



The Sabbath Sentinel

Nov-Dec
2023

TRUTH

BSA—The Bible Sabbath Association

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"

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Death...NOT God's Choice!

It is readily apparent to even novice students of the scriptures that man was made to look like God. God, Himself, states unequivocally that He made “*man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*” Gen. 1:27. Man, therefore is comprised of two similar, yet very different, beings. These two beings were created to become one for a very specific purpose. Satan is attempting to disguise that wonderful purpose through the “woke” nonsense that there are many genders and you can choose the one you wish to be.

We all know, at least those of us with even a little sense with which God blesses us, that there are certain anatomical differences between humans born as male and as female. Yet, God said that He created all of us in His image—male and female. Many have speculated that we were created to look like God, even though they try in every way to create a god in their image. There is no doubt about the truth that it is we who are created to look like God, however. But, when we stop the analysis at that point we miss some very important elements of what God was doing when He created Adam and Eve. One missing element is found in the very next verse where it states, “*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*” Gen. 1:28.

Therefore, man, and woman, are both created to look like God, and were given a special physical function to accomplish the task of being fruitful and multiplying. God does not inspire words haphazardly. One word to notice is “replenish.” God did not say to plenish the earth. He said to replenish it. Replenish means to plenish it again! The word plenish means to “equip” or to “build up.” God told them to plenish the world again. One day God will let us know what happened in between the time that they said “Let there be light” and the time He gave the command to Adam and Eve to replenish the earth.

Returning to God’s command to be fruitful and multiply given to our first parents, we know that our physical differences were given especially for this function because Jesus tells us that “*in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God*

in heaven.” Mat 22:30. Summing these things we find that God created us to look like Him, and to procreate to produce others who also look like Him.

A second important consideration in our discussion of God’s mission in creation of clay images of Himself is our mortality. But, what about our mortality? We were made to look like God but God is not mortal; He is ever living, without beginning of days. Would it surprise you to know that man was not created to die? No, this does not mean that man has an immortal soul. In fact, we see in other scriptures that “*the soul that sins shall die.*” Eze 18:4, 20. Man would not spend eternity in hellfire torment for his sin; he would die for his sin. The one who will spend eternity in fire is the Deceiver—not people. The only possible conclusion is that from the beginning, man was not supposed to die!

In Rom 5:12 we find the following awesome piece of understanding being imparted by Paul to the Church in Rome: “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...*” Do we see the significance of what Paul wrote? It was because of sin that man had to die. What if man had NOT sinned. What if our parents had rejected the snake and instead chose every day, for as long as it took, to refuse to take of that tree that God had denied to them?

God had instructed Adam who obviously passed the admonition on to Eve “*And Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*” Gen 2:16-17. We should not read over that hastily.

God was saying that IF they ate of that one tree THEN they would die! This can only mean, as Paul states, that it took the sin of their taking of the one fruit denied to them to bring upon them, and us, death. The unsaid truth in that scenario was that if they had never taken of that fruit all the days of their lives then they would not have died!

What would have happened had they chosen the path God wanted them to take? We can’t know for sure, but be-

cause God never changes we can surmise that when Adam and Eve had finished fulfilling their function as mortal humans that they, like us, would have been changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, into the same type of spiritual body that we have been promised for obedience.

Instead of believing God, though, they chose to believe Satan, the serpent, when he said “*You shall NOT surely die.*” That’s what Satan does; he lies and was a liar from the beginning.

But God did NOT want us to die! He tells us in Eze 18:32, “*For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*” God has not derived any pleasure from our bad decision in the Garden and its penalty. He only wanted life for us. His awesome purpose was to create other immortal beings who looked like Him. God’s intent from the beginning was to reproduce Himself, exactly what He commanded Adam and Eve to do.

There is a day coming when God will return man to the state he was before sin entered the world. “*He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.*” Isa 25:8. Death itself will be destroyed! Without death there can be only life everlasting! This is an astonishing truth that most people in the world do not yet understand! We were created to live forever, and God is on the path of making that happen for most who have ever lived.

To prove to us that God has that power, two resurrections surrounding the life of Christ were given to us as examples. First, we read in John 11 that a friend of Christ, Lazarus, was sick and dying. Mary and Martha requested that Jesus visit and heal Lazarus. But, Jesus delayed going until there was no doubt that Lazarus was dead. Jesus tells His disciples plainly that “*Lazarus is dead.*” Jn 11:14. We know that this is the condition of Lazarus because when Jesus asked that the covering stone of Lazarus’ grave be rolled back, Martha objected because of the smell that would exist. Lazarus, after all, had been dead 4 days at that point.

But Jesus, after a short prayer to the Father, ordered Lazarus to come forth from the grave—and Lazarus did! Jesus proved that God has the power to do what we see is His plan for all of mankind who do not experience the type of resurrection we next address. God addresses that

event in prophecy found in Eze 37. In that prophecy, God causes bones long dead to come together, cover them up with muscle and skin, and put breath in their lungs. A resurrection to physical life like that which happened to Lazarus was being described in detail for us.

That next resurrection is one of being raised with a spiritual body rather than a physical one.

When Jesus died on the cross, there is no doubt that He died. Roman soldiers were experts at killing people. They knew when someone was dead. They knew that Jesus was dead even before running the spear into his side to pierce His heart. We can be assured that Jesus was dead.

Yet, three days later, toward the end of the weekly Sabbath day, that same Jesus who died was awakened to show us that God also has the power to resurrect us to a spiritual form that will never again die. He did it for Jesus as the first-born of many brethren proving to us that He can do what He says He will do for us, if we will only walk the path He has laid out for us.

These things we’ve discussed here are the foundation of the Gospel, the good news, that Jesus brought almost 2000 years ago. A Kingdom is coming that will never end. That Kingdom will be ruled by the glorified Christ and filled by those who have rejected that same fruit that Adam and Eve could not resist, those who have hated that they chose the wrong fruit and sought God’s mercy through the cleansing sacrifice of Christ.

Does a future that includes becoming a born-again child of God interest you? Does eternal life in a body that never hurts, never gets sick, and is imbued with power sound like a life worth striving to achieve? Are you ready to be that follower of Christ who is no longer held captive by the death penalty, who is a holder of the promise of immortal, eternal life. Jesus says to us today as He did to His disciples so long ago, “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” Mat 11:29-30.

If you understand these things, God has drawn you to His Son, and to adoption as His son also. The next move is yours!





FORGERY IN JUSTIN THE MARTYR

Kelly McDonald, Jr.

