

The Sabbath Sentinel

March–April 2007



The Cup of Blessing

The Bible Sabbath Association

The Sabbath Sentinel

March-April 2007 Volume 58, No. 2 Issue 524

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Our Cover: *The "Cup of Blessing," the third cup of Passover. "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' "* (Matthew 26:27-28). Photo by Dreamstime.

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Mustard Seed Faith

*Matthew 17:20: "And Jesus said unto them, (his disciples,) Because of your unbelief: for verily I (Jesus) say unto you, **If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed**, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."*

When I was a small boy I remember a winter snow-storm that left snow piled high across the yard. As a child it was fun to dive into the deep snow and roll around in it. After my father shoveled the snow from our walk in order to reach his car, it was like walking through a canyon with walls of white on each side. The snow reached just below my shoulder. At the time, I thought this was probably the biggest snow-fall that had ever occurred. Now that I look back on this amazing childhood memory, I realize that the snow really wasn't tall; I was small.

I recently heard a preacher on television talking about mustard seed faith. Of course, what he was saying was taken from the Bible, and, in principle, I can't quarrel with his comments. But the way he was applying Jesus' teaching in Matthew 17 seemed

strange to me. He talked about how we could use our mustard-seed faith and command mountains to move out of our way. We could move any obstacle aside because our faith, which started small like a mustard seed, had grown to the point where we had the spiritual muscle to cast any obstacle out of our way.

Even though I don't disagree that this is part of learning to live by faith, there is something about this approach to faith that strikes me as a bit out of proportion. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that are completely out of our control, and we need "mustard-seed-faith" intervention. Circumstances are so beyond our ability to influence them that God's direct intervention is necessary. It may be that our life is in danger, that our health is deteriorating,

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April 1 deadline for entries is approaching fast!

The BSA Scholarship Essay Contest for 2007

Our competition for the largest scholarships we have ever offered will end on April 1. We will be offering \$2,000 for first prize, \$1,000 for second prize, and \$500 for third prize.

If you are seventh-day Sabbath keeper and a current or soon-to-be college student between the ages of 17 and 25 and would like to enter our contest, please go to our special Scholarship contest Web site at <http://biblesabbath.googlepages.com> and download our scholarship contest rules and contest application. You may also write directly to our scholarship contest coordinator, June Narber, at 6325-9 Falls of Neuse Road #193, Raleigh, NC 27615. You may also contact June by e-mail at junenarber@yahoo.com.

All entries must be in the hands of our contest coordinator by April 1, 2007. We will begin evaluating the essays at that time. We will announce our winners no later than June 1, 2007.

Pass the word. Tell your college-aged friends.

The Man Who Circumcised Jesus

by Kenneth Westby



Shepherds in the Judean hills east of Bethlehem were the first to see that something unusual was taking place. It was a dark night as the new moon of the seventh month had yet no light to cast. Bethlehem lay in shadows in the distance, typical of all small towns before the modern age. During the day there had been much travel on the road passing through Bethlehem leading to Jerusalem, but now deep into the night all was quiet and the stars shown bright.

It was fall and the Feast of Tabernacles was fast approaching. Soon Jerusalem and the Temple courts would be thronged with Jews celebrating the most joyous festival of the year. In addition to the festival crowds the Roman overlords, for taxation purposes, had ordered another census of Judea requiring males to travel to their ancestral territory. Many were traveling in Israel that season, including a humble couple who had journeyed from Nazareth in the north to be registered in Bethlehem, the city of King David.

Joseph was of Davidic decent and his pregnant wife, Mary, joined him on the trek. With so many travelers coming and going, it was no surprise the couple could find no lodging in Bethlehem. But Mary's child chose that night to be born, and they had no choice but to settle for the shelter of an animal stall.

It was a night the shepherds on the hills would never forget. A glorious angel of the Lord appeared to them with a blinding brightness leaving them terrified. Quickly the angel quelled their fears and announced that on this night Israel's Messiah would be born in the nearby little town of David. "You will find him newly born, wrapped up in clean cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly the angel was joined by hundreds of other angels filling the sky above the shepherds, praising and glorifying God in song. Just as abruptly the angels ascended back to heaven.

The shepherds immediately left their flocks and headed to Bethlehem where they found Joseph, Mary, and the baby lying in a manger, just as the angel had announced. The excited shepherds told the couple all the words they had heard from the Lord's angel. Mary said nothing, but treasured it all up in her heart. The shepherds returned to the hills praising God for all they had heard and seen.

The Circumcision Journey

After a day or two of rest the couple set out for Nazareth seventy miles away. Mary with her baby rode upon a donkey led by Joseph. Circumstances dictated their choices. A mother could not enter the temple until after forty days following the birth of a male child, and it made no practical or economic sense to stay in a manger for forty days. If they had kinfolk in Bethlehem they would not have been forced to settle for lodging in animal quarters. The journey would take but five or six days allowing them to arrive home in time for the baby's circumcision.

We don't know if Joseph and Mary made that schedule or stopped for the circumcision rite along the way. But the biblical record is quite clear; the baby was circumcised on the eighth day. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant made between God and Abraham's offspring of promise. It represented a "marking" by God on those who were the Sons of the Covenant made with Abraham. (The word circumcision comes from Latin *circum*, meaning "around" and *caedere*, meaning "to cut".)

Circumcision came to symbolically represent many facets of God's requirements for man from repentance from the filth of sin (spiritual circumcision) to the New Testament rite of baptism which came to symbolize entry into the New Covenant and becoming an heir to Yahweh's eternal promises.

Abraham's son of promise, Isaac, was circumcised on the eighth day as instructed by God. From that time circumcision became a most important rite in Israel and was carefully honored by the Jews in the days of Jesus. (Ishmael, Abraham's other son by handmaid Hagar, was circumcised at age thirteen, and to this day Arabs practice circumcision upon their males at age thirteen.)

"On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived" (Luke 2:21).

The Unnamed Circumciser

The circumciser of Jesus is unnamed in Luke's account. He may have been a rabbi and many were. Joseph would have known where to contact the nearest

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A Comedian's Sigh, the 4th Commandment, and a Better New Year

by *Michael Medved*

Townhall.com, Thursday, December 28, 2006

A random, wistful comment by one of the nation's most successful movie comedians helps illuminate the least noted of all the Ten Commandments—and should suggest some worthy New Year's resolutions for the rest of us.

A December 10th Parade magazine profile of Ben Stiller, the star of the hugely entertaining new comedy "Night at the Museum," describes the 41-year-old star's quiet life with his family. "Ben now lives in the Hollywood Hills with his wife, actress Christine Taylor (best known as Marcia in 'The Brady Bunch' movies), their two young children and two dogs," writes celebrity reporter Robert Masello. "He's been married for six and a half years and says he can hardly remember the night-owl lifestyle he used to lead. 'One of my friends will say, "Hey, it's Friday night. What are you doing?" and I'll have to stop and think, "When was the last time I got excited over a Friday night?" I asked Christine, and she said that maybe it was in high school.' "

From a Jewish point of view, Stiller's comment conveys a strange sense of emptiness, a tinge of sadness—since our tradition views Friday night—the Sabbath—as by far the most significant, most "exciting" night of the week. Though he often portrays Jewish characters on screen (even playing a likeable, lovesick rabbi in Leap of Faith), Stiller's mother (the gifted comedienne Anne Meara) is Irish Catholic and he claims no particular affiliation with the religious tradition of either parent. It's not surprising that he'd feel no particular compunction to celebrate Friday night as a special occasion with his family, but his implication that weekends at home count as boring and indistinguishable highlights the deeper need for Sabbath commitments.

When it comes to the Ten Commandments, most Americans make some effort to honor most of them—avoiding murder, theft, adultery and false witness wherever possible and even, if they think about, trying to honor parents and to stay away from covetousness. The Sabbath commandment, on the other hand (most often enumerated as number four in the

Big Ten) gets scant attention: aside from Seventh Day Adventists, Orthodox Jews and a few other minor denominations, few of us even pause to consider what God expected of us with the instruction "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" (Exodus, 20:8) or, in the later restatement of the Ten Commandments: "Guard the Sabbath Day to keep it holy" (Deuteronomy 5:12).

According to Jewish tradition, the two imperative verbs "remember" (*zachor* in Hebrew) and "guard" (*shamor*) represent the two essential and contrasting aspects of Sabbath observance. "Remember" emphasizes the positive elements of the holy day – setting up a big festive meal with your best food and wine, singing songs, enjoying guests, celebrating your blessings. The instruction to "Guard," on the other hand, tells us that in addition to these special, additional positive observances, there are also numerous negatives, things we don't do. A Biblical Sabbath involves not only things we add to our weekday routine, but behaviors we subtract and restrict. We're expected to cut back on our normal, daily activities – no creative work, no handling of money, no media immersion, no indulging our normal human (and God-given) impulse to alter the world that the Almighty has created (in the first six days) and given to us as a blessing.

