we quote "watch and pray always," too often we focus on the "watch" part and we let the "prayer" part drift into the background. Watching our spiritual state is more important than watching world events. I'm not trying to suggest that we should not be watching world events, because God wants us to be aware of what is going on around us; and we should watch. Yet, we can be watching world events diligently, and yet still be drifting from God if we are not praying as we should. But most brethren are so caught up in the rat race, they are too distracted for the prayer life necessary. Get out the rat race brethren; learn to live as simple as possible. Anything that is distracting us from spending sufficient time with God needs to be put away.

Some of the events in this article that are coming on mankind are horrible to contemplate. But it's a reality of the times we are living in. Jesus said men's hearts will be failing them for fear at what is coming on the earth.

But the thing to keep in mind is that Jesus can keep us safe from that fear. *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33) NIV. We can have His peace in the midst of a troubled world if we will seek God and pray as we should.

But so many are caught up in the rat race that they are too distracted to have the prayer life necessary;

and they may not make it in the days ahead. Jesus told us much prayer will be necessary. Do not think you stand firm in these matters, lest you fall, because we cannot make it on our own strength. I came across a quote from a Greek poet that can apply here: "All arrogance will reap a harvest rich in tears."

We need to be building up our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask Him to take you by the hand and lead you through the Scriptures. Spend much time in prayer, and get to know Him personally. Get your foundation and trust down in Him. And as this old world gets shaken as Scripture says it will, everything around us can fall; but we can still be standing if we get grounded in Jesus Christ. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling..." (Jude 24).

Brethren, I'm not trying to suggest that we should stop studying prophecy; I still study it; but let us keep in mind that we don't need to know every detail about the future. Many spend endless hours studying prophecy, when they would be much better off spending that time in prayer. No matter how bad it gets in the days ahead, even if we lose our physical life, we will be safe if we learn to stay with God in our prayers. Don't let the distractions of the world take you away from God. Jesus warns us of this and tell us not to let the cares of this life distract us but to watch and pray always. Study these verses in different translations (Luke 12:34-36), and pray much as Jesus told us to do.

"One day Jesus told his disciples a story to illustrate their need for constant prayer and to show them that they must keep praying until the answer comes...But the question is: When I, the Messiah, return, how many will I find who have faith and are praying?" (Luke 18:1, 8) TLB.



TWO TREES AND THE SABBATH SINGULARITY VERSUS DUALITY

(Part 1 of 2)

Bill & Karen Bishop

Exodus 20:11 states the Fourth Commandment as follows:

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.

This Fourth Commandment speaks of the Sabbath being hallowed. In fact, it is still observed as a sacred day for those of us who hold closely to Torah. Yet others fail to see its beauty or its significance today. "Why would we do that today," they say, "when the Law was nailed to the cross?"

Instead of pursuing the normal discourse to explain why Believers should keep, remember, and guard the Sabbath today, perhaps it is even more useful to zero-in on a commonly overlooked and very elemental misconception of the modern church that is largely responsible for many people NOT keeping Sabbath. We present a full discourse regarding this basic problem in our two-volume book set called *Two Trees, Two Kingdoms, Two Kings*. Here we will attempt to bring you an extremely abbreviated version of our premise. We hope to expand on it with a series of articles further clarifying this perplexing stumbling-block that today's mainline church faces in its attempt to be "godly" through its own understanding.

The problem began in Eden. Yes, it has been around for that long. Until we comprehend the gravity of the two trees in the garden, we are sitting

ducks for deception. Because the mainline church typically fails to discern the singularity of the Tree of Life and the duality of the Tree of Knowledge of Good AND Evil (or the Tree of Death), they have grown away from the true Sabbath, and other aspects of Torah instruction.

The Tree of Life provides the exclusive essence for total holiness. Its singular thread is that of Life – brought to man in the form of Torah. There is no deviation in this tree. Torah is the embodiment of Truth that comes to man from the Tree of Life. Y'shua says the Word of Yah is Truth (John 17:17). He also says that He Himself is Truth (John 14:6). Likewise, He refers to the Holy Spirit as being Truth, with the role of leading us to all Truth (John 16:13).