In the study of Church History, an interpolation is a type of forgery where a section of a work which was added by a later copyist. In other words, the added section was not part of the original work. There is a passage found in Justin the Martyr's First Apology that is commonly used as evidence of weekly gatherings on Sunday in early Christianity.

In this article, we will examine if this section was found in the original writing or if it was added later. The text in question is given below:

“And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday [Greek: heliou hamera], all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons...But Sunday [Greek: heliou hemiran] is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn [Greek: Kroniches]; and on the day after that of Saturn [Greek: Kronichen], which is the day of the Sun [Greek: Heliou Hamera], having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration...” (First Apology, chapter 67)

At first glance, it appears that this passage describes gatherings on the first day of the week which involved a time of reading the Scriptures, prayer, and taking the Eucharist. There is then an apologetic, or defense, of why they met on Sunday. If genuine, then it would be the first reference to weekly Sunday gatherings in Church History (about 120 years after Jesus).

A deeper look at this passage reveals issues with its authenticity. The three main issues are the names used for the days of the week, inconsistencies with other writings of Justin, and the placement of section 67 in the text.

I. The Names for the Days of the Week

The first issue I noticed with this passage is the language used to describe the days of the week. The past few years, we have done research on the names for the days of the week used in Roman and Christian literature (which we will discuss in future articles).

The earliest Christians referred to the days of the week by their Biblical names: first day, second day, third day, fourth day, fifth day, sixth day (or preparation day), and Sabbath (or seventh day). The Greco-Romans referred to the days of the week by their gods. Helios-day [Greek] or Sun-day [Latin] was dedicated to the sun and would correspond to the first day of the week. Kronos-day [Greek] or Saturn-day [Latin] was dedicated to Saturn and would correspond to the seventh day of the week.

In two other works, Justin used the Biblical reckoning for the names of the week. In his work Dialogue with Trypho, Justin mentioned the Sabbath many times (sections 10, 12, 18, 19, 21, 26, 27, 29, 43, 47, 92). In chapter 41, he referred to the ‘first day of the week.’ He also called it the ‘eighth day’, which was a theological concept used by some Christian writers in reference to the first day of the week. In chapter 138, he mentioned the eighth day and the resurrection. In another work, Hortatory Address to the Greeks, Justin refers to the first day of the week (chapter 33).

In his other works, Justin never referred to the seventh day using the term Kronos; he never addressed the first day by the term Helios (Justin wrote in Greek). The first Christian writer to indisputably use the planetary names

for the days of the week was Clement of Alexandria in about 180 AD. Earlier Christian writings such as the Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, and Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians, use the Biblical names for days of the week.

Thus, the use of planetary names for the days of the week is inconsistent with the language used in Justin's other writings; this makes section 67 questionable.

II. Inconsistencies and Contradictions with other writings

Section 67 has more inconsistencies with Justin's other writings. Another issue is his defense of weekly services on Sunday. In sections 21, 42, and 46 of the First Apology, he discussed the resurrection without regard to the day of the week. In section 67, the resurrection and the first day of the week are suddenly interjected with an apologetic. In Dialogue with Trypho, Justin's reference to the resurrection and the day of the week involves the theology of the 'eighth day.' Section 67 omits this theological reference and thus makes it inconsistent with Dialogue.

Secondly, in section 67 Justin purportedly claimed that "all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place..." on Sunday. He goes on to describe these gatherings with much detail.

In Dialogue with Trypho, the Jewish man Trypho observed that Justin did not observe any festivals or Sabbaths. "...in that you observe no festivals or sabbaths, and do not have the rite of circumcision; and further..." (section 10). Justin also claimed that Christians took the Eucharist "in every place" (section 41).

Dialogue with Trypho was written later than the First Apology. If a weekly festival were supposed to have been kept at the time of the First Apology, then why would someone later argue that Christians in Rome did not observe any festivals? (side note: we know for a fact that Christians in other places did observe the Biblical Sabbath and festivals). Also, it seems strange that no detailed description of first day gatherings would be found in any other work credited to Justin.

Another work titled The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs describes the trial and martyrdom of Justin and some other Christians. We have a section of this work below:

"Rusticus the prefect said, 'Where do you assemble?' Justin said, 'Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and

earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful.' Rusticus the prefect said, "Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?" Justin said, "I live above one Martinus, at the Timotinian Bath; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his..." (idem, 2; emphasis mine).

This text also contradicts section 67 of First Apology. In this testimony before his martyrdom, Justin said that Christians gathered where they chose and not in the same place. This account seems more consistent with the size and scope of the ancient city of Rome.

It would be hard to gather people from such a large area into one place. Where would that many people gather and be unnoticed by Roman officials? Section 67 is thus inconsistent with pattern of Christian gatherings for that time.

III. Placement in the Text

When one views sections 65 and 66, it seems that Justin has already explained the Eucharist and described the order of service, but it was in reference to a newly baptized convert. Section 65 is quoted below:

"There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to *yévoito* [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion..." (idem)

In section 66, Justin gives a further explanation and defense of the Eucharist – in reference to a newly baptized convert. No day of the week is mentioned in sections 65 or 66. Rehashing the subject in section 67 is then an unnecessary repetition that contributes to it being a later addition.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence presented, it appears that most of section 67 is a later interpolation. It was interjected by someone who accepted the use of planetary names for the

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days of the week. Justin avoided this practice, but the forger did not realize it. This individual also promoted the idea of all Christians in a large area gathering into a singular place, which is anachronistic for Justin's time. The individual who added this content also provided an apology concerning Sunday gatherings and the resurrection.

The proper ending of Justin's First Apology is likely the very first part section of 67, which reads more like a conclusion: "And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost."

One can see how ancient forgeries have contributed to the incorrect idea that Sunday gatherings were established and developed in the earliest times of Christianity. The evidence shows otherwise. As we have discussed in previous articles, the vast majority of Christians continued to observe the Sabbath hundreds of years after Jesus. Only in Rome and Alexandria did the practice cease altogether.

Stay tuned as we continue to unearth more discoveries from the epochs of Sabbath history.

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BIBLICAL NUMERICS

Darl Arbogast

An elderly man many years ago came to my home for a visit. John (not his real name) was an aeronautics engineer by trade a native of Scotland. John was a Sabbath keeper and wanted to show me something important. Important it was, indeed, and what I am telling you actually happened.

When John came to visit me he brought with him a Bible and when he opened it all I saw were numbers. John explained to me that in the ancient Hebrew language words and letters have a numerical value. John explained to me that this Bible is absolutely true right down to the last jot and tittle explaining "If you could read it and lay it beside other translations of the Bible you would see the flaws in all translations written to date". Translations have man made mistakes as they translate the words but numbers never lie! John said that the numbers Bible reveals the plan of God for creation of earth and all that is on it from the beginning forward to infinity.