The key purpose of both "remembering" and "guarding" (of both positive and negative observances) is to make the Sabbath "holy"—to consecrate the day to God, and to set it aside as different from all other days. This goes along with the core meaning of the Hebrew word "*kadosh*," as well as the dictionary definitions of its English counterpart, "holy." The first definition (in the American Heritage Dictionary) says "belonging to, derived from, or associated with a divine power, sacred" and the fourth definition explains "specified or set apart for a religious purpose."

Leaving aside any religious associations, the idea of one day a week "set apart" for family and friends and home-based festivities makes all the sense in the world. With the frantic schedules we all keep today, time rushes past us in a blur with few guide-

posts beyond birthdays and anniversaries and the major seasonal holidays. Ben Stiller isn't the only one who can't remember the "last time I got excited over a Friday night." The days melt into one another with little distinction or direction, especially on those not infrequent occasions when weekday stress and demands infect the atmosphere of the week-ends. A Sabbath—a day of difference, set aside—breaks the pattern and the pressure and reminds you where you are, in the calendar and in your spiritual progress. One of the big advantages of traditional Sabbath observance is that it forces us to take note of another week that's passed, and to emphasize the opportunities in the fresh week that's about to begin.

I can't claim that every Sabbath counts as memorably "exciting" in the Medved household, but you certainly know it's different, radically different—with white tablecloths, glowing candles, free-flowing wine, leisurely, multi-course meals with abundant guests, and no telephone conversations or e-mail connections or business appointments or trips in cars.

The point is to gain a richer appreciation of the completeness of the glorious universe that God finished before he ceased his work of creation ("For in six days The Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all this is them, and He rested on the seventh day" Exodus 20:11) as well as a sharper sense of focus on the toil that consumes the other days of our lives ("And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God has taken you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to make the Sabbath day." Deuteronomy 5:15).

The Fourth Commandment, in other words, belongs in the Top Ten not because it requires your attendance in church or synagogue (it doesn't) but because it forces you to take a look at creation and your place in it. The purpose is perspective—the sort of perspective that's only achievable when you forget about the urgent and the pressing and concentrate instead on the important and timeless.

Even those who feel no religious impulses whatever can benefit from absorbing the message of the Fourth Commandment, just as they can enrich their lives and souls from paying attention to the Fifth (to "honor your father and mother"). As Jews, we begin a Sabbath on Friday at dusk, the evening of the seventh day – just as we begin every day at sunset the

night before, because the Biblical description of creation ("And there was evening and there was morning, one day." Genesis 1:5) suggests that this is the way God set up time. Whether you begin to count your holy, set-aside day at sunset, sunrise, or midnight, whether you observe it from Friday night till Saturday night, or Sunday morning through Sunday night (as most Christians do), the point is to establish an unbreakable pattern. You honor the Sabbath commandment by behaving differently even when it's inconvenient. Maybe it doesn't require a full 24-hour cessation of work (at least for now), but what about an iron clad, non-negotiable commitment for one celebratory, uninterrupted family meal – either Friday night, or a set time Sunday afternoon, or whenever your tradition (and preference) may dictate?

Those tens of millions of Christians who revere the authenticity of scripture could vastly enrich their understanding of the sacred patterns by which Jesus arranged his own life if they attempted a more serious experiential exploration of the Fourth Commandment. Why leave first-hand knowledge of the impact and meaning of one of the God's major instructions to humanity to a few

"The point is to gain a richer appreciation of the completeness of the glorious universe that God finished before he ceased his work of creation ... as well as a sharper sense of focus on the toil that consumes the other days of our lives...."

small religious sects? A society in which Sabbath consciousness plays a greater role will be a healthier society, both for its individual members and for the collective.

The upcoming New Year's celebration offers the perfect opportunity to set off in this positive direction. Looking ahead to the fresh calendar's months and days provides a distinctive chance to mark off some portion of each week as holy, or set-aside—different and restorative—a Sabbath. Making a 2007 resolution to observe some form of Sabbath might pay off even more substantially than the normal promises we make to eat less and exercise more.

Maybe you're every bit as busy as Ben Stiller (one of the hardest working actors in the business) and, like him, you wonder whether it's even possible to get excited once again over Friday nights after draining weeks of exhaustion and accomplishment. Making an attempt to take the Fourth Commandment seriously may not provide an immediate, automatic answer to that challenge but—as at least some of Ben's ancestors no doubt understood—it can't hurt.

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References to God in the Text of Each U.S. State Constitution

Want to represent God and share your faith in the public square? Afraid you'll be accused of "religious intolerance" by the politically correct thought police? Tired of your free-speech rights being abridged, just because you are a Christian?

No Problem! Present the Theistic world-view, and illustrate the Judeo-Christian presuppositions upon which America is based, simply by reading from your state's founding documents!

FACT: All 50 states acknowledge God in their constitutions.

FICTION: Conventional wisdom held by many today (a presupposition drilled into the public consciousness by organizations like the ACLU, People for the American Way, and others) is that America was organized as a strictly secular nation.

FOR INSTANCE:

Alabama (Date admitted to the union: December 14, 1819): Preamble. "We the people of the State of Alabama, invoking the favor and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish the following Constitution."

Alaska (Date admitted to the union: January 3, 1959): Preamble. "We, the people of Alaska, grateful to God and to those who founded our nation and pioneered this great land...."

Arizona (Date admitted to the union: February 14, 1912): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Arizona, grateful to Almighty God for our liberties, do ordain this Constitution...."

Arkansas (Date admitted to the union: June 15, 1836): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Arkansas, grateful to Almighty God for the privilege of choosing our own form of government...."

California (Date admitted to the union: September 9, 1850): Preamble. "We, the People of the State of California, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom...."

Colorado (Date admitted to the union: August 1, 1876): Preamble. "We, the people of Colorado, with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of Universe...."

Connecticut (Date admitted to the union: January 9, 1788): Preamble. "The People of Connecticut, acknowledging with gratitude the good Providence of God in permitting them to enjoy"

Delaware (Date admitted to the union: December 7, 1787): Preamble. "Through Divine Goodness all men have, by nature, the rights of worshipping and serving their Creator according to the dictates of their consciences...."

Florida (Date admitted to the union: March 3, 1845): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Florida,

grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty ... establish this Constitution."

Georgia (Date admitted to the union: January 2, 1788): Preamble. "We, the people of Georgia, relying upon protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution...."

Hawaii (Date admitted to the union: August 21, 1959): Preamble. "We, the people of Hawaii, Grateful for Divine Guidance...establish this Constitution."

Idaho (Date admitted to the union: July 3, 1890): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Idaho, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings...."

Illinois (Date admitted to the union: December 3, 1818): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Illinois, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy and looking to Him for a blessing on our endeavors."

Indiana (Date admitted to the union: December 11, 1816): Preamble. "We, the People of the State of Indiana, grateful to Almighty God for the free exercise of the right to choose our form of government."

Iowa (Date admitted to the union: December 28, 1846): Preamble. "We, the People of the State of Iowa, grateful to the Supreme Being for the blessings hitherto enjoyed, and feeling our dependence on Him for a continuation of these blessings ... establish this Constitution."

Kansas (Date admitted to the union: January 29, 1861): Preamble. "We, the people of Kansas, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious privileges...establish this Constitution."

Kentucky (Date admitted to the union: June 1, 1792): Preamble. "We, the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties...."

Louisiana (Date admitted to the union: April 30, 1812): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Louisiana, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties we enjoy...."

Maine (Date admitted to the union: March 15, 1820): Preamble. "We the People of Maine ... acknowledging with grateful hearts the goodness of the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe in affording us an opportunity...and imploring His aid and direction."

Maryland (Date admitted to the union: April 28, 1788): Preamble. "We, the people of the state of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberty...."

Massachusetts (Date admitted to the union: February 6, 1788): Preamble. "We...the people of Massachusetts, acknowledging with grateful hearts, the goodness of the Great Legislator of the Universe...in the course of His Providence, an opportunity and devoutly imploring His direction...."

Michigan (Date admitted to the union: Jan 26, 1837): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Michigan, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of freedom ... establish this Constitution."

Minnesota (Date admitted to the union: May 11, 1858): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of Minnesota, grateful to God for our civil and religious liberty, and desiring to perpetuate its blessings...."

Mississippi (Date admitted to the union: December 10, 1817): Preamble. "We, the people of Mississippi in convention assembled, grateful to Almighty God, and invoking His blessing on our work."

Missouri (Date admitted to the union: August 10, 1821): Preamble. "We, the people of Missouri, with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and grateful for His goodness ...establish this Constitution...."

