



The Sabbath Sentinel

**Mar.-Apr.
2023**

KINDNESS

Begins in the Home!

BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil"

The Sabbath Sentinel March/April, 2023

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Prayer - Having God's Ear

Would you like to know that when you talk to God that He is listening? Did you know that God, in His Scriptures, tells us exactly how we can cause this to come to pass?

God gives us guidelines showing us how it is that we can know that He hears us. Since we know that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), when He tells us how to be in contact with Him then we can know that He hears us.

Before we get into understanding how we can KNOW God is hearing us, let's first get into the guidelines for prayer left to us in the scriptures. We read the following in Ecclesiastes 5:2:

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

I've heard people claim that they spent X numbers of hours per day in prayer. But, is that what God wants from us? Solomon, graced with great wisdom by God, seems to indicate that we need to be judicious about the words we use when we pray, getting to the point.

Jesus, in Matthew 6:7 seems to indicate the same thing: *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

When we look at the great prayers of the Bible, we find that they are right to the point. Jabez (1 Chron. 4:10) prays for protection and blessings in a prayer that can be repeated in less than a minute.

Hannah desperately wanted a child and was blessed with Samuel after a short prayer we find in 1 Samuel 1:11. Jesus, when He raised Lazarus from the dead, spoke what appears to be only a few sentences to the Father before commanding Lazarus to come out of the grave.

Even in Jesus' agony in the Garden the day of His death we find that He prayed three times to the Father about what was coming. Each time the prayer was short and directly to the point.

There are many examples of prayer in the scripture for us

to read. Many of them led to miraculous intervention by God in response.

It is certainly permissible to reason with God in prayer. Moses gave us an example of this in Deuteronomy 9:25-29 where Moses reasoned with God against His wiping our Israel and starting over with the descendants of Moses. While Moses fell face down for 40 days and 40 nights, the actual prayer he uttered was very short. And, it reasoned with God that outsiders' view of God would be a negative one perhaps showing to the heathens that God was not as powerful as Moses knew Him to be.

Likewise, Jesus rationalized with the Father in the Garden, asking that the burden of his coming torment might be lifted from Him. It would, therefore, be proper for us to lift our prayers up that rehearse to our Father why what we ask would be a good thing.

How can we know that we have God's ear? We know that sinning puts up a barrier between us and God. We read this in Isaiah 59:1-2 where we are told:

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

The first thing we need to do if we want to be assured that God hears us is to quit sinning, to repent. Does this mean that God can't hear? That's not what is written, is it? It says that He WILL not hear, a conscious decision to ignore us if we deliberately continue in a sinful lifestyle. This is not to say that when we make a mistake and sin—as we will all do from time to time—that God no longer hears us. Instead, this is talking about a willful decision to ignore what God says and continue in sin.

To whom will God pay attention? We find the following in Isaiah 66:2 :

For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

If we want God to notice us, we certainly need to have that right attitude toward what God says to us in His Word. We need to be living our lives as if what God says really matters to us! Remember, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks! For our prayers to be effective, our heart needs to be right. That means that we filter our thoughts and actions through the guidance of God's Word.

Jesus gives us a form, or format, for prayer which we find in Matthew 6:5-13. We know this form as the "Our Father." Your author was educated in the Catholic school system where he was taught to pray the rosary. That practice is the repeating of ritual prayer much like a mantra. One of those repeated "prayers" was the "Our Father." However, it did not take many trips around the beads before it became apparent that praying the rosary was ineffective. Later in life I came to read Jesus' words in Matthew 6 which made it indubitably clear that rosary prayer was just a lot of vain babbling, having no meaning, which Jesus stated would not be heard.

While Jesus gave us the Our Father, it was for us to use as a form for our prayers. Broken down for us, that form prayer tells us to pray this way (not those words):

First, address the Father; doing so reminds of who it is that we are before. Secondly, ask that God send His Kingdom soon to end the rule of Satan. Next, give praise to Him for what He has done for you. Then, ask Him to provide your needs and if you have some special need, bring it up. That could include a request for God's intervention for someone else.

Don't forget to ask for mercy and forgiveness and acknowledge that you have forgiven those who have sinned against you. In fact, if we have not forgiven those who have sinned against us, Jesus warns us that we are wasting our time asking for forgiveness! He said in Matthew 5:23-24:

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Again, our hearts need to be right when we come before God if we want our prayers to be heard.

Remember that we are powerless except as God intervenes on our behalf. So we should ask for protection from the Evil One. In everything we ask, we need to de-

sire that God's will be done for everyone involved.

Finally, we close with praise for God, both for what He has done, and what He will do in response to our request. There is a good reason for memorizing the "Our Father," but it is not for mindless repetition or babbling. It is merely to give us a structure on which we add our words when we address the Father.

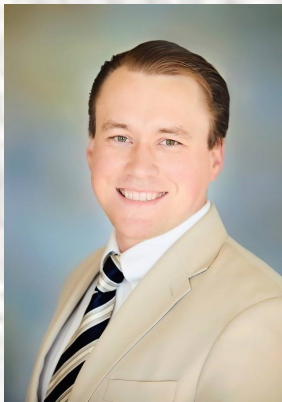
Some have adopted a "Name it and claim it" attitude toward prayer. They use John 15:16 in support of that idea where Jesus said, "*whatever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you.*"

But, if we can just name it and claim it, then Jesus and Paul didn't understand the purpose of prayer! How can we say that? It is because both Jesus and Paul had prayers where their desires were not met! Jesus prayed that the burden of His torture might be taken away. Paul prayed that his eyesight problem might be healed. Neither came to pass but both acknowledged God's will in their prayer. God is not our personal genie to fulfill our every wish simply because we ask of it. When we combine all of the relevant scriptures on prayer, we find that we need to ask everything within the constraint of God's will for us.

Knowing that all prayer may not be answered in the way we asked, we need to be attuned to possible answers from God in response to our request. God's answer could be to grant our request whether it is good for us or not. As such, the old adage "be careful what you pray for because you just might get it" should temper our requests. God also might respond with "No," or "Not yet." We won't know what the answer was unless we are paying attention to what God does. If we've made sure that God will hear us, then we can expect an answer of some kind. We can rest with assurance that God will do what is best for us, even if it is to teach us a much-needed lesson about our request or our attitude.

We can have God's ear if we are dedicated to the things that God wants us to be. Having God's ear means that the One who created all things, and keeps the universe in place by speaking that it be so, is listening to us! Now, THAT, my friends, is power. And, that power is as near as our going into our private place and asking God to hear us. God loves hearing from His Children. We should talk to Him as often as we can.





The Quartodeciman Controversy (Part 2)

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

In part one of this series, we looked at the first phase of the Quartodeciman Controversy. It started when the Church of Rome decided to depart from the celebration of the Biblical Passover (also called Pascha) under the influence of Gnostic heresies. As its replacement, they enacted a resurrection service on the Sunday after Passover. This change was an uphill battle as Christians even in Rome resisted this move for decades. In the second century, many Christians in the East still observed Passover as they received it from Jesus and the first disciples.

In part two of this series, we will discuss the next two phases of the Quartodeciman Controversy, which are often overlooked.

Confusion Abounds

The second phase of the Quartodeciman Controversy is confusion. Because the new 'Roman Pascha' mixed some human reason with some Biblical reasoning, variations of practice were developed by Christians in other areas. Pascha might be observed in a different way or date depending on the city or region.

An important early writing on this subject was composed by Anatolius of Alexandria. He was the bishop of Syrian Laodicea in the mid to late third century. In *The Paschal Canon*, he discussed the variation of calculations concerning the Paschal date.

Anatolius reasoned that Pascha should be celebrated anytime between the 14th day through the 20th day of the first lunar month so long as it was held on Sunday (which he called the Lord's Day). But other variations existed. One group he described might keep Pascha as late as the 22nd or 23rd day of the first month, which he found unacceptable. He also disagreed with another group who commemorated Pascha on the 21st day of the first month (or as late as the 21st day). Another source tells us that some Christians kept March 25 as Pascha every year (Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 50.1.6).