I could readily see and understand the logic in all that he said but I could not read the numbers Bible for obvious reasons.

Hillbilly colloquialism and poor grammar is about the best I can do with languages. I was feeling very inadequate by not knowing any foreign languages.

The Bible of numbers has shown me a world I could not enter into, the plan of God is too vast, like a fantasyland seeming unreal. Not knowing Hebrew alphabet or Hebrew numbers has me at a great disadvantage.

John explained to me that this is what God has allowed to happen with the many translations written. It has also occurred to me that God doesn't want us to know all the answers. However God has preserved this numerical 'proof copy' for verification by those who can decipher it.

Being a Sabbath keeper too I also, like John, wanted to be a part of what God was continuing to work out here on earth now and be ready for what is to come in the future.

The bottom line is we need to understand the following concept: "Do what you do that is in the realm of obeying God and in time to come we will all have a pure language with understanding based on the numerical system, almost certainly".

My visit with John was a long time ago but since that time I have acquired a Bible titled "The Holy Bible in its Original Order." In its introduction it is recognizing the value of Biblical numbers from number one to number fifty. Only the significant numbers that relate to the divine design of the Bible and the numerics of the biblical Holy Days are presented. This is as close as I can come to the numerical system during this age and time.

I would like to share just a few tid-bits of some of these with my friends and brethren, our readers.

The Number 1 signifies unity and oneness. One God, one true Church, one Mediator, one Shepherd, one body, one faith and one baptism etc.

The Number 2 signified union, like Old and New Testament, two witnesses etc.

The Number 3 signifies completeness. Three Patriarchs before the flood, three patriarchs after the flood and three key Apostles etc. in the New Testament.

The number 4 the number of creation, signs, seasons, days and years. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John etc.

These four small samplings of what some of the numbers mean are most informative and very interesting but I am especially intrigued by the number eight referred to in the book of John 7:37 as the "Great Day" while called by some the "Last Great Day." John 7:37 NKJ "*On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*"

The last day, that great day of the feast, is the day following the "Feast of Tabernacles." The first seven days of that Feast represents the Millennium, then Jesus said this on the eighth day. What Jesus states in John 7:37 is packed with so much meaning it is a job to keep it all together and reading John 7:38 is packed with more information "*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*"

We can only put together what we are told as it is written that when the Millennium is over and God has moved New Jerusalem to the earth, a new beginning is about to occur, eight signifies a new beginning as written in Revelation 21:2 thru 6 NKJ "*Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,*

and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.' Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.'"

The beginning of the eighth day, God the Father will be here on earth, dwelling with mankind. The tree of life will return, all death will cease, the river of water of life will be flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Jesus the Christ). No more death therefore no more graves Daniel 12:2 NKJ *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."*

Revelation 21:3 NKJ *"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.'"*

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

1 Corinthians 15:26 NKJ *"The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. Cessation of life and graves no longer exist!"*

2 Peter 3:7 NKJ *"But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."*

Revelation 20:11,12 NKJ *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."*

Revelation 21:1 NKJ *"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea."*

It is probable during that time everyone will have been found written in the book of life, God will not fail! Read John 5:28,29.

Apparently every human will live until they are judged worthy of immortality then they will be changed to a spirit being with a new name, no longer human.

God wants to save all His human creation! Only Satan and his minions will fail.



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DJ Wellington

We left off in Part 1 with Rachel, one who was not quite as righteous as perhaps she should have been. There were many women who went against the odds or were strong and courageous, but there's more. Not all women in scripture were good as we saw, actually, with Rachel and Delilah. There's another lady who was not a good example for females then or now, as we will soon see. So we will pick up with Leah....

Leah (Genesis 29:23): Jacob was "tricked" into marrying Leah, whom he did not love; he loved Rachel. Because she was unloved, Yahweh blessed Leah more by opening her womb (Genesis 29:31), but can you imagine being married to a man who you knew did not love you? What a horrible acknowledgement to live with, yet she did.

Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1; 2:19-21): This is a similar situation to Rachel and Leah. Hannah was a wife of Elkanah, with Peninnah being the other wife. Peninnah had bore children but Hannah's womb was closed. Elkanah loved Hannah more and would give her a double portion of anything he sacrificed and brought home. Peninnah would irritate her, holding it over her head that she bore children but Hannah's womb was closed. So, Hannah went to Yahweh in sincere, heartfelt prayer and made a vow to give her offspring to Yahweh. What dedication and trust she had in Yahweh! And she did bear a child--Samuel! Every year Hannah would take Samuel a new robe and she was blessed, having three sons and two daughters following this!

Jezebel (1 Kings 18:4): This lady DESTROYED the prophets of Yahweh! She was the wife of Ahab and in 1 Kings 21:5-27 it is described how she told her husband SHE would get him the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, and then goes on to say how she plotted to get it done. Yahweh spoke in verse 2 that the dogs would eat Jezebel. Now, no woman in her right mind would want to follow Jezebel's example. What it does show, however, is that women also have the intelligence to put together plans and follow through on them. The name "Jezebel" came through history, even to today, as her name is associated

with the following negative characteristics:

(1) A female who is seeking attention from and possibly plotting to use someone who is wealthy or otherwise desirable in order to gain status in society; (2) She is often beautiful and knows it, she uses her looks to her advantage to "lure in" her next victim; (3) She doesn't enjoy being out of the loop, she very much has to be the center of attention but also doesn't have many real friends because of how shallow she is; and (4) She will do anything and will use anyone to get what she wants. She is interested in the people she's interested in purely as a status symbol and will toss them away and move on when they no longer satisfy what she wants [from <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Jezebel>].

In 2 Kings 4:8-37 we read of the Shunammite woman who asked her husband to prepare a room for the man of Yahweh (Elisha). Elisha's servant, Gehazi, said she had no son and Elisha told the Shunammite woman she would bear a son. All these conversations were with her, not her husband. When the boy was in the field with his father and fell ill, he was brought back to his mother and he died. She called to her husband requesting one of the young men and a donkey to run to the man of Yahweh. Her husband inquired why but she just said, "It is well." The Shunammite woman did most of the work in getting to Elisha, explaining what happened and Elisha came to the house and her son was healed. The husband was very obviously her head because she checked with him before she did these things, but he (evidently) trusted that she would act in proper fashion to get things done.