Montana (Date admitted to the union: November 8, 1889): Preamble. "We, the people of Montana, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of liberty establish this Constitution"

Nebraska (Date admitted to the union: March 1, 1867): Preamble. "We, the people, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom ... establish this Constitution."

Nevada (Date admitted to the union: October 31, 1864): Preamble. "We the people of the State of Nevada, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom...establish this Constitution."

New Hampshire (Date admitted to the union: June 21, 1788): Part I. Article I, Section V: "Every individual has a natural and unalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience."

New Jersey (Date admitted to the union: December 18, 1787): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of New Jersey, grateful to Almighty God for civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing on our endeavors..."

New Mexico (Date admitted to the union: January 6, 1912): Preamble. "We, the People of New Mexico,

grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of liberty...."

New York (Date admitted to the union: July 26, 1788): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of New York, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure its blessings...."

North Carolina (Date admitted to the union: November 21, 1789): Preamble. "We the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for our civil, political, and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those...."

North Dakota (Date admitted to the union: November 2, 1889): Preamble. "We, the people of North Dakota, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, do ordain...."

Ohio (Date admitted to the union: March 1, 1803): Preamble. "We the people of the state of Ohio, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings...."

Oklahoma (Date admitted to the union: November 16, 1907): Preamble. "Invoking the guidance of Almighty God, in order to secure and perpetuate the blessings of liberty...."

Oregon (Date admitted to the union: February 14, 1859): Bill of Rights, Article I. Section 2: "All men shall be secure in the Natural right, to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their consciences...."

Pennsylvania (Date admitted to the union: December 12, 1787): Preamble. "We, the people of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance...."

Rhode Island (Date admitted to the union: May 29, 1790): Preamble. "We the People of the State of Rhode Island grateful to Almighty God for the civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing...."

South Carolina (Date admitted to the union: May 23, 1788): Preamble. "We, the people of the State of South Carolina grateful to God for our liberties, do ordain and establish this Constitution...."

South Dakota (Date admitted to the union: November 2, 1889): Preamble. "We, the people of South Dakota, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberties...."

Tennessee (Date admitted to the union: June 1, 1796): Article XI.III: "...That all men have a natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their conscience...."

Texas (Date admitted to the union: December 29, 1845): Preamble. "We the People of the Republic of

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Out-of-place Fossils

The geologic column depicted in many science textbooks and museums supposedly shows which life forms existed at any particular time in the history of our planet. Trilobites, for example, are thought to have lived during the Cambrian period and later became extinct. Dinosaurs walked the earth during what are called the Jurassic and Triassic periods and likewise later became extinct.

According to traditional scientific thinking, such creatures should not be found on earth today because the geologic column shows they fell victim to extinction many millions of years ago. However, several discoveries of “living fossils” have cast doubt on this long-accepted interpretation of the fossil record.

An astounding catch

Perhaps the most stunning and famous of these living fossils is the coelacanth. Fossils of this unusual fish first appear in strata from the Devonian period, with an estimated age of 350 million years.

For years paleontologists thought the coelacanth became extinct about 70 million years ago, since they found no fossil remains of the fish in deposits formed later than the Cretaceous period.

At least they thought that was the case until December 1938, when a fishing trawler captured a living coelacanth off the eastern coast of South Africa. Scientists were stunned. After all, the discovery was akin to finding a living dinosaur in a remote patch of jungle!

Since that first shocking discovery, fishermen and scientists have taken more specimens, all near the Comoro Islands. Researchers were dismayed to find that the inhabitants of the islands had used coelacanths as food for years, drying and salting the rare fish's meat.

The discovery of living coelacanths proved to be a profound embarrassment for those trying to use evolution to interpret the geologic record. It was especially embarrassing for those who, based on fossilized specimens, had earlier proposed the coelacanth as a prime candidate for the kind of fish that would have first crawled out of the oceans to dwell on land. Yet the discovery of a fish that was supposed to have been extinct for millions of years, one that some paleontologists had hoped was a vital missing link in the supposed evolutionary chain, hasn't led many to question their assumptions regarding the supposed evolutionary timetable.

If coelacanths were the only creatures found alive that were supposed to have been long extinct, then we might accept their discovery as an oddity that proved little or nothing. But the list of such living fossils has grown considerably in recent years.

A tree from the age of the dinosaurs

One such living fossil is a pine tree that, according to the traditional interpretation of the geologic column, was supposed to have been extinct for more than 100 million years. But that changed with a remarkable 1994 discovery: “David Noble was out on a holiday hike when he stepped off the beaten path and into the prehistoric age. Venturing into an isolated grove in

a rain-forest preserve 125 miles from Sydney, the Parks and Wildlife Service officer suddenly found himself in a real-life ‘Jurassic Park’—standing amid trees thought to have disappeared 150 million years ago ... ‘The discovery is the equivalent of finding a small dinosaur still alive on Earth,’ said Carrick Chambers, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens ...

“The biggest tree towers 180 feet with a 10-foot girth, indicating that it is at least 150 years old. The



The coelacanth is one of science's most startling discoveries. So ancient that it was considered a candidate for the first fish that supposedly crawled onto land, it was long considered extinct until found in a fisherman's net in 1938 (Source: Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History).

trees are covered in dense, waxy foliage and have a knobby bark that makes them look like they are coated with bubbly chocolate ... Barbara Briggs, the botanic gardens' scientific director, hailed the find as one of Australia's most outstanding discoveries of the century, comparable to the living fossil finds of the dawn redwood tree in China in 1944 and the coelacanth fish off Madagascar in 1938 ... The closest relatives of the Wollemi Pines died out in the Jurassic Period, 190 million to 135 million years ago, and the Cretaceous Period, 140 million to 65 million years ago" (Salt Lake City Tribune, Dec. 15, 1994, p. A10).

Living fossils from long-dead worlds

Following is information about a few of these living fossils that either have not changed in time or were supposed to be extinct.



If evolution were true, why do we see so many species in the fossil record that remain unchanged for millions of years and are virtually unchanged from species we see alive today like this fossilized lobster and this crab (Photos by Paul Abramson of creationism.org).

A find similar to the Australian discovery took place a half century earlier when the dawn redwood (species *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) was discovered in China in 1941. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says of this tree: "Discovered first as fossils in Miocene (23.7 to 5.3 million years ago) deposits, it was assumed to have become extinct until it was discovered growing in Szechwan province in China. Its distribution in the late Mesozoic and Tertiary (66.4 to 1.6 million years ago) was throughout the Northern Hemisphere" (Internet version, 2000, "Gymnosperm").

Another living fossil is the tuatara, a lizardlike animal found only on several islands off the coast of New Zealand. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, this strange creature "has two pairs of well-developed

limbs and a scaly crest down the neck and back. Unlike lizards, it has a third eyelid, the nictitating membrane, which closes horizontally, and a pineal eye, an organ of doubtful function between the two normal eyes. The tuatara also has a bony arch, low on the skull behind the eyes, that is formed by the presence of two large openings ... in the region of the temple.

"It is this bony arch, which is not found in lizards, that has been cited as evidence that tuataras are survivors of the otherwise extinct order Rhynchocephalia and are not lizards. And indeed, tuataras differ little from the closely related form *Homeosaurus*, which lived 150 million years ago during the Jurassic Period" (Internet version, "Tuatara").

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* adds that the tuatara is "a reptile that has shown little morphological evolution for nearly 200,000,000 years since the early Mesozoic" ("Evolution").

Another example is a marine mollusk that goes by the scientific name *Monoplacophoran*. "In 1952 several live monoplacophorans were dredged from a depth of 3,570 m (about 11,700 feet) off the coast of Costa Rica. Until then it was thought that they had become extinct 400,000,000 years ago" (*Britannica*, "Monoplacophoran").

By no means are these the only examples of living fossils. These are simply examples of animals and plants that, based on where they were found in the fossil record, scientists had assumed had died out millions of years ago. Other creatures, such as the nautilus, brachiopod, horseshoe crab and even the ubiquitous cockroach, are virtually unchanged from fossils paleontologists date to hundreds of millions of years ago.

Troubling questions for evolutionists

These discoveries show that evolutionists cannot adequately explain the fossil record through evolutionary theory. Crucial facts are missing from the interpretations given to the general public.

Such discoveries bring up an important question. According to the traditional evolutionary interpretation of the fossil record, man appears late ("late" is defined as in the upper strata of the geologic column) while trilobites and dinosaurs, appearing lower in the geologic column, died out many millions of years ago. Yet the coelacanth—obviously still alive and well—appears nowhere in the fossil record for the last 70 million years.

What does this tell us about the fossil record? Obviously that record is not as clear-cut as we have been led to believe. When it comes to human remains, and those of creatures evolutionists claim as distant ancestors of modern man, things get especially murky.

Fossil “men” have been discovered in strata in which nothing close to human is supposed to have existed. Other species thought to have been long-ago ancestors of the human race have been dated to quite recent years, much to the perplexity of scientists.

