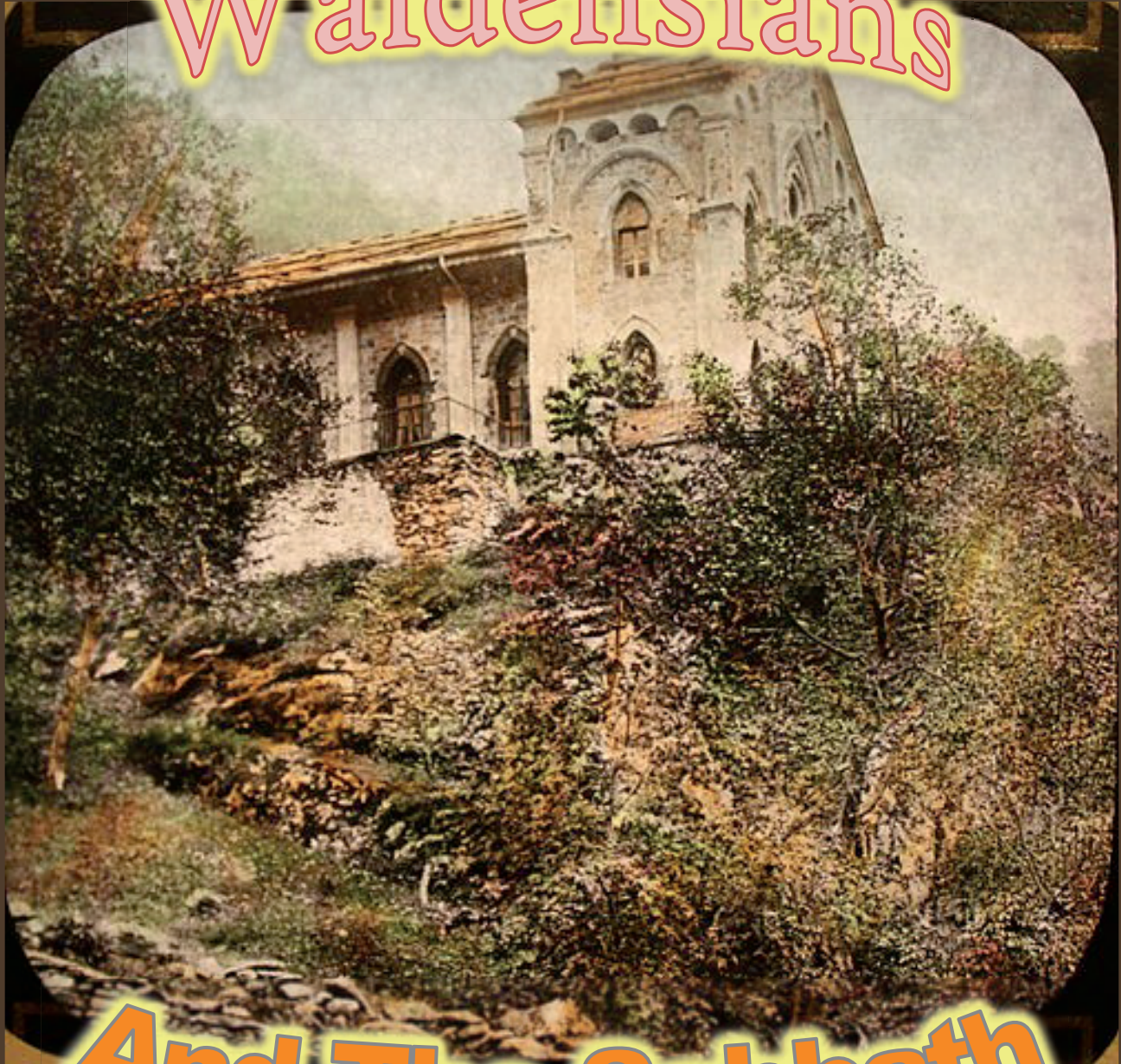




The Sabbath Sentinel

**May-June
2023**

Waldensians



And The Sabbath

BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "man shall live by ... every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

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Choosing to Bear

the Light Burden

Why do people claim to be worshipping the Creator God yet refuse to do the things that He commanded? Jesus once posed a similar question. In Luke 6:46-49, Jesus, or Yeshua if you prefer, left humanity (including us) this same question to ponder—as well as the answer. He said this:

Luk 6:46-49 And why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? Whoever comes to Me and hears My Words, and does them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man who built a house and dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock; and a flood occurring, the stream burst against that house and could not shake it; for it was founded on a rock.

But he who hears and does not perform, is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, on which the stream burst, and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.

There is much to “unpack” in those verses, if the world would pay attention. Jesus poses His question to everyone, including us. The world at large claims to love Jesus and accept Him as the Savior, yet they refuse to do those things that Jesus said to do! Hopefully, those of us who are called out have learned to live by every command of Jesus. But notice what Jesus said in response to Satan’s temptation about food:

Luk 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Do we as alleged servants of our Lord and Savior take that admonition to heart? Do WE live by EVERY word that comes from God? Or, do we make excuses for doing what we want to do. Do we say, “Oh, God will understand?” Or, do we perhaps say, like the Sunday keepers, “That stuff was only for the Jews.” or, “It was hung on the cross.” or “those commands were just a shadow of things to come,” or some other non-biblical statement trivializing what God asked us to do?

Certainly, there is no end to the excuses that people come up with to not obey God. When we want to live a life of

convenience, while tricking ourselves into believing that we are doing what Jesus said, there are many “justifications” which we can use to rationalize our behavior. But Jesus’ words cut to the heart of the matter. Why would we call Him Lord and don’t do what He commanded?

The book of John, Chapter 1, makes it clear that the One who handed down the sayings of God in the Torah was the One who divested Himself of Godhood and became a man subject to all of the same temptations that we are—but without sin (Heb. 4:15). Do we believe even for a minute that the LORD of the Old Covenant days, who sent His people into captivity, would come as a human being and allow His called ones to do the very things for which Israel and Judah were sent into captivity?

This same Jesus we claim to worship also issued all of the Words of God which He commanded that we are to keep because He WAS that very God. Remember, He indicated that He came to reveal the Father (Matt. 11:27), that the Father was unknown to men before He revealed Him. For this cause it had to have been Jesus who gave us all of the commands of God which He also said that we should be obeying.

When Jesus admonished us to live by every word that came from God, He was saying to get into the Torah and find what words were quoted as having come from God and live by every one of those words.

Obviously we don’t need to be sacrificing animals for sin. In that respect, we don’t need to follow those old customs. They are like the divorce command Moses handed down, given because of our hard-heartedness, but from the beginning was not the intention of God. God’s intention was that we would love Him and obey Him by following His every word. This writer admits that he does not perfectly live by every word of God and as such must regularly call upon a merciful Father to once again apply the covering blood sacrifice of Jesus to those events where he “missed the mark.”

Joshua showed us the attitude we ought to have toward every word that comes from the mouth of God. In Joshua

24:15, Joshua is quoted as saying the following:

And if it seems evil to you to serve Jehovah, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served Beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

Joshua recognized that God wants those who claim to worship Him to CHOOSE to serve Him in every word. Moses recognized that same thing when he admonished Israel in Deu. 30:19-20:

I call Heaven and earth to record today against you. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, so that you may love Jehovah your God, and that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give it to them.

“Obey His voice,” was the very same thing Jesus was talking about when He said to live by “every word that comes from God.” Who does God look to? The answer is found in Isa 66:2:

... But to this one I will look, to the afflicted and contrite spirit, and the one who trembles at My Word. .

Do we accept what men say about what God says as our gospel? Or do we look at every word that God has spoken with a heart for them, trembling rather than disappoint our Daddy in Heaven through disobedience? The difference is one of attitude toward God in our lives.

