

THE Sabbath Sentinel

January-February
2002



BSA – The Bible Sabbath Association
“The Sabbath was made for man...” – Jesus, the Christ

The Sabbath Sentinel
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FEATURES

- 4 President's Message — Left Behind**
by Dr. Sidney L. Davis
- 5 Christianity vs. Islam**
by Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld
- 6 Is God to Blame?**
by John W. Ritenbaugh
- 12 The Seventh-day Sabbath is the Tree of Life, and Sunday is the Forbidden Fruit**
by Isaac Kofi Eshun
- 17 Bent on Backsliding**
by Daniel Botkin

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 Editorial — Praying in Time of War**
- 11 Announcement — Bible Sabbath Musicians Association**
- 18 Question on Military Service**
- 20 Mormons and the Sabbath**
- 21 The Church in the World**
- 22 Letters to the Editor**
- 23 Classified Ads**

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Praying in Time of War



How does one know what to pray about in a war? I have been asking myself that question a lot lately. America's involvement in the war in Afghanistan since the terrorist attack against the World Trade Center's twin towers on September 11 has left many Christians wondering what their response should be. How should we react to the attack and subsequent military hostilities halfway around the world? What should we pray for?

To be sure, many lives are at stake; many have already been lost. Are Christians obligated to seek to preserve the lives of those who would, without hesitation or remorse, snuff out the lives of others who do not share their religious convictions? Are we to sit idly by, praying nothing and doing nothing, while the guilty destroy the innocent? I think the Bible is very clear that we must not allow that to happen. "Because justice is slow, men's hearts are set in them to do evil," and "save those who are being drawn away to death" (Ecclesiastes 8:9 & Proverbs 24:10-12). Furthermore, if we sit idly by while evil runs amuck, we are encouraging evil and empowering the worst kind of injustice imaginable. God's Word tells us that we are obligated to defend those who are weak and unable to defend themselves against the will of the perverse and the strong.

Some will argue that the people who were killed on September 11 were not "innocent." In the ultimate sense, that is, from God's perspective, I would have to agree with that. Who among us is innocent? Yet, even God Himself makes distinctions. He makes it clear through the apostle Paul in Romans 13 that He expects secular governments to punish crime. Governments are supposed to be "God's servants," and agents "to bring wrath on wrongdoers" (v. 4). He also states clearly that Christians are to "remember the poor," and defend widows and orphans (Isaiah 1:7, 10:12; Zechariah 7:10; James 1:27, etc.). How many children were left orphaned by the attack of September 11? How many wives and husbands suddenly became widows and widowers because of this barbarous act? Are we to look the other way because the vast majority of those killed were "sinners?"

We are to be salt and light in our society. That has to mean that we are obligated to be visible, as the representatives of Christ within society, and that we add flavor to the societal stew. That also has to mean that we do not withdraw our influence—which is felt in society through our prayers and our actions—in the midst of a crisis such as the one we are experiencing.

So, how would you pray in the midst of a war? I have some suggestions. Perhaps you have others. First and foremost, we must remember that the world is dying and that the only "elixir" for this dying world is the gospel, because the gospel is lifegiving. One of the most oppressive regions of the entire world—one that has been shut up against the gospel for many years—has been Central Asia, that is, Afghanistan and most of the surrounding countries. The knowledge of Christ that would liberate people in that region of the world has been very unwelcome. However, with the overthrow of the forces of oppression in Afghanistan and the effects of that overthrow on the surrounding countries, there is at last hope that a window of opportunity is opening for the words of eternal life to flow into that region. That, my friends, is more than worth praying about. Pray that President Bush and the armies of the U.S. and its allies will be instruments in God's hands to open that entire region of the world to the lifesaving message of Christ.

Pray also that the U.S. forces will be dignified representatives of the One True God so that the world will not scoff at God because of our misbehavior. After all, there are many Muslims in the world who consider the U.S. to be the representative of Christianity in this world. To them this war is about which God is the true god—the God of Israel or Allah. In the minds of these Muslims and in many Muslim writings, Christians and Jews are referred to as the "covenant people" and must be brought into submission to Allah or die.

The world is groaning in travail, waiting for the revealing of the sons of the One True God; that means us, brothers and sisters. Let us remember what our Father's business is and be about it.

—Kenneth Ryland

Left Behind

by Dr. Sidney L. Davis



No, this is not an examination of the dispensationalist fictional deception of the “secret rapture” doctrine that teaches that the Jews will be “left behind” after Christians have been secretly “taken away.” This teaching, a logical outgrowth of the “Christian” theology of contempt for the Jews is similar in rationale for the change from Sabbath to Sunday and from Passover to Easter-Sunday, in order, as Constantine puts it in his Nicene conciliar letter (A. D. 325), “to have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd... and to avoid all participation in the perjured conduct of the Jews.”¹

“The identification of the Sabbath with the so-called ‘Old Covenant’ given to the Jews, is an important aspect of the Dispensational theology of contempt for the Jews. This appalling ‘Christian’ theology makes God guilty of discriminating against the Jews not only during the present age, but throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. God is accused of planning to ‘rapture,’ that is, to secretly snatch away the Church, in order to pour out His wrath in an unmitigated way upon the Jews during the final ‘seven years’ of tribulation. A Jewish Antichrist is supposed to arise at this time who will counterfeit Christ Himself. The Jews who will be converted during the final tribulation will form a second class of citizens in God’s eternal kingdom.”²

This message is about “left behind” in another context that is also linked to this theology of contempt for the Jews. It is amazing how one set of verses seems to prove opposite sides of an argument. In my discussions with some of my Christian brethren I find the text of Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 to be such a passage. They see these texts written, not as a continuing New Testament witness to the observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest, but rather with the divine purpose of propounding the saving virtue of faith alone without Sabbath observance. It should be noted that the “faith alone” doctrine is not biblical. Nowhere is it mentioned that man is saved by “faith alone.” Martin Luther would be shocked at the previous statement, as well as many “faith alone” Christians. It is no wonder that Luther despised the book of James³ because the apostle states categorically, “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone” (James 2:24).

It is said that the Sabbath in Hebrews 4 is the Christian’s rest in Christ only, not his rest in a day. It is admitted that the Christian’s rest is in Christ, but does this do away with the sign and symbol that shows faith in that rest, the Sabbath? To say this would mean that Israel’s observance of the Sabbath, and the rest that it pointed to, could not have been realized in faith pointing to the rest Christ gives us today. We know this cannot be true because the writer of Hebrews says, “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them” (Hebrews 4:2).

The Lord told Israel that when they would come into the possession of the land of Canaan, “Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 26:2). The Lord then delineated all the promises and blessing that Israel would receive by following His commandments. He also delineated the curses that would result from not following His commandments after entering the land:

“And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies’ land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it” (Leviticus 26: 32-35).

It was Israel’s abhorring of God’s Sabbath rest that eventually led to their downfall, exile and captivity: “To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chronicles 36:21).

“Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her Sabbaths” (Lamentations 1:7).

“I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts” (Hosea 2:11).

Continued on Page 14

Christianity vs. Islam

by Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld



Because we live in such a highly secularized society, we cannot believe that America could ever become involved in a religious war in this day and age. Yet ferocious religious wars have been going on all over the place: in Northern Ireland, Israel, the Balkans, the Sudan and Russia. But history is a very harsh taskmaster and refuses to let us Americans escape into our secular fantasies and hot houses for long.

Thus, it is vitally important for us to reconnect with the human race's never-ending history of religious struggle. That a group of Islamic terrorists, living in a remote, war-torn, famine-ridden, hell-hole in Asia could organize the kind of mind-boggling attack against America that took place on Sept. 11, means that America is not only not exempt from history, but has been dragged kicking and screaming back into the middle of it.

Back in 1588, Christopher Marlowe, master of historical drama, wrote his famous Tamburlaine 2. In it, there is a fascinating scene in which the Christian King Sigismund of Hungary and Orcanes, the Muslim King of Natolia, both former enemies, decide to establish peace between them in order to join forces to defeat Tamberlaine the Great, the cruel, pagan conqueror of Asia.

Both men confirm their commitment with an oath. King Sigismund vows: "By Him that made the world and sav'd my soul, The Son of God and issue of a maid, Sweet Jesus Christ, I solemnly protest and vow to keep this peace inviolable!"

King Orcanes vows: "By sacred Mohamet, the friend of God, Whose holy Alcoran remains with us, Whose Glorious body, when he left the world, Clos'd in a coffin mounted up the air, and hung on stately Mecca's temple-roof, I swear to keep this truce inviolable!"

But as the story goes, it was King Sigismund who later broke the truce and was defeated and killed by the Muslims.

While the history of the struggle between Christians and Muslims for control of Europe was for a time settled after the Muslims were expelled from Spain in 1492, and driven back from the gates of Vienna to Asia and Africa, the Islamic enclaves that remained in the Balkans led to the recent wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. The Serbs had considered themselves as the Christian bulwark against further Islamic incursions in Europe, and therefore could not understand why they were being bombed by fellow Europeans and Americans.