For example, remains of *homo erectus*—supposedly an evolutionary ancestor of modern man that lived 1.6 to 0.4 million years ago—have been found in Australia that have been dated to only a few hundred to a few thousand years ago. Although according to the evolutionary timetable the species is said to have died out several hundred thousand years ago, the remains of at least 62 individuals have been dated as less than 12,000 years old (Marvin Lubenow, *Bones of Contention*, 1992, pp. 131-132, 153, 180).

Meanwhile, remains of anatomically modern humans have been dated to strata both well before and alongside fossil remains of creatures that were supposed evolutionary ancestors of modern humans (Lubenow, pp. 56-58, 139-140, 170-171).

Not surprisingly, these discoveries are rarely reported. Of course, such fossils are hotly disputed and for the most part dismissed by evolutionists. Nonetheless these unexpected finds show that the fossil record, far from supporting the traditional view of Darwinist evolution, in fact exposes many inconsistencies and contradictions within that view.

Although evolutionists are loath to admit it, the dating methods used to support their evolutionary construct spanning millions of years are themselves open to question. To illustrate the gravity of the problem, “in 1984 Science reported that the shells of living snails in artesian springs in Nevada were carbon-dated as 27,000 years old” (James Perloff, *Tornado in a Junkyard*, 1999, p. 141).

Other dating methods have their problems too. Using the potassium-argon method, Hawaiian lava from an eruption two centuries ago was dated from 160 million to three billion years old. In New Zealand, lava dated 465,000 years old by one method contained wood dated at less than 1,000 years by another method (Milton, pp. 47-48). James Perloff notes that the lava dome of Mount St. Helens, which erupted in 1980, “has been radiometrically dated at 2.8 million years” (Perloff, p. 146).

Science or wishful thinking?

Sir Solly Zuckerman, an anatomist at England's University of Birmingham, said about the scientific study of man's supposed fossil evolutionary history:

“... No scientist could logically dispute the proposition that man, without having been involved in any act of divine creation, evolved from some ape-like creature in a very short space of time—speaking in geological terms—without leaving any fossil traces of the steps of the transformation. As I have already implied, students of fossil primates have not been distinguished for caution when working within the logical constraints of their subject. The record is so astonishing that it is legitimate to ask whether much science is yet to be found in this field at all. The story of the Piltdown Man hoax provides a pretty good answer” (Beyond the Ivory Tower: The Frontiers of Public and Private Science, 1970, p. 64, emphasis added).

The hoax to which he referred—involving parts of a human skull and an orangutan jaw chemically treated by a forger to give the appearance of great age—went undetected for 44 years from its 1912 discovery until 1956. During that time many of the world's greatest anthropologists accepted the fake fossil as a genuine human ancestor.

“The remains were acclaimed by anthropologists to be about 500,000 years old... Over 500 doctoral dissertations were performed on Piltdown Man... [but] further critical investigation revealed that the jawbone actually belonged to an ape that had died only fifty years previously. The teeth were filed down, and both teeth and bones were discolored with bichromate of potash to conceal their true identity. And so, Piltdown Man was built on a deception which completely fooled all the ‘experts’ who promoted him with the utmost confidence” (Huse, p. 137).

In spite of much wishful thinking on the part of evolutionists, the fossil record does not and cannot be made to agree with Darwinism. The question is, How does the fossil record agree with the accounts found in the Bible? This question, too, demands an answer. Which is best supported by the fossil record—creation or evolution.

What Does the Fossil Record Show?

Traditional evolutionary theory predicts a fossil record that would contain:

- Simple life forms gradually appearing with similar predecessors.
- Simple life forms gradually changing over time into more-complex forms.
- Countless transitional links between kinds of creatures.

- Beginnings of and partially completed features such as new limbs, bones and organs.

The biblical account of creation predicts a fossil record that would contain:

- Complex life forms suddenly appearing with no evolutionary predecessors.
- Complex life forms multiplying "after their kinds" (Genesis 6:20), but with limited variety within those kinds.
- No transitional links between kinds of creatures.
- No partial features such as new limbs, bones and organs; all parts are complete and fully functional.

After years of study and research, what does the fossil record show?

- Complex life forms suddenly appearing with no evolutionary predecessors.
- Complex life forms multiplying "after their kinds," but with limited variety within each species.
- No transitional links between kinds of creatures.
- No partial features such as new limbs, bones and organs; all parts are complete and fully functional.

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"[For over two decades, William Wilberforce] fought tenaciously until the slave trade was finally outlawed. And then he fought for another twenty-five years, despite failing health, for the emancipation of all slaves in 1833. The battle had taken forty-six years. Forty-six years! Today, we are tempted to throw up our hands and go home if we lose a single election. In our campaigns against modern moral evils, we are too easily discouraged; we have forgotten how to persevere. Of course we will have fierce opposition; sometimes the opponents will play dirty, as they did with Wilberforce. But that is no excuse to give up. Who do we think we are working for?... In our own era, the campaign to eliminate the killing of unborn children has already taken thirty-four years. And that is just one battle: Christians are fighting as well modern slavery, embryo-destructive research, and the attack on marriage. We had better take a lesson from Wilberforce (and Wesley) and roll up our sleeves—permanently, if necessary... persevering until the battle is won."—Chuck Colson

Those Weird Christians

At my youngest sister Melisa's graduation party, my husband Tom, my daughter Kiersten, and I found ourselves visiting with a family with whom I had an acquaintance. We spent quite a bit of time interacting with the couple and their two teenage sons and teenage nephew. We watched Kiersten play, discussing what a blessing she was. We discussed other topics and even found ourselves conversing about the time Tom and I spent in El Paso, Texas, and the fact that we had been to Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, many times. It turned out that one of their sons traveled to Juarez on a missionary trip to build housing for people there. During the course of our conversation there was a lot of laughing, a lot of smiling, and a lot of good natured teasing among the family with whom we were visiting.

After we went home that evening, Tom and I spent some time discussing the course of the party. "It sure was nice visiting with that family, wasn't it," I said.

It was then that I heard him say it. "Oh, do you mean those weird Christians?"

Our conversation suddenly came to a screeching halt. How rude! Why would my husband make such a remark? Did he really think they were weird? If he thought they were weird, did that mean he thought I was weird because I was a Christian? (Tom is still uncertain of his religious beliefs.) Did he think that all Christians were weird? I don't want to be thought of as weird. I can't imagine anyone would want to be thought of as weird? Who would?

I regained my composure and decided to stay calm and dig a little deeper into Tom's comment. "Why do you think they are weird?" I queried.

"Well," he answered, "Because they were so happy."

I was flabbergasted. It was at that point that I realized Tom's comment was not meant to be hurtful. The "weirdness" of this Christian family was that they were so happy. Tom found this impressive. To him it was out of the ordinary, unique, not normal, "weird."

I took the opportunity to dig yet a little deeper. "Don't you want that same happiness and closeness for our family?" I asked. He answered very soberly, "Yes, I do." I then pointed out to Tom the secret to this family's happiness. I explained that they were so happy because they had Christ in their lives. Christ is love. That is the whole point of Christianity.

Our lives should focus on the love shared between Creator and created, the Lover and the beloved. That is the secret of life. Experiencing the ultimate love.

I've changed my mind. I do want to be a weird Christian.

—Julia Benson

Julia Benson is a freelance writer who lives in a small town in northeast Iowa. A former school teacher, Julia now works part-time at a local newspaper. Julia has a husband and a three-year-old daughter. She attends an Adventist church in Wisconsin.

rating, or that we are about to lose our home. These are mountains, and they have to be flattened or moved for us to be able to continue on,...or do they?

More often than not, God leaves us with seemingly unbearable circumstances and works us through them. He doesn't remove the mountain that stands in our way. He increases the stature of our character so that we outgrow the size of the menace facing us. I have known of many miraculous, instantaneous healings, of friends being too late to board a plane that crashed or being caught in traffic only to learn later that a massive collision had just occurred ahead of them. I have also witnessed many people go on living with their afflictions and threats to their lives and health. But, the fact is, such miraculous, divine interventions seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

I will say this about "mustard-seed faith:" It is really not about moving mountains or casting into the sea those giant obstacles that stand in our way and prevent us from moving forward. It has more to do with coming to grips with the reality of the spiritual part of our lives that is as real as the physical. It is not about us versus the stubborn spiritual and physical obstacles we encounter. It is about recognizing and embracing the fact that "in Him we live and move and have our being." The Kingdom is ours and one day we will enjoy the full fruit of life that is totally in the spiritual realm. But Jesus also said, "narrow is the way, and strait [difficult] is the gate, and few there be that find it." It is our difficulties that bring out of us either self-will or grace. The inner person is like fruit. If you squeeze it, its juice will either get sweet or bitter. Sometimes God allows us to pass through the valley of the shadow of death to give us a chance to display the quality of the fruit that He has attempted to develop within us. You see, we must become like Jesus—able to suffer the worst kind of cruelty and say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

More often than not, mustard-seed faith is not, "Mountain, move out of my way." It is, "Lord, I trust in you to give me the strength to climb this mountain and reach the plain on the other side." And His response to us is, "My child, take my hand and we'll climb this mountain together." Then, after taking our Father by the hand and climbing a few mountains together, they will seem like molehills.