When we discuss keeping God’s commandments with others, we are regaled with a litany of excuses as to why we are not required to do what God clearly says to do. Yet, even the Roman Catholic Church leaders have admitted that the scriptures command no day but God’s Sabbath, and that those keeping Sunday are following the dictates of that church, not God. Why DO they call Jesus Lord when they deliberately gainsay what He said for their own traditions?

Jesus had something to say about that attitude. We read it in Mat 15:7-9:

Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, “This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.”

But in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Jesus called them hypocrites for making up their own commandments and then claiming to worship God. That same description applies to all of us who make excuses for not obeying God. He said that their worship is in vain! Of course, this is not addressing those who are worshipping God to the best of their ability and understanding. It addresses those who look at the words of God and trivialize it away with excuses.

Jesus died a horrible death for our forgiveness. Out of love and respect for His sacrifice, we ought to look at every Word of God with the mindset that Joshua had—as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Are those commandments hard to keep? Some say “Nobody could keep those commandments.” But, if what they say is true then they simultaneously make God into a harsh task master who gave the Children of Israel commandments that they could not obey. However, that is merely human reasoning, the kind that adheres to the attitude that “God will understand.” Indeed, He does! He understands that the sacrifice of Christ which redeemed us is trampled under the feet of our human reasoning; we need to repent of that attitude if we find it harbored within us.

Is obeying God really that hard? Is God requiring something onerous of us? Jesus answered that, also. He said in Mat 11:28-29:

Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

God’s Way is easy! He only requires of us to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. The way to accomplish those things is to view His commands through the prism of love, knowing that He gives us those commands out of love for us, to guide our steps all the days of our lives. Like any loving father should do, He issues simple commands as our Father, commandments that, if we would but keep them, would lead us to a joy and peace that surpasses understanding...and in the world to come, eternal life as a joint heir with Jesus for all eternity!





The Rise of Heresy in the Second Century

(Part 1)

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

In the second century, Christianity was influenced by many outside influences, including other religions, Greek philosophy, and anti-Semitism. Heretical teachings were also mixed with the Bible. These influences stained much of Christianity in a way that has lasted until modern times. In this two-part series, we are going to discuss the rise of heresy in the second century.

The first apostles warned about a time when false teachers would come to deceive many in the faith. Consider the words of Paul and Peter:

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (I Tim. 4:1-2).*

*The underlying Greek in I Timothy 4:1-2 translated as ‘later times’ refers to the time after Paul. This detail will become more apparent over the course of this two-part series.

“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves” (2 Peter 2:1).

Notice that both Paul and Peter warned about a future time when deception would rise. People in the world are already deceived. The attacks described by them were designed to deceive those in the Christian faith. Paul said some will “abandon the faith” and Peter said false teacher will be “among you” – meaning among believers.

In the second century, their prophetic warnings started to come to pass.

Below, we have quotes below from two Christian writers in the second century who lived in these turbulent times. Hegesippus is the first one we will examine. He is considered the earliest Christian chronicler. The second quote is from Clement of Alexandria, who wrote in the late second century. Though he was tainted to a degree with these false teachings, he did not wholly subscribe to them and denounced some of their errors.

Hegesippus

“And, after profound peace had been established in every

church, they remained down to the reign of Trajan Caesar [98-117 AD]...Symeon son of Clopas, was informed against [accused] by the various heresies, and subjected to an accusation like the rest...He was finally condemned to be crucified. Up to that period the Church had remained like a virgin pure and uncorrupted...But, when the sacred band of apostles had in various ways closed their lives, and that generation of men to whom it had been vouchsafed to listen to the Godlike Wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then did the confederacy of godless error take its rise...And the church of the Corinthians continued in the orthodox faith up to the time when Primus was bishop in Corinth. I had some intercourse with these brethren on my voyage to Rome...in every city, the state of affairs is in accordance with the teaching of the Law and of the Prophets and of the Lord...After James the Just had suffered martyrdom [62 AD], as had the Lord on the same account, again Symeon son of Clopas, descended from the Lord’s uncle, is made bishop [of Jerusalem]... Therefore was the Church called a virgin, for she was not as yet corrupted by worthless teaching. Thebulis it was who, displeased because he was not made bishop, first began to corrupt her by stealth. He too was connected with the seven sects which existed among the people...from these have come false Christs, false prophets, false apostles – men who have split up the one Church into parts through their corrupting doctrines, uttered in disparagement of God and of His Christ...” (fragments of Hegesippus)

Clement of Alexandria

“The Tradition of the Church Prior to that of the Heresies... For the teaching of our Lord at His advent, beginning with Augustus and Tiberius, was completed in the middle of the times of Tiberius. And that of the apostles, embracing the ministry of Paul, ends with Nero. It was later, in the times of Adrian [Hadrian] the king [117-138 AD], that those who invented the heresies arose...” (Stromata, 7.17)

Hegesippus noted that Christianity held to the true faith until the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD). What event or events might have caused him to say such a thing? Two can be gleaned from his quote.

Firstly, Christians were persecuted during the reign of Trajan (see Pliny the Younger’s letter exchange with Trajan). They were put on trial and tortured unless they recanted the name of Christ. As these events transpired,



strong Christian leaders were martyred. Hegesippus specifically mentioned how Simeon, the Bishop of Jerusalem, was falsely accused by the heretics.

A second factor noted by Hegesippus was the death of the first Apostles. The last of them, John, passed away in approximately 100-105 AD. This also happened during the reign of Trajan. Additionally, many of their followers had either passed away or were older by this time. Said another way, the individuals with the freshest memories of Christ's life were no longer alive or they were sparsely found. These two factors played a significant role in the rise of heretics who would try to alter Christianity in the second century.

Clement of Alexandria, who lived a little later, said that heretics came to prominence during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 AD). What event contributed to his conclusion on this subject? During Hadrian's reign, the Romans defeated the Jewish people in a war commonly known as the Bar-Kokhba rebellion. As a result, Hadrian banned all the Jewish people from Jerusalem. This included the Christian Bishop of the city who was Jewish by birth.

This incident caused confusion among Christians. Why is this the case? In the book of Acts, we learn that the Christian leadership established in Jerusalem made it the de-facto headquarters of the faith. For some examples of this, see the following verses: Acts 1:4-8, 11:1-2, 11:19-22, 11:26-27, 12:24-25, 13:13, 15:2, 16:4, and Gal. 2:1-2.

The bishop of Jerusalem was considered the bishop of

all Christendom. Towards the end of Hadrian's reign, the leadership of the faith was scattered. Christianity began to fragment and polarize around different cities such as Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome.

Passover was among the first subjects impacted by the removal of Jewish people from Jerusalem (see Epiphanius, Panarion, 70.9.1-2). To read more about this subject, see the article "The Quartodeciman Controversy (Part 1)" in the January-February, 2023, edition of [The Sabbath Sentinel](#). Also read our free E-Book "The Quartodeciman Controversy" from our website www.sabbath.blog.

The information provided by Hegesippus and Clement help us understand that heresy began to rise from 98-138 AD. It started by stealth and then came out in the open. During this time, there was a precipitous rise of the false teachers foretold by Paul and Peter. They sought to blend some of the New Testament with other viewpoints. Some of them tried to edit the New Testament in a way that was convenient to their doctrine.

There are at least five common beliefs shared among them. We have listed these below with a more detailed explanation for each.

- 1) Many were influenced by Gnosticism.
- 2) They were very anti-Semitic.
- 3) They devalued or disregarded the Old Testament as the chief background source for the New Testament.
- 4) They sought to replace the Old Testament with Greek philosophy, cultural influences, Stoicism or Gnostic sources.
- 5) They tried to replace or edit the writings that we call the New Testament.

Gnosticism is a belief system which blended Greek and Middle Eastern influences. Many teachers who received this label believed that physical matter was evil and spiritual things were good. Pursuant to that view, they thought that an inferior, evil god made the material world, and that a superior, good god made the spiritual realm. They placed a strong emphasis on secret knowledge as essential to the salvation of one's immortal soul.

