

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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SATAN'S SABBATH DECEPTIONS

Here are four ways Satan deceives people into not observing the Sabbath properly.

By Gregory Dullum

Satan the Devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8, Job 1:6-7). He is the god of this world who blinds people so they can't see the truth (2 Cor. 4:4). He is successful in his quest; he deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9). He seeks to destroy the last bastion of truth—the Church of God (Rev. 12:1-6, 9, 12-17). He deceives those who are in the church when he can (Mat. 24:4-5, 24).

Satan makes himself appear as an angel of light; he causes his FALSE ministers to *seem to be* right when they are wrong (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Following in Satan's footprints, his false ministers go about as roaring lions, seeking to devour God's people:

"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed any difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Ezek. 22:25-26, *KJV*).

False ministers, seeking to devour God's people, don't teach the truth about clean and unclean foods—they say there is no difference; it's okay to eat pork, shellfish and other unclean things. And, they cause people to STOP *keeping* the holy Sabbath *properly*.

Why attack these two things? There are HEALTH reasons to avoid unclean meats, because *they were not created to be eaten*. But there is another reason to avoid them. God calls them an "abomination" and says, "You shall not make yourself abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor



Photo by Gregory Dullum

Satan does not want us to keep the Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. He has carefully devised deceptions to prevent this from happening.

shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:42-44). We are not to become an ABOMINATION to God by eating things He calls ABOMINABLE! Avoiding unclean meats is a sign that says "We are God's HOLY people!"

And, as we noted last month, the Sabbath is a sign between God and his people. Sabbath-keeping reminds us that God is our CREATOR and our SAVIOR.

About a year ago, an elder from a congregation near me left the church and took a handful of the brethren with him. He started his own little congregation. I knew this minister had a skewed view of prophecy (from listening to his sermons), but I was surprised to learn that one of the teachings in his little congregation is that the Sabbath is NOT from sunset to sunset; he now says only the *daylight* portion of the day must be kept holy.

This is one of Satan's Sabbath decep-

tions. It's not a new idea; I first heard about it from a former *Sabbath Scoop* subscriber who left the church in 1996 to follow her son. He had written a tract that espoused this same idea and she gave me a copy, thinking I would like to write about it in the *Sabbath Scoop*. We'll discuss the error of this deception a little later. But first, let's remind ourselves that there are three reasons to keep the Sabbath properly:

1. We must keep the Sabbath holy because, as we saw last month, it is commanded by God. It is the fourth of his great 10 Commandments (Ex, 20:8-11, Deut.. 5:12-15).
2. The Sabbath is one of GOD's commanded Feast days—it was NOT *Moses' day* or Israel's day. It was NOT a *Jewish day* (Lev. 23:1-3).
3. The Sabbath is a sign between God and his people (Ex, 31:12-17).

SABBATH DECEPTIONS

Continued on Page 2

Sabbath Deceptions

Continued from Page 1

Throughout *all their generations*, the people of God will keep the Sabbath.

Satan, seeking to destroy, confuse and deceive people, has devised four clever ways to keep people from NOT observing the Sabbath properly.

Keep No Day Holy

The first way Satan deceives the world into not keeping the Sabbath holy is to keep them ignorant of the Sabbath so they keep NO day holy.

The spiritual things of God are unknown to the human mind (Rom. 8:5, 1 Cor. 2:10-14). One cannot *naturally* come to the understanding that the Sabbath must be kept holy. It must be *revealed* by God. He reveals the truth in his Holy Bible. If people have never read the Bible—and millions never have—how can they know to keep the Sabbath?

Some people want no part of organized religion. They don't go to church at all. My neighbor is one of these people. I don't remember him ever going to church. He's a nice enough fellow and a good neighbor, but he doesn't keep any day holy. People deceived in this way *don't keep Sunday holy*; they don't keep ANY day holy. They work seven days a week. They live by the laws of the land and by their conscience. They may even keep SOME of God's laws without realizing it (Rom. 2:14-15)—but *not the Sabbath!* A day of rest and worship is a foreign idea to them. They go about their business and do their own pleasures *seven days a week*.

