

Washington Post's Article On The Sabbath/Sunday Issue

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Dear Members of the Endtime Issues Forum:

In the last installment of Endtime Issues (No. 5) I informed you that Bill Broadway, a correspondent of **Washington Post** had interviewed me regarding the theological and legal implications of the Pope's Pastoral Letter, *Dies Domini*. At this time I am pleased to inform you that his article appeared on the religion page of **Washington Post**, on Saturday, January 23, 1999 (page B11). Many newspapers throughout the USA have already reprinted the article. Since some of the 5000 plus members of our forum live overseas and do not have ready access to the **Washington Post**, I thought I would post the text of the article and my commentary on two significant issues raised by the article. The article includes a picture of the Pope and of myself which obviously I cannot be reproduced here.

Bill Broadway did a fine job in reporting the issues raised by the Pope's Pastoral letter. He is factual and overall accurate. He is to be commended for bringing to the attention of the general public some of the problems of the Pastoral Letter. The positive impact of the article is indicated by the fact that some Christian radio stations have already called me to set up an interview. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mr. Broadway for the time and effort he put forth in writing such a timely article which raises some very serious questions for people to ponder.

As I have shown in chapter 1 of my latest book **THE SABBATH UNDER CROSSFIRE**, the Pope's attempt to make Sunday the continuation and "full expression" of the Biblical Sabbath, lacks both Biblical and historical support. It represents an ingenious effort to give to Sunday observance the strongest possible moral basis, in order to justify its enforcement by means of canonical legislation within the Catholic church, and civil legislation outside the church.

This essay examines two major questions raised by the article. I plan to mail a copy of this essay to Mr. Broadway, in case he should decide to write a follow up story. I believe that correspondents like Bill Broadway can make a significant contribution in making the general public aware of some of the crucial issues we face today. What follows is first the text of the article and then my analysis of two significant issues.

WHEN IS THE LORD'S DAY? Adventist Says Pope Unfairly Promotes Sunday Sabbath; When Is the Lord's Day?

By Bill Broadway
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, January 23, 1999; Page B11

An article in the current issue of **Liberty**, a Seventh-day Adventist magazine published in Silver Spring, attacks Pope John Paul II's recent apostolic letter on observing the Sabbath on Sunday as "highly flawed" and says the pope is trying to use "the strong arm of the law" to enforce Sunday as an official day of worship.

Titled "John Paul's Pseudo-Sabbath," the article was written by Samuele Bacchiocchi, professor of theology and church history at Andrews University Theological Seminary in Michigan and an ardent defender of Sabbatarianism.

Sabbatarians, a growing group that includes Seventh-day Adventists and other Protestant sects, believe that the Bible calls for the faithful to rest on the seventh day of the week, as God did in the Genesis account of Creation. Like Jews, they believe the Sabbath is Saturday and begin its observance at sundown on Friday.

In a telephone interview, Bacchiocchi said the publication of his article before John Paul's visit to St. Louis on Tuesday and Wednesday was coincidental. But the general timing is appropriate, he said, given the pope's "shrewd and deceptive" arguments promoting Sunday Sabbath-keeping in countries around the world in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000.

On numerous occasions, the pope has said he envisions the new millennium as a time of renewed Christian commitment and unity. In "*Dies Domini*" ("Day of the Lord"), released in July, John Paul called on the world's 1 billion Catholics to set aside one day a week as a time "to rest and celebrate" and to "look anew upon the wonders of nature." And he reminded them of the "grave obligation" to attend Sunday Mass.

"It is the duty of Christians," the pope wrote, ". . . to remember that, although the practices of the Jewish Sabbath are gone, surpassed as they are by the 'fulfillment' which Sunday brings, the underlying reasons for keeping 'the Lord's Day' holy--inscribed solemnly in the Ten Commandments--remain valid, though they need to be reinterpreted in the light of the theology and spirituality of Sunday: 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.' "

Bacchiocchi, whose Catholic parents converted to Adventism during his childhood in Rome, said what bothers him is the pope's use of such biblical references to the Sabbath to support its observance on the first day of the week, Sunday, rather than the last. That creates a "moral imperative" for Catholics and other Christians who look to the pope for spiritual guidance, he said.

The Rev. James P. Moroney, executive director of the liturgy office at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the pope's letter supports the dominant Christian practice of worshipping on the day of the week they believe Jesus rose from the dead.