The heretics of the second century also had a hatred for the Jewish people. This was partly motivated by an anti-Semitic trend in the Empire which existed at that time. This view was also influenced by the fact that the God of the Old Testament created everything – therefore Gnostics rejected Jewish people. Some of them believed that Christ came to destroy the God of the Jews.

Lastly, they wanted to devalue or disregard the Old Testament, which was the source material for God's covenant with Israel and Judah. This part of the Bible also required submission of the human body to a holy lifestyle abhorred by Gnostics. They wanted Greek philosophy or some other belief system to replace the Old Testament

since they thought an evil god inspired it. This produced a twisted view of Christ's life and the lives of the early disciples.

These false teachers wrote their own gospels or edited existing ones with their agenda. These actions added confusion within the Christian community and among the public. Those who sought the True God would be confused when comparing the original Christian teachings and the hybrid ones presented by these false teachers.

In the late second century, several Christian writers wrote extensive works refuting these heretics – including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Hippolytus. Unfortunately, many of them were influenced to one degree or another by these heretical teachings, but they were not completely corrupted.

In part two of this series, we will look at quotes from second-century authors who described these Gnostic teachers and their false doctrine.

Stay tuned!

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REAR ADMIRAL BARRY C. BLACK

In 2003 Rear Admiral Barry C. Black was appointed the 62nd Chaplain to the United States Senate. Shortly after Congress first convened in April 1789 in New York City, one of its "first orders of business" was to con-

vene a committee to recommend a chaplain, and there has been one ever since. His nomination by the President and the Secretary of the Navy during Black's tenure as Chief of Navy Chaplains was acknowledgement of a long and illustrious military career and his relationship with God. The appointment makes Black the first military chaplain, the first Seventh Day Sabbath Keeper, and the first African American to fill the position, ministering to a flock of 6,000 people, comprising senators, spouses, Chiefs of Staff, and Capitol Hill employees.

Black is sought out by some of the most powerful people in the United States government about moral, spiritual, and ethical issues that affect the lives of millions in the United States. During the past two hundred and seven years, all sessions of the Senate have been opened with prayer, strongly affirming the Senate's faith in God as Sovereign Lord of our Nation. The role of the Chaplain as spiritual advisor and counselor has expanded over the years from a part-time position to a full-time job as one of the Officers of the Senate. The Office of the Chaplain is nonpartisan, nonpolitical, and nonsectarian.

Commissioned as a Navy Chaplain in 1976, Chaplain Black's first duty station was the Fleet Religious Support Activity in Norfolk, Virginia. As Rear Admiral, his personal decorations include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit Medal, two Defense Meritorious Service Medals, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and numerous unit awards, campaign, and service medals.

He previously served for over 27 years as a chaplain in the United States Navy, rising to the rank of Rear Admiral (UH) and ending his career as the Chief of Navy Chaplains, commanding the United States Navy Chaplain Corps. He officially retired from the Navy on August 15, 2003.

Chaplain Barry C. Black was born on November 1, 1948, in a tough inner-city neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland, to Pearl and Lester Black. "My mother was a beautiful person who connected with all her children and made each of us feel special," Chaplain Black said in an interview with the Contemporary Black Biography series of books. "She was a storyteller with the ability to find allies and build networks, and she was athletic. I inherited these skills from my mother." Sensing his destiny, Pearl told her son, "You will have a special destination in life and a life with God." This she believed because when she was baptized and pregnant with the chaplain, she had asked God to do something special with his life.

Pearl taught her eight children the importance of God and education as the way to a better life without poverty. At Sabbath Observing Adventist Berea Temple and its church sponsored Baltimore Junior Academy her children found a thriving community of helping hands, a quality education, and much needed tuition assistance. Black's mother found friends like Albertha Brown, who shared her home with young Barry after school, providing him a haven from the mean streets of Baltimore.

Barry Black wanted to become a minister when he was just 25 years old and, citing his young age, church leaders would not grant Black approval to minister to the young people of his church. Subsequently he decided to become a minister with the United States Navy in 1976. At the time the Seventh Day Adventist church was seeking individuals interested in providing ministry in the military, so Black joined the Navy. Planning to minister in the Navy for



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three years, Black knew after his first day he had found his calling.

Chaplain Black has been selected for many outstanding achievements. He received the 2002 Benjamin Elijah Mays Distinguished Leadership Award from The Morehouse School of Religion. In 2004, a chapter of Old Dominion University conferred on him the Image Award, "Reaffirming the Dream -- Realizing the Vision" for military excellence.

Black has received "The Canterbury Medal" draws its name from one of history's most dramatic religious liberty stand-offs, which occurred between Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas à Becket, the law firm's namesake, and King Henry II of England. "Few spiritual leaders are as gifted as Chaplain Black in providing caring, courageous ministry in a pluralistic religious environment," said Mark Rienzi, president of the Becket Canterbury award society. "For almost two decades, our nation has benefited from his chaplaincy and this year we humbly thank him for his work to safeguard religious liberty."

Chaplain Barry C. Black is married to the former Brenda Pearsall of St. Petersburg, Florida. They have three sons: Barry II, Brendan, and Bradford.

Source material obtained from Wikipedia, Adventist News, U.S. Senate Biography.

Author Bill Lussenheide serves as Vice President of the Bible Sabbath Association and resides in the Bitterroot Valley of Western Montana.



History of the Fair Chance Doctrine

Part 1

Craig M White

www.friendsofsabbath.org

In this two part series we will explore the historical development of the doctrine that most of mankind has never been called to salvation and that their first opportunity will be during the Last Great Day or Great White Throne Judgment.

This writer's original research in the 1970s on Herbert Armstrong as a 'sifter' of knowledge was expanded upon over the following years and finally typed up into several papers in the late 1990s and made available on his website. Then these were combined as a single paper and portions of that article were extracted to form The Doctrinal Heritage of the Church of God in the Nineteenth Century and the article History of the Fair Chance Doctrine.

A Fair Chance – Not Universalism

Sometimes critics of certain Church of God groups condemn them for teaching universal salvation. This is not true. Instead, the Church teaches universal opportunity for all and that we are of the opinion that probably the vast majority of mankind will choose the path of life, once they have their eyes opened to His way of life during the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:5, 11-12) – that is the second resurrection period.

However, for centuries Christianity has struggled with the concept of a chance of salvation for those who never heard the Gospel or understood it. As a result, many Christians adopted universalism (in its many forms) while others believed such individuals would be judged according to their conscience and how they acted accordingly regardless of their beliefs or religion. Still others believed in a future probation known also as the age to come doctrine and we will meet them in this article (a fair chance or future probation is sometimes termed age to come. Note that the Millennial period is also taught as the age to come – as these two doctrines overlap).

But many in the Churches of God teach that there is a universal opportunity for salvation, and we hope/think

most will eventually 'make it.' We see that the Scriptures are clear that some will lose out, unfortunately. So, there is no universal salvation, *per se*, for everyone.

Key Proponents of the Fair Chance doctrine

It is not generally known that a number of scholars during the nineteenth century favorably proposed a future fair chance – for all and sundry to be offered salvation. These men are discussed below.

Dunbar Isidore Heath (1816-1888)

Heath was not the average preacher or Bible student – his distinguished background included being a Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge and he became world renowned for his Egyptological expertise having translated papyri at the British Museum. However, he fell out of favor with the religious authorities and was prosecuted for heresy for publishing a work that proclaimed a concept of salvation for the saints and another for the rest of mankind later on during the reign of the Messiah on earth (the Millennium). So, in effect Heath taught that there were two periods of restitution and salvation on earth similar to, but not exactly the same as that taught later by the Church of God.