Keep the Wrong Day

The second way Satan deceives the world into NOT keeping the Sabbath is to get people to keep the WRONG DAY holy. Which day does God say is the Sabbath?

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Ex. 20:8-11, *New International Version*).

The Sabbath is the SEVENTH day of the week—Saturday. God created the SEVENTH-DAY Sabbath *at creation*. It was so

important to Him that He included Sabbath-keeping as part of his codified 10 Commandments.

He *reinforced* the concept of keeping the SEVENTH day holy by providing manna for the Israelites to eat as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. For six days they gathered manna to eat. On the sixth day they gathered a double portion because *there was none to gather on the Sabbath* (Ex. 16:15-35). They were to rest on the Sabbath.

The manna began appearing in Exodus 16. This was *before the Old Covenant was ratified* in Exodus 24. Sabbath observance was going on *prior* to the Old Covenant. It did not begin as part of the Old Covenant; therefore it did not go away when the Old Covenant became obsolete!

Israel and Judah went into captivity because they *disobeyed God's laws*, the chief ones being their proclivity for idolatry and their *failure to observe the Sabbath* (Neh. 13:17-18; Jer. 9:13-16, 17:19-27; Ezek. 20:7-34, 22:1-16, 23:36-39).

Jesus Christ and the apostles kept the seventh-day Sabbath (Mark 1:21, 6:2; Luke 4:31, 6:6, 13:10, 23:54-56; Acts 13:14, 42-44, 16:13, 17:2).

There is no instruction in the Bible abrogating the command to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, or changing it to Sunday. The Roman Catholic Church admits this: "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify" (*The Faith of Our Fathers* by James Cardinal Gibbons, p. 89).

Why does the Catholic Church observe Sunday as its day of worship? It was changed by the authority of the Catholic Church in supposed honor of Christ's resurrection. (Never mind the fact that Christ was actually resurrected on the seventh-day Sabbath!) The Catholic Church, in the fourth century, wanted to separate itself from what it saw as "Jewish" practices. Without any basis in the Bible, the Catholic Church changed Passover observance to Easter and Sabbath observance to Sunday.

Protestant churches, which came out of the Catholic Church, continued to follow the Catholic model of worshiping on Sunday. They have no Biblical reason to keep Sunday. Their only authority for keeping Sunday is the Catholic Church!

Professing Christians who keep one day holy, keep the FIRST day of the WEEK—NOT the SEVENTH. Some Protestants erroneously call Sunday the "Sabbath" and think they are faithfully keeping the fourth commandment by resting on Sunday. But it's the WRONG DAY!

Other religions keep other days. Muslims keep Friday, the sixth day, holy ("Mohammed," *Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia*, 1966, vol. 9, p. 420).

Satan doesn't care which day people keep holy, as long as it's NOT *the seventh*.

Keep the Sabbath Too Long

Some "Christian" groups believe the Sabbath should be kept, but they are deceived by Satan into believing the Sabbath is *not limited to the seventh day*.

Part of their reasoning goes like this: All six days of creation end with "So the evening and the morning were the ... day" but the description of the Sabbath does not end this way. Thus, they reason, the Sabbath was intended to be a *continual* observance, *kept every day*. Only under the Old Covenant between God and Israel was it limited to the seventh day. Under terms of the New Covenant the Sabbath is to be observed *every day*.

Someone who used to attend church with me told me, "Under the Old Covenant God required just 1/7 of man's time. Under the new covenant He demands 100 percent of our time. We are to be Christians all the time."

This, of course, is faulty reasoning. I have made the statement more than once that the Sabbath is such a joy to me that I wish God had commanded *one day of work* and SIX SABBATHS each week. But the truth of the matter is, no one can keep the Sabbath 100 percent of the time. While we are to *behave as Christians* 100 percent of the time, we must still *cease from our physical labors on the Sabbath*. As Christians, we still have physical needs that require thoughts and actions that are not appropriate for the Sabbath. God gives us the first six days of the week to take care of those things.

The SABBATH SCOOP

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Actually, people who are deceived in this way “spiritualize away” the Sabbath. They don’t TRULY REST from their labors; instead, they claim that they “rest in Christ.”