—Kenneth Ryland

Sharing His Son

The Athletes in Action Super Bowl breakfast is an annual event sponsored by former Green Bay quarterback Bart Starr to recognize NFL players on the basis of character and service. In February 2006, the day before Super Bowl XL, the award was presented to New York Jets running back Curtis Martin. Tony Dungy delivered the keynote address, who a year later would be handed the Vince Lombardi Trophy as head coach of the champion Indianapolis Colts.

On that particular Saturday morning, Dungy spoke of the two things closest to his heart, and neither had anything to do with the National Football League. His two great passions of family and faith were evident, for just weeks before Dungy had buried James, his oldest son.

Said Dungy, "He was struggling with the things of the world and took his own life. People ask how I could come back to work so soon. I'm not totally recovered, I don't know if I ever will be, it's still ever-painful. But some good things have come out of it."

Dungy spoke of the many kindnesses that were shown to him and his family, and also of changed lives and attitudes. "I met a guy the next day after the funeral. He said, 'I was there. I heard you talking. I took off work today. I called my son. I told him I was taking him to the movies. We're going to spend some time and go to dinner.' That was a real, real blessing to me."

He spoke of letters he had received. "People heard what I said and said, 'Hey, you brought me a little closer to my son,' or, 'You brought me a little closer to my daughter. That is a tremendous blessing.'"

The family donated their son's organs through a donor program, and Dungy commented, "We got a letter back two weeks ago that two people had received his corneas, and now they can see. That's been a tremendous blessing."

He spoke of a letter he received from a friend of his son who had attended the funeral. "When I saw what happened at funeral, and your family and the celebration and how it was handled, that was the first time I realized there had to be a God. I accepted Christ into my life and my life's been different since that day. That was an awesome blessing, so all of those things kind of made me realize what God's love is all about."

This man of faith was clearly looking beyond the pain of the moment to find the will of the Divine, but this experience led him to a profound understanding that he felt compelled to share with his audience that day.

"If God had talked to me before James' death and said his death would have helped all these people, it would have saved them and healed their sins, but I would have to take your son, I would have said no, I can't do that.

"But God had the same choice 2,000 years ago with His Son, Jesus Christ, and it paved the way for you and me to have eternal life. That's the benefit I got, that's the benefit James got and that's the benefit you can get if you accept Jesus into your heart today as your Savior."

For more details on Dungy's address, go to www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=22595. —Lenny Cacchio

Lenny Cacchio lives in Lees Summit, Missouri, and is very active in the Truckers' Bible Study in the Kansas City, Missouri, area. The "Sabbath Morning Companion" is now available as a devotional and journal through the Website of the Church of God, Kansas City (www.kccog.org/literature.htm).

A Prophet like unto Moses

by Monte Judah

When John the Baptist was in the wilderness, there was great expectation for several prophecies to be fulfilled. First and foremost, the Messiah was expected to come and throw out the occupying Romans. There was great hope that the Messiah would rise up from among the poor, the countrymen of the land. The primary prophetic text for this expectation was from Deuteronomy.

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' And the Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him'" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

The second great expectation concerned the prophet Elijah. The prophet Elijah was expected to somehow return and restore the families of Israel. The prophecy of Elijah is mentioned at every Passover; they even set a cup for Elijah anticipating his return. The primary prophetic text for this expectation was from Malachi.

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6).

There was also the expectation of another person who would come and be a part of the events leading to the Messianic age. No, I am not referring to John the Baptist himself, the "one crying in the wilderness." The New Testament speaks of this expectation in the first interchange with John the Baptist.

The Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem had heard about John the Baptist in the wilderness. They also

knew that many people were responding to him. So they dispatched men to investigate John's testimony. The Gospel of John records this interrogation.

"And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' And he said, 'I am not. Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.' They said then to him, 'Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as Isaiah the prophet said.' Now they had been sent from the Pharisees" (John 1:19-24).

John knew that the first expectation of these men would be to find someone claiming to be the Messiah. That is why he denied being the Messiah before they even asked. It was logical then that they ask if he was Elijah.

John answered that he was not Elijah fulfilling this prophecy. As it turns out, John was the spirit of Elijah, a forerunner for the Messiah for work of redemption. The prophecy of Elijah as given by Malachi to be a forerunner (Elijah), for the Messiah when He does the work of restoration and judgment.

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6).

With John's two negative responses, they then ask if he is the Prophet.

Who is the Prophet they are looking for? This is the third expectation following the Messiah and Elijah. This is not the only reference to this expectation in the New Testament. It arises again when Yeshua is in the temple at the Feast of Tabernacles.

"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is

thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." ' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Yeshua was not yet glorified. Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, 'This certainly is the Prophet.' Others were saying, 'This is the Messiah.' Still others were saying, 'Surely the Messiah is not going to come from Galilee, is He? Has not the Scripture said that the Messiah comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?' So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him" (John 7:37-43).

It is clear that there was an expectation of three persons to come: the Messiah, Elijah, and the Prophet. The prophetic text speaking of the Messiah and the Prophet come from Deuteronomy.

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' And the Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him' " (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

When most people read this passage they think that only one prophet (like Moses) is prophesied. In fact, two prophets are prophesied: one that is like the Lord and one that is like Moses. The first expression of the prophet is Moses expressing what the Lord said and why He will do this. The people asked for God to come to them and speak like a man. The second prophecy of the prophet is the one like Moses. It is only Christianity that does not seem the dual prophecy here.

There are many rules for interpreting Scripture properly, even more so for prophetic Scripture. According to principles of Jewish interpretation there are no idle or redundant words in the Scripture. Scripture does not repeat itself for emphasis or drama. An apparent repetitious expression is another teaching of itself.

Here are a few examples supporting this rule of interpretation:

Abraham and Isaac journey up the mountain together in Genesis 22. Abraham is about offer Isaac. The Scripture says, "So the two of them walked on together" in verse 6 and 8. What separates them is Isaac's realization that he will be offered up on the altar. The first expression is about Abraham's obedience to God. The second expression is about Isaac's obedience to God. This is crucial to the proper understanding of this passage. Isaac agreed to participate. It foreshadows the prophecy of Yeshua in the garden agreeing to offer Himself up in obedience to His Father. It is a very profound moment and teaching. Isaac was the promised son just like Yeshua was the promised Son of God.

Another example is Isaac conversing with his father about the missing lamb.

"And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' And he said, 'Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?' " (Genesis 22:7).

The translation of this passage into English seems to flow naturally for us. However, in the Hebrew, there are three distinct elements as underlined that almost seem redundant. The sages of Israel and Torah teachers know that this apparent redundancy of Isaac speaking is profound and significant. They have concluded that it reflects Isaac's heart and realization of what is going to happen to him.

There are other examples, some explained in the Scripture directly, including the two dreams of Joseph, the two dreams of Pharaoh as interpreted by Joseph. But of the most obvious repeated word example is in Deuteronomy.

"Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Deuteronomy 16:20).

In the Hebrew text, it simply says, "Justice justice you shall pursue." The expression "and only" is added by translators. Although the words are identical, it is well understood that the second justice does not mean the same thing as the first justice. The second justice means that the method of justice must be done in a just way. In our modern legal system, it is called "due process."

With these examples understood, let us examine Deuteronomy 18 again concerning the Prophet.

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my

God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die. And the Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him' " (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

There are two expressions of a prophet to be raised up. There is a slight difference in them though. The first reference to a prophet to be raised up is one like me. The second reference is to a prophet like you. Translators have made this sound like only one prophet is being discussed. In the Hebrew however two separate expressions are stated. The first prophet (like Me the Lord) will come from the mountain (God's presence). This is the Messiah. The second expression is God pronouncing that another prophet will be raised like "you" Moses. This second prophet will go up to the mountain and prophesy. The second prophet is not the same as the first; it is two prophecies.

Maybe you have heard the same expression that I have heard in my previous instruction. "The Messiah is to be a prophet like unto Moses." This is a common expression among Christians. But, it is incorrect! The Messiah is to be more than a prophet like Moses; He is to be a Prophet like unto God coming down from the mountain. The Messiah is not like Moses; he is like God. He is to speak the very word of God that was just as compelling as when God spoke from Mt. Sinai.

Look at how Peter taught this very prophecy in the temple after the resurrection.

Moses said, "The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23).