Setting the Trinity issue aside, we are merely trying to develop a thread of unity to coordinate the different sacred manifestations of Divine Truth provided for man relative to the passages in our Biblical text. It is specifically stated in the Bible that the Son sent the Spirit from the Father (John 15:26), and He calls this Holy Spirit the "Spirit of Truth." This same Holy Spirit now abides within those who have been adopted into the family of the Father through belief in His Son (1 Corinthians 3:16), and writes Torah on our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Therefore, you might say that the Father provided the written Torah in our Bibles. Y'shua provided the living Torah in His interaction with man, and the Holy Spirit provides the indwelling Torah on a continual basis. The Bible repeatedly references these



worldly standards. The spirit of this world has its version of truth too, but it is a subjective truth based on human reasoning that is tainted from the knowledge of the defiled tree of death.

This tree brings forth the manifestation not only of horrific evil and perversion, but also a secular humanistic version of goodness that too many have errantly come to view as the

three manifestations of Truth impartation, and it seems clear that each of them brings forth and maintains the fullness of the essence of Divine Truth from the Tree of Life itself.

The Tree of Life is singular in nature, being exclusively holy. The goodness of this tree is above and beyond the comprehension of fallen man. The Holy Spirit associated with the Tree of Life maintains the “set apart” holy standards of the Most High. These holy standards are not (indeed cannot be) compromised by the ways of the World, but continue to stand tall as being Divinely decreed throughout time. This Tree of Life Truth is objective in its singular perfection.

Conversely, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is dualistic in nature. The knowledge of this tree brings forth BOTH good AND evil. The Tree of Knowledge is worldly in nature. It is a defiled tree that produces only defiled fruit. The spiritual entity associated with this tree is the spirit of this world (Ephesians 2:2), and it determines what is supposedly good and what is evil according to humanistic

goodness of “God.” Therein is the fatal flaw.

In Part 2 we will begin to see that both the “good” and the “evil” factions of this knowledge abide in death, BOTH being foreign to the perfect holiness of the Tree of Life. Within this worldly system the Divine Truth that is embodied in Torah is maligned, and people conform to a belief that no longer sees the sanctity of Sabbath or the necessity to observe it. It is when a Believer begins to grasp and cherish Divine Torah Truth that realignment starts to occur to the holy essence of the Tree of Life.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Until next time, be blessed and be a blessing!



Revelations of a Seasoned Rockhound

Paul Syltie

My wife and I have searched for precious and semi-precious stones ever since we were married back in 1967. In fact, on our honeymoon in Idaho we searched for such stones along the Salmon River and in other such places, and despite being novice rockhounds we found a few prizes that grace our collection even today. It was a really fun adventure, complete with confrontations with rattlesnakes and hailstorms! We have built upon this hobby ever since, and now have an entire room in our house dedicated to beautiful rocks, crystals, and minerals from all over the world.

This matter of seeking after valuable treasures is not a subject to be taken lightly, for even our heavenly Father is, in a very real sense, a rockhound. Take a look at what is said in Exodus 19:5-6.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure [sequllah, “wealth, as shut up”] to Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine, and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

In fact, in the very beginning of God’s word we read, *“Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good, Bdellium and the onyx stone are there”* (Genesis 2:10-12).

Notice that onyx is given a prominent position in the text, and even Bdellium may refer to precious stones as well, as stated in Web-



ster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary: “1. (n.) An unidentified substance mentioned in the Bible (Gen. ii. 12, and Num. xi. 7), variously taken to be a gum, a precious stone, or pearls, or perhaps a kind of amber found in Arabia.”

Add to this the fact that when the Eternal characterizes the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:19-20, He shows the walls of the city adorned with all types of precious stones.

The first foundation: jasper

The second foundation: sapphire

The third foundation: chalcedony

The fourth foundation: emerald

The fifth foundation: sardonyx

The sixth foundation: sardius

The seventh foundation: chrysolite

The eighth foundation: beryl

The ninth foundation: topaz

The tenth foundation: chrysoprase

The eleventh foundation: jacinth

The twelfth foundation: amethyst.

There is some question as to what each of these stones actually is, but it is safe to say that they were beautiful and highly symbolic of the character of the Eternal Living God who made them. Moreover, the breastplate of the high priest contained an array of twelve precious stones in settings of gold, each one with the name of a tribe of Israel. This “breastplate of judgment” (Exodus 28:15) was to be made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, a two-piece square of a span

[zereth, "the spread of the fingers," about 7 inches], with four rows of stones (Exodus 28:17-20). The Urim and Thummim were folded inside this piece.