You had to know history to understand what Bosnia and Kosovo were all about. That conflict proved that the war between Christianity and Islam has never ended. Over the ages, it simply took on different forms.

The rise of European power put a lid on Islamic ambitions and the Muslim world became the backwater of history until the discovery of oil in the 20th century. But in the 19th century, the Islamic Barbary states of North Africa could still make trouble for the infidel. They took possession of American and European commercial vessels, held their crews for ransom and enslaved other Christians. Our first war after independence was fought during the Jefferson administration against the Muslim pirates and kidnapers of Tripolitania, the Barbary War, in which U.S. Marines staged their first invasion of foreign soil. Hence, the Marine anthem: "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli."

In order to finally put a stop to the piracy and barbarism coming out of North Africa, France decided to take over Algeria. During the 1830s and 1840s, the French imposed their rule over the territory, encouraging Europeans to settle there. The result was a flourishing French colony and an end to Barbary piracy. France maintained order in North Africa until the end of World War II, when the anti-colonialist movement got under-

"You had to know history to understand what Bosnia and Kosovo were all about. That conflict proved that the war between Christianity and Islam has never ended."

Continued on Page 20

Is God to Blame?

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Many have noted that the September 11 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., has forever changed the way Americans live their lives. Gone is the foolish reliance on the supposed invulnerability and impregnability of fortress America. "Normalcy" now includes within it a measure of apprehension.

For almost two hundred years, our shores remained uninvaded from east or west because America lies so far removed from where the wars of the past raged. We felt that the spans of two great oceans were so great that any plan of invasion would prove impossible. Any enemy would easily be revealed and countermeasures taken long before it could mount an effective attack. However, events of September 11 exposed the reality that the enemy is already within, having invaded us through deceitful impressions of peaceful intentions.

The sudden and mysterious mailings of anthrax to media and political figures seem to be following up the terrorists' first strike. At the time of this writing, no one has directly tied these mailings to the bombers or their cohorts, but the packages that have been positively identified originated from within the United States. In addition, federal investigators recently disclosed that credit cards used by some of the terrorists on board the hijacked planes were used after the bombings to purchase items within the U.S. Again, the enemies of our security are already among us.

Flag-waving patriotism has reached a highpoint unseen for many decades, but these circumstances are undoubtedly affecting the American's sense of well-being. Political and media figures are talking confidently of victory over the forces of terror, but the sudden and devastating effectiveness of the attacks has unquestionably struck a blow at our freedom of movement and created suspicion of those of Arabic ancestry and Islamic faith. Some Americans now admit they catch themselves "looking over their shoulder."

The economy, already in decline before the attack, has worsened significantly. Air travel has lessened to such an extent it has motivated the layoffs of some 80,000 Americans. Those in the hotel business are also expressing financial concerns. Today, one cannot even receive mail without thoughtfully and carefully examining the outside of the package or envelope before opening it.

Where Was God?

The attacks have also stirred a revival of interest in God. A minority of Americans had nearly succeeded in running God out of schools and public life in general, yet now Americans in highly visible and public positions are invoking God in virtually every appearance. God has become very popular once again. Popular, yes, but understood? Hardly!

A recent *USA Today* article reports that President George W. Bush is an openly religious man who mentions God frequently in his speeches, prays on his knees, and reads the Bible every morning before beginning his workday. The article adds that he frequently prays in the Oval Office and often asks a Cabinet secretary to lead a prayer at the beginning of Cabinet meetings. Following a recent meeting with Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski, a fellow Methodist who is also a lay minister, he invited his guest into his private study, and there the two men knelt side-by-side in silent prayer. Overt expressions of faith by elected leaders, however, make some Americans quite uncomfortable because they fear it is the beginning of state-imposed religion.

For some, not only the success of the attacks but that they happened at all is a deep and solemn mystery. They apparently believed that the United States existed under automatic and eternal divine protection, so that tragedies like this were just not supposed to happen here. In Europe, Africa, Russia or Southeast Asia, yes, but not here.

Front-page newspaper articles report Americans asking, "Where was God?" as they struggle to understand how something of this magnitude could possibly have happened here. Syndicated columnist Leonard Pitts, Jr., writing in the *Charlotte Observer*, tells of a minister at the church he attends opening in a sermon, "that God allowed the planes to be stolen, and the people to die, because He was helpless to stop it. Maybe He didn't have the power." At first, Pitts reports, he thought this might be a clever speaker using a daring rhetorical device to make a positive statement later, yet as the preacher continued, Pitts was disappointed to find it was not. He writes, "This was just what it seemed to be: a man of God publicly struggling with a crisis of conviction. Of all I've seen in the wake of September 11, this was, in some ways, the most dismaying."

Another article by David Von Drehle of the Washington Post posits the familiar question, "What would Jesus do?" and applies it to President Bush's responsibility as the leader of this nation. Though he quotes one scripture that has little bearing on the truth, he reaches this conclusion:

Nowhere are God's intentions more obscure than in war, which consumes lives and destroys hopes even in a good cause. The United States rightly respects conscientious objections. But not in a president. If he is fortunate, his duty during war will not be the occasion for too many sins. But that's not his primary concern until after it's all over. He can worry over that in retirement and plead his case come Judgment Day.

Some religious figures touched on some of the truths of God's Word in an effort to help Americans think that perhaps the attacks were not completely undeserved. All this accomplished was to raise the ire of many in the media, who turned their verbal guns against them, pillorying them as unscriptural, narrow, deluded, and destructive to the confidence of the American people.

Despite the horrific results caused by the terrorists, who succeeded in ramming three hijacked planes into buildings, is it possible that God may have actually stopped far worse from occurring? We know that a fourth plane commandeered by terrorists apparently crashed after a struggle between the terrorists and passengers who mutinied to attempt to retake control of the plane. That plane was almost certainly headed for either the White House or Capitol building.

In a WorldNet Daily commentary of September 20, 2001, Craigie McMillan writes:

A fifth plane that took off from Newark, New Jersey, near the time of the attacks was grounded when U.S. airspace was closed. The next day Ayub Khan, 51, and Mohammed Jaweed Azmath, 47, who had been on the Newark flight, were removed from an Amtrak train during a routine drug search, when police discovered box-cutting knives and \$5,000 in cash. Their associates in New Jersey are now being questioned by investigators. Was that fifth plane intended for the U.S. Capitol building? It seems likely. We know that the White House was a target, because shortly after the first airliner crashed into the World Trade Center, the Secret Service received an anonymous call using the agency's code words relating to Air Force One procedures and whereabouts. We don't know if the Capitol building was a target—but the assumption seems reasonable.

This suggests that whoever masterminded these attacks intended not to "send a message" or cripple—but to entirely destroy the United States government. We need to think long and hard about what that means as we head into war. To me it suggests more than a terrorist attack, even one as well-planned and coordinated as this. It suggests a terrorist attack executed in conjunction with as yet

unknown actions by one or more hostile nation states. I would suggest that under those circumstances, we would have been vulnerable to anyone strong enough to step forward and offer "leadership."

Was God Involved?

Is it possible for us to know the mind of God? The apostle Paul asks this question in Romans 11:33-36:

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

To know the fullness of God's thoughts on any subject or any event is, of course, so far beyond us to be unimaginable. To this end, we truly do look through a glass darkly. However, He has revealed certain things about Himself, His way and His plan sufficiently enough that we may seek Him, come to conversion, and grow thereby. He has also revealed much to us about His attributes and Himself and His activities as Creator, Sovereign Ruler, Provider, Lawgiver, Judge, Savior and Father so that we are not completely without some knowledge and understanding of how He functions within His creation.

Deuteronomy 29:29 confirms God's revelation by saying, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." I Corinthians 2:10 provides a New Testament confirmation of this: "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." We can understand a great deal about God.

The "catch" in all this, though, is whether we choose to believe Him and thus choose to conduct ourselves within the parameters of what He reveals in His Word. Far more, it seems, choose not to believe. Some say they believe, but carelessly continue living their lives as though they, and not He, are all that matters—until some crisis occurs and He suddenly becomes very important to them.

Was God aware of what was transpiring? Did God see what was happening from the attack's conception, through its planning and development, to the systematic execution of each step? Of course He did! God is omniscient; nothing escapes His attention in His creation.

◆ Psalm 33:13-15: "The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works."

◆ Psalm 66:7: "He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah."

- ◆ Psalm 121:4: “Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”
- ◆ Proverbs 5:21: “For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He ponders all his paths.”
- ◆ Proverbs 15:3: “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”
- ◆ Jeremiah 32:19: “You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.”
- ◆ Matthew 10:29: “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will.”