He is not quoting all of the passage, just the first part. Peter is not saying that the Messiah is another Moses. He taught the Messiah to be the greatest of all. This is repeated by Stephen at his trial and resulting execution.

This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, "God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren" (Acts 7:37).

These are not oversights or mistakes by Peter and Stephen. The Messiah is the first prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy, "the one like me." Another prophet (not the Messiah) is prophesied to come later.

Actually, the word "me" should be properly capitalized to make this passage clear. It should read as follows:

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like Me from among you,..." (Deuteronomy 18:15).

This is the prophecy of the Messiah. The Messiah is God. He is not like Moses; He is like God (Me), but He comes in the form of His countrymen. Therefore, He was to come in the form of man as demanded by the people. They had pledged to hear the man (like them) who came from the mountain with the word of God. This was in accordance with their request not to hear the word of God any further from God directly on the mountain. They chose to hear the instruction of God from a fellow man, one of their own brethren from among us. This is what God agreed to do — to send Himself in a form of one of our countrymen to speak the word of God to us. This the greatest prophecy of the Messiah (He who ascends and descends).

"Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!" (Proverbs 30:4).

"And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man" (John 3:13).

Judaism has a real struggle with the Deuteronomy 18 prophecy and its comparison with Moses.

"Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

While this verse offers a positive commentary of Moses, it offers no time frame into the future for when One greater than Moses would emerge from among the brethren. Furthermore, a prophet like God does not track with the tenets of Judaism — there is One and only One God. This is part of the reason why the Jews rejected the Messiahship of Yeshua. He clearly represented Himself as greater than Abraham, who was even before (greater than) Moses. He represented Himself as equal to God. The New Testament is clear on that observation.

"Yeshua said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am' " (John 8:58).

"For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, ... , making Himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

So let's say we now are agreed on the prophecy of the Messiah. The Messiah is clearly prophesied in this first expression of the Prophet like Me. Why would God want to have another Prophet like Moses come into the world?

This is where the Christian Church in its prophetic teachings has fallen flat on its face. Even many of my own Messianic Jewish brethren do not get this. Judaism has endorsed this much stronger than Christians understand. The answer is simple: There is going to be another Exodus! God has planned for an even greater exodus from Egypt — an exodus from all of the nations (Jeremiah 16 and 23). There is a need for another "Moses" to lead this worldwide exodus.

The Greater Exodus happens at the end of the age, when the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. It is when the Messiah gathers all of the exiles scattered in all of the nations to come to the Messianic Kingdom. It is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Restoration of the House of Judah and the House of Israel. It is at the time of Jacob's trouble, when his family was divided into two companies but joined together in the land (Gen. 32-33). There is a need for another Moses to arise in conjunction with this greater Exodus. According to the book of Revelation, two witnesses are to announce God's judgments during the Great Tribulation just as Moses and Aaron did before Pharaoh. The antimessiah is a type of Pharaoh. The most popular belief is that the two witnesses (Rev 11) are Moses and Elijah.

Isn't that fascinating?!? We already knew that Elijah was prophesied to come before the day of the Lord. But now we know where someone like Moses is also prophesied to come.

This prophecy alone is probably the strongest reason why the Jews rejected Yeshua of Nazareth as the Messiah. He did not bring about the greater exodus with the Prophet like Moses. Elijah and the Prophet didn't show up. The day of the Lord and the Messianic kingdom did not emerge. This is why the Pharisees dispatched messengers to question John the Baptist. They were expecting all three to appear: Messiah, Elijah, and a Prophet like Moses who would help lead the scattered of Israel back to the land.

However, before we leave this subject completely we should recognize another misunderstanding concerning this prophecy.

Mohammed, the Prophet of Islam, lays claim to the title of Prophet from Deuteronomy 18. He claimed that he was the Prophet like unto Moses, but even better than Moses. Islam also teaches that Abraham took Ishmael (not Isaac) up to be sacrificed, not at Mt. Moriah but instead to Mecca. Devout Muslims travel at least once in their life time to Mecca to

complete the Haj (a pilgrimage to Mecca). They view Yeshua as another prophet of Islam, not God's Son, nor the Messiah.

In recent days you may have heard of the Shiite Muslims (Hezbollah and Iran). The present conflict in Iraq is between Shiite and Sunni Muslim. According to the Shiite teaching a Mahdi (one of the descendants of Mohammed) will soon emerge to bring about a great conflagration of the world. The world will then be all Islam (everyone else is dead). This is an imitation teaching to match the return of Messiah Yeshua.

So, what should we expect from this Prophet who is to come? How will we know that he is the one like Moses?

This is by no means a complete list, but it will get us started.

1. He will be from the countrymen of Israel.
2. He will be a powerful teacher/speaker of Torah (the teaching of Moses).
3. He will confront the antimessiah (Pharaoh).
4. He will be able to do signs to confirm his words.
5. He will work closely with the Elijah of his day.
6. He will promote the coming of the Messiah.
7. He will call for his brethren to return to the land of Israel (from all the nations).

You should also remember that no true prophet, from Moses to the Messiah, has been initially endorsed or accepted by the people. They are always rejected initially. He will have to prove himself.

The prophecy of the Prophet like Moses is more than a fascinating study in biblical interpretation. For those of us in the final generation, it is something that we should seriously be looking for and expecting. I personally believe that the antimessiah is alive and well in the world today. I believe the prophet like Moses is with us as well.

Reprinted with permission from "Yavoh! He Is Coming," January 2007. Lion and Lamb Ministries (www.lionlamb.net). P.O. Box 720968, Norman, OK 73070, (405) 447-4429, E-mail: info@lionlamb.net.

"Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God and in the power of His might." —John Wesley to William Wilberforce

The Eye of the Lord

by Daniel Botkin



Years ago I read about a one-eyed missionary who went deep into the jungles of a South Pacific island to minister to stone-age natives who had never seen any of our modern marvels of technology. The missionary hired several of the native men to cut down trees to clear a road through the jungle. As long as the missionary was right there with the men, they worked eagerly. But whenever the missionary had to go away and leave them to work by themselves, without his direct supervision, the natives loafed on the job and got very little done.

This one-eyed missionary had a glass eye. He removed the glass eye from his head, set it on a tree stump, and told the astonished natives, "I have to leave for a while, but I'll be watching you, so keep working and don't be lazy!"

This story is a good reminder that we labor under the watching eye of our Master. He has left us for a season, but like the missionary in the above story, He is "keeping an eye out for us." He is watching us, so we had better behave. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). His eye sees every deed and every secret thought of the heart. "For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job 34:21f).

The Lord sees everything we do and think. And if we do not repent, someday everyone else will see the record of our deeds and thoughts, "for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad" (Lk. 8:17).

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," Yeshua warned. "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops" (Lk. 12:1-3). Every religious disguise will be stripped away to reveal the sinful hearts of religious hypocrites, either in this age or on Judgment Day.

Hebrews 4:13 says that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." John saw the resurrected Lord's eyes and described them "as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14). How will we stand before the burning gaze of His fiery eyes on the Day of Judgment, knowing that those eyes can see right through us? Proverbs 20:8 says, "A king that sitteth on the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes." If this is true of mere earthly kings, how much more terrifying it will be when the heavenly King of kings

sitteth on His throne of judgment and scattereth away all evil with His burning eyes. When John saw Yeshua, he "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. 1:17). And this same John was the beloved disciple who had leaned on His breast at the last Passover. Of all the disciples, he was perhaps the closest to the Master. Yet when John saw Him in His risen glory, he didn't say, "Hey, it's my old fishin' buddy Jesus!" He fell at His feet like a dead man.

When we see the Lord and look into His eyes, I believe it will be a terrifying and wonderful experience. The only way to prepare for that Day is to get your heart right with God and keep it that way. Repent of your sins, accept the sinless Son of God as the only One who can take away your sins, and put your trust in Him. Then do the will of the Father. Obey His commandments because you know that His eye is upon you.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16:9). Your character and your habits may not be perfect yet, but if your heart is perfect toward Him, He will show Himself strong on your behalf. He will be patient and merciful toward you, and He will continue to transform you into the image and likeness of His Son.

The wicked live as though God is not watching them, as if there will never be a Day of Judgment. The righteous live differently. They know that God is watching them and that they will someday give an account for the things they have done and thought in this life. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Being a law-abiding citizen in God's holy nation will make you peculiar in the eyes of unbelievers. To those who do not know the Lord, you will appear to be strange, different, eccentric. There is no inherent value in peculiarity itself. It is the cause of a person's peculiarity which is of value. Peculiarity is primarily a matter of ownership. The nature of a peculiar person's peculiarity shows to whom he belongs. What does your peculiarity say about you? The way you live your life shows to whom you really belong. Live your life in a manner which testifies that you belong to the Lord. The eyes of unbelievers are upon you. Even more importantly, the eye of the Lord is upon you. □

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circumciser who was a member of a class of respected and important functionaries in Israel. They bore title the *Mohel* and the sacred rite they performed with a sharp knife was called *Bris Milah* (lit. "Covenant of circumcision"). Originally the command to circumcise was given to the boy's father, but it became a custom to delegate that responsibility to a trained and practiced circumciser, the *Mohel*.

