

## Should a Christian Fight?



Some in the Church of God today support military service. Others do not address this important Bible topic. In spite of the fact of our long-standing doctrine of conscientious objection to military service, and the numerous Bible admonitions for Christians to abstain from carnal warfare, some have corrupted the Church with the teaching that it is proper, even a patriotic duty, for believers to serve in the military. The truth is, that military service is fundamentally opposed to our core beliefs, and it is neither patriotic nor Biblical, to be a military slave and kill others in warfare.

The study, "The Sabbath and Military Service," covers this topic. In addition, we have reprinted a Church of God classic, L. Leroy Neff's thesis, "Should a Christian Fight?" It is available on the Internet at [www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/militaryservice/](http://www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/militaryservice/), or in printed form for \$4 from Giving & Sharing.

## How Early American Pilgrims Handled Sexual Perversion

The following is an excerpt from the writings of William Bradford, second governor of the Plymouth Colony, from Book II, Chapter 32, written in 1642:

"And after the time of the writing of these things befell a very sad accident of the like foul nature in this government, this very year, which I shall now relate. There was a youth whose name was Thomas Granger. He was servant to an honest man of Duxbury, being about 16 or 17 years of age. (His father and mother lived at the same time at Scituate.) He was this year detected of buggery, and indicted for the same, with a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves and a turkey. Horrible it is to mention, but the truth of the history requires it. He was first discovered by one that accidentally saw his lewd practice towards the mare. (I forbear particulars.) Being upon it examined and committed, in the end he not only confessed the fact with that beast at that time, but sundry times before and at several times with all the rest of the forenamed in his indictment. And this his free confession was not only in private to the magistrates (though at first he strived to deny it) but to sundry, both ministers and others. . . .

"And whereas some of the sheep could not so well be known by his description of them, others with them were brought before him and he declared which were they and which were not. And accordingly he was cast by the jury and condemned, and after executed about the 8th of September, 1642. A very sad spectacle it was. For first the mare and then the cow and the rest of the lesser cattle were killed before his face, according to the law, **Leviticus 20:15**; and then he himself was executed. The cattle were all cast into a great and large pit that was digged of purpose for them, and no use made of any part of them.

"Upon the examination of this person and also of a former that had made some sodomitical attempts upon another, it being demanded of them how they came first to the knowledge and practice of such wickedness, the one confessed he had long used it in old England; and this youth last spoken of said he was taught it by another that had heard of such things from some in England when he was there, and they kept cattle together. By which it appears how one wicked person may infect many, and what care all ought to have what servants they bring into their families."

The Pilgrims were struggling to survive living in the wilderness of the New World, but they were willing to destroy valuable livestock in order to obey God's Law! No wonder the Almighty blessed America! Today, our nation does not regard the seriousness of sexual sin. Bestiality would not even be punished. We are headed down a slippery slope into the abyss of evil. May the Almighty help us to repent of our sins! May the Eternal give our Church leaders the courage to speak the Truth in love.

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We have received favorable comments on the fascinating five-part video series on the history of the Sabbath. These videos are an excellent tool to share with non-Sabbath-keepers to help explain our beliefs.

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## *Seismos* in Divers Places

In **Matthew 24:7**, the Savior prophesies, “there shall be famines, and pestilences, and *earthquakes* [*seismos*, Strong’s #4578] in divers places.”

We get our word, “seismology,” which is the study of earthquakes, from *seismos*. However, the word can also mean “commotion, tempest.” In **Matthew 8:24**, we see the same word referring to a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee.

So, Jesus was predicting that natural disasters such as earthquakes and violent storms would be signs of His return and of the end of the age. The recent Asian tsunami and Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, which devastated the southern United States, are examples of *seismos*.

## Giving & Sharing Newsletter

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**T**he Sabbath-keeping Church of God has a long tradition of non-participation in war. Both the Church of God (7th Day), and most descendants from the Worldwide Church of God are opposed to military service. Some of these groups have anti-participation-in-war statements in their fundamentals of belief. While Seventh-day Adventists do not have a statement on carnal warfare in their current official doctrinal statement, SDA's, when inducted into the military, often become non-combatants, but many now serve in combat roles. However, the history of conscientious objection to military service goes back much further.

Anabaptists in Europe, who became prominent in the 1500s, generally opposed taking part in warfare. While not all Anabaptists were Sabbath-keepers, some were. My ancestors became followers of a prominent Sunday Anabaptist named Menno Simons, founder of the Mennonites. Because they would not participate in Prussian wars, my German Mennonite ancestors, known as the "von Nickel" clan, gave up their ownership of the largest nickel mine in Eastern Europe, and settled in the south Russian area of the Ukraine, at the invitation of Russian Empress Catherine the Great. John Kiesz, the late noted evangelist of the Church of God, Seventh Day, also was descended from these Germans in Russia. They eventually migrated further east, reaching Tashkent, in Asiatic Russia. In about the 1870s, seeking to avoid mandatory military service in the Russian army, my father's ancestors migrated to the Dakotas in North America. Others went to Paraguay, in South America.

Those who refuse to kill and maim other human beings in warfare often face contempt, ridicule, and persecution. In spite of ardent persuasion from public officials, my grandfather in North Dakota refused to buy War Bonds during World War I. Buying bonds was supposed to be voluntary. He did not want to support President Woodrow Wilson's war in Europe. As a result of grandpa's refusal, the local sheriff came to Cornelius Nickel's farm and confiscated a cow on behalf of the United States war effort.

In 1969, as a young college graduate and twenty-one year old convert to the Sabbath-keeping Church of God, I faced a hostile draft board shortly after I was baptized. The government had declared me "1A," which means that I was subject to being drafted and sent to the Vietnam War. I performed a diligent study of the Bible teachings on war,

writing a lengthy paper to my draft board, in order to convince them that I was a sincere conscientious objector to war. One of the members of the Draft Board reviewing my case was Professor of Religion at the college I had been attending. I remember his pointed questions, and sneering ridicule of my beliefs. I got a little practice in case I ever have to appear before a Grand Inquisition. Rather than allow me to engage in public or international service in the Peace Corps as work in lieu of military service, my Draft Board decided that I must take the lowliest job available: janitor at Goodwill Industries in Portland, Oregon. So, for two years of alternate service, known as the "1-W" program, the valedictorian of both his high school and college graduating classes, mopped floors and cleaned toilets. It was a good, character building experience. I could have fled to Canada to live with relatives there, but I am happy that I was able to serve my country in a non-destructive way. While some of my contemporaries who went to Vietnam came back in pine boxes, crippled with injuries, or drugged out of their minds, I worked with handicapped people and learned many helpful lessons.

My personal experiences are not unique. Sabbath-keeping and non-participation in warfare seem to go hand in hand. The Waldenses huddled in the valleys of the Alps underwent military attack and persecutions time and again. They were never aggressive, and only in extreme circumstances would defend themselves.

## **Civil War Conscientious Objectors**

During the American Civil War, many Adventists and Church of God Sabbatharians refused to participate in the war.

One clear indication of the beliefs of the

*Hope of Israel* (name of the Church of God paper, the predecessor of today's *Bible Advocate*) supporters generally was their conscientious objection to participation in the Civil War.

It appears that some Advent groups attempted to buy exemption from the draft for their male members. Eli Wilsey of the Hartford "Church of Christ" spent at least four months in prison "for refusing to fight with carnal weapons." Frequent news articles on the progress, and staggering costs, of the war were published, with the exhortation to the brethren to have nothing to do with "war, revenge and murder."

One news report was that brother William Cronk of Casco was drafted, passed examination, "but was declared exempt from field service on account of his religious principles. He is in the government service in the hospital."

N. Wallen and R.C. Horton reported in a letter dated January 16, 1865, from South Haven, Michigan that the brethren of Hartford and Casco were going to try and raise \$300.00 to clear all the brethren who may be drafted.

The April 23, 1865, issue contained a quote from the *Harbinger* expressing sorrow at the death of President Lincoln, thanking God that Lincoln made laws to deliver Christians from participating in war.

John L. Staunton, a one-time president of the Michigan Conference, enlisted in the Union army, and the Waverly church disfellowshipped him, maintaining that only non-resisters could be in their church.

Henry E. Carver of Iowa was conscientiously opposed to Christians fighting with carnal weapons, that is, in warfare. He believed that the church should adopt the same position and urged that the question be discussed in the columns of the *Advent Review* (see October 21, 1862 issue, p. 166). This occurred at the outbreak of the Civil War, shortly before the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

The Whites stated at a council in Lisbon, Iowa that the subject should not be discussed because of the danger of being destroyed by the war elements in the country for seeming to be unpatriotic. James White wrote in the *Review* that to engage in war would be a violation of two of God's commandments, but in case of being drafted, the government would be responsible for an individual's violation of God's commandments. In effect, he said that it was all right to break God's

law! This error was so obvious that Ellen G. White had to apologize in the *Review* for her husband, but maintained that something had to be said on this delicate subject. Mrs. White never did pronounce a vision concerning conscientious objection.

The Iowa Church of God brethren were firmly convinced that it was wrong for Christians to engage in warfare. During the initial phase of the Civil War, Elders B.F. Snook and J.H. Waggoner prepared a petition to the Iowa State government, asking their church be exempted as non-combatants. The petition was circulated among the brethren for signatures, and sent to the state capital. Battle Creek did not sanction this effort, terming it "fanaticism." Due to the Church of God petition, a law was enacted exempting non-combatants from bearing arms. Carver termed the non-action of the Battle Creek Seventh-Day Adventists as "cowardly."

However, Uriah Smith reported that the Seventh-Day Adventist General Conference did indirectly exempt Seventh-Day Adventists by petitioning the government to exempt them through an already existing law.