Moreover, he reasoned that it was necessary to calculate a range of dates on the Roman Calendar that Passover should fall within. According to his calculations, Pascha should always occur between March 27 and April 23. This cycle was not accepted by certain believers in north Africa. They asserted that Pascha had to occur between

March 22 and April 21. Why did this discrepancy exist?

In ancient times, the spring equinox was recognized as a different day in different places. The Roman Julian Calendar established March 25 to be the day of the equinox, but the Alexandrian Calendar viewed the equinox as March 21. Both groups thought Passover should fall after the equinox, but they disagreed as to which day was the equinox. So there were also differing views as to which dates on the Roman Calendar were acceptable to keep Pascha. To this day, the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches disagree on the calculation for Pascha.

If this wasn't confusing enough, there were also disagreements as to how many years into the future that the Pascha feast should be calculated. For instance, Anatolius argued for a nineteen-year time cycle. Hippolytus had a sixteen-year cycle, and Dionysius had an eight-year cycle (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6.22.1, 7.20). There is also the famous Hippolytus statue. On it is inscribed a 112-year cycle for keeping Pascha. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, an 84-year time cycle was also utilized in the early church (article: *Easter Controversy*).

At the very least, the writings of Anatolius and others give us an idea of the confusion initiated by the first phase of the controversy. No one could really agree on when to keep the new Pascha introduced by the Roman Church. In his discourse about this subject, Anatolius also mentioned the Quartodeciman Christians. He claimed that they did not have any difficulty with their observance. We have a quote from him below:

"...But nothing was difficult to them with whom it was lawful to celebrate the Passover on any day when the fourteenth of the moon happened after the equinox. Following their example up to the present time all the bishops of Asia—as themselves also receiving the rule from an unimpeachable authority, to wit, the evangelist John... were in the way of celebrating the Paschal feast, without question, every year, whenever the fourteenth day of the moon had come, and the lamb was sacrificed by the Jews..."

Why did the Quartodeciman Christians not have difficulty? Because they obeyed the Bible, not the commandments and doctrines of men. When the Bishops of Rome and other leaders tried to change the Scriptures, it caused confusion. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace..." (I Cor. 14:33).

Forced Conformity

The third phase of the Quartodeciman Controversy is Forced Conformity. In the fourth and fifth centuries, people were coerced to comply with the Roman Church practice concerning Pascha. Four methods were used in these efforts: 1) Church Councils, 2) Polemic Writings, 3) Roman Law, and 4) Force.

Constantine became Western Roman Emperor in 312 AD. The next year, he gave freedom of worship to all religions, including Christianity, with the Edict of Milan. During his reign, an opportunity arose for the Roman Church to assert its reckoning of Pascha above all others – but not in the way you might think.

Disputes erupted between the Roman Church and other Christian groups in the early fourth century regarding other issues. Church Councils were convened to resolve them. As part of this process, these groups appealed to Constantine to settle the disagreements. After all, he was the highest civil authority in the Western Roman world. This led to a series of unforeseen consequences that favored the Roman Church Pascha.

Church Councils

Arles (314 AD) – The Council of Arles was held in 314 AD. It was the third council convened to resolve the dispute between Donatists and the Roman Church. Arles was also the first Church Council with wide representation from across Western Europe. The first judgment issued by the Council was to impose upon all other regions the same Pascha observance as the Roman Church (canon one). This helps us understand its importance to their leaders. They desired to end the confusion by imposing their view on others.

Nicaea (325 AD) – In 324 AD, Constantine became ruler of the entire Roman Empire. The next year, he was again asked to resolve a dispute between the Roman Church and two other groups: the Meletians and Arians. The Council of Nicaea was convened to resolve these issues and others. At its conclusion, Constantine directed that a letter be sent to church leaders and compelled them to follow, among other things, the Roman reckoning for Pascha. It was left up to Church leaders to enforce its contents. This letter did not have the force of imperial law; Quartodeciman practice still existed in some areas of the east.

While these church councils were initially convened to resolve disputes, Roman Church leaders utilized them to force other groups to follow their Pascha practice. Other councils were held after Constantine's reign that increased the marginalization of Quartodeciman Christians. We have summarized three of them below.

Antioch (341 AD) – The first canon or decision of the council excommunicated from fellowship Quartodeciman Christians.

Laodicea (363/364 AD) – One of the goals of this council was to pronounce condemnation on Christians who practiced celebrations considered Jewish. In canon seven, Quartodecimans and other groups were pronounced as heretics. In canon twenty-nine, Christians were condemned for keeping the Sabbath. In canon thirty-seven, Christians were denounced for keeping feasts with Jewish people or heretics. This council expressed the views of the Roman Church and did not have the force of law behind it.

Constantinople (381 AD) – In canon seven, heretical groups were required to perform certain actions to be accepted back into fellowship with the 'Catholic' Church. Some were required to write down a renunciation of their beliefs and then be anointed by a priest. Others had to be rebaptized. Quartodeciman Christians could fall into either category.

Polemic Writers

Roman Church leaders also composed polemic writings and sermons against Quartodecimans. These works condemned them in various ways. For instance, Epiphanius (late 300s AD) and Theodoret (early to mid 400s AD) both denounced Quartodeciman practices as false doctrine (Panarion, 70.10.1-5; Compendium of Heretical Tales, 3.4). John Chrysostom (late 300s AD) pronounced eternal condemnation on those Christians who kept feasts such as Passover (Eight Homilies Against the Jews, 3.4.1, 3.5.6, 4.3.5, 4.4.1, 6.7.9). He was also very anti-Semitic.

Roman Laws

Another development which started during the reign of Constantine was the gradual intertwining of Roman Empire and Roman Church. Laws were enacted which favored and codified Roman Church practices, including their Pascha feast. By the end of the fourth century, this religious system became the preferred religion of Roman Emperors. Thus, Roman law became another method by which the Roman Pascha was imposed on others. There were two categories of laws pertaining to this subject.

The first category of laws curbed or prohibited public activities on the Roman Pascha. This granted their version of the feast recognition by the imperial government and throughout the empire. This forced the average person to be aware of the Roman Church Pascha because their activities were restricted. The bulk of these laws were enacted between 389-425 AD (see CT: 2.8.19, 2.8.21, 2.8.24, 9.35.4, 9.38.3-4, 9.38.8, 15.5.5).

The second category of Roman laws related to this subject were those which condemned heretics. As previously discussed, various fourth-century Church Councils started to define certain beliefs, practices, and groups as 'heretical.' As the Roman Church and Roman Empire became intertwined, punishments against groups deemed

'heretical' became codified into Roman law.

In 380 AD, the Roman Emperor Theodosius enacted a law that commanded all to follow the teachings of the Bishop of Rome (CT: 16.1.2). Those who did were called 'Catholic Christians'; all other groups were pronounced as heretical and insane. Other Theodosian laws relating to religion were fanatical.

For instance, non-Roman Church groups were banned from owning church buildings or assembling. Sometimes they chose the Paschal season to perform these confiscations! (see CT: 16.5.12 [383 AD]) Theodosius tried to intimidate people into conformity.

Other laws, both during and after his reign, prescribed exile and confiscation of goods upon non-conformist groups (see CT: 16.6.6, 16.10.24). In 425 AD, heretics were banned from the city of Rome (CT: 16.5.62). Anyone caught assisting non-conformist groups were fined and could be severely punished (CJ: 1.5.5 [428 AD]). This second category of laws took civil protections away from groups considered heretical.

Force

The early Christian historian Sozomen wrote that Theodosius chose not to enforce the harshest laws against non-conformist groups (Church History, 7.12). He hoped to persuade people to the Roman Catholic cause through intimidation rather than force. Despite this laxity in enforcement, his laws established a dangerous precedent. After his reign, we have at least two recorded instances where certain punishments prescribed by Roman law were carried out.