The Gospel of Luke gives a long and detailed account of the circumcision of John the Baptist, but no more than a sentence devoted to that of Jesus. One reason is that the elderly Zechariah was a well-known and respected priest who had ministered in the temple much of his life. His wife, Elizabeth, was too old to become pregnant; nevertheless, she did and gave birth to a boy. All these unusual circumstances provided drama and added to the crowd of family and neighbors attending John's circumcision when the official naming would take place. One gets the impression than no such attention accompanied Jesus' eighth-day event.

For the *Mohel* Joseph selected, this circumcision of Jesus was just one of hundreds or thousands he had performed on Jewish boys. It was nothing special. The service would take no more than twenty minutes, and the actual cutting no more than a few seconds. Joseph named the boy Jesus, paid the *Mohel* for his services, and followed his instructions for caring for Jesus' wounded male member.

I shall never forget the different circumstances of the circumcision of our two sons. A regular pediatric medical doctor did the procedure on Kennet, our oldest son. The MD did the job, but we thought our son would never stop crying. For our younger son, Eyvind, I secured, with some difficulty, the services of a circumcising rabbi in the Washington, D.C., area where we lived in 1968. He wasn't too keen on performing the rite for a non-Jew, but finally acquiesced. On the eighth day he arrived with his wife, put on his prayer shawl, said a brief prayer, placed a sweet wine-soaked piece of gauze between my son's lips and did the cutting so quickly that if you weren't paying close attention you would have missed it. Eyvind made a quiet whimper, sucked on the gauze, and that was it. It was like watching an artist who had made these same careful strokes a thousand times. A delightful experience by comparison.

He Didn't Have a Clue

The unnamed *Mohel* that placed hand and knife upon the baby Jesus had no clue there was anything distinctive about this little baby. How might he have felt had he realized he was about to mark for God the Son of the Covenant, the literal first born son of Yahweh, Creator

of heaven and earth? Would his hands have shaken uncontrollably knowing he was touching the long-promised Messiah of Israel? Would his joyful, tear-filled eyes have forced him to pause to regain composure before cutting the foreskin of God's firstborn?

Would his heart have raced in excitement over his unique honor, knowing he was in the company of a young mother who had personally talked with the mighty angel Gabriel who came directly from the presence of the Almighty; and standing next to Joseph who had received an angel in a dream telling him to accept Mary's son and instructing him to name the babe "Jesus" (the Greek form of "Joshua," which means *the Lord saves*)? Would this *Mohel* be struggling to breathe?

What if he perceived the full truth concerning the babe his hands held? Before him was the King of Glory, the King of Kings, the one who would ascend through the heavens to be seated at the right hand of the Ancient of Days. This is the one Moses and the prophets foretold would usher in Paradise. This eight-day-old baby was destined to be the Savior of all mankind, the Second and true Adam made in the Image of God, and the King of the age to come, the Kingdom of God. Would his mind have become undone with such a precious treasure of information?

What if he knew the newly named Jesus would become a great teacher in Israel, train disciples, do marvels and miracles, but one day be brutally murdered? What if he also understood that this Jesus would be the first to rise from the dead, be glorified and given eternal life? I doubt any man could contain himself upon receiving such understanding all at once.

Our unnamed *Mohel* knew none of these things. He knew none of the things about Jesus we have been privileged to know. He probably forgot the brief encounter and the names Mary, Joseph, and Jesus as he went on to circumcise hundreds of other Jewish boys in the years following. In all likelihood he was dead by the time the man Jesus began his ministry some thirty years later.

A month later when Jesus was brought to the temple to be consecrated to the Lord, two elderly saints, Simeon and Anna, did have spiritual eyes to see that this child was destined for greatness and the salvation of Israel. Their comments amazed Mary and Joseph.

Forgive Him for His Blindness

We can forgive our circumcising *Mohel* for being dull to the greatness all about him on that fall day in Judea. If we had been there in Judea, we would have been as blind as that *Mohel* who saw only an ordinary Jewish baby boy needing the rite of circumcision.

The man who circumcised Jesus didn't have a clue. I smile at the thought of his being resurrected and coming face to face with Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. He will be in for the shock of his life. Jesus may say to him, "Remember me? You circumcised me in Galilee?" I expect the awestruck fellow's jaw will drop to his shoe laces as he struggles to remember his participation in the most important circumcision in the history of the world.

Let's change our focus for the moment and leave our clueless circumciser to history where he presently rests. Given the circumstances of his time and place, he can be forgiven his blindness. Can we be forgiven for our blindness to the presence of greatness?

Here is a question we should ask following our discussion above: Am I clueless to my brushes with greatness? What awesome associations am I missing as I live my Christian life? In what ways today am I blind as a bat to the sacred and holy about me?

Here are a few examples to consider. Start with a fellow Christian you know—any Christian. He could be your best friend and soul mate, the one you usually sit behind in church, or the one who tends to irritate you, the one you dislike. Fast forward a few years to the glorious first resurrection when that lowly Christian will be exalted by God, glorified, given a crown and rulership in the everlasting Kingdom of God. Should that future fact—as sure as the promises of God—change your view of him or her now?

Sure, he or she is just one of many Christian folk with whom you have interacted over the years, many of whose names you have forgotten. We have all grown accustomed to seeing our brethren as unremarkable, fault-ridden, plain old regular people—nothing special, right? Can we or should we view them otherwise?

People Watching

I like to people-watch and maybe you do too. There you are sitting in an airport concourse, or on a bench in a busy mall, or along a lakeside walking path watching humanity walk past. We can view them as a faceless crowd like those we frequently plow through to get to where we are going. Or we can think about them as individuals like us and look at them face by face as they pass by. What are they thinking about? Where are they going? What is their family like? Are they happy? Would I like them as a friend? Do they know God?

I've done the following mind experiment many times. Looking at each person passing by, I focus on this one particular thought, namely: there goes a man, a woman, or child made in the image of God and destined for ultimate glory and eternal life. I admit that it takes some mental work to keep your mind just on that fact and not on how they look, their clothes, race, body shape, displayed attitude, etc.

The truth is, each passerby is a child of God and belongs to Him. Is there a benefit to my mind-experiment? I think so, as it brings me to catch a glimpse of reality and be amazed that God will one day deal with each of these strangers (to me), as He has with me. He is their loving Father too, whether they know that now or not.

Such ponderings should help me have a kinder, more respectful attitude toward the individuals that make up the "teeming mass of humanity." They all count to God, He knows their names, and they are His entire heritage. Even though many, or perhaps most at present, don't realize it, they will one day come face-to-face with their Maker and discover that they belong to Him, that He cares for them, and has planned a spectacular future for them.

We Rub Shoulders with the Holy, with Greatness

Doing that same mind-experiment among our Christian community should be a lot easier for us. The Mohel didn't know he was in the presence of a holy couple and touching the Son of God; do we know that with every handshake among brethren we hold the hand of one who has the Holy Spirit of God within them? Do we pause, from time to time, to see our fellow Christian as just being a few years away from being crowned by Christ? Does it resonate in us that we are talking to holy brethren who are destined for glory and eternal life? It might help our relationships if we did.

The old but true aphorism "familiarity breeds contempt," too often characterizes our day-to-day relationships. It should not. Just because you know a person doesn't mean he is any less worthy of respect, honor, or perhaps even a touch of awe.

That Christian husband of yours across the breakfast table is destined for unbelievable glory and is highly esteemed by His Majesty. That wife of yours talking away on the phone with her friend will one day soon possess powers beyond those of any human that ever existed—and she is personally loved by the Creator of heaven and earth. That church lady you have never talked to is destined to command angels. That gawky teenager whose name you haven't bothered to learn will soon be baptized and receive the power of God's Holy Spirit. Should those facts temper our human tendency to take one another for granted, or worse yet, disrespect them?

Can we from time to time let ourselves see the uniqueness and preciousness of our fellow sons and daughters of God? Can we let our minds see the flicker of greatness in those around us? Can we dream of them in the embrace of the Mighty Savior and members of the Heavenly Kingdom? It will happen, you know.

God has graciously given us eyes to see that we Christians are members of the holy assembly, the church of the

firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. Together we are called "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God..."

Peter writes, "Show proper respect to everyone [because every human being bears the image of God]: Love the brotherhood of believers...."

I believe we can cut the man who circumcised Jesus some slack for missing the grandeur, the magnitude of the moment. His eyes were not opened. He didn't see the Savior of mankind, but only an eight-day old Jewish baby of common parents. No such slack can be cut in our case. We have eyes to see the magnitude of what God is doing in His Church, among His people, and that should affect the way we view and deal with each other.