Martha and Miriam, sisters of Lazarus, (John 11:19-24): There was never any hesitation for women to speak openly to Yahushua. In fact, in this instance, Martha said to Him, "Master, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of Yahweh, Yahweh will give you." What greater faith do you see in Scripture as such? Luke 10:38-42 shows how women also have different "jobs" or focus. Here Yahushua basically told Martha she worries too much.

Miriam, Mother of Yahushua (Luke 1:26-38): This is an-



other story most know well about how the messenger of Yahweh came to her and said she would be with child and she asked how that could be. Did it ever occur to you that this messenger of Yahweh spoke TO HER, not to Joseph to tell her but to her directly? This again should represent a role of women in the world of believers.

Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18): She was actually at Yahushua's tomb and the two messengers spoke to her directly. She was the first to actually SEE Yahushua when He rose, though she thought at first He was the gardener. Then, she went and told the others she had seen the Master.

Lydia (Acts 16:14-15): Lydia was a merchant, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshipper of Yahweh. She actually responded to comments made by Paul. After she and her household were baptized, she invited them to her house to stay! We are not told if she was married but we do know that SHE was speaking with Paul and the others directly, not through her husband or father.

Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2): Paul makes it very known that they should receive Phoebe in a manner WORTHY OF THE SAINTS, and they should help her in whatever matter she may have need for she has been a helper of many. She was a servant of the assembly at Cenchrea.

There may have been some women missed in this study and I would welcome any additions to keep the study complete. Of most importance, however, is WHAT have we learned from these women?

1. First and foremost: You also were created in the image and likeness of our Heavenly Father!

2. Priorities – Yahweh first, husband second. If you think about it, if Yahweh is first, you will be the absolute best wife for your husband, though he is second.

3. You were made to be a “help meet” for your husband and to be that “help meet,” you should be able and willing to do whatever he needs for you to do, staying within the confines of Scripture. All marriages are different in certain aspects—you are to be the best helper you can in your marriage.

4. You can and should study the scriptures the same as your male counterpart because the instructions pertain to each individual. Most desirable is to study and discuss scriptures together. You need to know and understand the instructions so as to practice them. Remember, you answer to Yahweh first, then your husband.

5. You absolutely can have functions outside of the family, if your husband is approving. In fact, especially in times of sickness, he may need you to assist the family financially and that is not always possible within the home environment.

6. “Submission” is not a dirty word (neither is “housewife”) but has been grossly misunderstood and, sadly, sometimes used as a “hammer over the head.” Men are to be submissive to THEIR head (James 4:7), younger people are to submit to the elders. Something to remember is that the husbands, as the leaders, are the responsible parties to ensure their household adheres to our Father's words--”To whom much is given, ...much will be required.” Most all employees must be submissive to their employers or they'd be fired—again, so long as their demands do not violate the scriptures we live by.

There may be other lessons learned from this. I pray this has been a beneficial study to the female gender everywhere.



Is There Truth?

(Part 1)

Daniel Campau

Is there truth? This may seem like an odd question to ask as there is plenty of debate on the definition of truth. This question may be surprising, yet I ask it all the same. Does truth exist?

In the last few years, we have been bombarded with terms such as “misinformation,” “fake news,” and “fact checking.” This is so much so that many begin to distrust anything they read or hear. It is becoming harder and harder to discern what is truth. If we do not know what is true, or we have reason to disbelieve what we are told, then we begin to lose our trust altogether. When we do not believe or trust, we become anxious, irritated, impatient, and selfish. An individual, let alone a society, cannot function well and certainly cannot flourish when there is such distrust.

How long can we live in this unsettled distrusting state before it begins to affect our entire body physically, emotionally, and spiritually? This is also true within the greater body of Christ. When we are distracted by the everyday confusion all around us, we take our eyes off the Head of the Body. This is the worst condition to be in. If there is no real truth—as some want us to believe—then we are lost as a nation, as families, and as individuals.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;” (Philippians 4:6) (NKJV unless noted).

Rest assured there is truth, and rest assured there is absolute truth.

Truth is required for survival and for success, at all levels, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Let me give an example.

Mathematic absolutes form the foundation of many sciences. Whether or not we have given it much thought,

Science, Mathematics, Art, Music, and Chemistry are all based on a foundation of mathematic absolutes. When executed correctly, accurate results can be expected. If you are adding up the quantities of materials needed to complete a project, using inaccurate equations will cause frustration, at the very least. Now apply this principle to something such as properly calculating load bearing structures for a bridge or building. Using inaccurate equations or formulas could lead to loss of life if those structures fail. The severity of outcome depends on the situation in which the incorrect formulas are applied. The discovery of these mathematic absolutes over the course of history, allows us to engineer, build, create, AND survive.

When the first man was created, there was already everything in place for him to breathe, live, and survive. The fact that gravity already existed at that time is only one of the absolute truths or laws that are required for physical life. Of course, this man could not reproduce until Eve was made, but everything he needed to live was present because of absolute truths that already existed, and dare I say, God created. The law of gravity was there long before the law was “discovered” by Galileo and Newton. It was set in place by a Creator who designed it perfectly for the environment mankind would need. This same Creator made many other laws or truths or absolutes that are vital for us to know and follow for successful life. Some of these truths are more “discoverable” than others. Some of these truths need to be taught and then actively obeyed in order to achieve a successful outcome.

Next, we will discuss why truth matters. If truth does not matter, then seeking to know and understand it has little value.

Why it Matters

We live in a world where many people believe they can have their own personal truths. Morally, this creates a

problem because when we think, talk, and act on our own truths we, at the very least, create confusion to those around us.

Does it matter if there is truth in this mixed-up world? Is truth something you need to know? If you know some “truth” how does this information affect your life and the lives of your neighbors and family? Why does it even matter?

Simply put, every choice we make in thought, word, or deed has consequences. We ultimately must live with those consequences. If the premise of our choices is based on truth, the resulting consequences are much more likely to be effective. For example, if you are mixing or dispensing medication and you do not believe the truth that the amount matters, you could cause someone’s death. When baking a cake, adding, and correctly mixing the right ingredients result in good flavor. Attention to boarding the correct train will get you to your desired destination. These types of examples are easily understood. Why? Because most people have experienced making wrong and right choices in their lives, finding out firsthand that their choices have consequences.