"The intention of the Holy Father's statement is to restore the appreciation of the celebration of the Sabbath to the day of resurrection," said Moroney, who believes the Sunday Sabbath dates to the time of the apostles. "I respect [Bacchiocchi's] point of view, but he's at variance with most Christian denominations."

In his article in the January-February issue of **Liberty**, Bacchiocchi asks, "Why should Sunday be chosen to celebrate the atoning sacrifice of Christ when His redemptive mission was completed [with his crucifixion] on a Friday afternoon . . . and [He] then rested in the tomb according to the Sabbath commandment? Doesn't this suggest that both God's creation rest and Christ's redemption rest in the tomb occurred on the Sabbath?"

He also argues that Sunday observance of the Sabbath was an invention of the early church, not a biblically mandated day of worship, as he believes the pope suggests. It's a position Bacchiocchi chronicled in his doctoral dissertation, **From Sunday to Sabbath**, which he wrote when he was the first non-Catholic student at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and which was later published by the Vatican. And it is a position generally accepted by Catholic historians, he said.

Bacchiocchi also is troubled by the pope's call for Christians throughout the world to promote civil legislation supporting Sunday as a Christian holiday. In "*Dies Domini*," John Paul wrote: "In the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy."

Bacchiocchi said that although the United States historically has supported the separation of church and state, countries in Europe and other parts of the world have not. And many nations have large Catholic constituencies that might influence government policy--for example, restoring or reinforcing laws against operating a business on Sunday.

Laws supporting Sunday as a religious holiday discriminate not only against Sabbatarians and Jews, Bacchiocchi said, but also against Muslims, who worship communally on Fridays.

"We are concerned that we will not be able to enjoy our own day of worship," Bacchiocchi said of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose international headquarters are in Silver Spring. The church has 1 million members in the United States and 10 million worldwide.

Bacchiocchi said he understands that one purpose of "Dies Domini" is to call recalcitrant Catholics back to Mass on Sunday. Studies show that from one-fourth to one-third of the 60 million U.S. Catholics attend church weekly. In Italy, the figure is 28 percent; in some countries in Latin America, attendance has dropped to as low as 6 percent.

If the Catholic church wants to enforce church attendance by imposing penalties on those who don't attend regularly, "that's their prerogative," Bacchiocchi said. "What's troubling to me is that the pope expects civil governments to support the church plan by passing civil legislation."

Bacchiocchi also argues that the insistence on Sunday Sabbath-keeping is a form of anti-Semitism. The shift in the early church toward worshipping on Sunday began in the 2nd century during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, who "promulgated the most anti-Jewish, anti-Sabbath laws" after Jewish revolts in Palestine, he said. To avoid the repressive laws, Christians moved their celebrations to the first day of Creation, the "day of the sun."

The issue is "not just the Sabbath but the whole relationship of Christianity and Judaism," Bacchiocchi said. "Christianity has been plagued by anti-Semitism and theology that is contemptible of the Jews, not only for the abandonment of the Sabbath but the heritage of the Jewish faith."

Moroney said that observing the Sabbath on Sunday is not anti-Semitic, but reflects the Christian belief that Jesus's death and resurrection offered a "new covenant" between God and humanity.

"God chose the church as the interpreter of tradition," he said. And Jesus's early followers, the founders of the church, interpreted the Sabbath tradition in light of the life and death of the man they believed to be the Messiah.

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BACCHIOCCHI'S COMMENTS:

For the sake of brevity I will limit my remarks to two basic issues: (1) The Pope's attempt to make Sunday the fulfillment of the Sabbath; (2) The larger implication of the Sabbath/Sunday issue for the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, Judaism and Christianity.

The Pope's Attempt to Make Sunday the Biblical Sabbath

John Paul believes, as Broadway mentions in his article, that "the underlying reasons for keeping 'the Lord's Day' holy" are "inscribed solemnly in the Ten Commandments." Such reasons, the Pope maintains, "need to be reinterpreted in the light of the theology and spirituality of Sunday: 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.'"

The Pope's view of Sunday as the embodiment and "full expression" of the Sabbath stands in stark contrast to the so-called "New Covenant" and Dispensational theology that emphasizes the radical discontinuity between Sabbath and Sunday. The Pope rejects this position, defending instead the creational origin of the Sabbath in which he finds the theological foundation of Sunday observance. He writes: "In order to grasp fully the meaning of Sunday, therefore, we must re-read the great story of creation and deepen our understanding of the theology of the 'Sabbath.'"