Even to begin to consider that God was unaware or that He somehow lacked the power to intervene suggests unfamiliarity with the God of the Bible. But to do so is neither a frailty limited to modern man nor unusual. Many who go to church apparently do not spend much time meditating on the intellectual immensity, purity of character and almighty power of Yahweh, the Lord the Bible presents. The apostle Paul puts it this way in I Corinthians 1:25, “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Just mere months after God liberated the slave-nation Israel from centuries of bondage to Egypt through awesome and terrifying displays of power, capping their redemption by dividing the Red Sea and drowning their captors in its waters, they reconfigured the nature of Almighty God into the form of a bull (Exodus 32)! One has to ask, what in the world were they thinking as they cried, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!” (verse 8).

Is this not similar to what one may discover on the world scene today? People have created gods in their own image. They interpret God according to their own cultural biases, as well as what family, educational, and business associations have predisposed them to believe. They then attribute His favor to their political parties, athletic teams, motivations, and prejudices. All this is done with precious little careful study into, meditation upon, and especially wholeheartedly believing His inspired revelation of Himself in the Bible.

At the worship service held in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., a few days following the attack, clergy from Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faiths participated. Which clergyman represented God? Which did God hear? Can they all be His representatives, even though they all believe differently? Do these differences not matter to Him? They must matter to those men; otherwise, they would not advocate their brand of faith. Certainly, God hears just as surely as He sees what is going on. He makes very clear that no one comes to Him except through Jesus Christ, eliminating two of those faiths immediately.

He also makes clear that those who approach Him with favor must be subject to His government. In others words, they must keep His commandments. The remaining two faiths keep none of His Sabbaths, and in fact, they tell people they do not have to keep the commandments—in other words, they need not be subject to His government in daily life—because His law is “done away.”

Might God, as an act of mercy, nonetheless hear and respond by delivering us from future destructions planned for us? He might. It has happened before, for instance, when God mercifully forgave Nineveh after it repented at the preaching of Jonah, and He delivered Israel a number of times. Yet when that happened, it was accompanied by a wholehearted repentance that God was willing to accept. Have we as a nation repented? How deep must the repentance be? How many must repent before it tips the balance of God’s judgment so that He moves in our behalf? In Genesis 18:32, God tells Abraham He will spare Sodom if He finds ten righteous people in it. Is God using the same standard of measurement for America today?

Terrorism, a Sign of God’s Judgment?

Much negative, indeed inflammatory commentary, arose in America’s newspapers and radio and television programs when some suggested that we are not as innocent as we like to think we are and that we must consider this attack to be a judgment from God and repent. The fact remains that, long before the attacks occurred, critics of American morality—Americans themselves—have been calling upon their fellow citizens to change their immoral ways. The attacks and a wave of sympathy for the grief of those directly impacted by them, as well as a sudden spurt of patriotism, changed the way people heard these messages. Before, they just tuned them out. After all, the messages were not for them but for others because they considered themselves to be okay. Afterward, however, the sense of being innocent victims of a sneaky and undeserved attack made the hearers feel that the messages were demeaning and insulting. But were they true?

If a person believes the Bible, he is forced to conclude that God is in control of all things, whether good or evil. Consider such scriptures as:

- ◆ Daniel 4:35: “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, What have You done?”
- ◆ Daniel 4:17: “This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.”

◆ Isaiah 45:6-7: “I am the Lord, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

◆ Exodus 9:29: “And Moses said to him, As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s.”

◆ Deuteronomy 4:39: “Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the Lord Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.”

◆ Psalm 99:1: “The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; let the earth be moved!”

◆ Isaiah 33:22: “For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.

◆ Jeremiah 18:6: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter? says the Lord. Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!”

The Bible declares quite clearly that God is not only well aware of what is taking place, but He also has the power, wisdom, and love to either stop it at any time or let it run its course. In fact, Scripture plainly shows God actively—indeed proactively, not merely permissively—involved in earthly matters. God has not gone “way off somewhere,” letting things simply proceed naturally. Note that Isaiah 45:7, quoted above, records God proclaiming that He “creates calamity.”

Judges 2:11-15 provides a unmistakable record:

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger. They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for calamity, as the Lord has said, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.”

Forms of the situation described here appear frequently in the history of Israel’s relationship with God. Several hundred years after this, God inspired Isaiah to write, “Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. I will send him against an ungodly nation, and against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to

take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets” (Isaiah 10:5-6). This can only mean that God inspires and empowers the Assyrian nation to punish the nations of Israel for their flagrant disobediences.

Such punishment precipitated Israel being scattered, taken into captivity into foreign lands, and losing their homeland, to which they have never returned. God remarks in II Kings 17:18, after providing a long list of Israel’s sins, “Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.”

However, the tribe of Judah was hardly better than Israel, as II Kings 17:19 states: “Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.” The result was similar to Israel’s, for in II Kings 24:2-4 God carried out His threats of punishment against Judah too:

“And the Lord sent against [Jehoiakim] raiding bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the Lord this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.”

Is God Responsible?

In addition to this brief summary of God’s sovereignty over Israel, ample additional evidence exists to show that He exercises equal dominion over the other nations of the world. He determines their rise and fall and the times of dominance of every nation. Clearly, God judges the inhabitants of His creation, and His judgments are not limited to Israel or to “biblical times.” God lives and He always rules and judges—just as surely today as He did thousands of years ago. Since the One who judged during Old Testament times is the same One who judges today, we can be certain that He uses the same standards now that He did then. His laws, which define His standards of morality, have not changed one iota. Jesus emphatically asserts in the Sermon on the Mount that we should not think that He came to destroy the law or the prophets (Matthew 5:17). Indeed, Malachi 3:6 proclaims, “I am the Lord, I do not change,” while Hebrews 13:8 says that Jesus “is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

Is God to blame because He exercises His authority, punishing to maintain order and to continue the advancement of His purpose in His creation? Who sins and brings upon themselves the necessity of punishment? God does not sin, men do. If God does not punish for sin, then righteousness loses all meaning. Life will soon become a violent free-for-all (Ecclesiastes

8:11). The Bible makes it clear that human nature is violently evil, and when left unchecked as it was before the Flood, it will reproduce similar conditions (Genesis 6:5). Indeed, God forecasts that exactly those conditions will face those living just before Christ's return (Matthew 24:37). Every indication is that we live during that time now.

The Bible prophesies scores of horrific punishments: epidemics of incurable diseases; wars; fires burning fields, forests and homes; earthquakes; famines; floods from raging seas; violent weather patterns; and infestations of insects and wild animals. All of these occur as punishments for sin as God exacts His vengeance on "those who destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18). "Earth" here represents all aspects of His creation—including man—which He created for man.

God is most certainly not to blame if He reacts in accordance with what He has told man He will do. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 establish that, if one does well, God will bless him. Conversely, God strongly warns that, if one does not do well, He will surely punish him. Though not to blame because His sins did not cause these tragedies, He is responsible for them because He at least allowed them to occur. He may even have inspired them to occur and oversaw events so that they would.

The Curse Causeless?

Proverbs 26:2 says, "Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight." We can understand "curse" in several ways: as the invoking of evil or misfortune upon another, or as the evil or scourge itself. The proverb primarily deals with invoking a curse against another when no justification for doing so exists. Such a curse is akin to the aimless flitting of birds, suggesting that it will have no effect. It will not "hit" its intended target.

We can definitely consider the tragedies of September 11 as a curse. However, God undoubtedly approved of it, or it never would have happened. This curse hit, and it hit hard. Therefore, we must conclude that there was more than ample justification for it falling upon this nation. Currently, the death toll stands somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 people, a horrendous figure to be sure, but it pales when compared to just one other death-toll figure: Every day in the United States over 4,000 human lives are snuffed out of existence by abortion. In the 30 days following September 11, 120,000 lives ceased to exist. Of those 120,000 abortions, 95% of them—114,000—occurred solely for the mother's convenience!

Is it any wonder that God cries out in Ezekiel 7:23, "Make a chain, for the land is filled with crimes of blood, and the city is full of violence." George Mason, whose great influence can be seen in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution, wrote that sin, "brings the

judgment of heaven upon a country. . . . By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence [God] punishes national sin by national calamities." George Washington declared in his First Inaugural Address, "We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained."

The apostle Paul states in Romans 9:14. "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!" As a people, we are guilty and fully deserve anything He in His loving wisdom decides to inflict upon us. Most assuredly, we are not innocent victims. Individually, few of us have sinned against any of the people, groups, or nations that may have done this, but as citizens, we are part of this nation, and our well-being rises and falls with it. We have eagerly accepted God's overflowing abundance of material blessings with which He showered this nation. So when He judges that we need to be brought down a peg—or many pegs—we would do well to consider deeply the many ways we may have offended the great God who created us and gives us every breath of air we breathe.

This article has not even considered the many other commandments that Americans are breaking in a multitude of ways, but one must be mentioned because it is the most important of all, the first commandment. As a nation, we Americans are not worshipping the God of the Bible. If we were, we would not be having the problem that faces this nation. We worship a multitude of gods created in our own imaginations. Many people in self-indulgent America—people who seemingly cannot delay gratification, sadly—worship a god tantamount to a nicey-nicey Santa Claus who gives good things whether one is "naughty or nice."