Row 1: sardius topaz, emerald

Row 2: turquoise, sapphire, diamond

Row 3: jacinth, agate, amethyst

Row 4: beryl, onyx, jasper

Which stone identified which tribe is a matter of conjecture, but my belief is that the twelve foundations of Revelation 21:19-20 correspond to those twelve breastplate stone, since the twelve tribes of Israel were to form the basis of the priestly government that would overspread the earth, as expressed in the blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In Genesis 49, each of the twelve sons of Jacob is described in some detail as to its national character as a people in the end time. Moreover, Israel as a whole was to be an example or model in governance and the expression of God's law and character to all nations (Exodus 12:49; Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:29). See especially Deuteronomy 4:5-7.

"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?"

The ephod for the priest was to have finely woven and colorful material as was the breastplate, with an onyx stone on each shoulder of the ephod having engraved on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel — six on one stone and six on the other. Here again we see the use of precious stones to display the names of the twelve tribes. The throne of God

is pictured as a sapphire stone (Ezekiel 1:22, 28; 10:1; Exodus 24:10), and the living creatures had *"wheels and their workings ... like sparkling beryl"* (Ezekiel 1:16; 10:9). Even Lucifer was decked out in precious stones, at least before he sinned: the sardius, topaz, diamond, beryl, onyx, jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald in settings of gold (Ezekiel 28:12-13).

Many other scriptures also speak of precious stones. Here is a sampling:

Exodus 24:10. *"... and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself."*

1 Kings 10:2. *"So she [the Queen of Sheba] came to Jerusalem with a very large retinue, with camels carrying spices and very much gold and precious stones."*

1 Chronicles 20:2. *"David took the crown of their king from his head, and he found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it; and it was placed on David's head."*

1 Chronicles 29:2. *"Now with all my ability I have provided for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the bronze for the things of bronze, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, onyx stones and inlaid stones, stones of antimony and stones of various colors, and all kinds of precious stones and alabaster in abundance."*

Job 28:16. *"It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx, or sapphire."*

Job 28:18. *"Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned, and the acquisition of wisdom is above that of pearls."*

Job 28:19. *"The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold."*

Proverbs 3:15. *"She [wisdom] is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire compares with her."*

Proverbs 8:11. *"For wisdom is better than jewels,*

and all desirable things cannot compare with her."

Proverbs 31:10. *"An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels."*

Isaiah 54:11. *"O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. Moreover, I will make your battlements of rubies, and your gates of crystal, and your entire wall of precious stones."*

Jeremiah 17:1. *"The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart and on the horns of their altars"*

Daniel 11:38. *"But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures."*

1 Corinthians 3:12. *"Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw"*

Revelation 4:3. *"And He who was sat there was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance."*

We can safely say that almighty God is highly interested in precious, beautiful stones.

What About Us?

It turns out that we saints also are likened to jewels, both today and at the resurrection. Regarding our present status, notice I Peter 2:4-6:

"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also mentioned in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.'"

Notice what God says concerning our future

Enjoying the articles...?

You can aid the BSA effort to promote the Sabbath and a Spirit of brother-hood among all who keep God's Sabbath by becoming a **BRIDGE BUILDER** or a **PILLAR** with the BSA? Besides the monthly or annual membership dues which you can find inside the front cover, you can also help with various functions designed to help bring a fellowship of brethren across denominational lines. Some of the opportunities are: Advise and/or consult with the BSA Board of Directors; visiting and interacting with other Sabbatarian fellowships; speaking on behalf of the BSA; Promotion and/or distribution of BSA materials and services; and assisting with this magazine, the BSA Facebook page, Twitter and other social media on projects defined by the Board of Directors.



status through the prophet Malachi in Malachi 3:16-17:

“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them. So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. ‘They shall be Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘on the day that I make them My jewels [segullah, “wealth”]. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’”

Such a prophecy for the elect is an amazing admission, showing that the saints are transformed to jewels even in this life, and even more so when they are made spirit. What an incredible present and future God has given us! With God’s spirit in us, motivating us to display the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), we have shed our former selves, the plain, ugly rocks found on the ground in a desert wilderness, or dug up from a pit or quarry, covered with soil, dirty and shapeless, not yet cut and polished.