Fortunately, our wrong choices do not always lead to immediate death. If this were the case, there would be no one left to teach the value of right choices. (See Rom 3:23). Since most of us are still around after making many wrong choices, we may conclude that there are no absolute truths and by extension no real consequences. We may get into arguments that end with “I will do it my way and you can do it your way.” Is there a clear true and false here? No, sometimes this can be labeled as preferences, opinions, or situational ethics. Be assured, I am not promoting situational ethics nor relativism, but there are times when our personal situation will direct our choices. Let me explain. If you are driving and a police car pulls up behind you with its lights flashing and siren wailing, you have a choice to make that moments before you would not have had to make. In this particular example, you have only two viable choices; try to get away or pull over and stop. The wise person knows which choice to make.

Let’s move on from these obvious examples of common sense in everyday life. All of us have regular occasions to learn from our mistakes and make correction. I refer to these choices as lesser matters in life. There are, however, some choices we must make based on truths whose consequences are not immediate. For example, the con-

sequence of following the command to love God with all of your heart (Deu. 6:5), usually does not show an immediate result. Some of God’s instruction is not intuitive. For example, we would not naturally keep the Sabbath without having been instructed to. Yet there are other commands that are more intuitive such as the command against murder. Most nations have some form of law against murder. Over time, selfish individuals figured out that murder, unabated, prevents a society from surviving, so laws were created against murder.

If the Creator, who cares for His creation and understands the destructive consequence of murder, says Do not Murder, and man in his selfish state also realizes that murder is detrimental to society, wouldn’t other less intuitive instruction from this same loving God also be valuable to follow? Wouldn’t one want to seek even more diligently for truth in such matters? Choosing well in what I call the greater matters carries eternal consequence. Therefore, obedience is much more important, though we do not necessarily, intuitively, see the value in following those particular instructions. The “why” of correct and true choices in some of the greatest matters in life is not always easy for our natural minds to discern. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us our own nature, or heart, is deceitful above all things and if that is not startling enough, it is desperately wicked. Wow, do you see how truth matters? We must not rely on our own wisdom or emotions to make right choices, especially in the greater matters.

These greater matters in life I am referring to have to do with who our God is, how we listen to Him, and how we treat our fellow man. The ultimate consequence for getting this right, making the right choice, has to do with something man has been searching for since the beginning—Eternal life. It is in this sense that truth, real truth, absolute truth, matters.

In this part, we have discussed why truth matters. Yet we have not fully addressed what that truth is. In the next segment, what is truth, we will discuss in more detail where to go for instruction on the greater matters.





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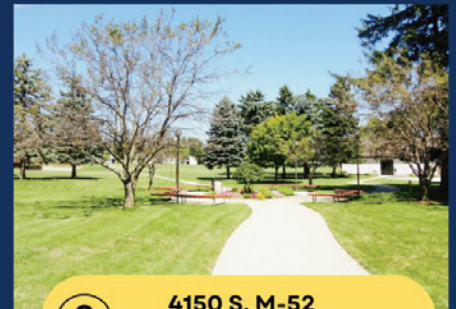


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All our Busy Rushing Ends in *Nothing*

Tommy Willis

As a student of human nature, it becomes clearer to me over the years the price we pay for not slowing down to think about the more important matters; and the big picture.

We are often constantly busy. Our minds are often fretting about the past or future; and we miss the joy of the present moment. I once heard someone say that we hope to be happy in a future that never arrives, because we fail to live in the now.

“Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered

— how fleeting my life is... all our busy rushing end in nothing.” (Ps 39:4, 6) NLT.

We could avoid a lot of trouble if we took the time to pray more and think; because too often, we let emotions guide our actions. Many Christians are caught up in the division and emotions of the nation, and getting caught up in all the bickering.

If you are one of the many who have said they want to throw things at the TV when the news is on—then turn it off and go pray. You can’t pray with that attitude of anger and bitterness that so many are having; this is dangerous. God tells us to come out of the world’s ways. The world will do what the world does; but as Christians we need to make sure we stay with God, and don’t get caught up in the attitudes of the world.

Many are becoming offended now; if God allows persecution to come; how will we react then? A good example of this is when the disciples were beaten; they did not complain that their rights and freedoms were being violated; but they went on to praise God that they were accounted worthy to suffer for His name (Acts 5:40-41, Acts 16:22-24). As trials increase, we will need to learn to have the attitude of Christ, as they did; and we will stay in focus, because, as Jesus said, the love of most Christians will grow cold. Our human nature is very dangerous.

The days ahead will not be easy. Jesus said: “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.

If we meditate on the above scripture that tells us the

love of most Christians will grow cold; and many will leave the faith; this should be a wakeup call to us. As we see the increase of wickedness in society, we will need to pray as never before so that we won’t get caught up in it. Most do not think this can happen to them; but it’s starting to happen now; and we have so much confidence in ourselves and our own ability; and we fail to see the danger of our human nature.

The Romans Seven Experience:

As trials increase, we can learn more why twenty years after his baptism, Paul said that he kept doing the evil he didn’t want to do (Rom 7:18-19). And we will see more of the need for prayer, because we can’t make it on our own strength. It has to be Christ in us.

Our human nature is a failure. All the disciples had to learn this lesson. At first, they all said that would stand by Jesus: “Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.” “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.” Mt 26:33-35) NIV.

Peter wept bitterly after he had denied Jesus three times. He was in agony. I notice the men who claimed the body of Jesus were not a part of the twelve; not like leaving the body in a morgue somewhere, but on a cross for the vultures and birds to devour. That must have brought many more tears for them.



But Jesus knew they would do this. Yes, they all said they would stay by Him. And all failed. They all forsook Him and fled when times got difficult. But just 50 days later, men who had acted like cowards, would go on and astound the world with courage, because then, the One who was crucified for us was in them to produce! They got the message it had to be Christ in them doing the work; and that their human nature could not be depended on. It makes me think of the times I drifted from God, and failed to honor Him for all He did for me; and the utter failure I've often been.

But God would use this, as one of the things that would show them our Adamic nature for what it is. After they had produced failure of the greatest kind, then they would be ready to be used by the Master. And they went forth with the Power of God to go on and astound the world—because now the Life of the One who died on the cross would be in them to produce! Praise be to our wonderful God.

If God is going to use us, we must be taken through the Romans 7 experience, to see our utter failure is spiritual matters, to where we come to see "nothing good dwells in me" (verse 18). As our society continues to crumble, we will need to draw close to the one who died on the cross for us, to have His ability to overcome. No wonder Paul said: "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal 6:14) niv

One of the major lessons we need to learn is the danger of our human nature. We will come to see more of the reality of Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" KJV. The hatred is building, and the darkness grows, and many can't see where they are going (1 John 2:9-11). I think about how the two words: "prayer" and "danger" connect here; we don't pray as we should because we don't see the danger.