When the Worldwide Church of God was slipping into apostasy in 1995, this is the deception used to get people to stop observing the Sabbath properly. Notice these writings from that time:

“The Genesis ‘rest’ of God, in force since the beginning of the seventh day of creation, is meant to typify the spiritual salvation of the people of God. That means the weekly Sabbath rest is a lesser expression—a shadow as it were—of the true ‘rest’ inaugurated at the seventh day of creation. ... What believers can now enter is none other than the same kind of rest which the Creator enjoyed when he had completed his works, which means that the idea is of completion and not inactivity. ... ‘Rest’ is a quality which has eluded man’s quest, and in fact cannot be attained except through Christ” (“Does Hebrews 4:9 command Sabbath-keeping?” by Paul Kroll, *The Worldwide News*, May 23, 1995, pp. 15-16).

This wrong human reasoning leads its holders to believe they are keeping the Sabbath by just FEELING they are *already saved*. Christ has *completed a work* in them: “John says that we have already been given eternal life, and that eternal life is in Jesus Christ. We have been given the promised Holy Spirit, guaranteeing the future promises. We do not yet have the fullness of salvation but we have enough” (“What do the Scriptures say about the Sabbath?” *The Worldwide News*, May 23, 1995, p. 11).

Those deceived by this error feel a satisfaction (or take rest) in this belief, and this is somehow fulfilling the Sabbath command “on a spiritual level.” They claim this is the *spiritual meaning* behind the Sabbath.

But all of this spiritualizing away of

plain Bible commands is human reasoning (inspired by Satan) and is NOT based upon BIBLE TRUTH. Nowhere does the Bible say that when God rested on the seventh day, He did not *really* rest, but only *felt a sense of accomplishment*. The Bible *plainly* states that we are to do no work on the Sabbath because God RESTED on the Sabbath day after working for six days. Because God rested, He blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Ex. 20:8-11). He set aside one day as HOLY TIME.

God’s people keep the Sabbath by resting on the seventh day, just as God had done at creation: “... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested *and was refreshed*” (Ex. 31:18, emphasis added). God’s people DO NOT spiritualize away the COMMAND of God, making it into a feeling of a *sense of completion* at being saved *every day*.

Keep the Sabbath Too Short

From one ditch (keeping the Sabbath too long) we jump to the other. Some people, as we mentioned earlier, believe the Sabbath should only be kept during the *daylight* portion of the day. They don’t consider the Sabbath to be a 24-hour period. Satan doesn’t care which ditch people fall into as long as they are in one or the other (or on the wrong road altogether).

The CRUX of this error is based upon sincere but erroneous Bible belief. When God began recreating the earth, He separated light from darkness and called the light “day” (Gen. 1:3-5). These people claim God’s definition of “day” is the daylight portion, not the 24-hour period. Since the Bible often uses the term “Sabbath day,” they think God intended the Sabbath to be only the daylight portion of the day.

This error is compounded by misunderstanding the truth from a quote in *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*: “From an early period the time of reckoning the day was from sunset to sunset, and this became the Jewish method (Lev. 23:23; cf Ex. 12:18). The Phoenicians, Numidians, and other nations of the east are said to have followed the same custom, if it was not indeed the custom generally followed in remote antiquity” (“Time, Divisions of,” p. 1285).

In his tract, “The Scriptural Weekly Sabbath Is Not from Sunset to Sunset,” Gary C. Miller makes a big deal out of Unger’s wording, “and this BECAME the Jewish method.” He claims the Jews kept the Sabbath ONLY in the *daylight portion* of the day ORIGINALLY but changed to sunset observance during their Babylonian captivity, because the Babylonians believed the days started at sunset (pp. 1-2).



NAPS photo

The idea that a day begins at dawn is an idea that was held by the ancient pagan Greeks.

Miller fails to realize many Bible scholars do not take God at his word. They look for physical ways to explain supernatural events. They refuse to accept the fact that God’s laws came from God, spoken from his divine lips in a cloud on top of a mountain. These scholars claim the Israelites took some of their laws from the nations around them. They claim other laws came from Moses, not from God. And in *this case*, they do not admit that *God revealed the division of time to ancient Israel* but they state this *became* their belief. Unger does not say the Jews received their belief (of days beginning at sunset) from any pagan society. Miller makes this conclusion himself.