The problem with John Paul is that he reads Sunday in creation story by applying, for example, to Sunday God's blessing and sanctification of the Sabbath. "Sunday is the day of rest because it is the day 'blessed' by God and 'made holy' by him, set apart from the other days to be, among them, 'the Lord's Day.'" It is evident that the Pope completely misreads the creation story because what God blessed, made holy and set apart from the other days, is the seventh day and not the first day of the week.

More importantly, the Pope makes Sunday the "full expression" of the Sabbath by arguing that Sunday, as the Lord's Day, fulfills the creative and redemptive functions of the Sabbath. These two functions, the Pope claims, "reveal the meaning of the 'Lord's Day' within a single theological vision which fuses creation and salvation."

The Pope maintains that New Testament Christians "made the first day after the Sabbath a festive day" because they discovered that the creative and redemptive accomplishments celebrated by the Sabbath, found their "fullest expression in Christ's Death and Resurrection, though its definitive fulfillment will not come until the Parousia, when Christ returns in glory."

The Rev. James P. Moroney, executive director of the liturgy office at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, concurs with the Pope's attempt to make Sunday the "full expression of the Sabbath." In his interview with Mr. Broadway, Moroney said: "The intention of the Holy Father's statement is to restore the appreciation of the celebration of the Sabbath to the day of resurrection."

The attempt "to restore the appreciation of the celebration of the Sabbath to the day of resurrection," is very ingenious, but it lacks biblical and historical support. From a Biblical perspective, there are no indications that New Testament Christians ever interpreted the day of Christ's Resurrection as representing the fulfillment and "full expression" of the Sabbath. In fact, the New Testament attributes no liturgical significance to the day of Christ's Resurrection, simply because the Resurrection was seen as an existential reality experienced by living victoriously by the power of the Risen Savior, and not a liturgical practice, associated with Sunday worship.

Had Jesus wanted to memorialize the day of His resurrection, He would have capitalized on the day of His resurrection to make such a day the fitting memorial of that event. But, none of the utterances of the risen Savior reveal an intent to memorialize the day of His Resurrection by making it the new Christian day of rest and worship. Biblical institutions such as the Sabbath, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, all trace their origin to a divine act that established them. But there is no such divine act to sanction a weekly Sunday or annual Easter Sunday memorial of the Resurrection.

From a historical perspective, Moroney's claim that "the Sunday Sabbath dates [back] to the time of the apostles," as well as the Pope's claim that the celebration of Christ's Resurrection on a weekly Sunday and annual Easter-Sunday "evolved from the early years after the Lord's Resurrection," are discredited by compelling historical facts. For example, for at least a century after Christ's death Passover was still observed by the date of Nisan 14 (irrespective of the day of the week), and not on Easter-Sunday. When in the latter part of the second century Bishop Victor of Rome (189-198) attempted to impose Easter-Sunday on the churches of Asia Minor, he was met with a strong opposition.

Indications such as these discredit the attempts to invest Sunday with the theological meaning and eschatological function of the Sabbath. Such attempts break the continuity and cosmic scope of the Sabbath which embraces and unites creation, redemption and final restoration; the past, the present and the future; man, nature and God; this world and the world to come. From a biblical and historical perspective, Sunday is not the Sabbath because the two days differ in authority, meaning, and experience.

Difference in Authority. The difference in authority lies in the fact that while Sabbathkeeping rests upon an explicit biblical command (Gen 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11; Mark 2:27-28; Heb 4:9), Sundaykeeping derives from an interplay of social, political, pagan, and religious factors. I have examined these factors at length in my dissertation **From Sabbath to Sunday**, published by the Pontifical Gregorian University, in Rome, Italy. The lack of a biblical authority for Sundaykeeping may well be a major contributing factor to the crisis of Sunday observance that John Paul rightly laments.

The vast majority of Christians, especially in the Western world, view their Sunday as a holiday to seek personal pleasure and profit rather than a holy day to seek divine presence and peace. I submit that a major contributing factor to the secularization of Sunday is the prevailing perception that there is no divine, biblical command to keep Sunday as a holy day.

The lack of a biblical conviction that Sunday should be observed as the holy Sabbath day may well explain why most Christians see nothing wrong in devoting their Sunday time to themselves rather than to the Lord. If there was a strong theological conviction that the principle of Sundaykeeping was divinely established at creation and later "inscribed" in the Decalogue, as the Pope attempts to prove, then Christians would feel compelled to act accordingly.