When I drifted from God; he used suffering to get my attention, along with the messages to the churches. Study Revelation 3:15-20. He stands at the door and knocks; but he will not force us to open the door. Jesus says: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." KJV.

Therefore, we need to slow down and examine our lives. Since all our busy rushing ends in nothing, let us learn to slow down from the busy rushing of the world spend time with God. Once I did as the above scripture says, and repented to correct my relationship with Jesus Christ, my life changed. I share this as one who has plumbed the depths of failure; and repentance is what brought healing, and God restored me to a proper relationship with Jesus Christ.

I'm keenly aware of the danger of my corrupt human nature. Thirty years ago, God healed me of my unforgiving

heart; but what I did not see at the time was that this was only the "tip of the iceberg" of my Adamic nature. More failure over the years continued to reveal more. And five years ago, God revealed to me how I had drifted, and I never even realized I did. And he mercifully brought me to repentance. But keep in mind, each time you drift, you will find it harder to find your way back. I now dread not praying as I should. I may not find my way back next time.

As we study Isaiah 55:1-2, God ask why do we labor for that which does not satisfy? Many things can become an idol; it can be the TV, money, politics, social media, cell phones, are just some that distract us from our prayer life. But whatever is hindering us from spending time with God in prayer and meditation, needs to be put away.

God's peace is given freely; but we usually don't seek it as we should until after we have spent a lifetime seeking that which does not satisfy. We have to open the door (Rev 3:20), and come out of the world with all its consumerism and idols, to have the mind set free for a better relationship with Him. The days ahead are going to be very difficult; we need to grab on to God and stay with Him.

God will give us the peace we need to endure. The best thing you can do is spend time with the best Friend you will ever have. And as this nation and the world gets shaken as scripture says it will, He will be your comfort and protection in the days ahead. Focus on Jesus Christ; get to know and trust Him. Stay with Him in prayer; and he will keep us from falling away from the faith, as Jesus said so many Christians will.

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," (Jude 24).

As society continues to unravel, more of our human nature will be revealed for what it is; and like Jesus said, as lawlessness abounds, the love of most Christians will grow cold. This is starting to happen now, and we have to make sure we don't get caught up in it. The only way we will endure is staying with the love and forgiveness of God. This is why Jesus told us to pray always. We cannot make it on our own strength. Stay with Him and he will give you the peace to endure; and then there will be no reason to fear; he will sustain us.

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray." (1 Pet 4:7) niv



The Vocation God Never Intended

Paul W. Syltie

It may come as a shock to read this title and hear it stated that our Creator never intended that there be a profession known as “minister,” “clergy,” priest,” or “pastor” in our modern culture. How can I make such a bold statement? Let us examine God’s word and discover what our Creator has to say about such a topic, for within the pages of His word are the directions and standards for living.

Please let me preface this bold statement by saying that having a paid ministry for a group of brethren is not in itself a sin. It does, however, fall short of the perfection in God’s plan for the elect, as you will see in the following article. We know that Paul in I Corinthians 9:1-19 made plain that *“If we have planted the spiritual seed that has been of benefit to you, is it too much if we receive part of the harvest from your earthly goods?”* (verse 11, God’s Word Translation). Then he added in verse 18, *“So what is my reward? It is to spread the Good News free of charge. In that way I won’t use the rights that belong to those who spread the Good News.”*

Brethren must decide amongst themselves whether a paid ministry is the best for them in their congregation. In today’s world it is a choice they must make before our heavenly Father.

We Are All to Be Kings and Priests

From the beginning of the history of Israel we learn that all of the people were to be kings and priests. We first read of this truth in Exodus 19:5-6, when the nation had reached Mt. Sinai after the Exodus from Egypt.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all peoples, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

This message is repeated in I Peter 2:9-10: *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”*

The apostle Paul also emphasized that all of the brethren are to aspire to be shepherds [poimaino, “to feed, pasture, tend a flock”] when he addressed the elders [presbyteros, “older brethren”] at Miletus, who had come from Ephesus (Acts 20:16-17). He stated in Acts 20:28,

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has made you overseers [episkopos, ‘an inspector, overseer, watcher, guardian’], to shepherd [poimaino] the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

We see here that the older members of the ecclesia in Ephesus, because of their accumulated wisdom and experience in life over the years, are admonished to be shepherds, and tend to younger members of the ecclesia so that they might also grow up to be shepherds themselves when they become elders. It was a sober responsibility that Paul was relating to these elders, one that would absorb a great deal of their time and effort over the following years. It is an assignment that is highly reminiscent of the spirit of God resting on the 70 elders when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness of Sinai, when two of the 70 prophesied in the camp instead of around the tabernacle. Joshua pleaded with Moses to forbid these two elders to prophesy, but Moses answered, *“Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!”* (Numbers 11: 29).

Our heavenly Father wants all of us to become shepherds and leaders in the ecclesia, to be like Christ, to walk in His footsteps (I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6), to come to *“... the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature [helikia, ‘full age, years of discretion’] of the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13). Even as Jesus Christ is a King and a Priest, so are the elect to become kings and priests, for it is their future to reign with Christ on the earth during the millennial reign (Revelation 5:10).

The Apostle’s Functions

Paul, Peter, and the other apostles had a direct command that Jesus gave them before His final ascension into heaven, to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:19-20).

We, the ecclesia of today, have this same commission, to make disciples of all nations, baptize those whom God has called, and teach these disciples the ways of God. This is the function of a shepherd of the flock, just as Jesus was (and is) the Chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:4), in whose footsteps we follow.

When Paul would travel to various locations in Asia Minor, he would preach the message of the good news of the kingdom of God, and those whom the Eternal appointed for salvation as firstfruits would heed the message, repent of their sins, and be baptized. Then he and others in these congregations would select older people as overseers and organizers. This was done by voting of the people, a “stretching out of the hand.” See Acts 14:21-23.

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city (Derbe) and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed [cheirotoneo, ‘to stretch out the hand, to constitute by voting’] elders [presbyteros, ‘senior, more advanced in years’] in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Take special note here that it was the older members of the elect who were placed in leadership positions, and from these older members were selected, by voting or a raising of the hand, certain ones to be overseers. This procedure makes sense because who better than the people themselves, who likely had been neighbors and friends for years, would know who was best qualified and of high repute. Paul relied upon the knowledge of the groups to select qualified people for the very important responsibilities of an overseer or superintendent.