According to the "Coworker Letter," January 19, 1986, The Church of God (7th day) "was the primary instrument in this country to establish the conscientious objector status of those who sought to live in peace on either side in the Civil War. . . . The Church of God, in the person of Andrew Dugger, presented in the time of the First World War the petition of the Church to remain free of obligation of killing one's neighbor" (Herman L. Hoeh's graveside message at Herbert W. Armstrong's funeral).

### Conscientious Objection Today

Jesus said in **John 18:36**, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence." The Savior's servants are not to engage in carnal warfare. There are many scriptures supporting the view that participating in war is contrary to New Testament beliefs. You may wish to view several articles on this subject at:

[www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/militaryservice/](http://www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/militaryservice/).

Besides presenting a problem with the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," military service presents insurmountable problems with keeping the Bible Sabbath. As Ron Dart writes in his article, "Capital

Punishment, A Christian Dilemma,” there is little difference between a slave and a man drafted into the military. Soldiers eat and sleep when and where they are told. They work and fight when and where they are told. They are not free to quit and go home. If a civilian Sabbath-keeper refuses to work on God’s weekly Holy Day, he may lose his job; a soldier under the same circumstances may be court martialed and jailed. Sabbath-keeping, and military service and war, are totally opposed to each other.

Evangelist Ron Dart does not believe it is wrong to be in the military or engage in war. Dart said he does NOT believe that we should conscientiously refuse to bear arms, or refuse to come under the military authority. He says, “I think it [opposition to military service] is a doctrine that needs to be carefully re-thought. As it was taught by the Worldwide Church of God, I came to see that there were flaws in the argumentation. During my years in WCG, I accepted the teaching on military service.” He says that Garner Ted Armstrong believed the same way, and that his church left it as a matter of individual conscience.

In a 2005 essay, “A Brutal War,” on Dart’s CEM website, he says that the USA should fight a no-holds barred war in Iraq. “you fight a war with whatever brute force is necessary to ensure that you don’t have to do worse later. You brutally pacify a city like Fallujah in Iraq, and you do it the first time you threaten it. You don’t back down or negotiate with criminals and terrorists. You kill them. It doesn’t sound very Christian does it? Well, so what? Isn’t the United States supposed to be a secular nation? Why should our military be guided by Christian principles?”

Supporting the war in Iraq, or any other carnal war, puts one outside the Church of God and is actually against the safety and security of our nation. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh,” **II Corinthians 10:3.**

### **Doctrinal Statements on Military Service**

Article 15 of the Statement of Beliefs of the Church of God, Seventh Day, headquartered in Denver, Colorado, states: “**Participation in Warfare.** Jesus Christ our Lord taught us to love and forgive our enemies, and to work for the peace and salvation of all peoples. Wars among nations and violence between persons are not God’s perfect will,

but result from greed, lust for power, selfishness, and other sinful motives. Christians should renounce such carnality and the weapons of human strife, and should not participate in military combat through the armed forces. **Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-38; Romans 12:17-21; John 18:36; Matthew 26:51, 52; II Corinthians 10:3, 4; James 4:1.**”

The United Church of God, an International Association, with home office near Cincinnati, Ohio, says this in their statement of belief:

“We believe that Christians are forbidden by the commandments of God from taking human life, directly or indirectly, and that bearing arms is contrary to this fundamental belief. Therefore, we believe that Christians should not voluntarily become engaged in military service. If they are involuntarily engaged in military service, we believe they should refuse conscientiously to bear arms and, to the extent possible, to refuse to come under military authority.”

Down through history, Sabbath-keepers have often been persecuted and attacked by Catholic armies. They have had to flee to avoid massacre, and have had to defend themselves only under extreme, provocative, circumstances. In the Twentieth Century, purposeless wars slaughtered millions. If there is any lesson to be learned from this bloody history, it is that war is “hell,” and that a Bible believer should shun such evil practices. We look forward to the coming of the Savior. His return will initiate the ONLY “war to end all wars.” Sabbath-keeping and military service appear to be totally incompatible. This is not a borderline, “gray” issue. The Sixth Commandment is as important as the Fourth Commandment.

### **True Christians are Anti-War**

A fundamental, foundational tenet of our belief is opposition to carnal warfare. Of the ancient Waldenses, it is reported, “Their opposition to bearing arms, and to war in all its operations, was unanimous and unequivocal. Whoever commanded them to the field they refused to obey, alleging that they could not conscientiously comply. No contingencies would induce them to assume the weapons of death; and this peculiarity was well understood by all the world, and made the onsets of the inquisitors and crusaders upon these weaponless Christians the more cruel and

contemptible,” *A General History of the Sabbatarian Churches*, by Tamar Davis, 1851, p. 78.

### U.S. Law for Conscientious Objectors

The United States Military Selective Service Act provides that no person shall be subject to combatant training and service in the armed forces who “by reason of religious training and belief is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form” (50 U.S.C. App. § 456(j)). There is no draft at present; however, if a war were declared today, the draft could begin immediately. By law, all males must register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Pursuant to the Biblical instruction given in **Romans 13:1-2**, we recommend that all young men register, and at the same time, express their conscientious objection to military service. If you have failed to register within the required 30 days, we recommend that you now register as soon as possible if you are between the age of 18 and 26. The longer you delay, the greater the potential penalty if the draft were re-instituted.

### Seventh-day Adventists and War

(Material for this section comes from “Between Pacifism and Patriotism,” by SDA scholar Douglas Morgan.)

The Seventh-day Adventists have a checkered history relating to their stance on war. In the recent Gulf Wars, thousands of Adventists served in the Armed Forces, both active duty and reserves, the majority bearing arms. It wasn’t always this way.

In 1867, Adventists passed a resolution stating: “That it is the judgment of this Conference, that the bearing of arms, or engaging in war, is a direct violation of the teachings of our Saviour and of the spirit and letter of the law of God. (Similar statements were made in 1865 and 1868.)

While encouraging young people to choose options other than combatant service in the military, the church’s official stance since 1972 has recognized that conscientious Adventists will reach different conclusions on this momentous moral issue.

In August 1862, SDA founder James White, wrote in an *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* editorial entitled, “The Nation.” White reasoned that if Adventists were drafted, they should submit, letting the

government assume responsibility for any violations of God’s law (August 12, 1862, p. 84).

White’s editorial sparked vigorous, extended debate in the pages of the *Review*. Some believers called for Adventist participation in the Union’s “crusade against traitors” — one even fantasizing about an armed regiment of Sabbath-keepers that would “strike this rebellion a staggering blow” (September 23, 1862, p. 134). Other believers supported total pacifism, including Henry Carver, who maintained “that under no circumstances was it justifiable in a follower of the Lamb to use carnal weapons to take the lives of his fellowmen” (October 21, 1862, p. 166). The 1863 federal draft law allowed conscripts to purchase an exemption for \$300 or to provide a substitute.

Congress, in July 1864, restricted these options to conscientious objectors with membership in a recognized pacifist church. The Adventist leadership quickly sought governmental recognition of their noncombatant position. Declaring themselves “a people unanimously loyal and anti-slavery” but unwilling to shed blood because of their convictions, based on the Ten Commandments and the teachings of the New Testament, they obtained an exemption allowing them two options: (1) accepting assignment to hospital duty or care of freedmen, or (2) paying the \$300 commutation fee (*Review*, September 23, 1864, pp. 124-125). Despite this government recognition, at the local level, many Adventist draftees were refused alternative duty, threatened with imprisonment or court-martial, and harassed when they tried to claim their right to alternative duty.

A resolution voted by the General Conference session of 1865 declared: “While we thus cheerfully render to Caesar the things which the Scriptures show to be his, we are compelled to decline all participation in acts of war and bloodshed as being inconsistent with the duties enjoined upon us by our divine Master toward our enemies and toward all mankind.” (*Review*, May 17, 1865, p. 196-197.

During the first half of the 20th century, noncombatancy in general remained normative in Adventism, despite significant exceptions outside the U.S. However, a subtle but significant change in emphasis occurred. Most 19th-century Adventists viewed pacifism as a matter of faithfulness to Christ and obedience to the law of God, although they

sought to accommodate the state as far as possible without violating principle. Twentieth Century Adventists tended to shift the priority to the Christian's patriotic duty to the nation-state, and sought ways to fulfill that duty within their religious scruples, which became known as "conscientious cooperators," and church leaders quickly adopted the phrase. During World War II, American Adventists enthusiastically embraced the national consensus about the rightness of defending freedom against the aggression of ultra-nationalist dictatorships.

As World War I neared, Germany had the largest Adventist membership of any European nation. Ludwig R. Conradi, who played a major role in establishing Adventism in Europe, led the German church. Drawing on Ellen White's favorable comments from Basel in 1886 about Adventist participation in military drill exercises, Conradi basically repudiated noncombatancy. Under his leadership, the German church took the position that during wartime, Adventist draftees would not only bear arms, but also not make an issue of Sabbath observance. Conradi insisted only on Sabbath-keeping by Adventist military personnel during peacetime.

And so, Adventism had moved from eschewing military service to supporting it, and, as we shall see, even persecuting Adventists who opposed carnal warfare. Thankfully, not all Adventists supported their Church in its departure from Truth.

### **And Follow Their Faith!**

The story of German Adventist conscientious objectors is one of the most stirring episodes of Sabbatarian history.

Anybody who stood up to the Nazis is a hero in my book. Will we be steadfast in the coming time of war and trial? I became aware recently of a body of Sabbatarians who have a rich history of holding to their faith, in spite of hardship, persecution, and excommunication from their own Church. The *Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement* began during World War I in Europe. Their story is one of courage, and is a sterling example for us to follow. Will our faith be as immovable as theirs?