This concept was laid out in his book *The Future Human Kingdom of Christ* (1852). An extract from his book is provided below:

“Countless will be the multitudes of the saved in the restitution of all things. Glorious will be the renewed earth. Its untempted inhabitants will not be miserable. The will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But countless also will be the conditions of the individuals who will go up in those days to keep the feast of tabernacles, - - as they are now. Untempted, saved from the Devil, but much differing, everyone's repentance will have been taken at exactly what it weighed. True repentance will, through Christ's merits, have saved the greatest sinner from the eternal companionship of the Devil, he will receive his penny for his one hour -- his salvation; he will not be in hell, but (Isaiah 60:14) as one of those who erst afflicted Christ's true holy Church shall he come bending

unto her, and as one who erst despised her shall he bow himself down at the sole of her feet, and shall call her the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” (The Future Kingdom of Christ, chapter 2)

Henry Dunn (1801-1878)

Dunn was a very religious man and devoted his life to studying the Scriptures and even published his own periodical, The Interpreter (1860-61). His illustrious career included his position as secretary to the British and Foreign School Society and he was very much involved with the history of public education in England.

During his studies, he expressed appreciation to The Future Kingdom of Christ: Or Man’s Heaven to be this Earth by Dunbar Heath and advocated similar views. This book led him to write Destiny of the Human Race. George Storrs and Charles Taze Russell were appreciative for this book’s influence on their development of the doctrine of two periods of salvation - one for the few now (the saints) and another at the return of Christ during His 1,000-year reign on earth (the times of restitution).

He wondered about the Millennium and what would occur during that period. His conclusion was that millions would be resurrected at that time and be taught God’s way by the saints and thereby have their first opportunity of salvation - a subject more and more scholars were eager to explore.

“It is impossible to conceive that, dealing with them thus the Lord could regard them as eternally lost, hour by hour, dropping at once into the grave and into the bottomless pit. Yet this must be the conclusion if we are to accept the popular interpretation of such texts as “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” For these people, although in a certain sense familiar with Christ, were yet not believers on Him.

The explanation is to be found, and found only, in the declaration that they were not weeds to be destroyed, but a harvest to be reaped (Matt. ix. 37); that they did not perceive, and could not comprehend the nature of the kingdom, because they had not been born again; that they were not included in those ‘first-fruits’ of which James speaks; that they belonged to that later ingathering which is one day to complete the Redeemer’s triumph.” (The Kingdom of God. Or, What is the Gospel? p. 33)

Charles Taze Russell (founder of the Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society, becoming known as the Bible Students by the early twentieth century and later as Jehovah’s Wit-

nesses), also published articles by Dunn (extracts from The Study of the Bible) in his Zion’s Watchtower and acknowledged the influence of Dunn and Storrs on his theological development:

Jacob Blain (1818-1906)

Blain, a Baptist clergyman, acknowledged Dunn’s influence and subsequently authored Hope for Our Race (1871). Following are extracts from this book:

“What thoughtful person, acquainted with the history of our world, can avoid feeling sorrowful when he knows that more than two-thirds of mankind have never heard the glad tidings of a Saviour, that “the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty?” We should also consider the fact that a large majority in Christendom come into the world with minds so weak and thoughtless, with passions so strong, and are surrounded with temptations so numerous and powerful, that the Gospel has little or no effect on them ; and that more than one-half, in almost every age, live and die under erroneous teaching as to the way of salvation.” (Hope for Our Race, p. 6)

“At Christ’s coming, and after the first resurrection, all who have died impenitent will be raised, and in due time Christ will be made known to them by the elect Church. Light being given, the mass, it is hoped, will repent and accept Christ, and so be saved; but with the lesser salvation they will not reign with Christ, or be of the bride, but be the “nations outside of the new Jerusalem” (Rev. xxi. 22–26). The chief difference between this view and some others is, that all the risen impenitent dead will share in the blessing, as well as those living when it begins.” (ibid, p. 10).

Blain also wrote The Wicked Not Immortal (185?); and Death not life: or, the theological hell and endless misery disproved, and the doctrine of destruction established, by a collection and explanation of all passages on future punishment. Also metaphysical arguments for the immortality of the wicked exploded (1853) in addition to other writings disproving the immortal soul doctrine. This latter publication was advertised in the Church of God’s Hope of Israel periodical in the 1860s.

George Stetson (1814-1879)

Stetson was a physician, school-teacher and minister who also taught this doctrine. He joined the Adventist Christian Church and worked closely with Jonas Wendell (whom is mentioned further along in this article). He also

became associated with Charles Taze Russell (having met him in 1872), George Storrs and Henry Grew and it is likely that it is he who influenced Russell to adopt Arianism.

Russell mentioned him in his Zion's Watchtower and even delivered the sermon at Stetson's funeral. Both he and Wendell wrote articles for The Herald of Life and the Coming Kingdom, published by George Storrs.

George Storrs (1796-1879)

Storrs was one of the leading lights of the Second Advent movement but never went along with the visions of Hiram Edson or Ellen G White. However, many of his major doctrinal positions found their way into Russell's Bible Students movement and other Sunday Adventist groups.

It should be noted that he did not consider himself an Adventist since their emergence in 1844 (B. Schulz, [A Separate Identity](#), p. 136). He was anti-clerical and did not even provide a legal name for his congregation in Philadelphia, preferring the non-official naming or categorisation of Church of God (B. Schulz, [A Separate Identity](#), p. 125). Later, Russell's Bible Students unofficially also called themselves Church of God.

It not well known that he believed in British-Israelism, but the various Second Adventists and successors, in the main, were not interested in the concept. However, if Storrs recommended a book or concept, he was so well-esteemed, people would follow up and read the book, if possible. It is very likely that he had some influence upon Church of God people in addition to the British-Israel doctrine, as they read books on this subject as a result of his recommendation. Why would they not read other materials he recommended, such as on the fair chance?

Although he was accused of being a universalist, he countered by explaining that he was not, but rather there would be universal opportunity for salvation.

"The penalty of the divine law is literal death, or cessation of conscious being ... if the impenitent and unbelieving are raised to life at all, it must be a mortal and not an immortal life... Numerous divine testimonies ... teach a universal judgment both of a judicial and executive character: passages which declare facts relative to the judgment of the wicked, which necessarily imply life and its functions, ... many who will be made alive by 'a resurrection [to] condemnation,' will be still mortal and liable to a second death. ... The sacred Scriptures distinctly teach that some will be made alive by a resurrection, in a

'mortal' state." ([Bible Examiner](#), February 1856)

Again, it was Storrs that widened this view of salvation being offered to all of mankind (yet without adopting the universalist teaching). To him, God would reasonably provide for mankind's redemption and fair chance for everyone.

Note the following quotes from Storrs:

"The next age of Messiah's personal reign of one thousand years, will open with a resurrection of all the sleeping saints who have suffered with or for Christ in this or the previous ages: such 'shall reign with him.' ... These having suffered with Christ, and overcome the seductions to abandon His cause, will 'together be made perfect' in body and mind ... That there will be more than two classes of men on the earth at the opening of the next age, or at the second advent of Christ, to me is clear ... there is yet a ... class of men at the second advent of Christ, who 'have not heard God's fame, neither have seen his glory,' etc. ... This class constitutes by far the largest part of the inhabitants of the earth ... will be the subjects of trial under Messiah's personal reign." ([The Bible Examiner](#), January 1877)

"However, in 1871, Storrs made another change in his position in this regard. While still believing that the incorrigibly wicked dead would never be resurrected, but would remain dead forever, his position was that the vast majority of mankind would all receive a resurrection (during the "ages to come" after the 1,000 year reign of Christ ended). Here they would have a full and fair opportunity to know and accept God's "Plan of the Ages." He doubted not that the vast majority of them would do so." (<http://watchtowerdocuments.org/george-storrs-enigmatic-and-ambivalent-polarizer-of-adventism/>)

Storrs decided to revive the aforementioned The Bible Examiner periodical in 1871 (which was discontinued in 1863). In it he taught that God's plan extended to the entire human race and not just those that have been offered salvation in the Christian era. To him, the Abrahamic promise would be offered to all mankind during the Kingdom of God on earth period. Charles Russell contacted him in 1871 and was heavily influenced by him.