We know that Paul, Peter, and most likely all of the apostles would return at times to visit these congregations, and to help them with various issues that inevitably cropped up (Acts 14:21; 18:21; etc.). Sometimes they could not manage to make a per-

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sonal visit, as Paul in his dealings with the ecclesia in Corinth: He "... *intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit ...*" (II Corinthians 1:15), but since he could not carry out a personal visit he sent messages by letter in many cases. Thus we have the letters of Paul that constitute a goodly portion of the New Testament writings.

It is plain to see that Paul was not a hired pastor from a headquarters church organization in Jerusalem. Of course he taught God's truth wherever he went, but he was not a paid clergy member to any particular congregation. He served them all, and the overseers appointed by popular vote from the various fellowships were not paid by the brethren; they had their own jobs to support themselves.

The New Testament example of leadership in the ecclesia is not to have a paid minister from a headquarters — as we see amongst Catholics, Protestants, and Evangelicals today — but to have local members serve the brethren in independent fellowships within their spiritual gifts of administration. It is the free, spirit-led serving of the brethren's spiritual gifts one to another that defines government within the ecclesia as it ought to be. Corporate, top-down structure finds no support within God's system.

How Did We Get to This Place?

The history of governments throughout the world has been one of domination of people over other people. It is the system that Jesus Christ strictly admonished us to avoid at all costs.

"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:25-27; see also Matthew 20:25-28).

It is the Adversary's desire to hide the truth from us and practice self-centeredness and hedonism to lure the elect from the calling they have been given. Thus, greatness is equated with being rich and powerful, whereby control can be exerted over others. Nowhere is this character of Satan more clearly revealed than in totalitarian governments, where leaders have the power of life and death over their citizens: obey or be dead! Multiple millions over the millennia have lost their lives due to the utterly



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self-centered rulership of dictators.

This same sort of lordship permeates religious organizations. In fact, wars involving religious differences have killed multiple millions over the millennia, a prime example being the Moslems in the Middle East and Europe who have killed countless “infidels” in many wars over the centuries.

The impetus towards authoritarianism is particularly strong within incorporated groups, for corporations must operate by law through a hierarchical leadership system, not a brotherhood system as Jesus outlined in Luke 22. Satan will encourage any sort of system that will draw people away from the truth, in particular try to require a human priest or minister to be interjected between the person and God. These priests and ministers, trained at seminaries and other colleges that oftentimes fail to teach students the pure truths of Scripture, then control the understandings passed on to various congregations. Deep and sincere study of God’s word is seldom encouraged.

Well before the Flood the specter of control permeated society. Nimrod reflects that tyrannical nature of leadership by his building the Tower of Babel and his encouragement of urbanization, and his effort to rule all people from all nations under his umbrella. This effort at world government, as we know, failed grandly once God confused the tongues of the various nations, but the system of domination by government over all aspects of society continues to this very day.

The top-down form of repressive government began after the Flood through Satan’s instigation, and that system has been carried forward to the present time through every strata of society, including religious organizations. Concerning the Roman Catholic Church, we read at Saylor.org (Early Globalizations: East Meets West [1200s-1600s], The Medieval Catholic Church):

“Christianity transformed from a persecuted, unorganized group of believers into a hierarchical, dominating Church over the course of seven centuries, developing alongside the changing political environment of post-Roman Europe. The development of the institution of the Catholic Church and the spread of Christ throughout Europe during these seven centuries directly impacted every aspect of late-antiquity and early-medieval life, especially politics and the relationship between kings and religion. During this time period the Church rejected its domination by the Roman and Byzantine emperors, in turn exerting its own type of spiritual

dominance over the rulers of post-Roman Europe. Christianity, through the Church, became organized and ‘conquered’ all of Europe by the time of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066.”

As we well know, despite the ups and downs of centralized, authoritative administrations such as employed within the Roman Catholic Church, the end result was always the maintenance of a system that demands obedience to human rulers, an idea that spilled over into Protestant groups after the Reformation. While obedience to Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Episcopalian leaders may not be as strongly adhered to today as in the previous centuries, the system is still in place.

This sort of organizational structure, as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church, is hardly acceptable for God’s people, and the reasons for that have already been pointed out.

1. The dictates of the church corporation will be enforced, even if they disagree with Scripture.
2. The spiritual gifts of the brethren will not be encouraged to develop, since the free flow of the spirit of God will be impeded. Corporate decree will hold the uppermost authority. Note I Peter 5:1-3, 5: “*The elders (older people) who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility*”

The Levitical System Has Passed

Some people might say that the Levitical Priesthood of the Old Testament sets the standard and pattern for how the ecclesia of today ought to operate, with priests being administrators over the congregation and carrying out their divinely appointed duties. However, let us understand that THE PRIESTHOOD IS US, as we read in I Peter 2:5-9.

“You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous

light."

Also, remember that the ecclesia is now living within the Melchisedec Priesthood, not the Levitical Priesthood, which has passed away (Hebrews 8:13). The Levitical Priesthood was essential to bring Israel through the gentile nations for many generations, to prevent the Israelites from being swallowed up by the Canaanites and other foreign peoples and races whose pagan gods would mislead and squelch the existence of God's chosen people. That would have made God a liar, since He promised Abraham, and thereafter Isaac and Jacob, that He would give them extensive land in Palestine, increase their descendants as the "dust of the earth," establish His covenant with them, and through their descendants bless all the nations of the earth (Genesis 13:13-16; 17:7; 22:18).

Our Creator keeps His promises, and this Levitical system of governance did indeed preserve Israel throughout many centuries. The keeping of these promises enabled Jesus Christ to be born and carry out His ministry and sacrifice for mankind.

However, as Paul stated and we just read in Hebrews 8:13, the Levitical Priesthood for the New Covenant elect has passed away, to be replaced by the Melchisedec Priesthood, the same one which Abraham was a part of. Thus, the elect of today are walking within the same covenant as was Abraham, and as was Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:11) ... for even though He is our High Priest similar to how Aaron was thousands of years ago, we walk in His footsteps as future kings and priests, of which Moses, Aaron, the Aaronic priesthood, and the Levites were types. What was shown to us on earth in the Tabernacle in the wilderness and through the Aaronic Priesthood is merely the type of what is in the spirit realm, and in us (Hebrews 8:4-5). We possess the spirit of God, unlike most of the ancient Israelites, so do not follow the Law on tablets of stone, but rather we walk in the Law as expressed on the tablets of our hearts (Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33).

Let us praise God who has in a real sense made us all "professional clergy!" It is the profession of each one of us to walk in Christ's footsteps, to preach the truth of God, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, and to utilize our spiritual gifts to assist one another in enduring this society, to be raised at the last trumpet. No higher calling can possibly be given to anyone!