Is not this the state in which our Creator called us: sinful, nondescript, rough, and formless? Surely such is the case, as we read in I Corinthians 6:9-11:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such

were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified.”

Notice also Ephesians 2:1-3:

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

I have often pondered why it is so fulfilling to work with rocks and minerals. One finds a plain, nondescript rock in some remote desert place like Wyoming or Idaho. You know the rock might have potential because others have identified ones like them in the area that might have gemstone potential. You may have to dig for the rocks, sometimes several feet down, but there you find them, dirty and formless.

You squirt some water from a spray bottle to wash away some of the soil ... and lo and behold a few promising patterns appear on the exterior, perhaps even a concentric set of lines indicating there might be an agate inside. You put it in a bag and take it home. You ponder the fate of these rocks perhaps as God did His people Israel.

“Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: ‘Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your own blood, “Live!” Yes, I said to you in your blood, “Live!” I made



not happen, nor be'" (Ezekiel 16:3-14).

You take the rock out of the bag and wash it free of soil, then clamp it in the rock saw. For 20 minutes the diamond saw blade chews away at the rock, and the stone finally is cut. The pattern revealed by the cutting oil on the freshly cut surface reveals a gorgeous, multi-colored banded agate. You wipe off the oil, and take it to the polishing wheel. First a coarse grit hones the surface,

then a medium grit, and finally a fine grit. Then the stone is held down upon the polishing wheel, and after a minute of polishing you wash off the polishing compound.

The nondescript, ugly rock has been miraculously transformed into a beautiful agate! What seemed impossibly decrepit has become a museum piece in your collection. Out of all the stones that were picked up and brought home to process, only a few turned out to be beautiful.

"Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord 'for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding'" (Jeremiah 3:14-15).

It is common for the rockhound to pick up bags full of stones from a location, all of them potentially beautiful specimens when cut and polished. Yet, once they are all cut, only a very few will display the colors and patterns fit for the display case. Notice the parallel to what Jesus told the workers in the vineyard after some had complained that they had worked longer hours than the late-comers, but received the same pay.

"Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not

you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare. When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,' says the Lord God. 'Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful and succeeded to royalty. Your face went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,' says the Lord God. 'But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. Such things should

lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen” (Matthew 20:14-16).

Notice also Matthew 22:11-14, the concluding statements of the wedding supper for the king’s son:

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.’”

While a rockhound who collects pails full of stones that, when cut and polished, may reveal a beautiful gem, only a few of those selected rough stones will reveal the qualities of a beautiful agate, amethyst, or carnelian. Most will have a nondescript, plain interior, good for nothing. Likewise, among humankind our Creator looks upon the interior qualities of the heart — the mind, attitudes, and character — to select those whom He has chosen from before the foundations of the world to become His sons (Ephesians 1:4-5), those who will be called by the Father to come to Jesus Christ (John 6:44).

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at the appearance or at the physical stature, because I have refused him For the Lord does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’” (I Samuel 16:7).

These are the precious stones that will comprise the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Zion that will be manifested in the new age. Read the remarkable section of Revelation where one of the seven angels that poured out the last seven plagues told John, *“Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9).* Thereupon John was carried to a great and high mountain, from which he saw the holy

Jerusalem, having the following qualities in Revelation 21.

1 Light like a most precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal (verse 11)

1 The wall of the city was of jasper, and the city was comprised of pure, transparent gold (verse 18)

1 The foundations of the wall were decorated with all sorts of precious stones (verses 19-20)

1 Each gate was a massive pearl (verse 21)

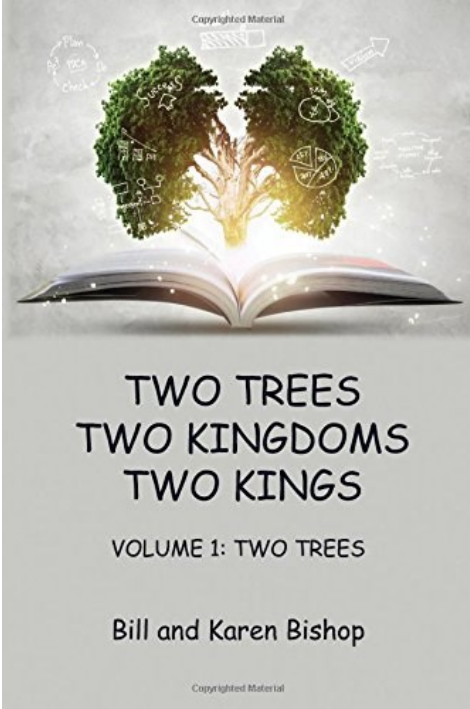
1 The street of the city was of pure, transparent gold (verse 21)

This city of precious stones, gold, and light defines “the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” That is us, the saints! See Revelation 19:7-9, where the resurrected saints, are given white linen to wear ... and they are the Lamb’s (Christ’s) wife!