As a nation, we urgently need to wholeheartedly turn from breaking God's Ten Commandments, the very ones we have removed from our schools and courts of law. We "in the church" easily see these September 11 incidents as a wakeup call to America and the Western world. A couple of symbolic beasts are arising that will drag this world into horrific warfare. Yet should it not be even more of a wakeup call for us? We have so much more at stake in our lives because the true God has revealed Himself and His way to us. Our Savior says, "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

There is no doubt that the Laodicean era is underway. At this time, it is especially easy to become attracted by and dragged into the course of this world. We cannot afford to allow such great salvation to slip from our grasp due to inattention. Paul writes about this time:

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent,

the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:11-14)

In this way, the September 11 events should change the way we live our lives.

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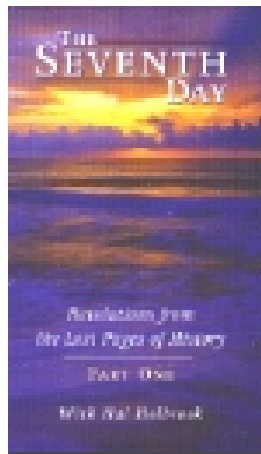
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The Seventh Day

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Bible Sabbath Musicians Association

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Announcing an Internet web site for the Bible Sabbath Musicians Association, located at www.sabbathmusic.org.

The BSMA is an organization of sabbatarian musicians and those with related music interests. It serves both its own membership and the sabbatarian community of believers. Founded by Robin Todd a few months ago to help foster an environment of cooperation and brotherhood amongst the many sabbath-keeping congregations through music, the group opens its web site with 32 members from around the world. Many more have expressed a strong desire to join, but have yet to visit the new web site or return information through the mail. The organization has kept a pretty low-profile while working to bring up this web site.

The BSMA now offers on-line membership with a simple questionnaire that takes only a few minutes to complete. There is no membership fee. The only requirement is to share the goals of the organization, which you can read on the Home page and by clicking on the "Welcome" link.

There are working links for 1) CDs and cassettes produced by sabbatarian artists, 2) List of members with some basic information about each, 3) and the membership questionnaire. Robin welcomes any new information about recording artists not yet posted.

Yet to come is a message board, music news from within the community, other types of music available (such as sheet music, lyrics, etc.), and products available to help those who want to delve into the world of songwriting, recording, etc.

There is much to do and seemingly so little time to get it done. Robin and his wife, Liz, will at times just need to inch along. However, at least one of the items of business absolutely necessitates the input of membership and others in the community, and that is the reporting of musical events. The BSMA obviously cannot report on every special music performance on any given weekly sabbath, but some reportable events might be: 1) invitations to local talent nights, 2) interdenominational or open fellowship concerts, 3) special guest performances by sabbatarian recording artists, 4) music announcements revolving around festivals, conventions, etc. Start sending those in for posting anytime now.

If you're not on the Internet, but would like to become a member of the BSMA or know more about them, write to: BSMA, 6413 Stephan Ct. S.E., Lacey, WA 98503. Please take note, very soon Robin's email address will change from robinsyngs@aol.com to robinsings1@attbi.com. If the first doesn't work, try the second.

The Seventh-day Sabbath Is the Tree of life, and Sunday Is the Forbidden Fruit

by Isaac Kofi Eshun

In Christendom today there are a lot of controversies over which day is the Lord's day, that is, the day our Lord and Savior must be worshiped for salvation. But, it is hidden from many salvation seekers that the all-wise God at creation gave man a particular day on which He should be worshiped as a memorial of His creation. As a result of this, God Himself plainly said in Isaiah 58:13 that the seventh-day Sabbath is His own day; thus, the phrases "My Holy Day" and "The Holy Day of the Lord" were used in that context.

Why the seventh-day became the day of God can be seen from Genesis 2:3: "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

This text shows that before God gave man the authority to worship Him on the seventh-day of the week, He Himself rested on that day as an example to all mankind.

This is why on Mount Sinai He commanded the Israelites to "Remember The Sabbath Day, to keep it holy," implying that man must remember the day on which God rested and keep it holy as a day of worship (Exodus 20:8).

Also, God, emphasizing the particular day He intended to be observed, explained further that, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:9-10).

This makes it plain that God is very circumspect of the seventh-day on which He should be worshipped. Since God is circumspect of a particular day of worship, and thus consecrated the seventh-day of the week for His worship, it is worth noting that whoever worships Him on that day has found the tree of life.

As such, anything contrary to that effect is also in line with the eating of the forbidden fruit which leads to death (Genesis 2:17).

This is because God did not intend man to eat the forbidden fruit, just as He did not intend man to worship Him on any other day apart from the seventh-day of the week.

Another reason why the seventh-day Sabbath is referred to as the tree of life is that it is a part of God's Ten Commandments (Proverbs 3:1-2-18). The Sabbath law which is the fourth part of the Decalogue (Exodus 20).

Therefore, if the whole moral law, or the Decalogue, is referred to as the tree of life, then what about the Sabbath law? Really, it is also the tree of life.

It should be remembered that in the Garden of Eden, God planted both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:8-9), yet Satan did not allow Adam and Eve to eat the tree of life in order to live forever, but he deceived them into eating the forbidden fruit to inherit death. In the same way these two days, that is, the seventh-day and the first day, are part of the seven days of the week, yet the only one which has eternal life and blessings has been stolen from man.

Satan has deceived man to keep the day which was not blessed and would lead man to death.

This means Satan has appeared in Christendom today to deceive masses from keeping the seventh-day Sabbath holy in order to lose its blessings, just as he deceived Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2 Cor. 11:3). It is worth noting that when the forbidden fruit was eaten, all other transgressions were enjoined. In this sinful world too, the climax of unwarranted transgressions is due to the introduction of the observance of the Sun's day as the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10).

This is because ever since the change of the seventh-day Sabbath by Emperor Constantine in 321 A.D. during then the Roman Empire, many transgressions and unbiblical doctrines such as Christmas, Lent, Easter, Infant baptism, wrong observance of the Lord's supper, eating of unclean meats, and many others have crept into Christianity to defile many salvation-seekers.

This also proves why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is symbolic of the Sunday observance in Christianity. This is because every bad tree can not bear good fruit just as every good tree cannot bear bad fruit. Hence, Sunday worship symbolized by the forbidden tree bears the evil fruit of transgressions and all unbiblical doctrines.

The seventh-day Sabbath is that good tree symbolized by the tree of life which bears good fruits worthy of blessings and life eternal (Matthew 7:17-18).

As it is said that God blessed the seventh-day of the week, so shall anyone who keeps it holy be blessed. Hence, the report in Isaiah 56:2 that whoever keeps the Sabbath holy and refrains from polluting it will be blessed. But, it is rather unfortunate that Sunday, the first day of the week, is now being used as a substitute to the seventh-day to worship God worldwide. Many people are not aware of the fact that the first day was not sanctified or set apart for God's worship, but rather the seventh-day, that is Saturday.

They are also ignorant of the fact that whatever or whoever is blessed of God is blessed forever (1 Chronicles 17:27), and, as such, the seventh-day, blessed from the beginning, is blessed for God's worship and its attendant blessings.

This is why St. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews treated salvation issues with much emphasis on the seventh-day Sabbath rest by saying that it was established or instituted at creation as a prelude to eternal life. That is, everything concerning man's happiness and salvation was finished from the foundation of this world (Hebrews 4:3). Hence, the psalmist's question: "If the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). So, St. Paul, knowing this very well, further argues that the Sabbath rest remains, therefore, for the people of God.

Also, the apostle said all those who want to keep the Sabbath must imitate the true example of how God kept the Sabbath from the beginning so that no mistake whatsoever would be committed—due to the fact that such a mistake is a transgression and, therefore, a snare which can endanger one's life to hell fire (Prov. 29:6 and Heb. 4:9-11).

In conclusion, may I say that the seventh-day Sabbath truly refreshes one from his days of hard labor, and so shall it refresh the saints from their tiredness in this suffering world (Exodus 23:12). This means the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is, without dispute, a gateway to eternal life. Even according to the prophet Isaiah, God has promised that anyone who keeps the Sabbath holy shall be taken to the holy mountain of God (Isaiah 56:6-7). And, it is worthy of note here that this holy mountain of God is nowhere but the new dwelling

place for the righteous men and the saints in light. (Isaiah 65:17-25).

Thus, the Sabbath shall again be kept in the new heaven and the new earth forever by those who shall be justified by God (Isaiah 66:22-23).

Also, those who transgress against God's commandments involving the seventh-day Sabbath shall continue to suffer affliction in the next world just as those who have forsaken the weekly Sabbath rest have no rest at all in their lives and therefore suffer Satan's afflictions of death (Isaiah 66:24). For when Adam and Eve forsook the tree of life and partook of the forbidden fruit, they did not enjoy a better life but were made subject to death.

So shall all men who follow Adam's transgression and partake the forbidden fruit, symbolized in Sunday observance, be found wanting in the lake of fire.