The first of these came from John Chrysostom, a virulent anti-Semitic Roman Catholic leader of that time (briefly discussed above). He was also the bishop of Constantinople from 398-403. He was deposed for his violent mistreatment of other groups, including Quartodeciman Christians. Socrates Scholasticus recorded: "Others, however, asserted that John had been deservedly deposed, because of the violence he had exercised in Asia and Lydia, in depriving the Novatians and Quartodecimans of many of their churches..." (Church History, 6.19).

Another example of this violent behavior was exhibited by Nestorius, who was the archbishop of Constantinople from 428-431. His tenure started the same year that a repressive anti-heresy law was enacted (CJ: 1.5.5). He supposedly received a prophetic message from 'God' that the emperor would be given heaven and victory over the Persians if he purged the empire of heretics. Immediately after this message, the audience erupted into a frenzy and burned down a non-Catholic place of worship.

He also persecuted Quartodeciman Christians in Asia Minor. Apparently, he caused people in other cities to be put to death! His aggressive rhetoric may have incited

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mob violence against them. Socrates related the following concerning these events: "...With what calamities he visited the Quartodecimans throughout Asia, Lydia, and Caria, and what multitudes perished in a popular tumult of which he was the cause at Miletus and Sardis, I think proper to pass by in silence..." (ibid, 7.29).

While unconscionable, the actions of John Chrysostom and Nestorius followed established Roman Law towards non-conformists. Other such incidences may have occurred. These violent acts were a by-product of the intertwining of Roman Church and Roman State.

Another point to be emphasized from these sources is that Quartodeciman practice still existed in the fifth century. This means that the group did not instantly disappear during previous times. Due to the pressure from Church Councils, Polemic Writings, Roman Law, and Force, Quartodeciman Christians were reduced to a small minority. Their civil rights were taken from them. Being involved with or connected to the group became dangerous.

Quartodeciman Christians were thus scattered to the wind. Various groups have held to this practice off and on from that time until the present.

How did this subject impact the Sabbath?

From the position of a once-a-year Sunday service for the resurrection, the Roman Church pushed weekly Sunday observances. This seemed to be commonplace at least by the beginning of the third century AD. In the fourth century, it was a staple of Roman Church doctrine. The Roman Church resorted to every avenue of action to suppress Quartodeciman Christians because their existence threatened the Roman claim to Apostolic Succession. In the future, we hope to release more articles about this subject.

To read about this subject in more depth, download our free book "The Quartodeciman Controversy" from www.sabbathsentinel.org (Free Resources Page).

Bibliography

To view the Bibliography, see The Quartodeciman Controversy, pp 109-113.



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“In It You Shall Do No Work ...”

We Need to Review These Words Often

Paul W. Syltie

Perhaps I am being trite by restating the obvious to everyone who has a conscience for obeying the Fourth Commandment. After all, this commandment we all cherish and follow to the best of our ability, for the law states, “*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*” (Exodus 20:9-10, NKJV here and throughout).

Isaiah expounds upon the principles of keeping the Sabbath holy when Yahweh declares, “*If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father*” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Many books and articles have been written on the subject of how to observe the Sabbath day, and I do not intend to make this an extended dissertation on the subject. A brief sampling of Sabbath books from my library include [The Sabbath in the New Testament](#) by Samuel Bachiocchi (Biblical Perspectives, Barrien Springs, Michigan, 1990), [A Sign Between You and Me](#) by Frank Houtz (Dry Bones Restoration Company, Winchester, Kentucky, 2004), [The Forgotten Day](#) by Desmond Ford (Desmond Ford Publications, Newcastle, California, 1981), [From Sundown to Sundown](#) by May-Ellen Colon (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Oshawa, Ontario, 2008), and [The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation](#) by Herbert Saunders (Seventh Day Baptist Center, Janesville, Wisconsin, 1970). There are many more older or recently published sources I could have cited as well.

It is never without merit to review what our Creator means by not working on the seventh day. Of course, our bodies will not just automatically shut down at sunset on

Friday evening; the issue is what we must do with the energy we have on the seventh day to serve the Creator. We understand that we must not perform our usual “servile work” on this day that earns us money or other sustenance in order to provide for our families. That is the “work” God is referring to here, although the priesthood “worked” on the Sabbath. Let us clear up that supposed anomaly first of all.

Jesus straightened out the accusative Pharisees in Matthew 12:5 when He told them that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane [*bebeloo*] the Sabbath, but are blameless. Numbers 28:9-10 and many other Scriptures show that the priests were required to offer sacrifices on the seventh day; they were, in fact, assigned to a schedule of 24 courses during which they would work a particular week — twice a year — as well as during the annual Holy Days (I Chronicles 24:3-19).

However, recall that the priestly Levites received no inheritance of land as did the other tribes of Israel. Read this fact in Numbers 18:20-21.

“*Then the Lord said to Aaron: ‘You shall have no inheritance in their [Israel’s] land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting’*” (emphasis mine).

So, the tithes and sacrifices were Levi’s inheritance. The tithes were not wages; they were their inheritance, equivalent to the land given to the other eleven tribes of Israel. The servants of God were not hirelings!

We of the ecclesia today, as for the entire New Testament period, are the priesthood of the Messiah, as stated in I Peter 2:9, “*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people ...*” (emphasis mine). We in essence are performing the duties of the Levites, as it were, in offering sacrifices to God through our daily living, keeping His laws, commandments, statutes, and judgments in the footsteps of Jesus (I John 2:6; 5:2-3; Galatians 2:20; Genesis 26:5).

On the Sabbath day we might be said to, in essence, work God's work when we assemble, sing praises to His Name, preach His words, and listen to the teachings of others. We do not perform sacrifices of bulls and sheep and goats, but we might pull an ox or sheep out of a ditch (Matthew 11:12; Luke 14:5), feed our animals (Luke 13:15), or eat some food found along the way while taking a Sabbath stroll (Matthew 12:1-3). Jesus cut through the rigid rules the Pharisees and Jewish elders had built around what is to be a delightful seventh day (Isaiah 58:13), "*teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7). The Israelite leaders wanted to kill Him for breaking their laws surrounding the seventh day.

Thus, we are led to the question, as being sons of God and the present-day priesthood, what constitutes the work that we must avoid on the holy Sabbath? The day is to be a delight, but we are not to do our own pleasure. Making it a delight while not doing our own pleasure may sound incongruous, but is it really? Hardly!

As for the Levites of old — though we are not a part of that Levitical priesthood, which has become obsolete (Hebrews 8:13) — our inheritance is in God Almighty! We have a great God who provides us with work to sustain ourselves and our families six days a week, but the seventh day we desist from those labors and rest in the fellowship of one another. The day is indeed a holy convocation (Leviticus 23:3), and we should, whenever possible, assemble on that day with brethren.

That rest involves what Paul pointed out in I Corinthians 14:26-29: singing, teaching, prophesying, and sharing our spiritual gifts with one another (I Peter 4:10). It involves removing ourselves from the burdens of this present evil world and dwelling wholly upon the realm of our Creator, and the coming millennial age. Even as the Eternal made the heavens, earth, and sea in six days — and rested on the seventh day — so we ache in our hearts for the coming re-creation of the earth and Christ's thousand year reign! As I John 2:15-17 states, "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*"

The entire issue of keeping the seventh day correctly

rests solely upon our attitude toward our Creator ... knowing and serving Him and one another ... wanting to please Him. We must live during the weekly Sabbath day as if we were already living within the Kingdom of God, the seventh 1,000 years of mankind's tenure on the earth! Please check back to the July-August 2018 Sabbath Sentinel for the article "That Mysterious Sabbath Verse — Exodus 20:11," which delves further into this subject.