Part 2 will be published in our next edition.

Peter Waldo, Waldensians, and the Sabbath

Bob Thiel, Ph.D

Some have asserted that those who have called themselves some version of the term Waldensian (sometimes also referred to as Vaudois) always kept Sunday.

Did any of the Waldensians keep the seventh-day Sabbath?

Did all of them?

What about Peter Waldo?

Seventh-day Adventist scholar Gerard Damsteegt has stated:

Although there is no record that Waldo and his followers observed the seventh-day Sabbath, we know that several movements related to the Waldenses were reported to observe this custom.

Actually, the above scholar actually provided evidence that Peter Waldo and his followers kept the Sabbath in the same article, more of which will be cited later.

Now, let it be made clear that scholars who have looked into the Waldensians have concluded that at least some of them kept the seventh-day Sabbath—despite the fact that they do not today.

Here is an old report from old English (where the letter ‘f’ was often used instead of the letter ‘s,’ so it is changed below) from a Baptist historian in the 18th century:

Some of the inhabitants of the Pyrenees, and of the adjacent states, and not those of the vallies of Piedmont, were the true original Waldenses, ... Some of these christians were called Sabbati, Sabbatati, and Insabbatati, and more frequently Inzabbatati. ... one says, they were so named from the hebrew word sabbath, because they kept the saturday for the Lord’s day. Another says, they were so called because they rejected all the festivals, or sabbaths, in the low latin sense of the word, which the catholick church religiously observed.

So, there were multiple types of Waldensians, and many kept the seventh-day Sabbath.

Notice the following:

One of the primary sources of evidence of Waldensian Sabbathkeeping during the first half of the thirteenth century comes from a collection of five books written against the Cathars and Waldensians about 1241-1244 by Dominican inquisitor Father Moneta of Cremona in northern Italy.

Moneta passionately defended himself against criticism from Waldensians and Cathars that Catholics were transgressors of the Sabbath commandment. In the chapter *De Sabbato, et De Die Dominico* he discussed the significance of the seventh-day Sabbath of Exodus 20:8, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” and contrasted it with the value of the Lord’s day, his term for the first day of the week. ...

Sabbathkeeping among Waldensians was most widespread in Bohemia and Moravia, places to which they fled during papal persecution.

A fifteenth-century manuscript, published by church historian Johann Döllinger in *History of the Sects {Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters (Munich: Beck, 1890), Vol. II, p. 662}* reports that Waldensians in Bohemia “do not celebrate the feasts of the blessed virgin Mary and the Apostles, except the Lord’s day. Not a few celebrate the Sabbath with the Jews.”

Here is a report from the Lutheran historian Johann Mosheim concerning a group in the 12th century with Waldensian connections and two of their tenets:

the denomination of the Pasaginians ... The first was a notion, that the observance of the law of Moses, in everything except the offering of sacrifices, was obligatory upon Christians; in consequence of which they circumcised their followers, abstained from those meats, the use of which was prohibited under the Mosaic economy, and celebrated the Jewish sabbath. The second tenet that distinguished this sect was advanced in opposition to the doctrine of three persons in the divine nature.

So, they kept the Sabbath, abstained from unclean meats, and were opposed to the trinitarian view. While not all

the views that Mosheim had about the Pasaginians were Church of God views, apparently some called by that name were Church of God Christians. It should also be noted that Mosheim believed that there were two types of Waldnesians. One considered that the Church of Rome was a real Christian church, whereas the other considered the Church of Rome to be the harlot of Revelation 17. Others have written that one type of Waldensian was fairly close to the Greco-Romans, whereas the other type was much more independent of them.

In the 17th century, Peter Allix reported about beliefs of the early Waldensians from a critic and then made his own comments:

That the Law of Moses is to be kept according to the letter, and that the keeping of the Sabbath, Circumcision, and other legal observances, ought to take place. They hold also, that Christ the Son of God is not equal with the Father, and that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, these three Persons, are not one God and one substance; and, as a surplus to these their errors, -they judge and condemn all the doctors of the Church, and universally the whole Roman Church. Now, since they endeavour to defend this their error by testimonies drawn from the New Testament and Prophets, I shall, with assistance of the grace of Christ, stop their mouths, as David did Goliah's, with their own sword.

But here, first of all, we are to take notice, that the Waldenses and Albigenses had both of them the same belief... the difference between the Waldenses and the Church of Rome was not so small, that they could be looked upon only as schismatics, as the Bishop of Meaux has been pleased to imagine ... the Waldenses, or disciples of Waldo, having been particularly famous for their refusing to swear, ... Peter Waldo's translating of the Bible, which must have been done before the year 1180, shews, that in France there was already a language different from the Latin tongue,

The above suggests that they held several Church of God doctrines including: binitarianism, non-swearing of oaths, and Sabbath-keeping.

The Petrobrusians (considered related to the Waldenses) kept the Sabbath and were condemned for it by the Roman Catholic saint Bernard in the 12th century. Notice the following from a Sunday-keeping writer (where I have typed it as originally written—knowing that now, the 'f' characters below would have been an 's' in modern writing):



Statue purported to be Peter Waldo

(photo by Alexander Hoernigk)

the feventh day Sabbath ... In S. Bernard's dayes it was condemned in the Petrobufiani.

So, yes, some of the immediate predecessors of Peter Waldo and the Waldensians kept the seventh-day Sabbath and were condemned for it. Peter Waldo likely was in contact with some considered Petrobrusians.

The Patarenes (considered related to the Waldenses) kept the Sabbath and were condemned for it by Cardinal Damian around the same time.

Now what about Peter Waldo himself? Here is more from SDA scholar Gerard Damsteegt:

With few exceptions, Waldensians today deny that the ancient Waldenses kept the seventh-day Sabbath. Howev-

er, historical evidence indicates that many did observe Sabbath during the Middle Ages. During the early part of the seventeenth century, the Swiss historian Melchior Goldastus (1576–1635) commented on Emperor Frederic II’s Constitution of 1220 against heretics. He reasoned that the label *insabbatati* was used to describe heretics during the thirteenth century “because they judaize on the Sabbath,” that is, they kept the Sabbath like the Jews. He mentioned that the “Waldenses” were often called “*Insabbatati*,” indicating that during that time there were Waldenses who kept the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday) as a day of rest. ...

Primary sources show that, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there were two groups of Waldenses—one group that observed Sunday as the Lord’s day, the other that kept the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible. Our research reveals that the title *insabbatati* could apply to (1) Waldenses who rejected Catholic festivals and holy days, or sabbaths, and observed only Sunday as the Lord’s day and (2) Waldenses who, in addition, rejected Sunday as a Catholic institution and kept the seventh-day Sabbath of the Bible. The title *sabbatati*, as applied to heretics, was used to characterize Waldenses who stood out because of their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. (Damsteegt PG. The ancient Waldenses: Did the Reformation predate Luther? Ministry, October 2017, pp. 23,24)

The Waldensian historian, Emilio Comba, admits that northern Italy was a stronghold of various dissident groups associated with the Waldenses, some of which kept the Sabbath and often influenced and merged with the various groups of the Poor of Lyon and Poor Lombards. Sabbath keeping among the Waldenses was most widespread in Bohemia and Moravia. An inquisitor’s manuscript from the fifteenth century reports that Waldenses in Bohemia “do not celebrate the feasts of the blessed virgin Mary and the Apostles, except the Lord’s day. Not a few celebrate the Sabbath with the Jews.” ... Most historians identify Turlupins with the Picardian branch of Waldenses. A company of them was arrested in 1420. Well-preserved manuscripts mention that they “upheld that the Saturday must be celebrated instead of Sunday.”