Beloved, do the best you can to follow after the righteousness of the tree of life, symbolized in Sabbath rest, and gain everlasting life. □

Isaac Kofi Eshun
7th Day Pentecostal Assemblies
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West Africa



Why the Seventh-day Sabbath?

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Jeremiah had warned Israel: "Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever... But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched" (Jeremiah 17: 21-25, 27).

This is why the writer of Hebrews says, "For if Jesus [Joshua]⁴ had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day" (Hebrews 4:9). How did Israel's lack of faith in the divine rest manifest itself after Joshua had already taken them to the land of Canaan? When Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity to the land, she was warned that her previous unfaithfulness to God commandments had resulted in her exile and captivity: "Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath" (Nehemiah 13:17,18).

Israel's lack of faith in true Sabbath observance resulted in their abuse of the land and the poor: "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" (Amos 8:4-6).

The law of tithing was based on the Sabbatical (shemmitah) cycle. Every third and sixth year, tithing did not go to the Temple; rather, it was for the poor (Ma'aser Ani). In the first, second, fourth and fifth years, the second tithe (Ma'aser Sheni) used for the festival gatherings was also shared with the poor. In the sev-

enth year on the day of Atonement the poor and the debtors were to be forgiven of their debts and lands were returned to those who had sold themselves and/or their lands. The abuse of this Sabbath principle is seen in that constantly the Lord warned Israel of her hypocritical regard to the Sabbath that excluded her faithful adherence to the true meaning of Sabbath observance.

"Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?" (Isaiah 58:3-5).

The Day of Atonement was called "shabbath shabathown" or "Sabbath of Sabbaths" (Leviticus 23:32). It pointed to the rest of every seventh year. Israel's literal obedience to fasting on the Atonement was not that which was according to faith. The Lord explains the true nature of the Atonement fast:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee

with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:6-14).

We see the expression of the *Sabbath principle* is made that those who were oppressed would be relieved of their oppression, their burdens and their debts. Jesus employed this use of *Sabbath imagery* to characterize His message and mission to proclaim the "good news" "the kingdom of God is at hand."

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable [Sabbatical] year of the Lord (Luke 14:18,19).

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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" (Matthew 11:28-29).

There is more attention given to the fourth commandment than to any other precept of the Decalogue in the gospel of Jesus. Jesus in his ministry consistently taught and demonstrated as the prophets before him that the observance of the Sabbath was to liberate man and not bring him into bondage. What an irony that so many Christians look upon the Sabbath as "being under bondage"!

We see that true Sabbath observance was comprehended in the complete observance of the entire law of God and the faithful obedience to the divine will as expressed in true love to Yahveh and to our fellow-man. This thought has long been the understanding in Hebraic tradition:

"Rabbi Levi (said): If Israel kept the Sabbath properly even for one day, the son of David would come. Why? Because it is equivalent to all the commandments; for so it says, 'For You are our God, and we are the people of Your pasture, and the flock of Your hand. To-day if you would but hearken to God's voice!' (Psalms 95:7). Rabbi Johanan said: The Holy One, blessed be God, told Israel: 'Though I have set a definite term for the millennium which will come at the appointed time whether Israel returns to Me in penitence or not, still if they repent even for one day, I will bring it before its appointed time.' Hence, 'To-day [our redemption comes] if you would but hearken to God's voice; and just as we find that the son of David will come as a reward for the observance of all commandments [one day], so also will he come for the observance of one Sabbath day, because the Sabbath is equivalent to all commandments."⁵

This ancient Hebraic Midrash of Psalm 95:7 is also reflected in Hebrews 4:4-9. Obviously the writer of the book of Hebrews was himself a Hebrew and could not have made reference to Psalm 95:7 outside of its traditional Hebraic understanding and interpretation of the text. Hearing the Lord's voice is perhaps tied to the Sabbath because the Sabbath was the day when God's people anciently expected to hear his word, whether in the worship service, from the priest or from the prophet of God. According to 2 Kings 4:22 & 23, this was the special reason for the Sabbath.⁶

"Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Hebrews 4:7) The Hebrew Midrash points out "Today" is a reference to the Sabbath, the day in which God's voice is heard. This shows that the Sabbath is an ever-present reality and that this is the sense this is what "today" means to the writer as he wrote to the Hebrews.

When Hebrews 4:9 says, "There remaineth <apoleipo> therefore a rest <sabbatismos> to the people of God." It literally means, "There is LEFT BEHIND a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God." Some Christians believe that the alternate meaning of the Greek word *apoleipo*⁷ "to forsake" is meant here. Sabbatarians insist that the meaning of *apoleipo* means "to leave behind" or to "remain." This meaning is reflected in various Bible translations:

"There remains then a sabbatism to the people of God" (Darby).

"There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (World English Bible).

"So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Revised Standard Version).

"It follows that there still remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Weymouth).

"There doth remain, then, a sabbatic rest to the people of God." (Young's)

"So that there is still a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God" (Bible In Basic English).

"It follows that there still remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Wesley's New Testament).

"It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath" (Lamsa-Syriac)

The meaning of *apoleipo* as "to leave behind" or to "remain" and *sabbatismos* as Sabbath observance is reflected in one of the earliest homilies and references to the text by the early Church father Origen:

"After the festival of the unceasing sacrifice [the crucifixion] is put the second festival of the Sabbath, and it is fitting for whoever is righteous among the saints to keep also the festival of the Sabbath. There remaineth therefore a sabbatismus, that is, a keeping of the Sabbath, to the people of God."⁸

Origen's Latin version of his famous Hexapla uses the same word as St. Jerome in his translation of the Latin Vulgate "sabbatismus," and it means "a keeping of the Sabbath."⁹ The KJV uses the Greek word "sabbatismos" "(derivative of savbbatona, 67.184) a special religiously significant period for rest and worship—'a Sabbath rest, a period of rest.' 'apoleipetai sabbatismo;' 'there still remains for God's people a period of rest' Hebrews 4:9–10."¹¹ Bible scholars have established that this word "sabbatismos" is used in both secular and Christian Greek literature as referring to Sabbath observance.¹²

Christians who interpret Hebrews 3 and 4 to mean the Sabbath in Hebrews 4 is the Christian's rest in Christ only, not his rest in a particular day, assume that there is a radical discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament that teaches the Sabbath is a Mosaic, Old Covenant, institution that terminated at the cross. But, we see the Sabbath rest that was to be faithful expression of faith in God's liberation from sin and oppression is just as clearly seen in the faithful obedience to God's commandments, statutes and judgments. The continuity of "the law and the prophets" with Christ is clearly shown in the message of Christ in His sermon on the mount. There Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17,18).

The Sabbath rest that is "left behind" is the same Sabbath rest that Israel observed, whose obedience was "not being mixed with faith" (verse 2), even though they came into possession of the land of Canaan. It was God's purpose from the very beginning that Israel would enter the land of rest and observe the Sabbath as the faithful expression to God of man's rest from sin. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29). For had they kept it in faith they would have never forfeited the possession. Israel was exiled from her land because of her "unbelief" (verse 6). They had failed to observe the Sabbath rest not only literally, but also by faith. The condition of her possession had always been the expression of that faith in true Sabbath observance. This is the same faith that must characterize true Sabbath observance today. It may be well ask ourselves, do we really observe the Sabbath "mixed with faith"? Or do we just observe "Saturday"?

Let those who love the Sabbath rejoice in the ever-present reality of our faith in the rest that Christ gives us now and in the prospect of eternal rest in heaven. In our labour let us look to that world where wearisome toil is unknown; in our afflictions, let us look to that world where tears never fall; and when our hearts are pained

by the violation of the Sabbath all around us, let us look to that blessed world where such violation will cease for ever. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

End Notes:

1. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3, 18-19, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 2 edition, vol. 1, pp. 524-525.
2. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Washington Post's Article On The Sabbath/ Sunday Issue, "Endtime Issues" No. 6, 24 January 1999*
3. "We should throw the epistle of James out of this school [Wittenberg], for it doesn't amount to much. It contains not a syllable about Christ. Not once does it mention Christ, except at the beginning. I maintain that some Jew wrote it who probably heard about Christian people but never encountered any. Since he heard that Christians place great weight on faith in Christ, he thought, 'Wait a moment! I'll oppose them and urge works alone.' This he did. He wrote not a word about the suffering and resurrection of Christ, although this is what all the apostles preached about. Besides, there is no order or method in the epistle. Now he discusses clothing and then he writes about wrath and is constantly shifting from one to the other. He presents a comparison: 'As the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead.' O Mary, mother of God! What a terrible comparison that is!" *Luther's Works*, Vol. 54, p. 424-425
4. Jesus here is the Greek transliteration of Joshua, meaning Joshua the son of Nun, not Jesus Hamashiach (Christ).
5. *Midrash Rabbah* 25:12
6. "And she [Hannah] called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? It is neither new moon, nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well" (2 Kings 4:22,23). These verses suggest Israel gathered together to hear the prophets on the Sabbath to get biblical teaching. This is why the woman's husband was surprised when she wanted to go to the prophet on a day other than the Sabbath.
7. Strong's Greek Concordance < 620 > apoleipw apoleipo ap-olipe'-o from 575 and 3007; v AV-leave 3, remain 3; 6 1) to leave, to leave behind 2) to desert or forsake "God therefore today commands men to forsake the observance of Jewish Sabbaths and to find rest in Jesus Christ alone. (Matthew 11:28f) (See also Hebrews 4:9-11.)" (GOOD NEWS FROM THE REDEEMER DECEMBER 14, 1996 RADIO MESSAGE # 143 <http://www.grace-for-today.com/690.htm>)
8. [Hebrews 4:9] (Homily on Numbers 23, para. 4, in Migne, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. 12, cols. 749, 750).
9. sabbatismos, a keeping of the Sabbath, Aug. Civ. Dei, 22, 30 fin.; Hier. Ep. 140, 8; id. in Isa. 16, 58, 13. Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*
10. (The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament) Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A., *Greek- English Lexicon of the new Testament based on Semetic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989
11. This definition of the Greek word sabbatismos is confirmed by other historical works: "The words 'Sabbath rest' is translated from the GK noun sabbatismos, [and is] a unique word in the NT. This term appears also in Plutarch (Superset. 3 [Moralia 166a]) for Sabbath observance, and in four post-canonical Christian writings which are not dependent on Heb. 4:9" (The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 5, p. 856). The Greek word, sabbatismoV sabbatismos, is a noun. The verb form of the word is sabbatizw sabbatizo, which means "to keep the Sabbath" (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

Bent on Backsliding

by Daniel Botkin



back-slide vi: to lapse morally or in the practice of religion (Webster's)

"My people are bent to backsliding from Me" (Hosea 11:7). God spoke these words in Hosea's day, but the truth of these words is not limited to the people of Hosea's day. The same thing is true of God's people in every generation. We are bent to backsliding. Our natural inclination is away from God rather than toward Him. This means that we must be determined to fight a life-long battle against temptation if we want to avoid backsliding.

Some people backslide with a presumptuous attitude. "I'm just going to have some fun, enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, then get right with the Lord again. He'll forgive me and restore me."

This is a very dangerous attitude. First of all, there's no guarantee that you will live that long. A newsletter from a Messianic ministry in Israel recently reported that one of the twenty young people killed in the terrorist attack at the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv was a backslidden Messianic believer. This young lady had been part of a Messianic congregation, but was drawn away by the pleasures of the world. She had quit attending her congregation's Friday night Erev Shabbat service, and she went instead to the disco that Friday night, and died a premature death.

"But don't you believe in the eternal security of the believer?" I prefer to reword it and say that I believe in the security of the eternal believer.

"But I believe that all born-again believers will go to heaven, even if they die in a backslidden state, so I'll take my chances and backslide for a short time. All believers go to heaven, if they're truly born again Christians." Maybe so, but what makes you so sure you are truly born again? If you have that attitude, chances are that you experienced a counterfeit conversion and are included in that category of people that John described as those who "went out from us, but were not of us" (1 John 2:14).

Satan launches a three-pronged attack in an effort to tempt God's people to backslide. John describes this three-pronged attack as "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). This has been Satan's strategy from the very beginning. He said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Satan appealed to the lust of the flesh with the word "eat"; he appealed to the lust of the eyes with the words "your eyes shall be opened"; he appealed to the pride of life with the words "ye shall be as gods."

In the very next verse the woman yields to this three-fold temptation: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat..." The lust of the flesh is seen in the words "good for food"; the lust of the eyes is seen in the words "pleasant to the eyes"; the pride of life is seen in the words "to make one wise."

Satan used the same three-pronged attack when he tempted the Last Adam, Yeshua. He appealed to the lust of the flesh by suggesting that Yeshua turn stones into bread. He appealed to the lust of the eyes when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. He appealed to the pride of life by suggesting that Yeshua throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple and let the angels catch Him.

Satan used this three-pronged attack on Eve, he used it on the Son of God, and he will use it on us. He will try to get us to yield to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

The lust of the flesh concerns sins which primarily involve the body: sexual immorality, violence, drunkenness, drugs, gluttony, etc. The lust of the eyes speaks of things that please our eyes. In the days of the Roman Empire, people could go to the Colosseum and feast their eyes on all sorts of spectacles. Nowadays, Satan uses high-tech entertainment and lets people

feast their eyes on movies and computers. Are movies and computers sinful? In moderation and with self-discipline, no. In excess and without self-discipline, yes. Why? First, because we are told to “redeem the time.” Second, because there is a lot of trash that we should not view. Therefore we need to be discerning, disciplined, and selective about what we see and how much time we spend on such things.

The third prong of Satan’s attack, the pride of life, is probably the most dangerous, because it is so subtle. People who backslide by yielding to the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes usually know they are doing something wrong. “I know I shouldn’t do this, but...” When people backslide by yielding to Satan’s appeal to their pride, they usually do not realize that they are falling into sin. On the contrary, they believe that they are doing something good and right and holy and noble. They believe that they are answering a higher call, and anyone who tries to warn them or discourage them from carrying out their plans is perceived as an agent of the devil.

The war against temptation is a life-long battle, but it is a battle we can win if we follow in the footsteps of our Messiah. Each time we gain victory over temptation, we become stronger and more experienced in spiritual warfare. As time goes on, we can mature into seasoned warriors who can, by the grace of God, handle temptation in the heat of battle. □

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Gates of Eden

P. O. Box 2257

Peoria, IL 61611-0257

Question on Military Service

Dear Dr. Davis,

Happy Sabbath wherever you may be—ship or shore.

The religious habits of those who profess to keep the Sabbath never cease to amaze me. After reading your response to Kris Erskine as published in the November-December issue of *The Sabbath Sentinel* and learning that you are in the Navy, I was stunned. I read your response twice and then clicked onto the sites you recommended. The matter of a person keeping the Sabbath in the military rests not with the D O D or with any elected official. It rests solely on the discretion of the company commander. Of course, I am fully aware that you know that so the question must be asked, “If your immediate commander refused to let you observe the Sabbath, even though it was reasonable for him to accommodate your request, what would you do?” See, I have been through it. Back in 1963 when I first heard of the true Sabbath, I was serving in the USAF in California. I was sitting on top of the world with the new truth I had found and was determined to keep the Sabbath, which I did—for a while. But, other airmen started complaining. Guess what? My only recourse was to abandon the Sabbath which, unfortunately at that time, I did. I’m here to predict that short of miraculous intervention and if you stay in the Navy, you will, too.

In your answer to Kris you wrote: “The day may come when our constitution may not always serve the interests of such freedoms when this country by repudiating its constitution will ‘speak as a dragon’. But until such time I serve God and my country with a clear conscience.” I have to ask, “What will you do then?” Pardon me, I thought you were a servant of God. That is NOT a judgement—it is only an observation.

In the final analysis, you are correct to quote Paul’s words as recorded in Romans 14:4 — “Who art thou that judgeth another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (or fall).

Best,

Tommy West

Reply

Dear Tommy,

Thank you for your interest in The Sabbath Sentinel article that I wrote and your observations. I have never had a crisis over observing the Sabbath in the almost 20 years of my naval career. When I served in the fleet, I almost had an occasion where this might have been a problem. After newly reporting aboard my ship, my master chief formed a “working party” to prepare for last minute duties before we were to get underway. The working party was scheduled for Saturday. I did not immediately raise an objection to this order. Instead I met casually with the master chief and brought up the subject of the working party that we were to have on Saturday. I asked him, “Why couldn’t we have the working party on Sunday?” He replied, “Oh no, that is the Sabbath and we could not do it for that reason.” I replied that Saturday was my Sabbath and I would be glad to do my part of the responsibilities on Sunday. I put him in a position where he could not refuse to accommodate me, without it appearing as religious discrimination. This was because of the reason he gave for not having a working party on Sunday. I used his own rationale for my Sabbath convictions. During my four years on the ship, I never was challenged or had an incident that

would put me in a position where I would have to violate my Sabbath consciousness. In fact, I became the "lay reader" for Sabbath-keepers (SDA's and Jewish believers) on my ship.

You asked what would I do if I were put in a position where I would have to violate my conscience regarding Sabbath observance or what would or will I do if I could no longer support my constitution and my country with a clear conscience. The answer is simple, I would ask to be discharged from the military. I have always been prepared to do so if it came to that. Even though I have advanced through the ranks and have received many military honors, I have always held myself and my military career upon the altar of God's service.

I do not expect that in the remaining years I have before I retire that I will be faced with such a dilemma as you predict. The highest ranking officer of the Navy Chaplain Corps is a Seventh-day Adventist. He has served to protect the rights of all Sabbath-keepers in the Navy. He is very much respected in the military community and has acted as the personal chaplain to the president of the United States.