Our attitude, our attitude. When we keep the day as a day of holiness, of speaking His words, of honoring Him, of congregating with brethren, of making it a delight, of singing praises to His Name, of serving one another with our spiritual gifts of teaching, administrating, prophesying, and on and on the list goes ... then we will avoid the pitfalls of serving the self on this day "*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace*" (Romans 8:6).

We can do good on the Sabbath day, but we cannot receive pay for the good that we do. Look at a few of Christ's examples.

- Healing on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:10-13; Luke 14:1-4; John 9:1-7)
- Casting out demons on the Sabbath (Luke 4:31-35)
- Teaching on the Sabbath (Matthew 4:23; Luke 4:16; 13:10)

Whatever He did was to uplift and edify His fellow man, never to do His own pleasure. Here are some things that we might do on the Sabbath — not to replace fellowship but to complement it — in conformity with the spirit of the Fourth Commandment.

- Enjoy a walk or drive through a beautiful natural area to praise God's creativity ... or even have fellowship in such an environment
- Help a brother or neighbor — or yourself — in a time of crisis, such as from a storm, fire, or accident ... an "ox in a ditch"
- Visit those who are sick or infirm, or in jail
- Provide food or clothing for the needy at a charity event
- Attend an uplifting concert of music from Mozart or Beethoven

After all, we are told in Matthew 25:40, "*... in as much as you did it [the good works] to one of the least of these*

My brethren, you did it to Me.” That statement must apply to the Sabbath day as much as any other day. Of course, we ought not refrain from fellowshiping when we can, but these acts of kindness can complement the day.

There are some situations that are difficult to address, since they involve necessary care of animals every day which brings income to the home. Some brethren operate dairy farms, and the cows have to be fed and milked twice a day; it is impossible to avoid working on the Sabbath and thus contribute to the family’s income through one’s work. I know this situation well, since I was raised on a dairy farm. Such a situation presents a quandary, and must be dealt with on an individual basis, but my recommendation is for dairy farmers to move into beef or other livestock to avoid the conflict with Sabbath dictates. My wife and I milked a cow for many years, but we would allow the calf to nurse the cow on the Sabbath, thus relieving us of that work.

We need to examine ourselves in our keeping of the holy Sabbath, and be sure we are not earning money on that day, serving our carnal nature by watching sports events, listening to unholy music, mingling with people that are working their everyday jobs, hunting or fishing, gardening, mowing the lawn, or any function that diverts us from the true spirit of the rest day.

Neither should we cause others to do work for us on the Sabbath. Hired gardeners, pool service men, and construction people need to take a break from serving your household on that day. I personally believe that applies to eating at restaurants as well, since having the waiter, cook, and other restaurant workers serve you is contrary to the Biblical command of having your servant do no work.

The Sabbath is a day in which we must do no servile work, but make it a day as if you were living in the next age. What a glorious time that will be (I Corinthians 2:9), a time that is made for our good and for the good and uplift of those around us.

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath!” (Mark 2:27).



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Church of God History

Tending to the Past. Preserving for the Future

Introduction

Over the years and decades of my dedication to understanding, promulgating and archiving Church of God history, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. There was one incident that a man in a position derided it all and would have liked it all dismantled. Another stated that no one would be interested in all of this. The Scriptures Matt 7:6; Prov 23:9 came to mind when I encountered these attitudes.

It is also disconcerting and even sometimes disheartening that some wish to alter history to suit themselves, to force a different slant on it, or to so disdain it that they trample and stamp on it like some sort of spiritual savage, destroying the past and having a negative impact on the future. There is no redacting by this author in this or other articles or other information on various subject matter.

But that is not being truthful even though the promulgator of such may feel secure and it may fulfill his or her ambitions. But as posited by myself, the truth must out.

Jealousy has seen members and scholars cast out for this sort of research. Some areas of the world are culturally of that mold and this rubs off into the church, almost unrecognizable to most, but it has a negative impact.

Allow me to quote from Cicero who wrote the following of fifth column traitors within during 42 BC:

“A nation [read Church] can survive its fools and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and he carries his banners openly. But the traitor moves among those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears not traitor! He speaks in the accent familiar to his victims and he appeals

to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation. He works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of a city [or church]; He infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist. A murderer is less to be feared”

So, it is with those who wish to ‘white-ant’ the Church of God from within, starting with diminishing our history and trying to get us to disengage from it. It is a sort of spiritual culture wars – rather similar to where the radicals are successfully unhooking the West from its history, heroes and culture (art, dance, music) thereby dismantling the West. Their stated aims are now well on the way to eliminating Western civilisation.

The spiritual radicals within are practicing the same means to eliminate the history of the Church of God and therefore its roots.

Why we need to tend time

What can we do about all of this?

First of all, we need to tend time – that is the history of our spiritual lineage and related topics. But that means not just preserving and increasing the knowledge of our roots, but also fixing incorrect knowledge of the past by reviewing it and refreshing any output on the subject (i.e. books, articles or presentations).

Also, it is essential to preserve an accurate record for the future because in many cases, the record of our history is too shallow and too haphazard. There is much forgotten history and neglect of promoting information about church leaders and pioneers over the centuries. Further, do we not need to give a voice to the past and to those portions of our history overlooked?

Even highlighting problems with the past in governance and policy; or missing detail in doctrines?

In other words, tending to the past.

Tending time!

Lessons learned

Ask yourself this question about our history: “what do we need?”

Answer: “We need a Christian approach to history that provokes a cultural relevance to all today, including the youth.”

Because we need to know the story of our history (‘warts and all’ and not white-washed), we get to know our roots, the torch bearers over the centuries and become thereby part of a rich heritage.

Then we can pose questions as we proceed on this journey of why we have this or that belief; or why we do this or that. Should we know about our ideas and how our beliefs developed? Where did we come from over the centuries? How did various historical developments (e.g. religious persecutions, wars and culture) shape us?

Sure, this may prompt us to having difficult conversations, but is that not part of clarifying our thinking and improving what we have?

By discussing the legacy of the church, we will be able to articulate our roots; how we developed; and what we can do into the future to improve upon what we have built so far. In other words, ongoing quality improvements.

“When a Land [read Church] rejects its legends,
Sees but falsehoods in the past, And its People
[read some Church members] view their sires [read
the pioneers] In the light of fools and liars, ‘Tis a
sign of its decline, And its splendours cannot last.
Branches that but blight their roots, Yield no sap
for lasting fruits [ie growth or a happy environ-
ment].” [F.R.A. Glover of England, 1861]

And is that not what has occurred?

Conclusions

Many have lost interest in history and the past as it is presented to them as boring or not important. It is this attitude that affects our spiritual development. They have thereby contributed to an almost crisis in historical understanding of the Church of God.

What is important to many of these? Comfort, entertainment and leisure which makes us less spirit-

ually productive as the Bible, related knowledge (such as Church history) and true Christianity – outgoing concern for others – becomes secondary. Resultingly, the duty of the Christian just becomes something to pull off the shelf after the natural needs of the flesh are met first.

Rather, are we not meant to live as children of God as a community daily, weekly, annually without selfishness? All which breed division and enhance the fruits of the flesh one of which is jealousy (Gal 5:20).

For instance, jealousy toward those that try and be productive including by tending to the past to preserve for the future. Tripping up such people to cause them harm and thereby preventing the continuation of this tending to our history.

Instead let us be a new community in fellowship, supporting one another’s gifts and talents. After all, we are not private property or private time. We belong to God and these things belong to Him. We are merely the stewards.

So let us cultivate, tend and keep the past and that helps us with being anchored into the Truth.

Craig M. White

President, Historical Research Projects

<https://www.historyresearchprojects.org/>



Genesis Chapters 1-11

Fact or Fiction? Does It Matter?

Daniel Botkin

There is a growing and disturbing trend among some Bible believers to view the first eleven chapters of Genesis as divinely inspired fiction, or as a mixture of fiction and fact.

“But Daniel, how can people claim to be Bible believers if they don’t believe the Bible?”