Difference in Meaning. John Paul recognizes the need to make Sundaykeeping a moral imperative and he tries to accomplish this by rooting the day in the Sabbath commandment itself. But this cannot be done because Sunday is not the Sabbath. The two days have a different meaning and function. While in Scripture the Sabbath memorializes God's perfect creation, complete redemption, and final restoration, Sunday is justified in the earliest Patristic literature as the commemoration of the creation of light on the first day of the week, the cosmic-eschatological symbol of the new eternal world typified by the eighth day, and the memorial of Christ's Sunday Resurrection.

None of the historical meanings attributed to Sunday require per se the observance of the day by resting and worshipping the Lord. For example, nowhere does Scripture suggest that the creation of light on the first day ought to be celebrated through a weekly Sunday rest and worship. Even the Resurrection event does not require per se a weekly or annual Sunday celebration.

The attempt to transfer to Sunday the biblical authority and meaning of the Sabbath is doomed to fail because it is impossible to retain the same authority, meaning, and experience when the date of a festival is changed. For example, if a person or an organization should succeed in changing the date of the Declaration of Independence from the 4th to the 5th of July, the new date could hardly be viewed as the legitimate celebration of Independence Day.

Similarly, if the festival of the Sabbath is changed from the seventh to the first day, the latter can hardly memorialize the divine acts of creation, redemption, and final restoration which are linked to the typology of the seventh day. To invest Sunday with the theological meaning and function of the Sabbath means to adulterate a divine institution by making a holy day out of what God created to be a working day.

Difference in Experience. Third, the difference between Sabbath and Sunday is one of experience. While Sundaykeeping began and has remained largely the hour of worship, Sabbathkeeping is presented in Scriptures as twenty-four hours consecrated to God. In spite of the efforts made by Constantine, church councils, and the Puritans to

make Sunday a total day of rest and worship, the historical reality is that Sunday observance has been equated with church attendance. John Paul acknowledges this historical reality in chapter 3 of the Pastoral Letter entitled "The Day of the Church. The Eucharistic Assembly: The Heart of Sunday." The thrust of the chapter is that the heart of Sunday observance is the participation in the Mass. He cites the new **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, which says: "The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life."

The end of Sunday church services represents for many Christians also the termination of Sundaykeeping. After church, they go in good conscience to the shopping mall, a ball game, a dance hall, a theater, etc. It came as a surprise for me to discover that even in the "Bible Belt" many shops open for business as soon as the church services are over. The message is clear. The rest of Sunday is business as usual.

The recognition of this historical reality has led Christopher Kiesling, a distinguished Catholic Liturgist, to argue in his book **The Future of the Christian Sunday** for the abandonment of the notion of Sunday as a day of rest and for the retention of Sunday as the hour of worship. His reasoning is that since Sunday has never been a day of total rest and worship, there is no hope to make it so today when most people want holidays, not holy days.

Celebrating the Sabbath, however, means not merely attending church services but consecrating its twenty-four hours to the Lord. The Sabbath commandment does not say, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy by attending Sabbath school and church services." What the commandment requires is to work six days and rest on the seventh day unto the Lord (Ex 20:8-10). This means that the essence of Sabbathkeeping is the consecration of time. The act of resting unto the Lord makes all the Sabbath activities, whether they be formal worship or informal fellowship and recreation, an act of worship because all of them spring out of a heart which has decided to honor God.

The act of resting on the Sabbath unto the Lord becomes the means through which the believer enters into God's rest (Heb 4:10) by experiencing more fully and freely the awareness of God's presence, peace, and rest. This unique experience of Sabbathkeeping is foreign to Sundaykeeping because the essence of the latter is not the consecration of time but rather church attendance, generally followed by secular activities.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, we conclude that the Pope's attempt to make Sunday the theological and existential embodiment of the Sabbath is doomed to fail because the two days differ radically in their authority, meaning, and experience.

The Relationship between the Old and New Testaments, Judaism and Christianity

The Sabbath/Sunday question has profound implications for understanding and defining the whole relationship between the Old and New Testaments as well as between Judaism and Christianity. In his interview with Broadway, Moroney said that "observing the Sabbath on Sunday is not anti-Semitic, but reflects the Christian belief that Jesus's death and resurrection offered a 'new covenant' between God and humanity."

Most Christians, like Moroney, do not see any anti-Judaic influence or attitude in their observing Sunday rather than Saturday. The reason is simple. They ignore what led in the first place to the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday. They define the meaning of Sunday in terms of the celebration of the resurrection, ignoring that the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week was not the major contributing factor to the adoption of Sunday observance.