Interested in BSA Membership?

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

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

Following are the membership levels:

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

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

Contact BSA via e-mail at office@biblesabbath.org for more information. You can also pay for membership at our web site, www.biblesabbath.org, using credit cards (handled by PayPal) or by writing to us at PO Box 372, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

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

Candidates for the BSA Board of Directors

It is time once again for BSA Board of Directors elections. The people shown on the next two pages have graciously agreed to serve us all as the next Board members.

If you are a member of the Bible Sabbath Association (BSA), you are eligible to vote in this year's board of directors' election. Each dues-paying member of the Bible Sabbath Association in this household may complete one ballot, with signature. If you have a family membership, the family casts one vote. The ballots have

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| <p>Bryan Burrell</p>  | <p>Bryan Burrell is a life member of BSA and a member of the Board of Directors, currently serving as Treasurer. He and his wife Sue live near Fairview, Oklahoma. They have two sons, Mark (Lisa) and Paul (Jill). Bryan is a licensed securities agent specializing in financial planning and has served as a mediator in the Alternative Dispute Resolution System, volunteering as a mediator for businesses, individuals, families and churches. Bryan is a member of the Church of God, Seventh Day and active in the local church where he serves as adult class teacher. Being able to share the Sabbath truth, encourage fellowship among the groups and promotion of the Bible seventh-day Sabbath and the BSA by structuring and continuing plans for moving forward in the electronic digital times.</p> |
| <p>Craig White</p>  | <p>Craig White began to observe the seventh-day Sabbath in 1973 and five years later baptized as a member of the Worldwide Church of God. His heart is to help other Sabbatharians work together on their common beliefs and goals. Over the years he has worked with Church of God, SDA, SDB, and Messianic groups. Craig has done extensive research into Sabbatarian history and written many articles on this subject. He has done a thorough job of helping to preserve Church of God history through the scanning of thousands of documents. His collaborative experience and extensive network of contacts will help him be a tremendous asset in promoting BSA/TSS content. He can bring committee experience and policy development skills to the Board where needed.</p> |
| <p>Eva June Narber</p>  | <p>June Narber has served on the board for over 28 years and has served many roles. She has been a sabbath keeper since her teens and is a graduate of Ambassador College. She has three graduate degrees from North Carolina State University, Masters international development MTID; and two from the University of Mo KC- Masters of Arts curriculum and instruction/TESOL (MA CI/TESOL) and educational specialist (EdS). Currently she is working on a PhD with cores in Archaeology, Religion, and philosophy. Her anthropology and archaeology research/digs have taken her to many different countries, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Greece, the Dominican Republic and Jordan, and priorly, her businesses and ministry interests to Thailand, Myanmar, and South Korea. She moderates several online sabbath forums, teaches and focuses her intl. ministry outreach through Lost Sheep Ministries International and her career is a college instructor, career coach, author, and public speaker www.junenarber.com.</p> |
| <p>Daniel Russo</p>  | <p>Daniel Russo is a lifelong New Yorker and currently resides in Albany, New York. Daniel obtained an undergraduate degree in American History from the State University of New York at Albany in 2013. He then received a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy in 2017. He is a second generation member of the Church of God and was baptized in 2009. While he enjoys traveling and meeting brethren in various groups, his home congregation of 25+ years is an independent Westchester, New York congregation. Daniel founded the Church of God Network to facilitate cooperation between various Church of God churches. As a potential board member for the BSA, Daniel desires to facilitate and promote knowledge of the Sabbath as well as connection amongst Sabbatarians.</p> |

been sent via US mail or via email if we have a valid email address on file for you.

Ballots that mark boxes for more than seven candidates will be disqualified. Ballots that are not signed by adult dues paying BSA members will also be disqualified. Signature can be electronic or write in.

Return your ballot(s) by email, or if we mailed the ballot package use the enclosed return envelope, and return by November 30, 2023. You may also scan and email your ballot to: office@biblesabbath.org.

Those seven (7) candidates receiving the highest number of votes on ballots received in the BSA Home Office will be declared elected to the BSA Board. Announcement of the results of this election will be made in the January-February 2024 issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel* magazine.

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| <p>Dr. Royce Mitchell</p>  | <p>Dr. Royce Mitchell is a life member and current board member of the Bible Sabbath Association. He currently also serves as the editor of the BSA's flagship publication, The Sabbath Sentinel. Royce also serves as an elder and pastor of a local Church of God congregation in Houston, Texas. Royce is also a writer of both biblically based articles and books as well as technical books related to his profession. Royce seeks to continue to serve the membership of the BSA for another 4 years on the Board of Directors.</p> |
| <p>Sharon Darling</p>  | <p>Sharon Darling is the founder of Heart of a Torah Woman. She and her husband Aaron are passionate about following the Creator and have been married for 21 years. They and their two teenagers reside in the Midwest. Her ministry was birthed out of a God-given desire to help other women in their walk with God. She provides mentorship that helps women focus on how to bring glory to God in all aspects of life. She helps women adjust their thinking and approach to Biblical womanhood through an emphasis on the importance of routine prayer and Bible study, strengthening our marriages and families, and encouraging and supporting each other.</p> |
| <p>John Lemley</p>  | <p>John Lemley grew up in a household where God's seventh-day Sabbath and dietary laws were observed. He was 18 when we found the Church of God (Seventh Day). Not long afterwards we learned about the Bible Sabbath Association and subscribed to The Sabbath Sentinel. I have been blessed to write for TSS over the years. He has pastored churches in Washington, Missouri and Alberta. He is now retired and living in Vancouver, WA with his wife, Lois Youngs Lemley, of 51 years. We have four children and eleven grandchildren. His goals for the BSA include trying to get greater involvement from the entire Sabbath-observing family. He is in contact with SDA and SDB leadership and hope to encourage those denominations to be more active in the BSA.</p> |
| <p>Brandy Webb</p>  | <p>Brandy Webb lives in a small northeast Texas town called Avinger. She and her husband, Josh, enjoy living in the country on 23 acres with goats, chickens and a few cattle. She is a mother of two beautiful young adults, Jazmyn and Asher. She is also overflowing in love with her first grandchild Adelynn Rose Stotts who was born this June to her lovely daughter Jazmyn and son-in-law Cole Stotts. Besides being a wife, mom, and now a grandmother, she currently works full time as a deed clerk & researcher for a local appraisal district. Brandy also loves writing, learning new things, and serving. She constantly prays for God to guide her steps so that she can do His will and not her own. Her hope is to one day hear, "well done my good and faithful servant."</p> |

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

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