That is a good question. Here is what they seem to be saying:

They seem to believe that God intended for those eleven chapters to be included as part of the inspired canon of Holy Scripture, but they believe that God never intended for readers to understand those chapters as actual history. God never intended us to view the people in Genesis chapters 1 through 11 as people who really existed, or the events as events that actually happened. The people and the events in those stories may or may not be based on some people who actually lived, and on some events that actually happened, but God never intended for us to understand the stories as actual history. The stories are written in a different literary style, a different genre. They are divinely inspired stories, and therefore part of God’s Word, but they are not stories about events that actually happened the way they are written. They are just divinely inspired fables meant to teach us moral lessons, similar to Aesop’s fables, or American Indian legends, or fables in other cultures. There was not really an actual Garden of Eden with a magical poisonous tree and an evil talking snake. After all, we know that snakes

don’t really talk, just as we know that vegetables don’t really talk when we watch a “Veggie Tales” film that teaches a moral lesson.

That is what they seem to be saying. I do not know where this erroneous view came from, or how long it has been around. And I do not know why some Bible believers are swallowing this idea, but it concerns me.

Why is it important to believe that the stories of Genesis chapters 1 through 11 are historically true? If we understand the moral lessons that those stories are meant to teach us, then why does it matter if we doubt or deny the historical truth of those stories? That’s a good question, and I will give an honest answer.

I reject this non-historical view for three reasons. First, I reject this non-historical view because I have no good reason to doubt the historical truth of the stories. Four times the Bible says that with God all things are possible. (See Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27, Luke 1:37 & 18:27.) Three times this “all things are possible” fact was stated by the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus), and once by the angel Gabriel. I’m not going to disagree with the Messiah or Gabriel. If I truly believe that with God all things are possible, then why should I doubt the historical reality of the events recorded in Genesis chapters 1 through 11?

Nothing in the text states that these stories are just fables, so why should I not believe that these events actually happened? Because snakes don’t really talk? If you think that a talking snake is a reason to

deny the historical reality of Genesis chapter 3, then you had better also deny the historical reality of Numbers chapter 22, which says that Balaam's donkey spoke to him. And you had better also reject 2 Peter chapter 2, because Peter says that Balaam's donkey spoke with a man's voice.

A second reason I believe in the historical truth of Genesis chapters 1 through 11 is because the Prophets, the Apostles, and Yeshua Himself often referred to the people and the events in these stories, and when they spoke about them, they spoke of them as real people who actually lived and as real events that actually happened. They never once referred to any of these stories as "the fable of Adam and Eve," or "the legend of Noah's Ark," or "the myth of the Tower of Babel." They simply spoke about the people and the events as actual people and actual events.

My third reason for believing in the historical truth of these stories is because of the inherent danger of doubting and denying their historical truth. Let me explain.

If we say that the people and the events of Genesis chapters 1 through 11 are fables and are not historically true, then why stop at the end of chapter 11? What is the basis for saying the Bible is not historically true in Genesis chapters 1 through 11, but at the beginning of chapter 12 the Bible then suddenly becomes historically true?

If the stories about Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, and Nimrod and the Tower of Babel are not stories about real people and real events, then maybe Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are also fictional characters. Maybe the story of Joseph in Egypt is just a great work of fiction. Maybe Moses was not a real person. Or if he was, maybe the Exodus and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai did-

n't really happen the way the Bible says. Maybe the entire Old Testament is nothing more than a great literary masterpiece, an inspired God-given work of fiction to teach us good moral lessons.

And why stop with the Old Testament? Maybe the New Testament is likewise not historically accurate. Maybe Yeshua, if He really existed, did not really rise from the dead in a literal sense. Maybe there was no real Resurrection and therefore there is no real eternal life for anyone.

The Apostle Paul wrote: *"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain... And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins... If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"* (1 Cor. 15:14 & 17).

I realize that some parts of the Bible are meant to be understood in a non-literal, figurative sense, and some of the stories can serve as allegories without denying the historical truth of those stories. I have written and taught about this at various times in the past. But there is no good reason to deny the literal reality of the stories in the early chapters of Genesis.

Denying the historical reality of Genesis chapters 1 through 11 is a slippery slope that can turn us into the most miserable of all men. I do not want to play around at the top of that dangerous slippery slope. I urge you to avoid it, lest you become of all men most miserable.

See Daniel Botkin's website at gatesofeden.online.





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KINDNESS BEGINS IN THE HOME

Sharon Darling

Kindness. This word is loaded. It is something we learn about from a very young age. We all know we should be. We all tell our children to be. We all want others to be kind to us. But do we actually practice kindness as a way of life? Are we known for generally being kind to our families? Do we treat our families with less kindness than we show strangers?

You know, ladies, Kindness begins in the home and we women set the pace and atmosphere for this. We have the power to turn a good day, bad as well as turn a bad day, good.

We never know what someone is going through or why they might be the way they are. While we should not encourage poor behavior we can certainly show kindness, compassion, mercy and love. Be kind, give a smile and perhaps some kind encouraging words. You never know how those things will affect another person. Be the light in another's darkness. Don't assume anything or automatically take something personal. We certainly appreciate those moments when kindness and grace are extended to us. Some examples worth considering for our family, others and even be willing to recognize that we fall under these kinds of things at least from time to time, appreciating when these are extended to us.

- That woman you saw who looks like she is falling apart and miserable- perhaps her husband just died, maybe her child is suffering or perhaps she is just having a bad day.
- That child screaming and is giving everyone a headache- maybe they have special needs and they just can't control their emotions or voice, maybe their relatives are cruel so they act out, maybe they are bullied in school, perhaps they have never been taught how to control themselves.
- That grumpy, kinda mean elderly man or woman- maybe their body hurts as they get older, maybe they are lonely because their husband/wife is no longer here, maybe their kids ignore them due to being too wrapped up in their own lives.
- The snotty cashier- maybe one of their kids are sick, an

elderly parent who now has to be moved to assisted living facility, maybe they are having marital problems, have a kid who is addicted to drugs or alcohol.

- The person who cut you off driving- maybe they were distracted because they are in a crises, maybe they just had a fight with their child or spouse and they just are not paying attention properly, overwhelmed from a crushing job that just takes advantage of them, financial problems, an unexpected anything just popped up I would like to think that most of us women wake up wanting to be cheerful and tenderhearted towards others. We want to show kindness to our family. It feels good when we have days when we are pretty satisfied with our efforts. On the days when there is overwhelm it can wind up making us want to hide and cry. Everything and everyone gets on our nerves, someone looks at us sideways, we get spoken to in a tone we don't like, our husband does something that we let sour our mood, maybe our children just aren't listening very well that day. How do we respond compared to how we should? I dare say, sometimes we do not do very well in that department.

Most things that set us off aren't things done with maliciousness or on purpose to make our day worse. People can annoy us or we just need some moments to collect ourselves letting our minds reset and refocus. Sometimes there are misunderstandings, an attitude or tone and yet they had nothing to do with us but boy do we react like they were.

Some of us naturally have personalities that make living out the principles within Titus 2 and Proverbs 31 examples a little or a lot easier. Kindness is a recurring theme and connected to so many other aspects of life. (Like many other things). We do not have to have it all figured out quickly. Unrealistic expectations we can place on ourselves and others place on us are not how it should be and is unfair. Growth happens all the time. The point is to get ever closer to the character of our Creator and Messiah. Burn out city is a common theme in many of our lives before we figure out how to stop and ban the unnecessary busy and get through the busy seasons easier with hopefully good support.

Some situations we just cannot get out from under whether they are a chronic illness, special needs children or any

number of life's challenges we have to navigate that is out of our control.

People in these situations need compassion and support more than a lecturing of "be happy" or whatever else gets said in those moments that are not helpful. Compassion, kindness and understanding go a long way.