It is clear that an interest in beautiful and precious rocks and gems involves much more than just a casual attraction to what is lovely in the natural world. This interest stems from a deep and profound appreciation of the Creator’s great plan and purpose for mankind, and especially for the elect, those chosen from before the foundation of the world to comprise the seat of Elohim’s government in the New Jerusalem.

Precious and beautiful gems have a whole lot to do with us saints, for even the stones on the breastplate of the high priest picture the twelve tribes of Israel who are fastened to the very breast of that representative of Jesus Christ ... figuratively sitting right upon His heart. We all ought to be rockhounds, as it were, and appreciate the beautiful gems that will adorn the heavenly city and will very likely adorn each one of us when we become eternal saints of the Most High!





Books to Awaken a Slumbering Faith!

Two trees in the Garden -
a choice to be made!

Two trees in the world today -
is it the same choice?

Two gospels -
is a counterfeit

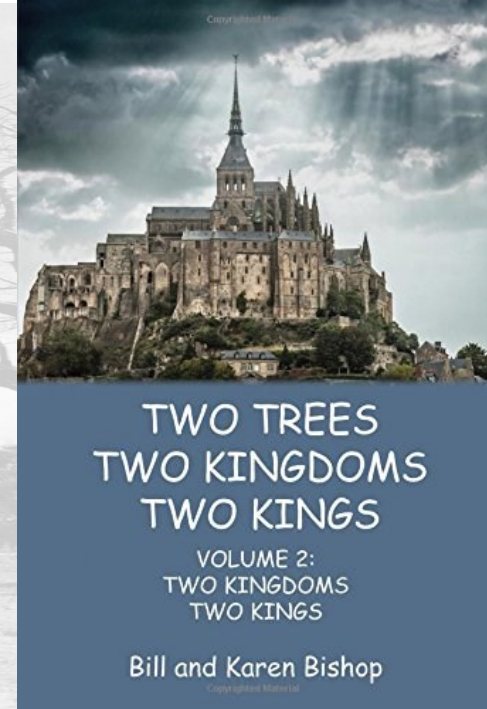
shaping our belief system?

Two directions -
one leading to life; the other to death.

How does one distinguish Truth and integrate it into one's belief system?

To find out more please go to:

returningtothegarden.com



Letters to the Editor

After reading the final installment of "The Sabbath Calendar in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible," I felt compelled to write as I also have been checking out our Heavenly Father's Calendar. The author references the four seasons when, in fact, scripture denotes two—summer and winter. Genesis 1:14 may not directly specify the moon, but it is clear the seasons involve the moon from harmonizing them all throughout and our Father MADE the moon as well. From what I've read, He does nothing for naught. So, given those two scenarios, there is a point (a matter of seconds or minutes) that the sun crosses the equator and it is the same moment in time for the entire earth. It does this twice a year, changing from winter to summer and summer to winter. Likewise, there is a point (a matter of seconds or minutes) that the moon goes from one month to an-

other month, and likewise, it is the same moment in time for the entire earth. Just like on man's timepiece (the clock), 11:59 PM is today, but 12:01 AM is tomorrow. So, if the sun rules the day (sunset starts the day, changes where you're at), and the moon rules the month (a period in time over the entire earth), would not the two combined rule the year (ie., sun crosses the equator for "summer" and next moon cycle for the month)? Seems simplistic. The author is correct this necessitates an added month but whether you add a week or a month, it is still adding to His calendar. Actually, if a month needs to be added, it is the Father who sets it, not man because He causes the two points referenced. I personally have a feeling when the two witnesses come, they will set us all straight in preparation for Messiah's return and we will probably ALL be wrong! May Yahuweh guide all to doing their best for Him! DJ

Do you like this magazine?