From the end of the twelfth century, opponents of the Waldenses called them *insabbatati*, *insabbatatis*, *xabatati*, *xabatenses*, *sabbatati*, *sabatatos*, *inzabattati*, *insabbatatorum*, and *insabbatatos*. These words can be traced back to the basic forms of *insabbatati* and *sabbatati*, because of Latin declensions. ... The first time the word *insabbatati*

appeared in the existing Latin literature is in an edict issued in 1192 against heretics by Alfonso II, King of Aragon, (1152–1196), Count of Barcelona, and Count of Provence. This edict warned against the Waldenses (*Waldenses*) and identified them as *Insabbatatos* and *Pauperes de Lugduno* (Poor of Lyon). The edict, however, did not explain why Waldenses were called *Insabbatatos*. The next use of this term was in an 1197 edict issued by the son of Alfonso II, Peter II, King of Aragon, (1174–1213) and Count of Provence. This document called them *Sabatati* and *Pauperes de Lugduno*. ...

From the various accounts of Waldenses rejecting holy days, festivals or sabbaths, it is not surprising that, as late as the time of archbishop James Usher (1581–1656), there were many who believed that *insabbatati* referred to those Waldenses who worshiped by judaizing on the Sabbath. Concerning the word *insabbatati*, Jesuit Inquisitor Pegne also admitted that “many used to think it came from Sabbath, and that they [Waldenses] observed the Sabbath according to the custom of the Jews.” ...

Since the Middle Ages, historians have characterized the Waldenses by the uncomplimentary names *insabbatati* and *sabbatati* to indicate their unique attire by the type of shoes they wore, or their unique belief in rejecting Catholic holy days or festivals and practices. The research underlying this article has tried to decode the confusion surrounding these names. This has led to the following insights for historiography, previously unnoticed. From the analysis of the shoe theory, the research brought out that the wearing of perforated shoes was not introduced by or was not the custom of the Waldenses or the Poor of Lyon, but it was a custom introduced by the Poor Catholics and the Reconciled Poor. ...

The term *sabbatati* also could have been used to describe some groups of Waldenses who followed the Jewish practice of resting on the Sabbath. This fits the meaning of both *Insabbatati* as depicting the rejection of Catholic holy days, Sabbaths, and teachings, and *sabbatati* describing the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Primary sources show that one inquisitor in the thirteenth century wrote a book against the Waldenses and Cathars in which he refuted their criticism that Roman Catholics observed Sunday instead of the seventh-day Sabbath. This is evidence that there were Waldenses and Cathars who kept the seventh-day Sabbath during the high Middle Ages. Additional evidence shows that several groups closely associated and considered part of the Waldensian movement did indeed keep the seventh-day Sabbath as early as



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the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

While there may be debate regarding the precise year of Alphonso's decree, notice the following:

Again to the South-West, about AD. 1190, we read of a public discussion between certain Valdenses and Catholics near Narbonne:and in 1194 of a Decree of Alphonzo II of Arragon against them ...

[596] "Waldenses sive Insabbatatos, qui alio nomine se vocant Pauperes de Lugduno,...ab omni regno nostro, tanquam inimicos crucis Christi,...et regni publicos hostes, exire ac fugere praecipimus."

I have translated the above as follows:

"The Waldenses, or the Insabbatatos, who call themselves the Poor of Lyons by another name, ... from all our kingdom, as enemies of the cross of Christ, ... and the public enemies of the kingdom, to go forth and flee from the headlands."

The fact that the followers of Peter Waldo may not have been publicly accused of keeping the seventh-day Sabbath until the late 12th century could possibly suggest that some who were earlier categorized as Waldensians did not then do so.

Yet, since Peter Waldo lived until 1205 in the 13th century, the fact that his people were called insabbatati by the end of the 12th century looks to be evidence that Peter Waldo and his followers were keeping the seventh-day Sabbath by then.

As far as Peter Waldo goes, it is my view that he initially (c. 1160-1179) may or may not have been a Sabbath-keeper, but was one, probably no later than 1180, after exposure to some others in his region who held Church of God-type doctrines.



DO
YOU
KNOW
WHAT
I HAVE
DONE
TO
YOU?

What True Love Really Is

PAUL W. SYLTIE



God is love. Do we really understand what that means? Love is the most corrupted concept in all of civilization, so we must strive to counter this deception by searching the word of God, wherein there are ten aspects of love that are examined in the book: the Commandments, fruits of the spirit, laying down your life, marriage, revelation in the creation, the least being the greatest, God multiplying Himself, and more! Vivid stories of these facets of love add to the excitement. Putting them all together enables a person seeking the Creator to understand why Jesus washed the disciples' feet just hours before His crucifixion, even the feet of Judas, His betrayer. We likewise must wash one another's feet! As He was sacrificed for us, so we must be sacrificed every day in His footsteps.

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DRAW CLOSE TO GOD

Tommy Willis

The Plague, War in Europe, escalating food prices, and nuclear threats from Russia. The conflict in Europe took first place in the news over the Coronavirus. In this Atomic Age, many are wondering, and uneasy, as global unrest rises.

My grandfather used to tell me about the plague of 1918, with all the dead in the neighborhood.

It caught your attention when he talked about what he saw. Now, we have had a Plague that has killed more American's than that deadly Spanish Flu epidemic in my grandfather's day.

With the Plague, wars and rumors of wars, and much more, many feel the prophecies foretold thousands of years ago, are unfolding before our eyes; and is sending chills down the spine of many prophecy watchers.

While we should be watchful, but not alarmist, and not be quick to jump into the "over-crowded end-times bandwagon," I do believe we are drawing close to the end of the Age. I feel just the events above should get our attention. Even if we are mistaken about where we are at with some of the end time prophecies—still, the nation is collapsing before our eyes. And Jesus said a nation divided cannot stand. Even some secular students of history can see this, as they are asking, will human civilization really collapse? there's more a foreboding sense of doom among them than before; because without God, there is fear, and not peace.

Does not Scripture tell us it will be like the days of Noah, and catch many by surprise? As people go about their daily business? "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26-27) NIV.

Therefore, we need to be watchful of the signs and to not allow that day to surprise us "like a trap" as Jesus said, warning Christians that it will catch us unaware if we are not careful? (Luke 21:34-36)

Much of this can be because we are distracted with the cares of this life and not praying as we should. I often think about this distraction when I see Christians angry and fretting at the news—peace and prayer is the furthest thing from their minds in this state. And some have said they want to throw things at the TV in their anger and frustration, as they become offended. How did we get

here? Why such turmoil and lack of peace? when God says we can have His peace if we are praying as we should?

Allowing yourself to become distraught over the news this way, becomes a major distraction to your prayer life and watching as Jesus said! If you are one of the many distraught watching the news—turn it off, and go to the prayer closet, and spend time with God. The answer to you finding peace will not be found in watching more news, but to draw close to God. Yes, we should watch and be aware of world events; but what is even more important is watching our spiritual state. We can be watching world events diligently, yet be drifting from God if we are not praying as we should—I have made this mistake in the past. Think about spending more time in prayer than you do watching the news, and you will be on much safer ground. Please pray about this. I share this as one who has made this mistake.

As Christians, we often look at the enemy from without. But the Bible tells us not only about the danger in the world; but from within ourselves also, and the dangerous Adamic nature we were born with.

God tells us to come out of the world and its ways. Let us not get caught up in becoming offended with the hatred and bickering of the world. If we are not careful, we can let our emotions dictate our actions. If we do, it can make havoc in our lives; it shipwrecks sound thinking. The Bible tells us not to have fear, and that God will give us a sound mind to reason matters out: "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*" (2 Tim 1:7) KJV. He will give us the mind of Christ with which we will make decisions based on sound thinking, if we are praying as we should.