We also need to ask, is it true pagan societies kept days beginning at sunset? Where did they get this idea? Was it wrong?

“The word *day* has more than one meaning. Most commonly, it refers to the official period of twenty-four hours associated with the calendar date, each day beginning at midnight. But this is not the traditional definition of a day. In ancient Greece, for example, the day was reckoned to run from dawn until the following dawn. The day in central and northern European tradition begins at sunset, as it does in the Jewish tradition. Symbolically and literally, this day starts in darkness and continues through the next period of daylight until the following sunset. This is why all the customary festivals of the year are preceded by an eve or often, taken as being the night before. Even in secular usage they are still common: New Year’s Eve, May Eve, All Hallows’ Eve (Halloween), and Christmas Eve, to name but a few” (*The Pagan Book of Days* by Nigel Pennick, 1992, pp. 6-7).

It’s interesting to note that the pagan Greeks reckoned days beginning at dawn! But for the most part, pagan societies

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. Whose name was changed to Israel?
2. Who sewed fig leaves together for clothing?
3. Whose coat (tunic) was without seams, woven from top to bottom?
4. There was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of a _____.
5. Jesus appointed others to go out two by two. How many were there?

(Answers on page 5)

SABBATH DECEPTIONS

Continued on Page 4

Sabbath Deceptions

Continued from Page 3

originally reckoned days beginning at sunset, just as *God's people did*. Why? Where did the pagans get the idea?

First, we need to ask, who were these pagans? The dictionary defines pagans as people who were not Jews, Christians or Muslims, people who believed in many gods or no God. In reality, God has worked with his few chosen people through the past 6,000 years and the rest of the people were pagans. They were not all “bad” people—they just were cut off from God.

Not everything a pagan did was wrong. Paul said they could even keep God's laws without realizing it (Rom. 2:13-15). Because ancient pagans did not have the truth of God, they did their best to make sense out of the world around them. They created their own ideas of God and made up many gods to explain what they observed in nature. Much of pagan belief is based upon worship of nature.

But what about pagans keeping days from sunset to sunset? Was this a wrong belief? I propose that this was a truth passed down from generation to generation, just as it was passed down among God's people. When Adam and Eve rejected God's way, they, in effect, became pagans. But they undoubtedly passed on to their children certain secular knowledge, including when days began.

Just because a pagan does something does not make the action automatically wrong. God says we *should not* worship Him as pagans worship their gods. He does not command us to avoid coffee because pagans drink it. He does not say we should avoid automobiles because they are made by pagans and driven by pagans. But we must avoid pagan worship (Deut. 12:28-32).

Just because pagans kept days from sunset to sunset, does that make it wrong for God's people to do? No—unless God commands us to do otherwise. We need to examine how God marked time. He is the authority. He created the universe and set time in motion.

When Does a Day Begin?

When does God say a day begins? The Genesis account of creation is very plain. “So the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5). Each of the first six days of creation is described as beginning with the evening (dark) period followed by the morning (light) period. Miller twists these plain scriptures to put the evening after the daylight portion. But if God wanted to say “morning and evening were the first day,” He would

have said it that way.

William F. Beck, in *An American Translation*, translates Gen. 1:5 as “Evening came and then morning—the first day.” *The St. Joseph New Catholic Edition* translates it “And there was evening and morning, the first day.” Other translations render it thus: “Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day” (*Today's English Version*); “Evening came and morning came: the first day” (*Jerusalem Bible*); “So evening came, and morning, and one day passed” (*Knox*); “Evening and morning came, making one day” (*Moffatt*). Other translations (*Masoretic, New International, New World, Revised English and Revised Standard*) all use similar words. The dark period comes first; the daylight period follows. The literal word-for-word Hebrew translation is: “and was evening, and was morning, day one” (*The Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible*).