But the time is sure to come where Sabbath-keepers will not be able to serve our country when this country will repudiate the principles of its constitution to make a law respecting the religious faith of the Christian majority in the advocacy of Sunday sacredness. When such a time comes, all Sabbath-keepers in the military would be morally bound to request a discharge, even our SDA Admiral, the Chief of Navy Chaplains.

I cannot speak to your experience in the USAF. But I can speak to the experience of Desmond Doss, an observant SDA Sabbath-keeper during his entire Army career and the recipient of the Congressional

Medal of Honor bestowed on him by President Truman. He openly proclaimed his Christianity as an observant Sabbath-keeper. Sabbath-keepers have many resources to appeal to for their military rights to observe the Sabbath as other military members have for their rights to observe Sunday.

Even today where I am stationed in the Great Lakes, I speak for the rights of our Sabbath-keeping recruits both SDA and Jewish to keep the Sabbath and the high holy days. It has been my experience that the commanders with whom I have had to interact over this question on behalf of our recruits has been accommodating to their religious needs and convictions in the same manner they are with "Christians" who opt to go to Sunday services and who observe Easter, Christmas and other holy days of obligation. Our SDA and Jewish services on Friday nights are well attended.

God has granted me favor and wisdom during my years in the military in dealing with the question of Sabbath and holy day services for myself and on behalf of others. This is not to say this will always be, for we are sure that the day will come where our faith will be incompatible with not only military service but even allegiance to our country whose legislators will one day act to trample on the rights and conscience of others in legislating against God's holy law. Even if allowed to observe the Sabbath under such conditions, it is my opinion that principle would demand our withdrawal from military service on conscientious and moral grounds.

Once again, thank you for your interest and your support of the Bible Sabbath Association.

Sincerely,
Sidney L. Davis, Jr., president
The Bible Sabbath Association

Proclaiming the Sabbath More Fully Sabbath Conference 2002

May 17-19, 2002
Berrien Springs, Michigan
ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
V. E. Garber Auditorium
in Chan Shun Hall

**"HE SHALL THINK TO CHANGE
THE TIMES AND THE LAW"**
Daniel 7:25

Prophetic history shows that anti-Judaism has played as much as a role in the abandonment of the annual Holy Days as it has in the abandonment of the Sabbath. The strong anti-Judaic reason for rejecting Sabbath observance is also the fundamental reason given by early Christian writers for condemning the observance of the annual Holy Days. In both cases the "beast" power of Daniel seven did not "nail to the cross" the holy days and the Sabbath; rather, it replaced them. The New Testament reveals they existed and were universally observed in the early church.

The "Christian" theology of contempt against the Jews has influenced the repudiation of biblical institutions such as the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days. This conference is an attempt to show the truth that God gave the weekly Sabbath and the annual Holy Days, not as trademarks of Judaism, but as signs of His saving plan for the whole human family. These together "Proclaim the Sabbath More fully."

This Sabbath conference will address the restoration of a biblical liturgical calendar to the church. *Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God's word in their native purity.*

"In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. The breach made in the law at the time the Sabbath was changed by man, is to be repaired." Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, page 678.

For further information contact:
M. Basner — (918) 521-1414
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Email: sabbathmorefully@yahoo.com

way. Both liberals and communists joined in forcing the European powers to give up their colonies.

In Algeria, however, over a million Europeans had settled in the territory and the coastal departments were considered an integral part of France. However, when Charles de Gaulle gained power at the height of the Algerian uprising, he decided that France should quit Algeria because the Muslims could never become true Frenchmen. And so, France abandoned Algeria, and a million Europeans took to the boats. Today, the invasion has been reversed. Five million Muslims, mostly Algerians, live in France. They comprise 10 percent of the population and are part of the resurgent Islamic power in Europe. Christianity is now so weak in France that one wonders if it is capable of resisting the assumption of Islamic power.

We have been told by our leaders and the media that we are not at war against the Islamic religion. We are at war against terrorism. But what they all prefer not to recognize is that the spiritual power behind that terrorism – the power that drives otherwise intelligent human beings to undertake suicidal missions against the infidel – is the religion of Islam. Of course, there are millions of Muslims who just want to lead normal lives. Unfortunately, after Sept. 11, nothing is “normal” anymore. □

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Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the author of eight books on education, including: *Is Public Education Necessary?*, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*, and *Home-schooling: A Parents Guide to Teaching Children*. His books are available online at Amazon.com.

Mormons and the Sabbath

Years ago (when I had time on my hands), I did a study on the Book of Mormon. One thing I found out was that it is a Sabbatarian book. Here are four quotes from the book of Mormon which indicate support only for the seventh-day Sabbath.

Jarom 1:5: “...the people of Nephi waxed strong in the land. They observed to keep the law of Moses and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord. And they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme...” [Interesting that keeping God's laws and the Sabbath is linked to a time when God “blessed” the Nephites. Also “the law of Moses” is affirmed—the modern LDS Church keeps neither the Sabbath nor the law of Moses! The only “sabbath day” connected to the Law of Moses is the 7th day.]

Mosiah 18:23: “And he [Alma] commanded them that they should observe the sabbath day, and keep it holy, and also every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God.”

Mosiah 13:16-19: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; But the seventh day, the sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor any stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” [It is intriguing to me that the Book of Mormon has “King James English” language structures even though Moroni (who theoretically gave the book to Joseph Smith) likely did not speak like a 17th century Englishman. Nevertheless, if the Book of Mormon is to be “scripture” to a person, it is clear that he is commanded to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.]

III Nephi 18:14: “Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” [The “law of Moses” would include keeping the Sabbath, and this also enjoins the observation of “the statutes and judgments” of the law.]

So, the Book of Mormon requires the reader to keep the seventh-day Sabbath and the Law of Moses. Interesting! Modern Mormons keep neither. By keeping Sunday, Easter, Xmas, etc.; the modern LDS church is proclaiming its submission to the Babylonian Church and the Popes of Rome instead of to the Book of Mormon.

—Steven M. Collins

author of *The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!*

The Church in the World

Friday, August 17, 2001

At 11:30 am my wife Bev and I landed in Guatemala City to start what would be one of our most interesting, sobering and inspiring trips ever. In the next five days we visited in Guatemala and El Salvador and were able to come to a better understanding of what Central America is really like and what some of the needs are.

We are able to donate \$5000 for LifeNets Guatemala initiatives and over \$4000 for an El Salvador scholarship program. There have been many people who have come to us asking "what can I do to help?" We have answers and will post the specific needs. If you want to contact me directly about what you can do, please call me at 317 216-0802 or email me at kubik@lifenets.org (Website: <http://www.lifenets.org/>).

I was sobered by the trauma that this part of the world which is so close to the United States has suffered in the past few decades: earthquakes, hurricanes, civil wars killing tens of thousands, volcanic eruptions in times past, unstable and corrupt governments etc. Each of these calamities has brought on massive numbers of deaths. The people generally live in poverty with incomes of no more than usually \$150 per family. In addition, El Salvador suffers a 40% unemployment rate.

Saul Langarica, United Church of God pastor, who serves seven churches in Guatemala, picked us up at the airport and took us back to his home where we became acquainted with his wife Carmen and children Susy (10) and Saulito (7). The public is not allowed into the airport arrival lobby so Saul waited outside for us. We brought 165 toys for the Fall Festival from Linda Schreiber and the SE Minnesota churches along with eye glasses and white shirts. We were concerned about going through customs, but sailed through without any problem.

Carmen prepared a delicious lasagna dish and we got ready to drive four hours to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala's second largest city with a population of 500,000, where we would attend a combined church service with San Marcos. The Langaricas will be leaving Guatemala October 15th for their new assignment in Santiago, Chile.

Guatemala City is the largest city in Central America with a population of 2.5 million. It's followed in size by San Salvador and then San Jose, Costa Rica. One quickly notices the Indian culture who are descendents of the Mayans. There are actually 23 distinct Indian languages spoken along with Spanish in Guatemala.

Guatemala has concluded a 32 year old civil war four years ago in which over 175,000 people died. It was a guerilla war in which the leftist faction encouraged by Cuba fought to bring more economic equity. The government conducted a "Terra Arssala" (erasing the land) campaign in which entire villages and settlements of people were destroyed on tips of harbored guerillas. The military killed 90% of the people who died in the civil war. They were often stuffed into wells to attempt to hide evidence from the worldwide human rights awareness. The current president was the government leader of the military. The Guatemalan Catholic Archbishop was murdered at the main cathedral in the center of Guatemala City three years ago for writing about some of the atrocities during the more than a generation-long civil war.

Green Guatemala is mountainous with few flat areas. There are deep chasms and ravines. The slopes are covered with corn, coffee, bananas and beans. Everything grows well here. All the agricultural work is done by hand. There is not a tractor or any mechanized implement in sight. The reason is that a tractor

could not be used on the steep slopes. Also, the people fear mechanization taking jobs away. And people prefer hand made corn tortillas to those made by machines. Farmers walk along the highway carrying hoes and other farm tools.