Go over Mt 24:10-13, in different translations, starting with the KJV, and we will see Jesus says that many Christians will become offended, and turn from the faith, and have their love wax cold. It seems that some of this biblical principle is happening before our eyes with so many Christians becoming offended today.

So, I ask, how important is it to stay with the love of God and not become offended? "*Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*" (Ps 119:165) KJV. To have the love God says we should have, we don't have the right to become offended.

Since Jesus even talked about a time of increased tribulation and persecution, and many will become offended and turn from the faith; do we think the days ahead will get

easier? What will we do when things really get bad? Will we become even more angry and mad? Will that help?

What does the future hold for you? Scripture says we don't know even what will happen tomorrow (James 4:13-14). The reality of this scripture became more real to me when I experienced the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As a lifelong resident of New Orleans, one day I had a home, then "tomorrow" came and I didn't. My home was destroyed in Katrina. I spent three months in a tent I bought at Walmart.

Some of the scenes I saw looked like one of those apocalyptic movies. They were still finding bodies in New Orleans for weeks and months after the storm, because many people drowned in the storm. In some places the water went up to the roofs. Many crawled into their attics to get away from the rising water, and they got trapped there. The death toll from those that died from the stress and agony after the storm cannot be estimated. People spend months sleeping in their car. Suicide rates went up. Many lives were shortened. There was much agony, tears and distress. Yes, we truly don't know what tomorrow will bring.

Some people lost their faith in God, and some people's faith grew stronger. I have often thought how this could be like a foretaste of the days ahead, and how as the fires of tribulation increase, some will be purified as others fall away.

Jesus says:

"At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved." (Mt 24:10-13) niv.

This scripture should get our attention. Because we are in much danger if we don't stay with the love of God. We need to pray and draw close to God. I share this because I used to have an unforgiving heart for many years until God brought me to repentance. I was offended at those in and out of the church; but once God brought me to repentance, I have had the peace of God not to get offended anymore. I have been free from this torment for decades now, and haven't held any unforgiveness towards anyone for decades. I thank God, because I know only Christ in me can do that. Without Him we can do nothing.

Once you see how, without the work he did on the cross for you, that you would be lost—then you are brought to repentance. Our Savior cried out in the garden for God to work it out some other way, he pleaded in the garden for relief, *"though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."* (Heb 5:8) nkjv.

We would all be lost without the work Christ did on the cross. I realize now it was only because of the work he did on the cross that I can have his forgiveness inside of me; and I'm given peace. A great price was paid for us

because we are all sinners. Therefore, I tremble at holding anything against anyone. The Bible tells us we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10). And when we do, we will not be pointing the finger of judgement at others, as so many Christians are doing today.

So many Christians lack peace of mind at present, and are becoming offended. Will the days ahead get easier? If we are persecuted in the near future, will you lash out as many are today, or will you praise God like the disciples did that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for His name when they were flogged? (Acts 5:40-41). Think about this. It will help you see we need to draw close to God.

I realized that much of my unforgiving heart that became offended, is because I had lost sight that I was a sinner, as 2 Pet 1:9 relates to: *"But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."* KJV.

Therefore: *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."* (James 4:8-10) NKJV.

The answer to you being taken from becoming offended and angry, and given peace, is repentance. I know this is true from the experience of my own failures. And this does not take place by continually pointing at the sins of the world; because the world will do as it has always done for thousands of years. But examining our own lives before God is what is needed. You see the biggest enemy when you look in the mirror—then you gain a different perspective. We don't know ourselves and the dangerous Adamic nature we were born with. Repentance set me free from the unforgiving heart that was always offended.

Many are worrying and fretting now, and not praying as they should. Much prayer will be needed to stay in focus and stay with the love of God. We need God's ability; His resurrected life. And to stay with Him will require much prayer; but we often get caught up in fretting and misery, and the peace of God is not there when we worry.

One day I heard a brother give counsel to someone who was full of worry, and no matter what counsel he gave the person, they kept worrying over one thing or another. Finally, he said: "Either pray or worry, don't do both."

Of course, God commands us not to worry: Philippians 4:6-7, tells us: *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."* NLT.

Slow down and pray: *"...All our busy rushing ends in*

nothing..." (Ps 39:6) NLT.

I've seen so many, including myself, go through so much misery because we don't take matters to God in prayer as we should. From much failure over the years, God has taught me to run to Him in prayer with my troubles. No matter what brave face we might put on for others, we all have our real problems, and as we learn that worry and mental anguish is dispelled when God's peace floods our very hearts and minds, then we learn to go to Him in prayer as Philippians 4:6-7 tells us.

I was in the church for over 40 years before I learned to apply these biblical principles; it took me that long; and once I did, I realized it was God's answer to peace. Before that point in time, I would run the problems over and over in my mind until I was miserable.

Once we learn to bring our needs to God in prayer this way, His peace will guard our hearts and minds. This is the antidote to worry. Won't you please try? As we do, we will learn to have God's peace in the midst of a troubled world. If you have worries and fears, then pray; and keep praying. As you learn to apply the above scriptures you will have peace; this is true success, *"For he himself is our peace."* (Eph 2:14) NIV.

Do not think you stand firm in these matters; lest you fall. Scriptures tells us it will take much prayer to endure the days ahead. Don't let that day catch you like a trap as Jesus said. The days ahead will not be easy; we need to focus on our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

But we can often make a thousand excuses for not getting in our prayer and Bible study. We need to draw close to God. He will keep us at peace amid the chaos of the world. We cannot make it on our own strength. We will need God's strength to endure. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is patience (Gal 5:22). We will need His patience inside of us.

We should give heed to Jesus exhortation: *"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up... However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:1,8) NIV

Everything that is not grounded on Jesus Christ can be shaken. This is why we cannot stress enough the need to get our foundation and trust down in Jesus Christ. As you get grounded in Jesus Christ you won't collapse when the fabric of society does; no matter what comes in the future.

The days ahead will be difficult; but we should not fear. We can have faith to face the future if we will pray as we should and draw close to God.

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you..." (James 4:8).



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YAHWEH AND THE LAMB

Darl Arbogast

Proverbs 30:4 NKJ states, *Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?*

John 3:13 NKJ tells us something that is very important - *13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.* (There is no evidence that any human, Enoch, nor Moses nor Elijah are in heaven therefore they are still in the place God laid them to rest and they will be resurrected at His second coming.)

Genesis 1:1 NKJ - *1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Genesis 1:26 NKJ - *26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.*

Isaiah 45:6,7 NKJ - *I am the LORD, and there is no other; 7 I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity (evil); I, the LORD, do all these things.'*

Elohim is God, the plural meaning, more than one in Hebrew, such as 'Most High, Creator, Spokesman and the Word' is God in English. However a clear picture is needed to give us a picture of just Who did the creating as Two Spirit Beings make up the Godhead and they are both God as written in Genesis 1:26.

'El' was the most common general designation of deity in the ancient near East. Elohim was capitalized for YAHWEH but not capitalized if referencing to pagan deities (gods). Our text, the Holy Bible, usually reveals which is meant when using God the Father or God the Son or some pagan deity. Elohim can mean only one even though it is plural! Other el's can refer to other deities or El's can also refer to God the Father or God the Son. For example Israel means 'people of God', Bethel means 'house of God' a holy place both capitalized, both Israel and Bethel end in 'el'. God also has the name, Elshadi and Adonai, Elelyon and Elolam (the everlasting God).

JESUS THE CREATOR

Colossians 1:15 thru 18 NJK - *15 He (Jesus the Christ) is the image of the invisible spiritual God, the firstborn by His resurrec-*

tion over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He (Yahushua, the lamb) may have the preeminence.