How long were the days of creation, of which the Sabbath was the seventh (Ex. 20:11, 31:18; Deut. 31:17)? Let's go back to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*. In the same section that was quoted by Miller in his tract, we read these words:

“**Day** (Heb. *yôm*; Gk. *hemera*). One of the commonest and most ancient of the divisions of time. As used in Gen. 1:5; etc., *day* marks an entire revolution of time, as of natural day and night—not day as distinguished from night, but day and night together. ‘If the days of creation are regulated by the recurring interchange of light and darkness, they must be regarded not as periods of time of incalculable duration, of years or thousands of years [or of partial days—editor], but as simple earthly days ...’ (K. & D., *Com.*, on Gen. 1:5)” (Unger, p. 1285).

“In Genesis 1, the six days of creation are each described as follows: ‘there was evening, and there was morning.’ It should be stressed that this clear description makes impossible any understanding of the days of creation in Genesis 1 as longer periods, such as geological eras. This system became normative (see Exod. 12:18; Lev. 23:32; Neh. 13:19) and is still observed in Jewish tradition, where, for example, the Sabbath begins on Friday evening at sunset and ends Saturday at sunset” (“Time, Units of,” *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, 1993, p. 744).

Miller's claim that the Bible defines “day” as only the daylight portion does not hold water. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* shows nine meanings for the same Greek word for “day” (*hemera*): (a) the period of natural light; (b) the same, but figuratively, for a period of opportunity for ser-

vice; (c) one period of alternate light and darkness; (d) a period of undefined length, marked by certain characteristics, such as ‘the day of small things,’ of perplexity and distress, of prosperity and adversity, of trial and resting, of salvation, of evil, of wrath and revelation of the judgments of God; (e) an appointed time; (f) a notable defeat in battle; (g) by metonymy = ‘when,’ ‘at the time when’; (h) a judgment or doom; and (i) a time of life (pp. 270-271).

From this we can conclude that he first six days of creation each lasted 24 hours. The seventh day of creation—the Sabbath—also lasted 24-hours. But *when* does the Sabbath begin?

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, in their *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, write about Gen. 1:5: “**first day**—a natural day, as the mention of its two parts clearly determines; and Moses reckons, according to Oriental usage, *from sunset to sunset*, saying not day and night as we do, but evening and morning” (1964, p. 17, emphasis added). This commentary says days begin at sunset. Is there Bible evidence to support this?

During the time of Nehemiah, the people were conducting business *on the Sabbath* (Neh. 13:15). Nehemiah warned them to stop bringing their work into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. They did not heed. “So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, *as it began to be dark before the Sabbath*, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, so that no burdens would be brought in *on the Sabbath day*. Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice. So I warned them and said to them, ‘Why do you spend the *night* around the wall? If you do so again I will lay hands on you!’ From that time on they came no more *on the Sabbath*. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day” (Neh. 13:19-22, emphasis added).

The sellers came to do business on the Sabbath. They came in the evening portion of the day (Friday evening). Nehemiah had the gates of the city shut as it *began to get dark*, or at SUNSET. If the Sabbath consisted only of the *daylight portion*, the gates would not have been shut until it *began to be light the next morning*. Nehemiah would have had no reason to be angry with the sellers for camping outside the city walls on Friday night if the Sabbath did not begin until sunrise. The sellers were there *at night*, but it says they came no more *on the Sabbath*. The Levites guarded the gates

(and the gates were guarded at night) to sanctify the Sabbath. The Sabbath begins at sunset.

For additional proof that the Sabbath begins and ends with sunset, we can turn to the New Testament. The Jews waited until after sunset Saturday night to bring their sick to Jesus for healing because they didn't want to do it on the Sabbath (Mark 1:32).

Meaning of Evening

Part of the confusion as to when to keep the Sabbath is caused by the Bible not specifically stating "the Sabbath shall be kept from sunset to sunset." The creation account does not say, "from sunset to the next sunset was the first day." The word "evening" is used.

In describing one of his annual Sabbaths, the Day of Atonement, God says, "from evening to evening you shall celebrate your Sabbath" (Lev. 23:32). He did not say "sunset to sunset."

When is the evening? Our use of evening today is somewhat confusing. *The Random House College Dictionary* defines it as: "the latter part of the day and the early part of the night." This can put evening from about 4 p.m. to about 9 p.m. A second definition is "the period from sunset to bedtime." Thirdly, evening, in some parts of the United States, can be from noon to sunset.