The Fourth Command, the Sabbath, is only one of Ten Commandments. The Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill [do no murder]," is as commonly broken as the other commandments. The Church of God con-

tinues to this day to be opposed to carnal war and military service.

During the formative years of the Sabbatarian Adventist Movement, some equivocated, but most Sabbath-keepers of the mid-Nineteenth Century were opposed to carnal warfare. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States during the American Civil War declared in 1864:

"The denomination of Christians calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists, taking the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, are unanimous in their views that its teachings are contrary to the spirit and practice of war; hence, they have ever been **conscientiously opposed to bearing arms**. If there is any portion of the Bible which we, as a people, can point to more than any other as our creed, it is the law of the ten commandments, which we regard as the supreme law, and each precept of which we take in its most obvious and literal import. The fourth of these commandments requires cessation from labor on the seventh day of the week, the sixth prohibits the taking of life, neither of which, in our view, could be observed while doing military duty. Our practice has uniformly been consistent with these principles. Hence, our people have not felt free to enlist into the service. In none of our denominational publications have we advocated or encouraged the practice of bearing arms, and, when drafted, rather than violate our principles, we have been content to pay, and assist each other in paying, the \$300 commutation money." F. M. Wilcox: *Seventh-day Adventists in Time of War*, p. 58.

In 1865, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists reaffirmed their original stand: "Resolved that . . . we are compelled to decline all participation in acts of war and bloodshed as being inconsistent with the duties enjoined upon us by our divine Master toward our enemies and toward all mankind," *The Review and Herald*, May 23, 1865.

During World War I (1914-1918), German and other European Seventh-day Adventists did an about-face and its leadership, supported by the American General Conference, not only broke with the traditional teaching of their Church, but actually encouraged its members to join the military and engage in warfare. While 98% of the members decided to obey the instruction of the officers of the denomination, taking by part in the war, 2% decided to remain faithful

to the law of God, upholding the original position, as taught and practiced up to that time. These faithful believers were disfellowshipped from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe because they chose to uphold the Church's original position in regard to keeping the Law of God (all Ten Commandments).

In a booklet published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany, they announced the following *doctrinal change*: "In all that we have said we have shown that the Bible teaches, firstly, that **taking part in the war is no transgression of the sixth commandment, likewise, that war service on the Sabbath is not a transgression of the fourth commandment,**" *Protokoll*, p.12.

"On the German mobilization, in August, 1914, the SDAs of that country were faced with the necessity of making an immediate decision concerning their duty to God and country when called into the armed service (see Germany, V; Noncombatancy). After counseling with the few SDA leaders locally available at that time, the president of the East German Union Conference informed the German War Ministry in writing, dated Aug. 4, 1914, that conscripted SDAs would bear arms as combatants and would render service on the Sabbath in defense of their country . . .

"Admittedly, the three SDA leaders in Germany took a stand concerning the duty of SDA's in military service that was **contrary to the historic stand officially maintained by the denomination ever since the American Civil War (1861-1865),**" *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, Commentary Reference Series*, Vol. 10, p. 1183, Edition of 1966.

The Adventist leaders declared: "At the beginning of the war our organization was split into two parties. As ninety-eight percent of our membership, by searching the Bible, came to the conviction that they are **duty-bound, by conscience, to defend the country with weapons, also on Saturdays,** this position, unanimously endorsed by the leadership, was immediately announced to the War Ministry. **Two percent, however, did not submit to this resolution, and therefore had to be disfellowshipped because of their unchristian conduct.** These unprofitable elements set themselves up as preachers and, with little results, sought to make converts to their propaganda of foolish ideas. They call themselves, falsely, preachers and Adventists. They are not; they are deceivers. When such

elements receive their merited punishment, we regard it, in fact, as a favor done to us," *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten* (a German newspaper), p. 3, April 12, 1918.

In the same year, SDA leaders made another declaration, as follows: "In the beginning of the war there were some members, as there are also in other places, who did not want to take part in war service, either because of their lack of unity, or because of **fanaticism**. They started to spread around their foolish ideas in the congregation by word and in writing, trying to convince others to do the same. They were admonished by the church, but because of their obstinacy they had to be put out, for they became a threat to internal and external peace," *Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt*, September 26, 1918.

Those disfellowshipped from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, not only in Germany, but also in many other countries in Europe, had no intention of starting a new Church. They were about 4,000 in number. Attempts at reconciliation with the main body were made just after the war, in 1920 and in 1922, but with no positive result.

Therefore, as their numbers increased, the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was organized as a church, separate from the main body of Seventh-day Adventists, when representatives from different countries met at Gotha, Germany, July 14-20, 1925. It is the purpose of the Reform Movement to continue with the original teachings and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference first operated from Isernhagen, Germany, and then Basel, Switzerland. During the Nazi Era and World War II, mainstream SDAs served the Nazi state, as they had accommodated the German government in the first World War. The April 20, 1940, *Morning Watch* (an Adventist publication) praised Adolph Hitler for his humility, self-sacrifice, and "warm heart." Adventists even disfellowshipped members of Jewish origin. Imagine, goose-stepping Adventists! This is a very black page in Adventist history. Although almost all SDAs placed themselves without exception behind the National Socialist Government, gave the German salute, and performed military service, the adherents of the Reform Movement maintained their old principles of faith and stood up to Hitler. Some were killed in concentration camps, rather than deny the Sabbath.

Reform Adventists publish an inspiring testimony of steadfast Sabbath-keepers during Germany's dark days, "**And Follow Their Faith!**" (\$5.00 postpaid from: **Giving & Sharing, PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849**) This 60-page book includes pictures, history, and letters of martyrs for the faith. In some cases, Nazi-collaborating regular Seventh-day Adventist ministers testified against them. One hero was *Anton Brugger*, born in 1911 in Salzburg, Austria. He was condemned to two years of prison in a labor concentration camp as a conscientious objector. While working in the concentration camp as a woodworker, Brugger wrote, "The officers of the Justice Department wanted to force me to work on the Sabbath, but the foreman was so satisfied with me and my work that I did not have to work on Saturdays. In exchange, I helped to unload boxcars every Sunday." Suddenly, without notice, they came to get him for the military. "*I could not pledge allegiance to the [Nazi] flag, because in doing so I would have promised not only to fight with arms, but also to fight on the Sabbath day.* Because I could not give this promise, I was condemned to death." In his touching letters to his mother and wife, Anton Brugger fully demonstrates the Spirit of Christ. He explains, "I could not swear to a worldly power unconditional fidelity, for this I did already to my Saviour at my baptism. Then I made a covenant with the Lord, promising Him to keep faithfully His commandments and follow Him under all conditions and difficulties in life. So there remained only two alternatives: either to remain faithful in all trials — even unto death — or else to become unfaithful by choosing the easier side. I chose death since I desire to attain to eternal life, for which Jesus Christ has called me by His sacrificial death. . . . *For me there is no halfway position; I am either fully true to my conviction, or not at all.* . . . I ask you [mother] to put forth special efforts to put out of your heart all hard feelings against everyone who has done you harm during your life. . . . Forgive them with all your heart and forget all the evil done." In his final letter to his beloved wife Esther, written hours before his execution on February 3, 1943 (at the age of 31), Anton wrote, "may the Lord bless you . . . and protect and help you graciously so that we may see each other again forever beside HIM in His wonderful kingdom of peace. . . . Farewell, my Darling, auf wiedersehen!" ("And Follow Their Faith!" pages 40-

51).

After World War II, Reform headquarters was moved to America, now in Roanoke, Virginia. The SDA Reform Movement works in 83 countries. In 1999, it claimed almost 30,000 members. I do not agree with them regarding Ellen G. White and vegetarianism as a test of fellowship. However, I admire their courage to stand up to 98% of their brethren, and remain faithful to the Sabbath even under war and Nazi tyranny. May we all resist the liberal crowd and be faithful to the Lord of the Sabbath.

### A Thousand Shall Fall

We highly recommend the 172-page book, *A Thousand Shall Fall*, by Susi Hasel Mundy (\$13 plus postage from Giving & Sharing). This is the true story of a Seventh-day Adventist conscientious objector in Nazi Germany. God certainly delivered this family who trusted in Him. It is amazing how Hasel was able to keep the Sabbath and avoid unclean meats while working in a bridge construction crew in the Nazi army!

Consider the fact that today thousands of Seventh-day Adventists are serving in U.S. combat forces and killing "the enemy," when in World War II, Franz Hasel risked his life in order to avoid killing anyone and rescued hundreds of Jews from Nazi murder. Do you think that the Almighty has a bone to pick with such faithless Sabbath-keepers of today, and with their Church leaders who refuse to preach the Truth about military service? Or, how about the so-called Church of God leaders who support America's wars?

It is time the Church of God returns to its religious roots. We cannot serve in the military, because we must either serve God or Satan. Will God protect us as He says in **Psalm 91**? Will we exercise faith, or will we become part of the world by becoming part of the military?

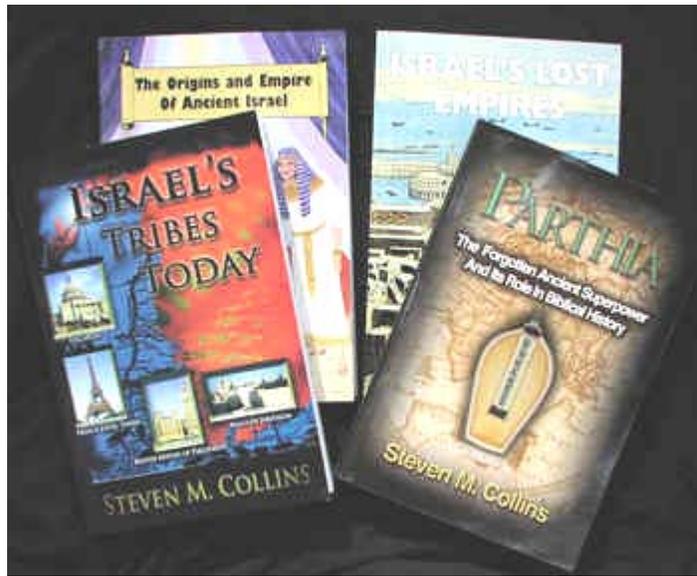
"It is a known fact that for two centuries and more after Christ, Christians almost invariably refused to serve in the armed forces," from *The Christian and Military Service*, by Herman Will, Jr.