End Notes

1. Luke 2:21
2. Genesis 17:9-25
3. Genesis 21:4
4. Humorist Mark Twain put it this way: "Familiarity breeds contempt—and children."
5. Hebrews 12:22-23
6. 1 Peter 2:9
7. 1 Peter 2:17

Ken Westby is a director emeritus of the BSA and founder and director of the Association for Christian Development and the Virtual Church. You may visit the ADC Web site at www.godward.org.

2007 Directory of Sabbath-observing Groups

We are now working on the new directory. If you are a Sabbath-keeping group or organization, send information to BSA at 3316 Alberta Drive, Gillette, WY 82718. We need a good phone number where interested people can contact you easily. If you would like an input form, you may call 1-888-687-5191. One third (1/3) to one half (1/2) of a page is free. You may pay for additional space if you wish to add more information or place an ad for your group.

The Directory is used by hundreds of people to visit churches while traveling, or to find a home church. If you have already sent information but do not hear from us by early spring of 2007, please call the toll free number to make sure you are included.

The BSA office will be moving to the state of Washington in May or June of 2007. Our future address will be announced in an upcoming edition of The Sabbath Sentinel magazine.

Our tentative print date for the upcoming Directory is the fall of 2007.

U.S. State Constitutions—Continued from page 8

Texas, acknowledging with gratitude, the grace and beneficence of God...."

Utah (Date admitted to the union: January 4, 1896): Preamble. Grateful to Almighty God for life and liberty, we establish this Constitution."

Vermont (Date admitted to the union: March 4, 1791): Preamble. Whereas all government ought to ... enable the individuals who compose it to enjoy their natural rights, and other blessings which the Author of Existence has bestowed on man"

Virginia (Date admitted to the union: June 25, 1788): Bill of Rights, XVI ... Religion, or the Duty which we owe our Creator can be directed only by Reason ... and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian Forbearance, Love and Charity towards each other."

Washington (Date admitted to the union: November 11, 1889): Preamble. We the People of the State of Washington, grateful to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for our liberties, do ordain this Constitution."

West Virginia (Date admitted to the union: June 20, 1863): Preamble. Since through Divine Providence we enjoy the blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, we, the people of West Virginia ...reaffirm our faith in and constant reliance upon God."

Wisconsin (Date admitted to the union: May 29, 1848): Preamble. We, the people of Wisconsin, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, domestic tranquility...."

Wyoming (Date admitted to the union: July 10, 1890): Preamble. We, the people of the State of Wyoming, grateful to God for our civil, political, and religious liberties ... establish this Constitution."

"Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants" (William Penn, 1644-1718).

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance" (John Philpot Curran, 1790).

"A nation that forgets its past has no future" (Winston Churchill, 1874-1965).

"In this age, there is no substitute for Christianity... That was the religion of the Founders of the republic, and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants" (US House of Representatives report, March 27, 1854).

"There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men, than in America" (Alexis De Tocqueville, 1805-1859).

This information is contained verbatim on several Web sites, so the primary source of this article is unknown. The version contained in this article comes from faithinfocus.org.

The Church in the World

CUBA: PASTOR ACQUITTED, BUT CONVICTED ON NEW CHARGE

Carlos Lamelas innocent of ‘human trafficking,’ yet fined for ‘falsifying documents.’



December 22 (Compass Direct News) – A court in Havana has found the Rev. Carlos Lamelas not guilty of “trafficking in human beings” but convicted him on a previously unannounced charge of falsification of documents. Judges imposed a fine of 1,000 Cuban pesos (US\$45) on the evangelical pastor and former national president of the Church of God in Cuba for the new charge. A co-defendant in the trafficking case, evangelical pastor Joel Rojas of Holguín, was convicted of “human trafficking” (helping Cubans flee the country) and was sentenced to seven years in prison, according to the court document. A guilty verdict for Lamelas on the charge of “human trafficking” could have resulted in a prison term of up to nine years. He expressed relief but said, “We are not satisfied. How can it be that I am innocent of the original crime, and nevertheless guilty of the one they later invented?”

INDIA: YOUNG PASTOR FOUND DEAD IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Police investigate state’s fourth known murder of a Christian worker.

NEW DELHI, February 27 (Compass Direct News) — The body of a 29-year-old pastor was found with stab wounds on February 20 in a canal in Krishna district of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

Pastor Goda Israel was found dead last Tuesday in a canal near his house in Pedapallparru village in the Gudivada area of the district.

Israel had worked independently in the area since graduating from Emmanuel Bible Institute of Emmanuel Mission International (EMI), in Rajasthan state’s Kota district, in February 2003. The slain pastor, who is survived by his wife and small children, was overseeing 15 churches that he established in the region.

“Pastor Israel had earlier been threatened by Hindu extremists due to his involvement in the preaching of the gospel in the area, and he had no enmity with anyone,” an EMI leader who requested anonymity told Compass. He added that persecution of Christians was common in Andhra Pradesh.

Previous Murders

Compass has reported on three previous, mysterious and brutal murders of Christian workers in Andhra Pradesh.

Two pastors, K. Daniel and K. Isaac Raju, were killed near Hyderabad, the state capital, in May 2005 (See Compass Direct News, “Second Pastor Found Dead in Andhra Pradesh, India,” June 6, 2005).

Unknown persons called both pastors by phone before they disappeared, asking if they would act as wedding celebrants. Raju went to meet a caller in Anantpur district on May 24, 2005 and disappeared; an unidentified caller then phoned police on June 2, describing where to find Raju’s body.

Similarly, callers met Daniel in a motorized rickshaw on May 21 and took him to a cemetery in Karwan, where they severely beat him, strangled him, and then dumped his body on the city outskirts.

The *New Indian Express* newspaper on June 27, 2005 quoted a man identified only as Goverdhan who claimed he and two friends had murdered the two preachers.

“I am not against Christianity, but Raju and Daniel converted hundreds of Hindu families,” Goverdhan said. “They enticed them with money. We have done this to prevent further conversions. This act should be a lesson for others.”

On September 11, 2000, two unidentified persons beheaded Pastor Yesu Dasu, 52, on the outskirts of Mustabad in Andhra Pradesh’s Karimnagar district.

Seven years later, Dasu’s case remains unsolved.

Although Andhra Pradesh state is ruled by the Congress Party, with Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, a Christian, as the chief minister, Hindu extremists are highly active in the state. Accusing Reddy of giving a free hand to Christian missionaries, the extremists launch frequent attacks against Christian workers.

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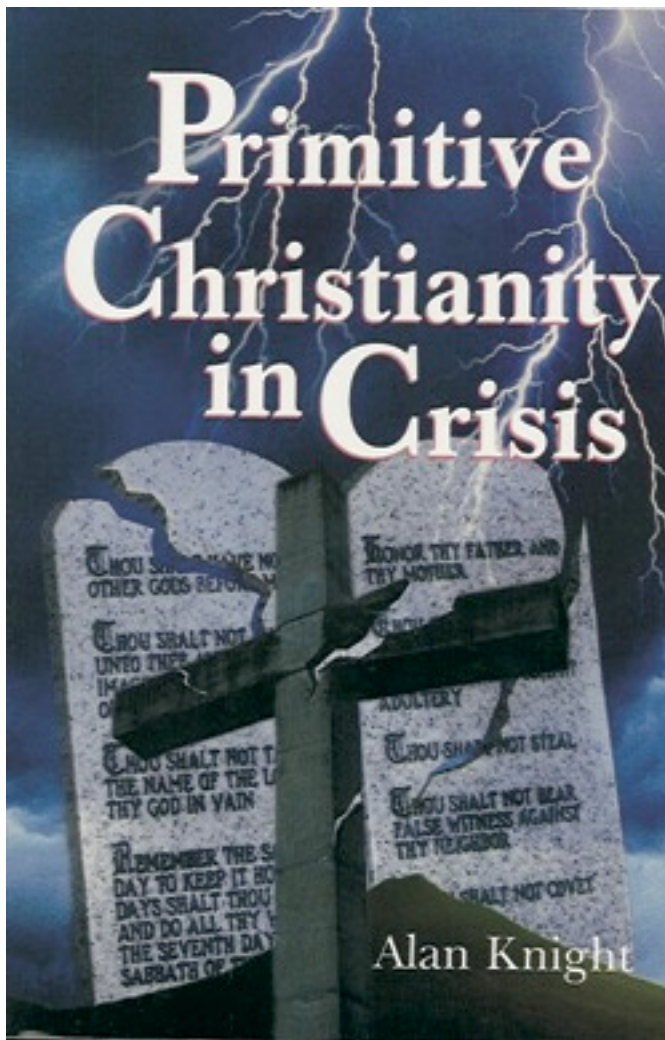
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