So when is the evening of the Bible? In some scriptures, the evening seems to come *just before sunset* (Josh. 8:29, 1 Chron. 18:34). In others, it seems to come *just afterwards* (Mark 1:32).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words helps solve the mystery. There are two Greek words translated "evening." The first is *hespera*, meaning "of or at evening." The second word is *opsia*, the feminine form of the adjective *opsios*, which means "late." "The word really signifies the late evening, the latter of the two evenings as reckoned by the Jews, the first from 3 p.m. to sunset, the latter after sunset; this is the usual meaning. It is used, however, of both" ("Even (Noun), Evening, Eventide," p. 44).

"Even" can mean one of two evenings. Between these two evenings is sunset.

Which evening do we use to reckon the beginning of the Sabbath? Which evening was used at creation, when the Sabbath was first made?

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. ... Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light ... and God divided the light from the darkness So the evening and the morning were the

first day" (Gen. 1:1-5). This evening could NOT have been the "early evening" from 3 p.m. to sunset. The first day began in total darkness. There was no sunset to begin the first day. It began in the late evening, i.e. "after sunset." It began in darkness and lasted 24 hours until sunset the next day. Each day, including the seventh, began at (or immediately after) sunset and ended at sunset.

Conclusion

The Sabbath, a 24-hour day of rest and worship, was created by God when He *rested* and *was refreshed* following six days of creation. He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it (made it holy) at creation. He *commanded its observance* as one of his 10 Commandments. It is a *sign* between Him and his holy people: Israel in the Old Testament and the true church in the New Testament. Jesus Christ and the early church kept the Sabbath. There is no command in the Bible to stop keeping the Sabbath. The Sabbath will be kept in the end time before Christ returns (Mat. 24:3, 15-20), Rev. 12:17) and in the Kingdom of God established after his return (Ezek. 44:24, 46:1-2, 12).

Satan hates God, God's way of life, God's people and God's Sabbath.

Keeping the Sabbath properly reminds God's people of who they are. This holy time is set apart for communion with God through extra prayer, study, meditation, singing, worship and fellowship. God's people are reminded by keeping the Sabbath that their God is the Almighty Creator (Ex. 20:8-11). They are reminded that their God has saved them from their sins, i.e., delivered them from spiritual Egypt (Deut. 5:12-15). The Sabbath is a shadow of the future Millennium when Christ will rule this earth and the god of this world will be deposed (Col. 2:16-17, Heb. 4:4-11, Rev. 20:1-3).

Satan doesn't want people to properly keep the Sabbath! He strives to confuse and deceive all people into NOT keeping the Sabbath. He has led them down the wrong path, causing them to believe it is not to be kept, or that they should keep it on a day other than the seventh. Other people, who may believe in the principle of Sabbath-keeping, are led into the ditches of either keeping the Sabbath too long or too short.

Let us not be confused by Satan and his devices. Let us remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Know Your Bible Answers

- 1) Jacob. 2) Adam and Eve. 3) Jesus.
- 4) Lion. 5) 70.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS "Auld Lang Syne" is sung at the stroke of midnight to bring in the new year. Set to an old Scottish melody, "Auld Lang Syne" literally means old long ago, or simply, the good old days.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings. Here is this month's selection:

Enthusiasm Makes the Difference by Norman Vincent Peale, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967, p. 224.

Faithful Over a Little

"A woman came up to me recently after I had made a speech. She turned out to be a high school classmate of mine whom I had not seen since graduation. 'Norman,' she said, 'I've been studying you as I listened to you. You've really done quite a lot with the little you had to start with.' At first I felt let down. Then I realized that her remark was really a compliment. If you have only a little to start with but you do the best you can with a little, it is astonishing how much it may become."

Mat. 25:20-23, Luke 19:12-19

Quotable Quotes

"I have learned that success is measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed."

—Booker T. Washington

Memory Scripture

"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' "

—Mat. 25:21

BIBLE STORIES

Over the years, I have collected a number of jokes and stories. Let's take a break from our serious study and enjoy some of these "Bible stories."

After the fall in the Garden of Eden, Adam was walking with his sons Cain and Abel. On their walk, they passed the ruins of the Garden of Eden.

One of the boys asked, "What's that?"