— compiled by Richard C. Nickels Ω

For additional information, write for the 47-page reprint, "Should a Christian Fight?" by L. Leroy Neff, available for \$4 from Giving & Sharing, or on the Internet at:

[www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/militaryservice](http://www.giveshare.org/BibleStudy/militaryservice)

## Steven M. Collins' Books on Israel



Steven M. Collins, author of *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel ... Found!* (available for \$18 from Giving & Sharing), has expanded his original book into four new books (\$18 each).

The four-book set traces the origins, history, migrations and empires of the tribes of Israel. Their locations in the modern world are also identified. Modern history texts examine ancient history ethnocentrically from the viewpoints of ancient Rome and Greece. This has led to a warped view of history as the ancient propaganda of Greek and Roman tyrants has been uncritically

accepted as a correct accounting of history. This book series examines world history from the standpoint of the tribes of Israel, most particularly, the supposedly "lost" ten tribes of Israel. All books combine Biblical accounts and secular histories in their narratives about the Israelite tribes. While based on *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!* the new books include much *new* historical information as well as *additional* photographs, illustrations and maps. All books have full indexes, and are 6 x 9 inch paperbacks. Here are the topical descriptions of each book:

(1) *The Origins and Empire of Ancient Israel* is a fresh look at the early history of Israel from the time of Abraham to King Solomon, with special emphasis on the little-known and immensely important events that helped to shape our modern world. Here is the untold story of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and evidence that God's People visited distant lands in Europe and America in ancient times. Author Steven Collins retells the story of the Book of Genesis and the lives of the Patriarchs with a keen insight into the meaning of interesting clues that other authors have missed. This is not just a rehash of history, but a re-analysis of a foundational book of Holy Scripture in the light of subsequent events and Bible prophecy. In addition to all of that, it is quite a good read!

The central theme of this book is the Biblical covenant which God made with the Patriarchs and their descendants. This included the Biblical promise of numerous descendants who would build powerful, wealthy nations. This exciting story is told with the aid of over 100 maps, charts, and illustrations. 296 pages (280 + xiv).

Chapter titles include: 1. God's Covenant

with Abraham; 2. Isaac, Jacob, and the Twelve Tribes of Israel; 3. Joseph and the Israelites in Ancient Egypt; 4. Moses, the Exodus, and the Promised Land; 5. King David and Israel's Rise to Greatness; 6. King Solomon's Golden Age and the Empire of Israel.

(2) *Israel's Lost Empires*. Was ancient Israel a landlocked nation or a seacoast trading empire? In this fascinating study, historian Steven M. Collins details the little-known story of Israel's ancient empires. Not only did King David's land empire stretch clear across the Middle East to Mesopotamia, but Israel boasted a navy which merged with and dominated the famed Phoenicians. Hebrew ships plied the Mediterranean, establishing colonies along the European and North African coasts. Israel's influence in the ancient city-state of Carthage has never before been so thoroughly documented, nor her definite presence in early Britain. New evidence is presented also suggesting that her ships visited the North American continent, as well. This study plows much new ground in ancient history.

Mr. Collins' knack for patient research

and logical deduction is only exceeded by a lively and riveting writing style that will surely hold the reader's attention to the last page. Over 100 maps and illustrations complement this unique study! 296 pages (280 + xvi).

Chapter titles include: 1. The Golden Age of the Israelite-Phoenician Empire; 2. Israel's Decline and Migration from Palestine; 3. Carthage: Israel's Colony Became an Empire; 4. The Scythian Sacae, the Asian "Sons of Isaac."

(3) ***Parthia: The Forgotten Ancient Superpower and its Role in Biblical History.***

Although little-known to modern readers, the ancient kingdom of Parthia played a key role in historical and Biblical events. It boasted one of the greatest kingdoms of the ancient world, and was the one empire that Rome actually feared. Just decades before the birth of Christ, its armies drove the Romans completely out of Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, forcing the reigning King Herod to flee for his life. Who were the Parthians? In this book, exciting new research is presented proving a Semitic-Israelite connection and even a link to King David within the Parthian royal family. The names of Israelite tribes are also in evidence within the Parthian Empire. Another surprise: The cover of the book shows a cutaway diagram of an ancient Parthian direct current battery. A number of these batteries have been found, and this book documents the sensational discovery of electricity by the Parthians and examines its possible ancient uses.

Some of the events of Jesus Christ's life become more understandable when they are examined in light of the politics that prevailed between Rome and Parthia at that time. One group of Parthian elites that chose Parthia's emperors was called the "Magi" or "Wise Men." A delegation of these high Parthian officials worshipped the young Jesus. You will enjoy the fascinating account of this mighty, but little-known empire that played an important role in the Biblical story! Full color cover, over 100 maps and illustrations, 272 pages (256 + xvi).

(4) ***Israel's Tribes Today.*** This fourth

book of a series, ***Israel's Tribes Today***, identifies the modern locations of the tribes of Israel, and it examines the migrations that brought them to their current locations. As a result, modern world geopolitics will be seen in an entirely new light.

Most efforts to locate the "lost" House of Israel have failed because of erroneous assumptions. Searchers assume that the supposedly "lost" ten tribes of Israel would be found in isolated little bands of people. However, the **first chapter of Hosea** and other Biblical prophecies foretold that the nations of the ten tribes would be found among the wealthy and powerful nations with large populations!

This book identifies the modern House of Israel as those nations descending from the Goths, Saxons, Germans and related peoples who migrated into Europe from Asia after the fall of Parthia and Scythia. They have enjoyed national prominence, power, and prosperity as the primary recipients of the divine "birth-right" blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. Many nations have Israelite roots, in whole or in part. Not only did they retain Semitic-Israelite names and customs, but many of the tribal and clan names of the ten tribes of Israel are found among them.

The final portion of this book utilizes Biblical prophecies about the tribes of Israel, as well as evidence from secular history, to identify the descendants of each tribe in the modern world. Readers may marvel at how specifically the prophecies have been fulfilled among modern nations, and that these nations even now enjoy the promised blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. With the substantial evidence laid out in this book, their Israelite origin and character is impossible to miss.

This fourth book has 312 pages (296 + xvi) with a full-color cover and over 140 illustrations!

This four-book series expands upon Mr. Collins first book, ***The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel...Found!*** and reveals much new information about the tribes of Israel. They are fully indexed and contain a large number of photographs, illustrations, narratives and maps not in Mr. Collins' first book. Ω

***The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel . . . Found! The Origins and Empire of Ancient Israel, Israel's Lost Empires, Parthia: Forgotten Ancient Superpower, Israel's Tribes Today.***

Order the original book, or any of the four new books, for \$18 from Giving & Sharing. North America: add \$2 per book for postage; International: add \$5 per book for postage.

# Every Man Shall Sit Under His Vine

Study No. 270

**M**icah 4:1-4 gives a picture of the World Tomorrow, the Millennium. God's government shall be established over all nations. There will be no more war any more. What symbol does the Eternal use to picture the peace and prosperity of the thousand years of God's kingdom? **Verse 4**, "But they shall *sit every man under his vine* and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

How does sitting under one's own vine picture the wonderful World Tomorrow?

About 10-12 years ago, I decided to grow my own grapes, to get a taste of the Kingdom of God. I would like to share with you some lessons I have learned raising grapes.

Where I live, in Wyoming, it is difficult to grow anything. Wyoming is in the western United States, and is the least populated state. In our frigid winters, the temperature sometimes drops to minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit. However, a special variety of purple grapes can survive our freezing cold winters.

I planted several young grape plants in mid-May. A few weeks later, we had a hard frost, and the leaves shriveled. However, grapes are hardy, and they came back. **Lesson one:** grape vines are very tough!

I hate to prune back my grapes. It seems cruel to the poor plant. However, the more I prune back the branches of my grape vines, the more my grapes grow. Christ is the vine, and we are the branches. In **John 15:1-2**, Jesus said, "I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." **Lesson two:** we need to produce fruit. **Lesson three:** for us to be productive, God prunes and purges us by sending us trials and tests to make us hardy grapes for Him. Mercifully, God only prunes us back as far as we can take it.

**Judges 9:13**, says that "wine cheereth God and man." God likes wine! So, I thought I would make some natural wine from my grapes. Grapes have a natural yeast on the skin. To make wine naturally, you do not wash the grapes. I picked and mashed the grapes, added sugar, and stirred them in a bucket for about a month. Then, I squeezed the pulp out through a thin cloth, and put the

blood-like juice in open bottles for several months of secondary fermentation. Finally, I bottled and corked the finished product.

In January, I was enjoying the fruits of my labor, sitting under my own vine, looking forward to having wine for Passover. Then, suddenly, a terrible noise came from our basement, where I had stored my wine bottles. Pop! Pop! The corks were blowing off, and the precious wine was spewing forth like a geyser, onto the floor, making the carpet blood red! What a mess! Madly, I desperately tried to salvage my remaining wine. There was one step in the wine-making process that I had forgotten: before you cork your wine bottles, you have to stop all fermentation, by adding a little white powder. **Lesson four:** wine needs to be fully refined! **Isaiah 25:6**, speaking of the Millennium, says, "And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

When I pull out an old bottle, I discover that the taste is richer and better. **Lesson five:** wine gets better with age. Christians, who are pruned back by God, are to mature, **Hebrews 5:14**, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Let's allow God to refine us!