We all know those kind of women who their children and husbands hide from, especially when mom is in one of her moods. Avoiding her is the best thing to do because they just don't know if or when they will receive her wrath. And yet, we all know the other kind of women who are the complete opposite, sure, they have their moments too but they are generally known for staying sweet, gentle and kind. That is the woman I strive to be. The kind where even when I am having a bad day, that is what is thought of about me. I don't always achieve that but I strive more than ever to do that now. Just because I am hormonal, sore, not feeling well, someone hurt my feelings, I keep making mistakes or just feel super busy that doesn't mean I get to treat everyone according to my mood. We should never let that dictate how we behave.

Admittedly, some days are harder than others.

Do we go around our home demanding kindness and respect from others and yet we do not show it back? Do we tell our children and maybe even our husband to stop yelling at us while we are yelling at them? Do we go around our home complaining that no one helps out, listens to us or treats us the way we feel we should be treated while we are doing the very same things to them? Are we making it easier or harder for others to be kind to us? Do we take a moment and remember that none of us, generally, want to be unkind. We all have our moments and say or do things we regret or are less than proud of.

Are we remembering that we are trying as families to better our lives together? Remembering that children are just that, children, and they will, without a doubt do and say some things that are undesirable? Do we remember that we all have things to deal with throughout the day that just makes us feel bad or worn out? We can help our families cope with those moments far easier when we are kind in return. The goal is to grow together and we can achieve that by slowing down, watching our tone, watching our words and our behavior. Over time, it can get

easier and easier and the odds are that it will start to be seen also in your family members if it isn't already. These are the moments that we can influence.

Some days we get overwhelmed, that happens. How do we react to that? We can get crabby or we can strive to just show kindness. Just like when our husbands come home after a long day at work and it was just a bad day, don't we want him to still treat us with kindness and not take it out on us? Same principle. We will not always achieve that, it is unrealistic to have that expectation on ourselves. Putting in the effort and making sure kindness is our general character probably will get easier. When you don't do so well, ask for the others to forgive you then give yourself grace too. Growth develops over time.

Our feelings could absolutely be valid (sometimes we are having a bad attitude and it is us who are wrong). It is quite hard at times to behave kindly when we feel neglected, taken advantage of, given an attitude or any number of other things we can deal with. These are the moments to exercise the fruit of the Spirit (which are not suggestions) and strive to be more Yeshua like. It is easy to know how we should be academically. Living them out can be harder.

How do we react to situations? How do we serve our families? How do we talk about them, especially in front of them?

Is it really loving to demand to be left alone all the time? Women are not the only ones tired and busy. Many kids are run ragged with far too many activities, running around and demands put on them. Husbands come home tired from work too and how many of them have wives who are a drip and nag the moment they come home and often do not stop. Nothing they do is ever right. The wives redo things they do to "help" or get upset because they did not do it to their liking. Men have taken on more and more of the tasks that women said they wanted them to do and yet it still is not enough sometimes. I realize that sometimes it is the other way around as well. It goes both way and is not good either.

Loving our families includes so many things. It isn't just about saying we love them. Most of us certainly do. Our actions, tones, demeanors and our facial expressions are where this matters most. We know how it feels when someone tells us they love us but are mean, obnoxious, roll their eyes at what we say, tell us to leave them alone... you know, all the things we can do to others at times and justify.

Yah is waiting to forgive our trespasses so let's be ready to do the same for our families. Yes, sometimes it can be hard and things can hurt deeply. That is where lots of prayer and Bible study comes in to help us. Sometimes another's help is needed. Of course we should not enable or put up with certain things, however the fruit of the Spirit are not sugges-

tions. If you are struggling, I understand how hard it can be and the process that happens as grow. Yah is waiting to heal the broken hearted and struggling. Go to Him!

A woman of Yah can live out His fruit and not be fake nor burying head in the sand to sin, behavior and problems we ought not to be. We are valuable, He sees all and it matters, you matter. Put on His armor from Ephesians 6 and walk out the fruit of the Spirit.

Kindness begins at home, then extended to the house of Yah and everyone else. It absolutely matters how we treat other people. Kindness is the law of her tongue in Proverbs 31. There are many verses to research that reference the tongue, lips, pride, being angry, being foolish, hasty speech and the like to see the importance of being careful. There is a reason that we are encouraged to be swift to hear and slow to speak while also keeping in mind that a soft answer turns away wrath. There is much wisdom in keeping those guiding words in mind. Ecclesiastes does speak of a time for everything which means discernment to be sharp, harsh and strong is needed. Our words can cause a lot of destruction. Being nasty, rude and snotty to someone you feel the need to unleash on to put them in their place is not of Yah or wise. It is wise to consider what we say and how. Displaying the fruit of the Spirit is the way to live it out.

Hastiness in speech and actions are not wise. Demanding people to be at a particular standard for growth can do more harm than good, even when good intent is there. We are not the ones that open eyes, works with a person, heals them or changes their heart and sometimes people can forget that. May that not be us. Imagine how it would have affected or would affect us if we were demanded to be at a place that we were or are not ready for yet.

Only Yah knows when that is, not a fallible person. In His perfect timing He does the work. We can inadvertently hinder that in another.

Hastiness to be harsh or sharp can add to or even create contention, debate, strife, hatred, pride and more which are works of the flesh. Doing our best to avoid them is wise. We should be striving to display the fruit of the Spirit. Discernment is highly needed before jumping into setting someone straight or correcting. I can think of many times and situations that I needed lots of patience, understanding, grace, mercy, etc., so I strive to be ready to extend them as well. Remember the standards we apply to others will be applied to us. We will be held accountable. We ought to place realistic and just standards on everyone else and ourselves.

Jumping right to the times that Yeshua was not gentle should not be our go to for everything and every situation. We do not like it when it is done to us when we ask a question, are displaying less than desirable behavior or are misguided on something and it is wise to keep in mind how we would like to be treated. Striving to live peaceably with all to the degree that we are able and being peacemakers are part of the fruit of peace. We would be wise to keep that in the back of our mind.

In our arrogance, pride, or even zeal with good intentions to share things, we can unintentionally drive someone away from the Father and Yeshua. Not closer to them. Farther.

Be careful not to put out a smoldering fire within another. Without love, we are nothing. Loving our neighbor as ourselves is extremely important. We can be loving and kind without enabling or tolerating what we should not. Sometimes drastic measures and words do need to be taken or said. It matters how we handle. Growing in discernment and wisdom are what we need to do to learn the differences.

We will have bad days that are hard. We will sin. We will fall short. We will have days we are ashamed of our behavior. We are not failures. When these times happen avoid the tendency to wallow in pity and stay in a state where all you feel is you can't do anything right. Please do not make the same mistake I did in trying to fix all of you at once. That is a disaster waiting to happen. I am referring to the character traits that are good to improve on. Sometimes honing in on good traits and developing them is desirable. I am not referring to the essence of ourselves that others may want us to change that we do not need to. Work on smaller amounts then move on while continuing to grow. Repent when need to, apologize if necessary, dust yourself off and keep moving forward. Steps backwards will probably happen and they do not make you as a person, a failure. We needed our Savior because only through Him can we do all things and have hope in eternal life.

Getting ourselves into His word daily and being in a constant prayerful state of mind helps bring peace to our minds to live more like Yah intended. Drink in His word. Wash ourselves with It. We can do all things through Yeshua Who strengthens us.

Our children will be blessed by seeing these things in us. Our examples are powerful. They can learn that when you do mess up, to go to Him, repent and keep trying. If they see you keeping Yah at arms length because of shame or feeling like you just will never measure up, that is exactly what they will learn to do. Oh please no, let's strive to make

it easier for us to be close to Yah and help set our children up to be able to truly walk with Him when it is their time to commit to this Way in a bigger way. We would not want to break our children's spirit so why break anyone else's? If we wouldn't want our family treated a certain way by others that is a good indicator not to do it to anyone, including them.