Would you like to help the BSA continue its work of proclaiming Jesus and all that He taught?

The BSA needs more partners like you to help continue and expand this ministry. Recently we had a group of 50 pastors in Africa request to be added to our TSS mailing list. To do this, we need more partners to help with the expense!

Please donate today so that we can expand and expose more brethren, and future brethren, to the teachings of the Bible and the idea that brotherhood is better than dogma!

Do You Want to Learn More About the Sabbath?

Are You or is Someone You Know New To the Sabbath?

The BSA now offers some free resources to help you learn about the Sabbath.

We have short, 1 or 2 minute audio clips on topics such as:

- “What is the Sabbath?” and
- “When is the Sabbath and How Can We Know?”

Free booklet download “A Beginner’s Guide to the Sabbath.”

1. Go to our website: www.biblesabbath.org
2. Click on the Products Menu
3. Click on the “Free Resources” Link



You can help support the cause, and help us continue to provide our magazine and

services without charge. Simply sign up your Amazon Smile account with the BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION named as your charity of choice.

Prices for products remain exactly the same, but Amazon will contribute 0.5% of the sale to your named chari-

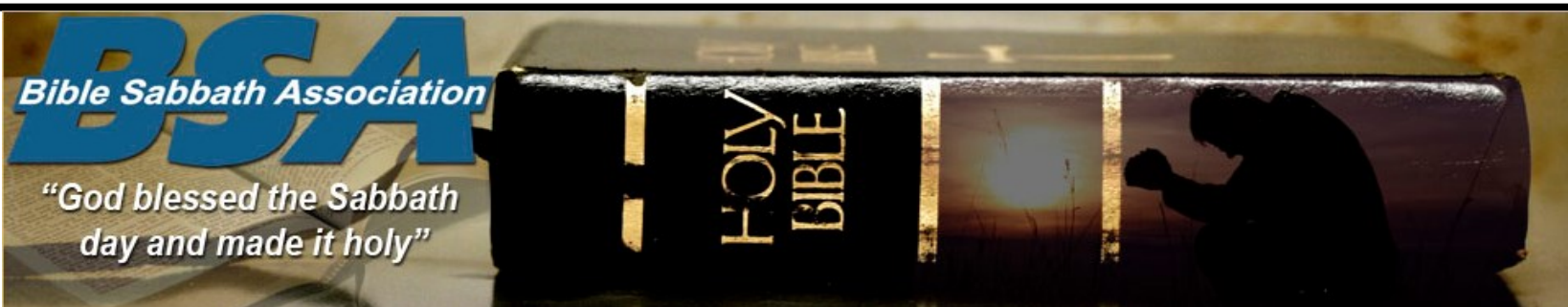
ty: BIBLE SABBATH ASSOCIATION.

Simply go to smile.amazon.com, log in to your account and choose us as your charity. Then, whenever you shop at Amazon, enter the site by going to smile.amazon.com, being sure that we are listed as the charity. Again, there is NO ADDITIONAL COST TO YOU! If you are going to purchase products on Amazon.com anyway, why not support this great work!

The Sabbath Sentinel

*A Bi-monthly Publication of
The Bible Sabbath Association
PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481 USA
Return Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
SAN DIMAS, CA
PERMIT NO. 410



Advertise in The Sabbath Sentinel

Classified ads (20% discount for second time, 30% thereafter) are available at the rate of \$1.00 per word (including each word and each group of numbers in the address; telephone numbers count as one word) for each issue in which the ad is published.

Display ads are available at \$150 per quarter page, \$250 per half page and \$400 per whole page for each issue the ad is published. Where possible your camera-ready copy will be utilized, or we will design your display ad for you for a one-time charge of \$200. Send copy for all ads and payment to The Bible Sabbath Association, PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481, USA.

Discounts: Advertise in the TSS Classified Ads section for more than one issue and receive discounts: \$1.00 per word 1st issue, 20% off for 2nd issue, and 30% off for subsequent times.

Ad copy without payment will not be accepted for publication. Deadline is two months prior to publication (i.e. if you want your ad to appear in the September/October issue we must receive it before July). BSA reserves the right to reject or edit any ad copy.

Publication does not imply endorsement by the Bible Sabbath Association or The Sabbath Sentinel, its editor or staff.