**Matthew 26:29** tells us that Jesus Christ will not drink wine until He drinks it new with us in the Kingdom. He has been waiting 2,000 years to sit down and drink with us!

Recently, I picked 110 pounds of grapes from our seven foot cube grape arbor. By raising grapes and making wine, I can better appreciate and look forward to the Kingdom of God. May God send His Kingdom soon, so that everyone can sit under his own vine, and none will make him afraid.

— by Richard C. Nickels Ω



## Jesus Christ is the Foundation of All Scriptural Understanding

Jesus Christ is the crowning glory of God’s plan, the supreme expression of God’s love for each individual He calls. Through Jesus Christ and Him alone, God’s marvelous love will ultimately be manifested to all mankind — past, present, and future. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him shall not perish, but may have eternal life” (**John 3:16**, *AT*, *Fred Coulter’s translation*). This often quoted Scripture is the undergirding of all that God does, but few understand how it applies to understanding the Scriptures.

Jesus said, **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one is coming to the Father, except through Me”** (**John 14:6**, *AT*). All Scriptural truth comes from God the Father through Jesus Christ. In order to properly understand the Scriptures, we must go to the Father through Jesus Christ, Who is the way, the truth and the life. It is the Father Who imparts the Holy Spirit to us to guide us in understanding His Word, which is the Truth (**John 17:17**).

### Jesus Christ Revealed the Only Way to Scriptural Understanding

Jesus clearly taught that it is the Holy Spirit — the Spirit of Truth — that enables us to come to a true and full understanding of the Word of God (**John 16:13**). The words of Jesus Himself, as recorded by the Apostle John, show that in order to receive the Spirit of Truth, we must love God the Father and Jesus Christ and be keeping Their commandments. Fulfilling these requirements is absolutely essential for any individual to receive the Holy Spirit and be able to come to a correct understanding of the Scriptures!

“If you love Me, you will be keeping the commandments — namely My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give another Helper to you, that it may be with you throughout the age [until Jesus Christ returns]; *even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world does not have the power to receive, because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it, because it dwells with you and shall be within you. . . . In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you.

“The one who has My commandments and who is keeping them, that is the one who loves [Greek *o agapwn*, “who is loving”] Me; and the one who loves [Greek *o agapwn*,

“who is loving”] Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to Him, And Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will be keeping My word [the entire message], and My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and We will make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me is not keeping My words; and the word [*the entire message*] that you are hearing is not Mine, but the Father’s Who has sent Me” (**John 14:15-24**, *AT*).

These words of Jesus Christ reveal the loving, personal spiritual relationship of God the Father and Jesus Christ with every true Christian. These words also reveal the wholehearted obedience that God the Father requires of all who profess to love and believe in Jesus Christ. This teaching is the heart and core of the love that God the Father gives to us through His Son, and the love that we, as true believers in Jesus Christ, show toward God. It is the daily way of life for a *true* Christian. **If we love Jesus Christ, we will be keeping His commandments, and those commandments are from God the Father!**

Not many professing Christians, whether ministers or laymen, are living in obedience to all the commandments of God. Jesus gave this warning for those who would be using His name and claiming His promises and blessings, professing to be His followers and teachers of the Word, but who would not be keeping the commandments of God: “Not every one who is saying to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father Who is in heaven.

“Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied through Your

name? And through Your name have we *not* cast out demons? And through Your name have we *not* done many wonderful works? And then I will profess to them, I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who are working lawlessness,” (Matthew 7:21-23, AT).

The word “lawlessness” is translated from the Greek word, *anomos*, which means *against law*, or against law and commandment keeping. This kind of pseudo-Christianity, which uses Jesus’ name but refuses to do the will of God, is not accepted by God the Father and Jesus Christ. The result of this pseudo-Christianity is death, not eternal life. And many, the vast majority of people, are following the broad path that leads to death — exactly as Jesus said (Matthew 7:13-14).

Those who are teaching and practicing a lawless pseudo-Christianity are doing the exact opposite of what Jesus said those who love Him will be doing: “**If you love Me, you will be keeping the commandments — namely My commandments**” (John 14:15, AT). The one who truly loves Jesus Christ will be keeping His commandments — yes, every one of His words, which He received from God the Father. That is the standard by which we can identify those who love God and those who do not.

Every commandment that God has given is based on love. Here is the greatest commandment of all: “You shall LOVE the Lord your God with ALL YOUR HEART, and with ALL YOUR SOUL, and with ALL YOUR MIND. This is the FIRST and GREAT commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS” (Matthew 22:37-40, AT). Without these two commandments, there would be no law, there would be no prophets, there would be no covenants, old or new. EVERYTHING GOD DOES IS BASED ON LOVE!

The Apostle John expresses the love of God so clearly in his first epistle: “Beloved, we should be loving one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves [Greek *o agapwn*, “who is loving”] has been begotten by God, and knows God.

“**The one who does not love does not know God**, because GOD IS LOVE! In this way the love of God was manifested unto us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

“In this *act* is THE LOVE: not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son as the propitiation for our sins. . . .

And we have known and have believed the love that God has *imparted* unto us. GOD IS LOVE, and the one who is dwelling in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (I John 4:7-10, 16, AT).

This is the attitude of love, faith, and obedience that we must show toward God the Father and Jesus Christ in order to understand the Word of God. Without this love for God and His Truth, a full understanding of the Scriptures can never be achieved!

### Five Vital Keys to Understanding the Word of God

In addition to a loving, faithful, and obedient attitude toward God, there are five major principles that are essential to a correct understanding of Scripture. These vital keys to understanding must always be kept in mind when we study the Word of God.

The **first vital key** is this: “All Scripture is God-inspired [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; so that the man of God is thoroughly equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17, AT).

Many who profess to study the Bible completely disregard this vital principle. Rather than seeking the truth of Scripture, they look for verses that appear to support their personal beliefs, but ignore those verses that clearly contradict their beliefs. This approach to study can never lead to understanding because it denies that every part of Scripture is inspired. Those who use this approach are exalting their own beliefs above the authority of Scripture.

When we study the Scriptures, we should always be careful to seek the true meaning of the words that were inspired by God. No study of the Scriptures should be designed to support the position of a doctrinal board, or to justify a time-honored church doctrine, or to “prove” a personal interpretation of the Scriptures. None of these motives are acceptable. And if these motives are involved, for whatever reason, do we think that God overlooks such deceptive use of His Word? If we think that we can fool God, we are only deceiving ourselves.

Let us not be guilty of such a presumptuous and self-righteous attitude toward the Word of God. Rather, let us humbly allow the inspired words of Scripture to correct us and instruct us in the true righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The **second vital key** to Scriptural understanding is clearly taught in **Isaiah 28**: “Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts [that is, fully grounded in the Word of God and not a spiritually immature Christian feeding only on the milk of the Word]. For *precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little*” (**Isaiah 28:9-10, JPSA**).

The book of Isaiah tells us that in order to understand doctrine, we must study the Scriptures line upon line and precept upon precept. This is exactly how we should study every doctrinal question. The New Testament confirms this approach to understanding the Word of God and establishing sound doctrine! “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a workman [in the Word of God], not being ashamed, straightly cutting [rightly dividing — precept upon precept, and line upon line] the Word of Truth” (**II Timothy 2:15, AT**).

In order to come to the knowledge of the Truth, we must always follow the Biblically outlined method of study — “straightly cutting” or “rightly dividing” the Word of God. Any other type of study is useless and all in vain! As Paul instructed Timothy, “Of these things put them in remembrance: I charge you before the Lord not to dispute about words to **no profit**, but to the **subversion of those who are hearing**” (**II Timothy 2:14, AT**).

This is exactly what many ministers and scholars have done in their doctrinal teachings because they have not rightly divided the Word of God! Whole congregations have been subverted by strivings and disputings over the meaning of key words that are used in Scripture. Some teachers and ministers have even engaged in redefining words — attaching their own personal interpretations and rejecting the authoritative definitions that are found in Hebrew and Greek lexicons. Anyone who undertakes such practices is “using the law unlawfully,” as Paul said, and will end up teaching false, satanic doctrines that subvert the minds of their followers. Unfortunately, the landscape of religious history is filled with the bodies of people who have taught false doctrines, and the bodies of people who have embraced their teachings. Only by learning to rightly divide the Word of God will we be able to recognize and resist these false doctrines.

The **third vital key** to understanding the Scriptures is found in the second epistle of Peter, where we read, “Knowing this first [Greek *protos* — meaning the primary, or first and foremost thing], that no prophecy of Scripture is of one’s own interpretation; because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (**II Peter 1:20-21, AT**).

In today’s world, we find many pseudo-teachers who are twisting the Scriptures and deceitfully using their own personal interpretations in order to persuade others to believe their false doctrines. To support their teachings, they may quote numerous Scriptures. To their listeners, their teachings sound very authoritative, but the way that they apply the Scriptures exposes their craftiness. They are using the same subtle methods of deception that Satan the devil uses.

Yes, even Satan the devil quotes Scripture! When Jesus Christ was being tempted by the devil in person, Satan did not hesitate to quote the Scriptures. “If You be the Son of God, cast Yourself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and in their hands they shall bear You up, lest at any time You dash your foot against a stone,” (**Matthew 4:6, Psalm 91:11-12**).

Satan correctly quoted this Scripture, but misapplied it in a crafty effort to tempt Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus resisted Satan’s deception by rightly applying the Scriptures. He said, “It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God,” (**Matthew 4:7**).