We should be treating everyone the way we would like to be treated. It is easier to love and show love when we are striving to do this. Albeit it is harder at times than others. When it is harder, look Above and work at walking together in Yah's love. We won't always hit that mark but we can try. Who knows, maybe our conduct will encourage the very things we were hoping for in our families too. Not from a selfish giving to get but just natural progression of the whole unit walking in love emulating our Father and His Son.

Isn't that the goal after all? This is our Kingdom work first and foremost. Working in these areas first helps the rest of our lives as well. Yah keeps His word how He will respond to us and what He will do for us when we walk in His ways. Shouldn't we be striving to do the same in our own family, not forever changing based on our moods and feelings? We can't control others but we can control ourselves. This can bless them and you! Be that light set on a hill and the salt of the earth. Keep leaning on Yah and talk to Him often in prayer. May He guide our steps and in turn bring glory to Him!

What are we building up or tearing down? Proverbs 14:1 --> "A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands." A wise woman shows kindness and love to her husband and children. A foolish one is unkind and tromps around making everyone else including herself miserable and that is not loving them, even when we feel justified. We don't like being on the receiving end of someone being unkind even when we did something to them. Don't we want kindness and be shown love when we are being less than lovable ourselves? Everything, absolutely everything begins and matters most in the home and we set the pace. Let's build it up.



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:

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and How Can We Know?”**

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My Testimony!

Vivian Allen

I grew up in a serious but grace-filled Sabbatarian home, and I can't remember when I didn't consider the Sabbath natural and normal. I never doubted it, or God, for a moment. I made the decision to follow Jesus in 2d grade, but I made the decision to *really* follow Jesus perhaps some six years later, and was baptized perhaps four years after that, when I was also immersed in the Holy Ghost, though I didn't understand that experience until many years later. How very, very good our Lord is, and lacking in no way!

At seventeen years of age I determined to join the U.S. Army, to the delight of our local recruiter. To his chagrin I came home from the induction center in Minneapolis uninducted. The major in charge there had not been able to assure me I could keep the Sabbath, so I declined enlistment. As far as I was concerned, that was the end of that.

The Lord ALWAYS has his way and as it turned out, his way was for me to serve in the U.S. Army AND keep the Sabbath day holy for the honor and glory of his love and greatness.

My recruiter was back at my door. "If you'll scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," he said. "Ok," I said, "What's the plan?" "They were very disappointed you didn't enlist, and said if you come back you can keep the Sabbath, and there's a military code that accommodates that."

"Ok." Off I went to Minneapolis again. "No, we can't do that." "There's a military code that says you do. Show it to me."

Well, there was a little loophole in it, for extraordinary situations, or some such, so I said, "Does this mean what it says? Do you uphold it?" "Yes."

So, I got a copy made for me and put my right hand up. You would never know these days, but I was the shyest person on the planet. To speak to strangers or several people at once, or to someone "up the chain" somewhere was fully and absolutely beyond my league and abilities.

When I got to basic training at Ft. McClellan, Alabama, in August 1977, I knew the very first thing I must do was speak to my Drill Sergeant, Sgt. LeMonier. We had already learned she was the terror of the whole battalion. Oh, God! Help! Well, what's one terror compared to another. Who do I find in this big unknown to go to and find her. I was a private E-1, the very lowest of the low. Not

even a Private First Class, E-3, as some more educated enlistees already lorded it over the rest of us. I found the front desk of the company barracks and soon was sharing with the drill sergeant on duty, a flippant lesbian creature (as I later learned), my military code and preference that I be allowed to keep the Sabbath Day holy. "Oh, you need to talk to the company commander." What? God! Do you mean it? Help! An appointment was set with Captain Fox. (Later I became acquainted with the fact she was the other half of the above sergeant!)

I again, upon our meeting, went through my (and God's) little routine. Throughout my time in the military I never demanded my rights. I just shared the code, my Christian Sabbath-keeping, and my preference to be permitted to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Captain Fox explained some of the basic training events which are always scheduled on Saturdays (like the obstacle course and low crawl) and exempted me from these several events. Thank you, Jesus!

Come each Sabbath for eight weeks, my barracks companions in the open bay accommodations would eye me reading my Bible while they departed to the schedule of the day. This allowed for some conversations about the Sabbath with the painfully shy private being shown favouritism for religious observances.

One day Sgt. LeMonier said to me, "Bass, I know tomorrow's Saturday, and we want to accommodate you, but you have to fall out in formation tomorrow for the training and if you don't, you'll be recycled." What? "What's that?"

"Go through basic training all over again." Visions of eternal basic training arose in my mind. I don't remember my response. Perhaps I said I'd think and pray about it.

Next morning, I put my fatigues and helmet on, picked up my Bible, and went out and stood in formation, not knowing what was in store for me that day. "Is Bass here?" inquired the drill sergeant when we were all fallen in by platoon. At that moment I realized the level of regard for my belief in my God, that the drill sergeant knew there was good chance I would still be in the barracks keeping my Sabbath holy. I felt shame, and am ashamed this was one of two times I buckled in the military, but God honored himself in me nonetheless throughout that training day. Although I wore my uniform through the day and accompanied my company wherever they went, the only thing I did all day besides sit, rest, eat lunch and

read my Bible, was shoot an anti-tank LAW weapon twice. Jesus' burden is easy and his yoke is light. My beautiful Lord went every step of the way with me.

I graduated successfully and was sent to advanced training at Ft. Devens, Massachusetts. Here, oh, delight of delights, I attended Sabbath worship and Sabbath School every week with my elder brother who was attending college nearby at that time.

BUT FIRST, The Conversation. Oh, yes, I ALWAYS prayed ahead of these encounters, set up and performed at the very earliest opportunity in every new station or assignment. This time, the Captain explained everyone is on call for their turn at CQ Duty, or Charge of Quarters, on weekends. He explained I would need to fulfil this and he was willing to see that I wasn't scheduled on Friday or Saturday. In the military, these are the two "party nights" (as everywhere else), so this was a very blessed favour indeed, however, he could do this for me because everyone on duty was equal, the whole company trained together, no seniority issues, which I later learned about down the road, could be an "impossible" obstacle.

God was so good to me and never ever failed me, nor has he ever!

My next duty station was Augsburg, Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). I was assigned to a tactical unit, the 409th ASA (Army Security Agency) Company, part of what was known as the "Chrysler Corps." This time I went to speak to my Top Sergeant, a man who had seen days of action and had many years and experience. He consulted with the company commander, and as tactical groups have more erratic schedules, they soon had me on loan as a "mudpacker" to the 3d Ops (Operations) Battalion, Field Station Augsburg, affectionately known as part of the "Seven Steps to Hell" (7th Army). I did however enjoy my short time at the 409th, and wore their insignia for most of my time at the 3d Ops.

Allegedly, the Field Station would be no complication whatsoever with keeping the Sabbath. Ha ha, the devil always has a challenge to anyone who would stand on God's solid ground, and likewise, the Lord also tests, us as he has all his choice children all through history, that we, others, and the devil may know what is in our own hearts.

I was assigned to the Russian division. Oh, this was so easy! Thank you, Jesus! "Ok, Bass, you'll do, and the schedule is posted there." What? Scheduled for Sabbath! What?! This is a 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 schedule, not 5 & 2 !!?! Out of the frying pan into the fire! I sought out my section leader, prayed, and went through The Sabbath Talk.

"We only have 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 here at the Field Station here. We don't know why they sent you here then!" What?! God! Help!! I went home at shift end in turmoil.

I came back to work the next day like the lamb looking at slaughter

and no escape. "Bass! You've been reassigned! You're going to the Eastern Block section. They work 5 & 2s." What? God, how WONDERFUL you are!!! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

This'll be so easy now, thank you, Lord! I picked up my things and walked over to my new section. "Who is the section head here that I can make an appointment with? I've just been assigned to this section." "You'll need to talk to Sgt. Grayson, then."