Jesus had the power of creation as He created the Heavens and the earth, the sun, moon and the stars giving talents to men He had created through Adam's descendants. Isaiah 45:7 and 54:16 NKJ - *7 I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.' 16 "Behold, I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire, who brings forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the spoiler (Satan) to destroy."*

It is very clear that Satan first named Lucifer was also created; our Creator did not intend for Satan to become an adversary; it was Lucifer's desire to be like the 'Most High' God the Father. Today Satan has the power of sin and death, he can kill suddenly and make men suffer but he doesn't have the power to resurrect.

It is written in Genesis 2:16,17 NKJ - *16 And the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) commanded the man (Adam), saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day*



that you eat of it you shall surely die." We are also told in Genesis 3:3,4 NKJ - 3 *but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God (Yahweh) has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die".*

Satan did not make Adam and Eve sin, they had made the decision to do so on their own. Today we have the same choice to believe God or not, to resist temptation or not!

God is in control and owns us all as written in Job 12:10, 13 thru 17 NKJ - 10 *In whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind? 13 "With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding. 14 If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt; If He imprisons a man, there can be no release. 15 If He withholds the waters, they dry up; If He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth. 16 With Him are strength and prudence. The deceived and the deceiver are His. 17 He leads counselors away plundered, and makes fools of the judges.*

Who can tell God what to do? Revelation 6:16,17 NKJ - *"Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him (Yahweh) who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

Mankind was created with the intention of not having to die apparently on the condition that Adam would keep the serpent out of the Garden of Eden and Adam would obey God's commandments.

Adam did not have the strength, stamina or fortitude to stand up to the beguiling serpent nor could he take charge and correct Eve, his wife who yielded to temptation first, then coaxed Adam to sin.

We are not told the age of Eve when she died but Adam lived 930 years; they could have continued to live on and on if they had not sinned against God as written in Genesis 3:22 NKJ - 22 *Then the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—*

Eating fruit from the tree of life consistently would have kept Adam and Eve living indefinitely therefore it was taken away and they were forced to leave the Garden of Eden. The Tree of Life will resurface again as written in Revelation 22:2 after the New Jerusalem descends.

After the Great White Throne judgment takes place and after death and graves are cast into a symbolic lake of fire which is the second death, a new pristine atmosphere with no pollution accompanied with a re-landscaped earth will be replacing what we

have on the earth now; the oceans and the mountains will be gone. All pollution will be underground or burned to ash and buried deep underground or under where the oceans use to be.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

There will be no temple in the New Jerusalem as the Father and the Son called Yahweh and the Lamb, they are its Temple. The 'temple is a sacred place' and the phrase 'bosom of Abraham' is figuratively used of a 'place of blessedness'.

There will be a throne on the earth in the city of 'New Jerusalem' with a river of pure water proceeding from under God's throne itself. The tree of life will be reemerged by that time bearing twelve types of fruit and leaves containing medicine for the healing of the nations as written in Revelation 22:12,14 NKJ - 12 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*

Revelation 22 indicates there will be human life continuing after New Jerusalem comes down from heaven. The angels and the resurrected saints will be spirit beings therefore not getting sick nor are they subject to diseases so no need for medicine for them. The leaves on the Tree of Life is there for the healing of the nations (the people).

Satan has the power of death but when he is gone there is no more death. Hebrews 2:14 NKJ - 14 *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself (Jesus the Christ) likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. 1 Corinthians 15:24,25,26 and 2 Timothy 1:10 NKJ - 24 *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 8 . . .the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**

The churches in the past did not teach us everything but perhaps more knowledge and wisdom will open up to us now!

Let's read, study, pray, seek knowledge and wisdom sharing with each other what we have learned.



Transgender ...

Or, Growing Pains?

DJ Wellington

Am I glad to be living in the times I am! A time when gender “confusion” is all around with many people including teachers, doctors and even parents willing to help young folks “choose” what gender they are or can become! In many cases, they encourage youngsters to change based on how they “feel” at the time when those “feelings” are all part of growing and maturing!

Genesis 1:27 says: *So Elohim created man in His own image; in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them.* So there were only TWO genders created, right? Male and female. That has never changed.

So, why am I glad to be living in these times? Let me explain. I was born to a set of very, very good parents along with three brothers. I grew up tough (physically and mentally)—I mean with three brothers, you had to learn to defend yourself. Not that they were mean, but as many siblings do—we’d get into disagreements. As I’ve gotten older and had children myself, then it was realized how vital these situations are—they help us to form our minds and prepare us for adulthood in an “adult” world. Children are no longer prepared for this, sadly. I was number two in the order of birth and my younger brothers looked up to me as well as I looked to my older brother. Again, all in preparation for adulthood.

Let me tell what happened one day, because this will be relevant in the “big picture.” I was at home when three young fellows came to our house—I was about 11 or 12 years old at the time and our parents were both out. My older brother came in the house to get me as these three fellows were there to fight me—me, the “girl” who my older brother said would whip ‘em good. So, I did—could never actually hit anyone but I did get them pinned, one at a time. When they were all



“licked,” they decided to gang up on me. Fortunately, “big brother” stepped in (he was 4 years my senior), told me to run into the backyard and the situation was ended—no hard feelings and everyone moved on. (I think my brother won “his bet,” though!)

One other short story.... I had very, very long hair when I was in my early teens. My Mom wanted me to try a new hairstyle. It was called a “Sassoon,” so I agreed. It turned out to be the “All American boy” style haircut and we brought my long hair home in a bag (didn’t donate it back then). I still remember how upset my Dad was at my Mom! I earned a new nickname then: “George.”

Why do I remember these stories NOW?

Had either or both of those situations occurred in a time such as we live in, I would have been a prime candidate to change my gender to male! In fact, some of the authority figures back then would have potentially ENCOURAGED me to change! It would have been the worse possible thing I could have done, then or now! What I realize now is all that happened to me then, PREPARED me to be a wife, mother and even a professional in the days to come. I did not know what would happen in my life, but my Heavenly Father did! He knew I would mother two boys and, having the upbringing I did, was able to relate more to them as they grew. It also prepared me for the tough times which came.



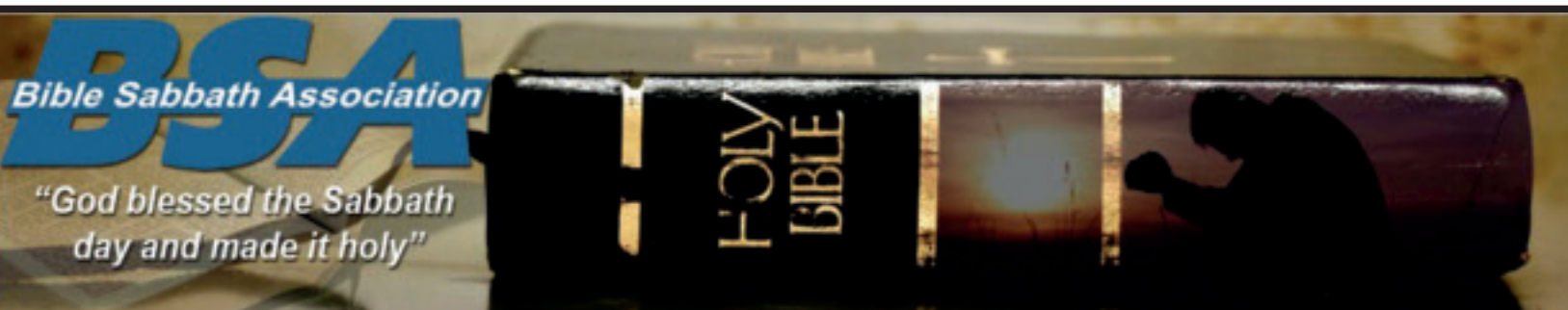
We all need to pray for these young folks to receive GOOD solid counseling on “gender,” not to encourage them to change what their Heavenly Father has in mind for them. He knows, we do not, what is facing that young person in the future. Remember, there are ONLY two genders—male and female! May He guide us all.



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