What is the lesson for us in this account? It is this: Those who quote the Scriptures correctly, but twist and misapply the meaning, are following Satan — not serving God! This example is recorded in Scripture as a warning for us to be on guard. The fact that a minister or teacher may continually quote the Scriptures does not guarantee that he is teaching the truth. **SCRIPTURE THAT IS QUOTED ACCURATELY IS OFTEN MISAPPLIED TO TEACH FALSE DOCTRINE!**

True servants of God do not use such deceitful tactics. The Apostle Paul wrote of his ministry, “Rather, we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness [that is, having a hidden agenda], nor handling the Word of God deceitfully [falsely applying the Scriptures], but by the manifestation of the Truth, we are commending ourselves to everyone’s conscience before

God” (**II Corinthians 4:2, AT**).

Those who are truly serving God will not deceitfully use Scripture to promote their own ideas and personal interpretations. They will seek to understand and teach the true meaning of the words that God inspired by the power of His Holy Spirit.

The **fourth vital key** to understanding the true teachings of Scripture is found in Paul’s instructions to the Thessalonian believers: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (**I Thessalonians 5:21**).

The command to “prove all things” is a lifelong responsibility for every true believer. We, as individual Christians, must continually be testing every teaching that we read or hear by carefully studying the Scriptures. The Bereans were commended because they diligently searched the Scriptures: “And these were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica [the unbelieving Jews, who immediately rejected the Apostle Paul’s teaching that Christ was raised from the dead], who [the Bereans] received the word with all readiness of mind and *were* examining the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so” (**Acts 17:11, AT**).

The account in the book of Acts reveals that the Bereans were diligently studying the Scriptures to prove whether or not the things they had heard were true. They did not react with blind emotion and refuse to consider the teachings of Paul. Rather, they carefully examined the Scriptures and proved to themselves that Paul was, in fact, preaching the true message of God.

We, like the Bereans, must diligently search and examine the Scriptures in order to discern true doctrine from false doctrine. As we apply our minds to this effort, we will become skillful in using the Scriptures — no longer feeding on the “milk” of the Word but able to handle “strong meat.” If we do not exercise our minds and learn to discern truth from error, we will not become spiritually mature Christians. “For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, *even* those who **by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**” (**Hebrews 5:13-14**).

Too many Christians have remained as spiritual infants because they have transferred their God-given responsibility to discern truth from error, to a minister or church board. Their ministers have told them that they, the laity, are incapable of understanding the

Scriptures and must submit to the doctrinal decisions of their church leaders, who alone can interpret the Scriptures. But it was never God’s intention that we, as individual believers, place our trust in human leaders who claim sole authority to establish doctrine. Christians who have done so have left themselves open to grievous deception. They have forgotten the many warnings throughout the New Testament to be on guard against false teachers and false Apostles who make a pretense of serving God. The Apostle Paul warned, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (**Acts 20:29-30**).

Likewise, the apostle Peter strongly admonished the brethren. “But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, denying *the* Lord who bought them and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed. Also, through insatiable greed they will *with* enticing messages exploit you for gain; for whom the judgment of old is in *full* force, and their destruction is *ever* watchful” (**II Peter 2:1-3, AT**).

True to the warnings of Paul and Peter, many Christians in the New Testament Churches were subverted and drawn away from the true doctrines of Scripture because they neglected to “prove all things” and did not test and try the teachings of these false Apostles. But the Church at Ephesus did not forget the warnings and admonitions of Paul and Peter, as well as the other true Apostles. In the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ commended the Ephesian believers because they tried and tested those who falsely claimed to be Apostles and proved them to be liars. “I know your works, and your labor and your endurance, and that you cannot bear *those* evil ones; but you have tested those who declare *themselves* to be Apostles, and are not, and you discovered them *to be* liars” (**Revelation 2:2, AT**).

Since these false Apostles professed to be ministers of Jesus Christ, we can be sure that they quoted the Scriptures. Their false doctrines must have sounded very authoritative and very convincing, because they succeeded in undermining the faith of many

New Testament Christians. How was the Church at Ephesus able to withstand this powerful deception? If the Ephesian brethren had not been exercising their senses to discern truth from error, they would not have recognized these men as false Apostles. But because the brethren at Ephesus were skillful in using the Scriptures, they were able to discern that these men were not teaching the true doctrines of Jesus Christ.

Like the brethren at Ephesus, Christians today must constantly be on guard against false ministers whose Scriptural-sounding teachings are actually a perversion of the true doctrines of Scripture. It is our personal responsibility as Christians to test and try the teachings of every minister, teacher, or scholar by carefully examining the Scriptures. By following the Scriptural command to “prove all things,” we can learn to recognize and reject false doctrine, and be able to stand fast in the true doctrines of Jesus Christ.

The **fifth vital key** to remember when we study Scripture is that we must be led by the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is called the Word of Truth. Furthermore, it is the Spirit of Truth that teaches us all things. The Bible makes it clear that the Spirit of Truth works hand in hand with the Word of Truth to give us the understanding God wants us to have. Jesus said, “But the Helper, the **Spirit of Truth**, which the Father will send in My name, that one **will teach you ALL THINGS**, and will bring to your remembrance all things that I have told you” (**John 14:26**, *AT*). This is the promise Jesus gives to all who repent and are converted in their hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit.

It is not possible for the unconverted human mind, which is deceitful above all things (**Jeremiah 17:9**), to come to the knowledge of the Truth of God. In fact, the carnal mind is enmity (that is, hostile) toward God and is not willing to be subject to God’s laws (**Romans 8:7**). The Word of Truth and the Spirit of Truth cannot work hand in hand with the carnal mind of deceit. Regardless of how brilliant or how great the intellect may be, God’s Truth is not understood through human wisdom and rationale. It is only through the Spirit of God that the Word of God can be understood.

Paul taught that it is not through human rationale or intellect that we are able to come to the knowledge of the Truth, but by and through the SPIRIT OF GOD. “But according as it has been written, *There are things that the eye has not seen, and the ear has not*

heard, and have not entered into the heart of man, *but* which God has prepared for those who love Him.

“But God has revealed them to us *by His Spirit*; FOR THE SPIRIT SEARCHES ALL THINGS, EVEN THE DEPTHS [the deep things] OF GOD. For who of men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In exactly the same way also, the things of God no one knows, except *by* the Spirit of God. . . . Which things we also speak, not taught in words of human wisdom, but in *those words* taught of the Holy Spirit, comparing [communicating] spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But the natural man [the carnal mind without the Holy Spirit of God] receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED AND UNDERSTOOD” (**I Corinthians 2:9-14**, *AT*).

Without the Holy Spirit of God, no human being — no matter how intelligent — can understand His Word! And even individuals who have received the Holy Spirit from God are beset by obstacles that can keep them from coming to a full understanding of the truth. Too many Christians become caught up in the politics of religion, or the power structure of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, or the *approved* doctrines of their church, or they have submitted to humanly devised church authority, or they have blindly accepted the teachings of so-called Biblical scholars, and they are not able to open-mindedly study and completely understand the spiritual truth of God’s Word.

The Holy Spirit cannot guide us into all truth unless we diligently study the Scriptures with an open mind, unhindered by the ideas and doctrines of men. Christians who look to the authority of men rather than Scripture, are easy prey for ministers and teachers who profess to serve God but are not obeying His commandments and are not teaching the Truth.

### **A Dire Warning Against The Disobedient And Those Who Teach False Doctrine**

The book of Deuteronomy contains a prophecy of Jesus Christ’s ministry coupled with a dire warning against those who refuse to obey His words and those who teach false doctrine in His name: “I will raise them up a Prophet [Jesus Christ] from among their brethren, like unto you [Moses], and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak

unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words [listen attentively to obey] which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him [hold him accountable unto judgment]” (**Deuteronomy 18:18-19**). This warning applies to every human being, but particularly to those who are claiming to follow Jesus Christ!

The following verse pronounces even more severe judgment upon those who are teachers, or claim to be teachers, of the Word of God. Notice what God warns: “But the prophet [anyone who is teaching], which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods [false doctrines palmed off as true teachings of God], **even that prophet shall die**” (**verse 20**).

Jesus Himself, the Prophet Who was to come, repeated the same warning! “Now if anyone hears My words and does not believe [to obey], I do not judge him, because I did not come [at that time] to judge the world, but that I might save the world. The one who is rejecting Me and who is not receiving My words, has one who judges him. The word [the entire message — all the words of Jesus Christ] which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken from Myself [He taught nothing on His own initiative], but the Father who has sent Me, He Himself gave Me commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. Now I know that His commandment is eternal life” (**John 12:47-50**, *AT*).

God Himself inspired Jesus Christ to speak these words and caused them to be preserved for us today. Anyone who presumptuously rises up against God and His Word, by misapplying the Scriptures and teaching false doctrine, already has the judgment of God pronounced against him.

Today, the churches of God — and all professing Christians in the world — are being assaulted with false teachings. These teachings are being received and believed because people cannot endure sound doctrine. They cannot sit still and listen to the wholesome words of Jesus Christ.

This decadent spiritual condition was prophesied by the Apostle Paul. “For the time will come [and the time is now] when they will not endure [be willing to listen to] sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they will heap to themselves *many* teachers because of having itching ears *for unsound*

*doctrine*. Now on the one hand, **they will turn away their ears from the Truth** [God’s Word is the Truth]; and on the other hand, **they will turn aside** [from the way of the Lord] **unto fables** [deceptive false doctrines]” (**II Timothy 4:3-4**, *AT*).