Pray, pray, pray, and The Talk. "Who do you think you are? Fridays and Saturdays are choice days off [isn't that the truth]; only old-timers get those! You, a private [not even an E-2 yet!] think you can just walk in and demand Friday and Saturday off? Get out of here. You'll work what you're scheduled!"

God! What! God! Help!

I worked my shift and went home on the bus in turmoil once again! Oh, what a blessing we can call out to Jesus and cast on him our cares!

I walked into my new section the next day. "Bass! Sgt. Grayson wants you in his office." Knock, knock.

"Come in. Your days off have been set to Friday and Saturday. You're excused." "Thank you, Sergeant!"

What???! God! What did you do!! I never found out!

The rest of the time I was at the Field Station I never worked a Sabbath. However, we went on high alert during one point there. I was told I was required to go to work one Friday night (I was working mids). The Lord gave me peace and assurance though I didn't know why, to put on my uniform, walk out the door and board the bus out to work as usual. When I entered the Field Station to pick up my security badge the soldier at the desk said, "You're not needed tonight. You can go home." Oh, God, you are the best!!!"

While at the Field Station I was selected Soldier of the Quarter. Eventually I was offered the choice to go back to my home unit, the 409th, on Flak Kaserne (base), and I gladly took it. I don't remember, but I suppose I inquired about the Sabbath again there first. At any rate, there was anticipated to be no problem. However, when I spoke to Top again he explained to me that although they had a regular work week, I would be on weekend CQ duty whenever my rotation came up, and there were no concessions for that, but I could trade CQ days with other soldiers, a common practice, if it happened I got scheduled on a Sabbath. So, this I did on a number of occasions 'til my end of term of service, and had no other Sabbath issues.

Trading Sabbath duty with another soldier did however, cause internal distress because I reasoned to myself I was the direct cause and influence of my replacements' breaking the Sabbath. I felt some level of guilt and that this really detracted from my testimony to anyone, fellow soldier or fellow Sabbatarian. Eventually, decades

later, I realized not only had my stand-ins always gladly done this for me, but with or without me they wouldn't have kept the Sabbath holy in any case on any of these days, similar to someone who voluntarily works shifts at a utility company or another essential job where non-Sabbath-keepers benefit Sabbath-keepers, Christians and non-Christians alike.

I also came to realize that though the size of the CQ pool was different, the duty was similar to Old Testament days where David, God's man, scheduled temple and palace guards on duty every day of the week, in which case the guards individually very infrequently worked Sabbaths. It was an essential duty and an acceptable reason for working on the Sabbath in that kind of rotation.

Throughout my tour in Germany I was blessed to be able to keep Sabbath both with fellow service members on base and with German believers off base.

Out of the military, and what next? Four years of college with a very heavy schedule. During these years I began to appreciate the Sabbath as far more than just a day off (so to speak). It became also a very blessed day off in a whole new way. No matter how heavy the load and pressing the study time for tests and deadlines for papers, I ALWAYS took the Sabbath off, and felt so much blessing and refreshment to be able to pick up the strain of each new week rested and happy. I also had a part time job at the horse barns and never had a Sabbath conflict there (I'm sure I had The Talk with the work-study supervisor). God is so good! I also would sometimes leave for the weekends to fellowship at the church into which I had been baptized.

Next was graduation and marriage! Graduation was NOT on the Sabbath, what a wonderful deliverance and surprise for me! Thank you, Lord!

God provided me a Sabbath-believing (AND KEEPING!) husband. We were together eighteen years. Shortly after we were married, my husband lost his job and I had to find something while he was looking for a new job that would suit our needs. I got a Christmas season job in walking distance at Wal*Mart and carefully marked on the application the days I was available for work (Sunday through Thursday of course). I was called in for interview, explained my days available and that I was not available Friday and Saturday even if needed for fill-in, because of Sabbath belief. I was immediately hired and told when to start.

You know it! I came in to work on that day, looked at the schedule, and found I was scheduled for Friday and Saturday! Time for prayers again! Food and utility bills and rent in the balance.

I went to my top boss who had hired me, application data in hand. Praise God, it was a very easy course correction and never happened again. However, at this point, I learned a very good lesson. When it comes to a Sabbath conviction, the devil will ALWAYS

test you; just expect it, and don't stress over it because the Lord honors those who seek to please him, and he never fails.

Later in our marriage my husband worked at a hospital where he was expected to be on call every third Sabbath, due to potential need for patient health and well-being. With prayer, he made it clear he would indeed come in on the sporadic occasions when a patient's health and well-being actually necessitated his services, however, otherwise it would have to wait 'til Sunday, or Monday morning. He always used good judgement on this and was never challenged on it in any way that I am aware of.

However, the devil always hangs around to see how he can get in somewhere, and we realized we had the money temptation to deal with. It was a very real temptation with a growing family on one income and extra expenses such as home education to boot. We silenced the tempter and any guilty conscience potential on our part by making all Sabbath call-pay and the time-and-a-half pay associated with any work on the Sabbath automatically tithe (offering). This removed all temptation and accusation, human or otherwise, and was a very helpful learning experience for me.

More recently, the Lord also provided a second Sabbath-keeping husband for me, from the little tiny Sunday-normal town I live in. Amazing! My second husband was a salesman with long hours at a dealership open on Saturdays (the biggest sales day) and closed on Sundays (his boss was Mormon). Nonetheless he kept the Sabbath faithfully and whole-heartedly. Not surprisingly, the Lord honored this, and although my husband gave up Saturday work before we were married, he continued to regularly be awarded Salesman of the Year for high sales.

My family is now grown and almost gone, and I have gone back to part time work. I have on-call jobs where my employers really depend on me. In these cases, unlike the military where it was a necessity to give a religious reason, I simply share with my prospective employers that I am not available on Saturdays. They have hired me anyway, and I now earn the best return I've ever had at a job. It is so easy to work as unto the Lord. This is all by his grace, and not of me or anything I have done. It is what he has done in and for me; all the praise is his.

You may think I have had an easy life. I have not; it seems the trials of life have been almost one on top of another and more fiery than I could imagine. In all of this, I testify that I have never seen God work as swiftly or abundantly in my life as he has in the area of keeping his dear and precious Sabbath day with him holy. As Calvin Burrell said, it is THE BEST DAY OF THE WEEK!

Thank you, dear Lord, for such a divine gift, and for your promise of the most wonderful rest in your One Eternal Holy Sabbath Day.

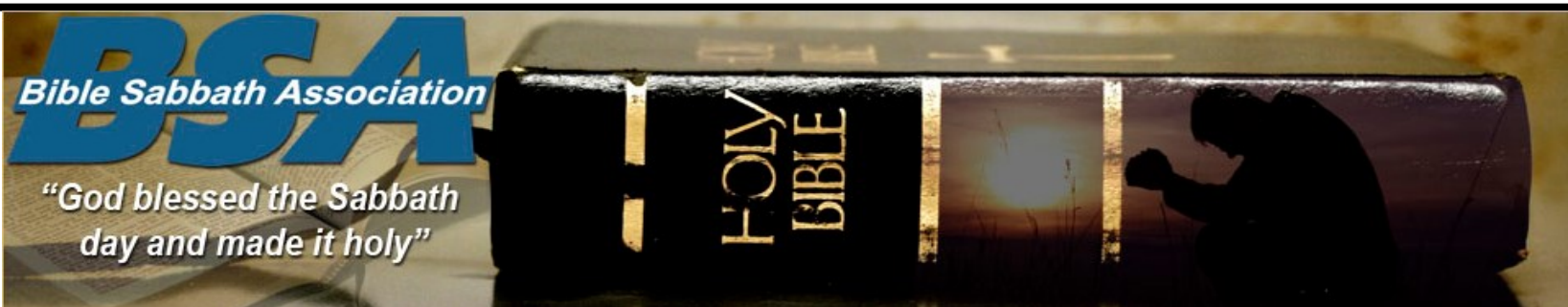
Hallelujah! Amen.



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