Adam replied, "Boys, that's where your mother ate us out of house and home."

The Sunday school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted. "My Mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

How did Noah see in the dark on board the ark once the door was closed? He used floodlights, of course.

An old preacher was dying. He sent for his IRS agent and his lawyer (both church members), to come to his home. When they arrived, they were ushered up to his bedroom. As they entered the room, the preacher held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of his bed. The preacher grasped their hands, sighed contentedly, smiled, and stared at the ceiling.

For a time, no one said anything. Both the IRS agent and the lawyer were touched and flattered that the old preacher would ask them to be with him during his final moment. They, however, were also puzzled because the preacher had never given any indication that he particularly liked either one of them.

Finally, the lawyer asked, "Preacher, why did you ask the two of us to come?"

The old preacher mustered up some strength, then said weakly, "Jesus died between two thieves, and that's how I want to go too."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson.

"If Jesus were here, he would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'"

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"



Australia Votes for Homosexual Marriage

"A solid majority of Australians voted in favor of same-sex marriage in a historic survey that, while not binding, paves the way for Parliament to legally recognize the unions of gay and lesbian couples.

"Of 12.7 million Australians who took part in the government survey, 61.6 percent voted yes and 38.4 percent voted no, officials announced on Wednesday morning [Nov. 15]. Participation was high, with 79.5 percent of voting-age Australians sending back their postal ballots. ...

"The high turnout and unequivocal result amounted to a rebuke for Australia's most conservative politicians, many of whom saw a majority of their constituents vote to support same-sex marriage despite their arguments against it. ...

"Although legalization is not guaranteed, the results announced on Wednesday make the country's path to same-sex marriage much clearer" ("Australia Votes for Gay Marriage, Clearing Path to Legalization" by Adam Baidawi and Damien Cave, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 14, 2017, pp. 1, 4).

Australia is one of the British Commonwealth countries, descended from Joseph. The U.S. and British Commonwealth nations have been greatly blessed by God because of promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12:2-3, 17:2, 5-6, 22:17-18), Isaac (Gen. 17:21, 24:60), Jacob (Gen. 27:28-29, 28:3-4, 14, 35:9-12) and Joseph (Gen. 48:3-5, 16, 49:22-26). Those blessings have come to pass in these last days.

However, God cautioned ancient Israel that if it obeyed Him, He would bless them, but if they disobeyed Him, he would curse them (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28).

Just as young Joseph was sold into Egyptian slavery (Gen. 37:24-28), his descendants can expect to go into national captivity if they fail to obey God. Prophecies about the time after Christ returns show Israelites being freed from captivity, so they must go into captivity

at the end time (Isa. 10:20-23, 11:11-12, 16).

God calls homosexual behavior an abomination (Lev. 18:22). The more accepting the U.S., Britain, Australia and other Commonwealth nations become of this sin, the sooner we face our destruction, for Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed on account of this same sin (Genesis 19, Jude 7), and God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

North Korea Fires ICBM to Defy Trump

"North Korea fired an intercontinental ballistic missile on Tuesday [Nov. 28] that flew both higher and longer than previous such launches, a bold act of defiance against President Trump after he put the country back on a list of state sponsors of terrorism.

"The bottom line is, it's a continued effort to build a threat—a ballistic missile threat that endangers world peace, regional peace, and certainly, the United States," [Jim Mattis] the [U.S.] defense secretary said. ...

"North Korea has persisted in its nuclear weapons and missile development despite nine rounds of sanctions that the [U.N.] Security Council has imposed since its first nuclear test in 2006.

"This year, the North has increased the frequency and daring of its missile tests, sending two missiles over Japan in August and September, while demonstrating technical progress that suggested it had developed the ability to strike the continental United States" ("North Korea Fires a Ballistic Missile, in a Further Challenge to Trump" by Mark Landler, Choe Sang-Hun and Helene Cooper, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 28, 2017, pp. 1-2, 5).

A nuclear armed North Korea may be one of the "kings from the east" that will attack European forces in the Mideast before Christ returns (Dan. 11:40-44, Rev. 16:12-14, 16). If its missiles could carry nuclear warheads to the continental U.S., they would have the range to be used in an end-time battle to strike Europe.