Many in the churches of God today are falling prey to this deception. At the present time a great number of members and ministers are being swept away with every new wind of doctrine. Although some have attended and served in their churches for many years, they are not spiritually grounded because they have not been diligently studying the Scriptures. As a result, while they may think that they are able to discern truth from error, they are woefully ill-equipped to recognize these clever, subtle, “truth-sounding” false doctrines. While they should have been trained and grounded in the Scriptures, they have not been. They have only been feeding on the milk of the Word and consequently have remained in a state of spiritual infancy. As Paul admonished, “For truly *when you* ought to be teachers because of the time, you again have need for someone to teach you what are the elements of the beginnings of the oracles of God, and have need of milk and not strong meat. For everyone who is partaking of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, because he is an infant” (**Hebrews 5:12-13**, *AT*).

Christians who are not spiritually mature are ripe to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. They are like dry leaves, caught up in a whirlwind, swirling and spinning around. Because they are oblivious to their weak spiritual condition, it is easy to get caught up in false doctrines that seem to be right but in reality are so wrong. **The most clever deception that Satan has devised is false doctrine that sounds blessedly true.**

This is what Christians are facing today — many cleverly devised false doctrines, more fitly called fables or myths. It is not sufficient simply to proclaim that a doctrine is true, or to denounce a doctrine as false. Those who truly want to follow Christ need to study sound doctrine and know and understand the Truth and why it is true. And we must know and understand false doctrine and why it is false.

Unless we are able to discern truth from error, we will end up straying from the narrow pathway of God’s Word, that leads to eternal life. To keep from following the broad way to destruction, as so many have, we need to be diligently studying the Word of God,

following all the Biblical principles and rules for discerning the true meaning of Scripture. *Please read the Fourteen Rules for Bible Study in the next section. These present a step-by-step, systematic method for proper Bible study.*

Few Christians think of themselves as students, but every true Christian is a disciple of Jesus Christ. The word “disciple” means “learner,” or “student.” As students of Jesus Christ, we should be daily studying His teachings. We should not be following the doctrines and traditions of men, regardless of how authoritative they may appear to be. Nor should we base our beliefs on Biblical commentaries or other writings of men. We should strictly follow the Word of God, rightly dividing it and putting line upon line and precept upon precept. Only by studying the Scriptures in this manner can we come to a full understanding of the Truth.

Knowing that we must engage in serious, in-depth study of the Scriptures, we may have questions as to which version of the Bible we should use, especially for doctrinal study. Numerous translations of the Scriptures are available to us today, and new versions continue to be published. The modern versions may be very attractive because they are easier to read than the older versions with their archaic words and expressions. However, these modern versions generally cannot be relied on for doctrinal study because they do not closely follow the original text. In some of these versions, thousands of words have been omitted.

Despite repeated attempts to discredit the King James Version, it is still the most reliable translation of the Bible. While no version of the Bible has been published that is perfectly accurate in every respect, the translators of the King James Version took great care to follow the original text. For those who seek to understand the true teachings of Scripture, the King James Version is highly recommended as the safest and most reliable translation.

In undertaking a Scriptural study of any doctrinal subject, we should thoroughly examine every verse and passage concerning the subject. If the meaning of the text is questionable or the English phrasing is unclear, it may be necessary to pursue a detailed study of the original language, Hebrew or Greek, in order to determine the precise meaning of the original inspired

words. This approach will give us a clear understanding of what the Bible is actually teaching and will enable us to arrive at a correct understanding of any doctrinal subject. The Fourteen Rules for Bible Study listed below will provide a systematic method for understanding all the essential doctrines of Scripture — even the most difficult ones.

### **Fourteen Rules for Bible Study**

(1) Begin with Scriptures that are easy to understand.

(2) Let the Bible interpret and prove the Bible. Don't look for what you want to prove; look for what the Bible actually proves.

(3) Understand the context — the verses before and after, the chapters before and after. Does your understanding of a particular verse harmonize with the rest of the Bible?

(4) Understand the original language, Hebrew or Greek. Never try to establish dogmatic doctrine or teachings by using *Strong's Concordance*. It can be helpful at times, but it is extremely limited.

(5) Ask, what does the Scripture clearly say?

(6) Ask, what does the Scripture not say?

(7) Ask, to whom was the book written?

(8) Ask, who wrote it?

(9) Ask, who said it?

(10) Understand the time frame in history when the book was written.

(11) Don't bring your own personal assumptions and preconceived notions into your understanding or conclusions.

(12) Base your study on Scriptural knowledge that you already understand. What do you know up to this point in time?

(13) Do not form conclusions based on partial facts or insufficient information, or the opinions and speculations of others.

(14) Personal opinions or convictions, regardless of how strong they may be, don't necessarily count. Scripture must be your standard and guide.

This is the complete study approach. When undertaking a study of the Bible, we should always use this approach, coupled with prayer, trusting God to lead us with His Holy Spirit of Truth. We know that He will fulfill His promise to lead us into ALL TRUTH, if we are diligently seeking to understand His Word.

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## 52 Week Bible Reading Plan

Week	Epistles (Sunday)	The Law (Monday)	History (Tuesday)	Pslms (Wednesday)	Poetry (Thursday)	Prophecy (Friday)	Gospels (Saturday)
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 1-2
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 4-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 3-4
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 8-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 5-7
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 12-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 9-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 8-10
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Josh 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 12-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 23-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 11-13
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 20-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 15-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 29-33	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 14-16
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 24-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 18-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 34-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 17-19
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rom 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 28-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 21-23	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 40-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 20-22
9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 32-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Judg 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 24-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 45-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 23-25
10	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 36-39	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 27-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 19-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 51-55	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 26-28
11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 40-43	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 30-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 21-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 56-61	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 1-2
12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 44-47	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 33-35	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Isa 62-66	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 3-4
13	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gen 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 36-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 25-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 5-6
14	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 39-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 27-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 7-8
15	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 13-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 42-44	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 9-10
16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Cor 15-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Sam 26-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 45-47	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 31-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 17-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 11-12
17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 33-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 22-26	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 13-14
18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 51-53	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 35-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 27-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 15-16
19	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 54-56	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 37-38	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 32-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 1-2
20	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 57-59	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 39-40	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 37-41	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 3-4
21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Cor 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Sam 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 60-62	<input type="checkbox"/> Job 41-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 42-46	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 5-6
22	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 63-65	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Jer 47-52	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 7-8
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ex 37-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 66-68	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 2-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lamentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 9-10
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 69-71	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 11-12
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 14-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 72-74	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 13-14
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Ki 19-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 75-77	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 13-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 15-16
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 78-80	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 8-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 19-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 17-18
28	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 81-83	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 25-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 19-20
29	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 16-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 84-86	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 31-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 21-22
30	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 19-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 87-89	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 37-42	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 23-24
31	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Thes 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 22-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Ki 21-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 90-92	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 14-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezek 43-48	<input type="checkbox"/> John 1-2
32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Thes	<input type="checkbox"/> Lev 25-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 93-95	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 16	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> John 3-4
33	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 96-98	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 17-18	<input type="checkbox"/> Dan 7-12	<input type="checkbox"/> John 5-6
34	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Tim 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 99-101	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> John 7-9
35	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 9-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 15-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 102-104	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 20-21	<input type="checkbox"/> Hosea 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> John 10-12
36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Tim 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 105-107	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 22	<input type="checkbox"/> Joel	<input type="checkbox"/> John 13-15
37	<input type="checkbox"/> Titus	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 17-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Chr 25-29	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 108-110	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 23-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> John 16-18
38	<input type="checkbox"/> Philemon	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 111-113	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Amos 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> John 19-21
39	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 114-116	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 26-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Obadiah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1-2
40	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 11-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 117-118	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Jonah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 3-4
41	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Num 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 16-20	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 119	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 29-30	<input type="checkbox"/> Micah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 5-6
42	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 11-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 21-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 120-121	<input type="checkbox"/> Prov 31	<input type="checkbox"/> Nahum	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 7-8
43	<input type="checkbox"/> James 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 25-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 122-124	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Habakkuk	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9-10
44	<input type="checkbox"/> James 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 29-32	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 125-127	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Zephaniah	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 11-12
45	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Chr 33-36	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 128-130	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Haggai	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 13-14
46	<input type="checkbox"/> 1Pet 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 13-15	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 131-133	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 15-16
47	<input type="checkbox"/> 2Pet	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezra 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 134-136	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 9-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Zechariah 8-14	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 17-18
48	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 20-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 137-139	<input type="checkbox"/> Eccl 11-12	<input type="checkbox"/> Malachi	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 19-20
49	<input type="checkbox"/> 1John 4-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 23-25	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 5-9	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 140-142	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 1-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 1-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 21-22
50	<input type="checkbox"/> 2John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 26-28	<input type="checkbox"/> Neh 10-13	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 143-145	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 3-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 7-11	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 23-24
51	<input type="checkbox"/> 3John	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 29-31	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 146-148	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 5-6	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 12-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 25-26
52	<input type="checkbox"/> Jude	<input type="checkbox"/> Deut 32-34	<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 6-10	<input type="checkbox"/> Ps 149-150	<input type="checkbox"/> Song 7-8	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 18-22	<input type="checkbox"/> Acts 27-28

## Lesson from Austria

The following story illustrates the devastating effect of “creeping socialism.” It is also a lesson for us spiritually, for this is how the Church of God has gone off track, one step at a time.

**Isaiah 9:16**, “For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.” It is easy to see how gullible we can be. One can see how our ancestors got duped, but it is not clear if we are any better. Can we really learn from these historic events staring us in the face? The politicians certainly have.