In Solola, on the way to Quetzaltenango, we stopped at spectacular Lake Atitlan which is a volcanic crater.

After we arrived in Quetzaltenango we went to the home of Oscar and Martha Queme for dinner. It was a memorable evening for all of us. They killed the turkey in their yard earlier in the day for the special meal, a Quetzaltenango specialty. The entire family of the parents and two sons Oscar Jr. (Ever) and Neitez ages 13 and 15 live in two small rooms. One is a sitting room by day and bedroom by night and the other is a kitchen and bedroom by night. While eating dinner a cat jumped on the thin tin roof above and made a loud noise. All the sights and sounds were very interesting.

We are trying to understand what the needs of the people are. As we have been talking for some time, we have either completed or funded the 15 concrete floors asked for by the Guatemalans. Now, we were learning about the need for seven or eight roofs that are leaking badly that need to be fixed or replaced. Also, there is one family living in a home having only cardboard walls and another family of nine that lives and sleeps in one room. This is unacceptable and must be remedied.

LifeNets - For Guatemala

P.O. Box 88165

Indianapolis, Indiana 46208-0165

LifeNets, which was started by Victor Kubik, United Church of God pastor, is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that develops programs offering practical assistance for needy people throughout the world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

I received the Jan-Feb & March-April Sabbath Sentinel for the first time in approximately 20 years.

It was very refreshing to read of the people who are Sabbath keepers.

The letters to the Editor particularly caught my attention.

Would it be possible to get a copy of the article concerning women? I gather from the responses that it was in the Sept./Oct. issue.

My husband and I have been Sabbath-keepers for over 30 years.

During that time we have come to a different understanding on many biblical issues. Some issues have taken years for us to totally understand and to take a position on them. As the Scripture indicates, one person plants the seed, another waters but Yahweh causes the growth.

Through the years I have also realized that I can love people who don't have the exact same understanding of Scripture as I do.

It seems like people who get angry because someone has a different opinion are taking it much too personally.

Sincerely,
Sharon Stables

Sharon,

Thank you for your comments and your contribution. You should have received the information you requested by now. One easy way to consult past issues of **The Sabbath Sentinel** is to go to our Web site at <http://www.biblesabbath.org/>. Many of our previous issues are there available for download, and you can browse for other material that might be of interest to you.

—editor

Dear Friends,

I haven't written in quite a while, but after reading (and rereading some articles) in the July-August "Sentinel," I thought it necessary. (And by the way, the "Sentinel" just keeps on getting better!!) As a former member on the B.S.A. board of directors, and a lifetime member of B.S.A., I wanted to share a recent experience with you,...

Now the experience. We have not attended any Church Of God service for many years, nor have we been invited,... Well, I had developed a friendship with an accountant whom I had just met a year ago, who was an elder in the Christadelphian Church Of God. Recently, Phil, the elder, invited Merrily & me to their services on Sunday. I told him politely about my view of the Sabbath, and he said they had a booklet (naturally!!) explaining why no day was special to God etc., etc., blah, blah. We agreed to disagree and are still friends. Just last week, not having had any fellowship and worship with fellow believers publicly for many years, I relented, and called him for directions to his church for Sunday. Only his wife, Pam, was home, and after getting details about the type of service, found that they partake of the symbols at a Lord's table every week, but we could sit and watch but not participate. Only baptized members could! Suddenly I realized God was telling me: the Sabbath, son, is the identifying sign of his people, not membership in an organization. I knew this for years, but it took my embarrassing weakness and compromise with that beautiful truth, the seventh day cycle as Ken Westby would call it, the Sabbath, and another correction to put me in my

place — not welcome in a church service again, but always welcome on the blessed seventh day to celebrate an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father. The Sabbath is a gift, and what one does with a gift is what they think of the giver of that gift. It's as simple as that. And for a moment, I almost forgot the value of that gift.

So, today we're enjoying another Virtual Church service by phone with Ken Westby of A.C.D. (and vice president of the B.S.A.). Ken has worked tirelessly for years, speaking the truth with love as the apostle would say in Ephesians 4:15. If it wasn't for Ken's Virtual Church, we would feel unwanted and lost. He gives us a feeling of belonging and being spiritual members in the body of the Messiah once again, and we can't thank him enough for his efforts as a minister of God (our minister).

Perhaps we should say thanks to all of you at B.S.A for giving to a couple in a far corner of Canada the good news of our Messiah, a day of celebration of rest in this hectic world and encouragement to love our neighbor and our families. As Dr. Bacchiocchi has said, it is a celebration of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

Until you almost throw it away, you don't appreciate one of the simple gifts—we don't keep the Sabbath; the Sabbath keeps us in relationship with God Almighty.

And you (we) have had the privilege to promote this truth. I've learned a valuable lesson this week. Perhaps you can learn from it too.

In Christian love and appreciation, your friends,

John & Merrily Bennet.

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(June 02)

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Press Release

Third Annual BSA Scholarship Contest

The Bible Sabbath Association wishes to announce the 2002 BSA Essay Scholarship Contest. The contest is open to all students in their junior year in high school (or home schooled students that are one year away from being college-bound (approximately ages 16-17), **and** to all college-age students up to the age of 25. The application deadline is April 1, 2002. Each applicant must accept a free subscription to *The Sabbath Sentinel* for one year along with his or her application entry. The four winners of the essay contest will be awarded prizes as follows: first place \$750; second place \$500, and third and fourth place with an award of \$250 each. Scholarship money will be paid directly to the trade school/college or university the student has been accepted at for the fall 2002 school year. The contest is open to U.S. and international students. It is open to any Sabbath-keeping Christian regardless of church or organizational affiliation.

Former BSA essay scholarship winners may NOT enter the contest this year. This is to allow others the opportunity for the prize money.

The three essay questions for this year's contest are as follows:

- (1) The lessons I have learned from keeping the Sabbath in my life;
- (2) How I explain the Sabbath to others (teachers, employers, friends, etc.); and
- (3) Challenges facing Sabbath keepers and/or Sabbath keeping churches in the years to come.

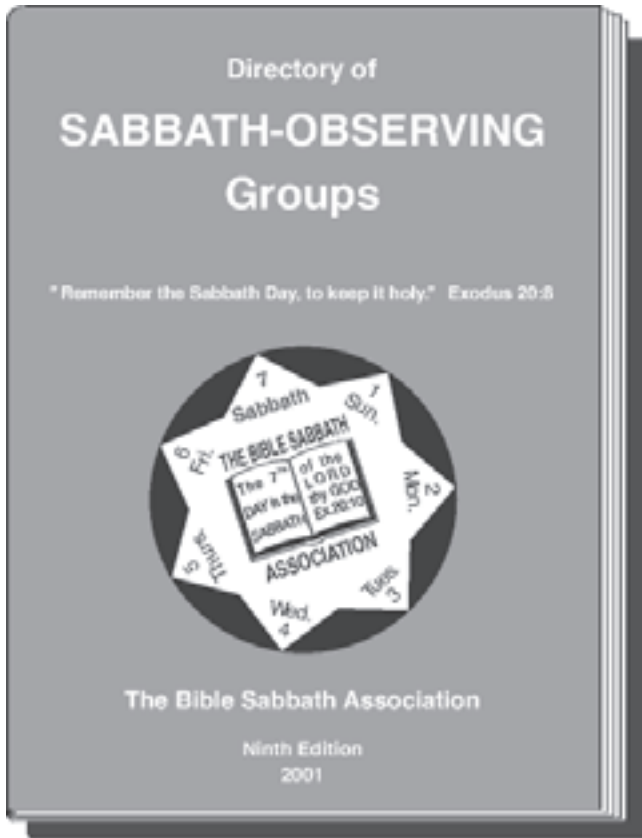
Applications must be filled out completely. Essay questions must be hand written by the applicant with a typed copy attached for easy reading by the judges.

For Scholarship Applications, call toll free 1-888-687-5191 or write:

Attention: Scholarship Contest c/o The BSA, 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, Wyoming 82718, or June Narber at jnarber@hercurian.com, or write her at 6325-9 Falls of Neuse Road #193, Raleigh, NC 27615. Forms are also available on the BSA Website, www.biblesabbath.org. Donations for next year's scholarship gladly accepted. We need donations to insure that we can continue the scholarship program.

Please send any donations to

***The Bible Sabbath Association,
3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718***



Place your Order Now!

The 246-page ninth edition of The Bible Sabbath Association's comprehensive catalog of Seventh-day Sabbath-Observing Groups has gone to press! The *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups* will ship in late September or early October.

The 2001 *Directory* lists over 400 Sabbatarian groups, and over 1600 congregations. This is the ninth update of the *Directory*, originally published in 1957, and the largest compilation of Sabbatarian Groups in the BSA's history. There are many international congregations listed.

The *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups* is available for \$15, postpaid, or 10 copies for \$95 postpaid, from:

The Bible Sabbath Association
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You may also order by credit card by calling 307-686-5191, or e-mail at info@biblesabbath.org.

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