**Kitty Werthman** saw Hitler’s rise to power in prewar Austria. *Der Fuehrer* did not conquer by force. He was eagerly welcomed by the people because the Nazis promised free health care, retirement income, unemployment benefits, guaranteed wages, free nursery care, equal rights for women, gun control, and other enticements that now are part of the American political scene. Can we learn from Austria’s mistake before it is too late? Here is Kitty’s story:



What I’m about to tell you is something you’ve probably never read, or will ever read in history books. I believe that I’m an eyewitness to history. I cannot tell you that Hitler took Austria by tanks and guns; it would distort history. We elected Hitler by 98% of the vote. I’ve never read that in any American publication. Everyone thinks that Hitler just rolled in with his tanks and took over Austria.

In 1938, Austria was in deep depression. We had nearly one-third of our work force unemployed, 25% inflation, and a 25% interest rate from banks. Farmers and business people were declaring bankruptcy every day. Young people were going from house to house begging for food. Not that they didn’t want to work, but there simply wasn’t any work. My mother was a very devout woman who believed that you have to help the people in need. I remember she had a big kettle of soup every day, on the stove, and we baked bread to feed those poor hungry people, about thirty each day.

The Communist Party and the National Socialist Party were fighting each other. Blocks and blocks of cities like Vienna, Lenzt, and Grotz were being destroyed. The people became desperate, and petitioned the government to let the people decide what kind of government they wanted. We looked to our neighbor on the north, Germany, where Hitler had been in power since 1933. We had been told that they didn’t have unemployment or crime. But they did have a high living standard. There was nothing being said of persecution of anyone, Jewish or otherwise, just that everyone was happy. We wanted the same thing for Austria. We were promised that if we would vote for Hitler, everyone would be employed in two or three weeks, and he would help the family. He also said that businesses would be helped. And the farmers would get their farms back.

Ninety-eight percent of the population voted to annex Austria to Germany, and have Hitler be our ruler. We were so joyful that for three days we danced in the streets and had candlelight parades. They opened up big field kitchens and everyone was fed. After the election, everyone was appointed from Germany. Like a miracle, suddenly we had law and order. Three or four weeks later, everyone was employed. The government made sure that a lot of work was being created by the Public Work Service.

Hitler decided we should have equal rights for women. Before this, it was a custom that married women did not work outside of the home. The husband would be looked down (upon) because he couldn’t support a family. The teaching profession was overjoyed that women could go back to the jobs they gave up for marriage. Our education was nationalized. I attended a very good school; 98% of the population was Catholic at that time, so we had religion in our schools. The day we elected Hitler,

March 13, 1938, I walked into my schoolroom and found our crucifix had been replaced with Hitler's picture and the flag. Our teacher, a very devout woman, stood up and told the class that we wouldn't pray or have religion anymore. We sang Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alis and had physical education instead. Our parents were not happy about the sudden change.

On Sunday, we had National Youth Day. It was compulsory to attend. We were told if our parents would not send us on Sunday, they would get a stiff letter of warning the first time. The second time they would be fined the equivalent of three hundred dollars, and the third time they would be subject to jail. As time went along, we loved it. The first two hours we had political indoctrination. The rest of the day, we had sports. We all had so much fun and got our sports equipment free. We would go home and tell our parents, gleefully, what a wonderful time we were having.

My mother was very unhappy. When the next term started, she took me out of public school and put me in a convent. I told her she couldn't do that, and she told me that someday when I grew up, I might be grateful. I almost hated my mother. It was a very good curriculum; hardly any fun, no sports and no political indoctrination. I hated it at first, but felt I could tolerate it. Every once in a while on holidays I went home. I would go back to my old friends and ask what was going on and what they were doing. Their lifestyle was very alarming to me.

By that time, it was glorified to be an unwed mother; to have a baby for Hitler. They lived a very loose lifestyle, without religion. It seemed strange to me that all of this changed so suddenly. As time went along, I realized what a great deed my mother had done, so that I wasn't exposed to that kind of philosophy.

In 1939, the war started and a food bank was established. That meant all food was rationed and you couldn't buy anything without food stamps. At the same time, the Full Employment Law was passed. Which meant if you didn't work, you didn't get a ration card, and if you didn't have one, you starved to death. The women who stayed home and raised their family for years and didn't have any skills often had to take a job that was for men. Soon after this, the draft was implemented. It was compulsory for young people, male or female, to give one year in the Labor Corps. During the day, the girls had to work on the farms and then at night, they returned to their barracks and had their military training just like the men. They were trained to be anti-aircraft gunners and in the Signal Corps. After the Labor Corps, they were not discharged, but were used in the front lines. When I go back to Austria and visit my friends, I find most of those women are emotional cripples, because they just were not geared to the same thing that men did in combat. Three months before I turned eighteen, I was severely injured in an air-raid attack. I nearly had a leg amputated, so I was spared having to go into the Labor Corps, and into the military service.

Socially, Hitler had to restructure the family. When the mothers had to go out into the workforce, the government immediately established childcare centers. You could bring your child from age four weeks on up to school age, and leave them there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, under the total absolute care of the state. There were no motherly women there to take care of the children, just people highly trained in child psychology. They raised a whole generation by state.

By that time, no one talked about equal rights, we knew we had been had. Before Hitler, we had very good medicine. Many doctors from America came over to train at the University of Vienna. After Hitler, all the health care was socialized; free for everyone. The doctors were all salaried by the government. The problem was, since it was free, the people were going to the doctors for everything. When the good doctor arrived at his office at eight o'clock in the morning, forty people were already waiting, and at the same time, the hospitals were full. If you needed elective surgery, you had to

wait a year or two until your turn came. There was no money for research because they poured it all into free medicare for everybody. Work at the medical schools was literally stopped, so the doctors left and went to other countries.

As for welfare, our tax rates went up to 80%. Any young couple who got married immediately received a one thousand dollar loan from the government to establish a household. We had big programs for families. All daycare and education was free. Going to college was subsidized, and high school was taken over by the government. Everyone who was entitled to something, whether it was food stamps, clothing, or subsidized housing, was given it by the government.

We had another agency designed to control the businesses. I had a brother-in-law whose restaurant had square tables and chairs. The government told him he had to have round tables because people can bump themselves on the corners. Then they said he had to have more bathroom facilities. It was just a small business; a dairy business with a snack bar. His business couldn't survive with all the demands. Soon, he went out of business. If the government owned the large businesses, and not many small businesses existed, they could be in control. We had consumer protection. We were told how we should shop, and what we should buy. Free enterprise was literally abolished. We had a planning agency, especially designed for farmers and private property owners. The agents would go to the farms, count the livestock, then tell the farmer what to produce and how to produce it.

In 1944, I was a student teacher in a small village in the Alps. The villages were surrounded by mountain passes which in the winter were closed off, with snow causing people to be isolated. So people intermarried. By genetics, the offspring were often retarded. When I got there I was told there were fifteen adult, mentally retarded, people, but they were all useful and did good manual work. I knew one named Vincent really well. He was the janitor of the school. One day I looked out the window and saw Vincent and others getting into a van. I asked my superior what they were doing. She said it was the state health department, taking him to an institution to teach him a trade, and to read and write. The families had to sign a paper. The paper had a little clause that they could not visit for six months, because it would interfere with their program and they might get homesick. When the six months passed, letters started to dribble back saying these people died a natural, merciful death. The villagers were not ignorant. We suspected what was happening. Those people all left in excellent physical health, and all died within six months. We called this euthanasia.

Next came gun registration. People were getting injured by guns. Hitler also said that the real way to catch the criminals (and we still had a few) was by the serial numbers of the guns, so we had to register our guns. Most of the people were law abiding and dutifully marched to the police station and registered their guns. Not long afterward, they said that it was best for everyone to turn in their guns. They already knew who had the guns, so you had to turn them in, or they would come and get them.

We knew then that we had a full dictatorship. No more freedom of speech. If you said anything against the government, you were taken away. We knew many people who were taken away, not only Jews, but priests and ministers. It didn't come overnight, it took five years from 1938 until 1943 to graduate into dictatorship. If we (would have) had a dictatorship overnight, we would have fought to our last breath, but we had creeping gradualism.

Now we had nothing except broom handles. The whole thing was almost unbelievable; that you could feed all this to the masses, little by little, and no one would object. It's true, those of us who sailed past the Statue of Liberty, came to a country of unbelievable freedom and opportunity. America is the greatest country in the world. Don't let freedom slip away. After America, there is no place to go. — from the Internet

## Do You Have the Time?

I knelt to pray but not for long,  
I had too much to do.  
I had to hurry and get to work  
For bills would soon be due.

So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,  
And jumped up off my knees.  
My Christian duty was now done  
My soul could rest at ease.

All day long I had no time  
To spread a word of cheer.  
No time to speak of HIM to friends,  
They'd laugh at me I'd fear.

No time, no time, too much to do,  
That was my constant cry,  
No time to give to souls in need  
But at last the time, the time to die.

I went before the YAHWEH, I came,  
I stood with downcast eyes.  
For in his hands HE held a book;  
It was the book of life.

HE looked into his book and said  
"Your name I cannot find.  
I once was going to write it down . . .  
But never found the time."

— from the Internet

## Back to the Basics

How do you study the Bible? Some believers think that you mainly compare various translations, or use lexicons to define Bible words. While multiple translations and lexicons are sometimes helpful, these resources are *secondary* Bible Helps.

We recommend that you use the seven *primary* Basic Bible Study Tools: (1) Main Study Bible (KJV Wide Margin), (2) Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, (3) Franklin Electronic Bible, (4) Englishman's Hebrew Concordance, (5) Englishman's Greek Concordance, (6) Interlinear Bible, (7) God's Holy Spirit. While we can help you obtain the first six tools, the Almighty is the only source for the Holy Spirit, which is essential to understanding spiritual Truth.

See our current Order Form, or visit our website for ordering Bible Study Tools.

— by Richard C. Nickels Ω

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