A careful study of all the references to the Resurrection reveals the incomparable importance of the event, but it does not provide any indication regarding a special day to

commemorate it. In fact, as Harold Riesenfeld notes, "In the accounts of the Resurrection in the Gospels, there are no sayings which direct that the great event of Christ's Resurrection should be commemorated on the particular day of the week on which it occurred."

Moreover, as the same author observes, "The first day of the week, in the writings of the New Testament, is never called 'Day of the Resurrection'. This is a term which made its appearance later." Its usage first appears in the fourth century in the writing of Eusebius of Caesarea. Therefore, "to say that Sunday was observed because Jesus rose on that day," as S. V. McCasland cogently states, "is really a *petitio principii* [begging the question], for such a celebration might just as well be monthly or annually and still be an observance of that particular day."

The New Testament attributes no liturgical significance to the day of Christ's Resurrection simply because the Resurrection was seen as an existential reality experienced by living victoriously by the power of the Risen Savior, and not a liturgical practice associated with Sunday worship. The silence of the New Testament on this matter is very important since most of its books were written many years after Christ's death and Resurrection. If by the latter half of the first century Sunday had come to be viewed as the memorial of the Resurrection which fulfilled the creation/redemption functions of the Old Testament Sabbath, as the Pope claims, we would expect to find in the New Testament some allusions to the religious meaning and observance of the weekly Sunday and/or annual Easter-Sunday.

The total absence of any such allusions indicates that the change from Sabbath to Sunday occurred in the post-apostolic period as a result of an interplay of political, social, and religious factors, which I have examined at length in my dissertation **From Sabbath to Sunday**. These developments began during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (A. D. 117-138) as a result of the repressive anti-Judaic legislation. In A. D. 135, Hadrian promulgated a legislation that categorically prohibited the practice of Judaism, in general, and of Sabbathkeeping, in particular. The aim of this legislation was to liquidate Judaism as a religion at a time when the Jews were experiencing resurgent Messianic expectations that exploded in violent uprisings in various parts of the empire, especially Palestine.

To avoid the repressive anti-Jewish and anti-Sabbath legislation, most Christians adopted the Day of the Sun as their new day of worship. This enabled them to show the Roman authorities their differentiations from the Jews and their identification and integration with the customs and cycles of the Roman empire.

To develop a theological justification for worshipping on the Day of the Sun, Christians appealed to God's creation of light on the first day and to the Resurrection of Christ as the Sun of Justice, since both events coincided with the Day of the Sun. The latter was connected to the first day of the creation-week, because the creation of light on the first day provided what appeared to many a providential biblical justification for observing the Day of the Sun, the generator of light.

"Christian" Theology of Contempt for the Jews. More important for the issue we are addressing is the fact that the Sabbath was reduced to a temporary ordinance, deriving from Moses and enjoined exclusively upon the Jews as a trademark of their wickedness. Justin Martyr (about A. D. 150), a saint for the Catholic Church, expresses this view most emphatically, saying: "As I stated before, it was by reason of your [Jewish] sins and the sins of your fathers that, among other precepts, God imposed upon you [Jews] the observance of the Sabbath as a mark."

The reduction of the Sabbath to a trade mark of Jewish depravity marks the beginning of a "Christian" theology of contempt for the Jews that has plagued Christianity throughout the centuries. Today this theology of contempt is well represented by Dispensationalism, which is widely embraced by Evangelicals. In a nutshell the fundamental construct of Dispensational and the New Covenant theology is as follows.

The Cross is seen as the line of demarcation between Judaism and Christianity. Before the Cross there was Judaism, the law, and Sabbathkeeping. After the Cross there is Christianity, grace, and Sundaykeeping.

What this means is that Sabbathkeepers are generally regarded as "Jews," still living under the Old Covenant. I grew up in the shadow of the Vatican being called a "Jew" for being a Sabbatarian. Being called a "Jew" especially after the World War II when six million Jews had been liquidated, was not a compliment. Moroney himself speaks of Sundaykeeping as indicative of the "New Covenant between God and humanity."

To make the Sabbath versus Sunday as representing the Old versus the New Covenant, means to ignore that the Bible teaches that the New Covenant that God will make with the House of Israel consists not in the replacement of the Sabbath with Sunday, but in the **internalization** of God's law: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my Law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God" (Jer 31:33).

The difference between the Old and New Covenants is not one of Sabbath versus Sunday or of "Law" versus "Grace." Rather, it is a difference between failure to internalize God's Law (which includes the Sabbath commandment), which results in disobedience, and successful internalization of God's Law, which results in obedience. The New Covenant believer who internalizes God's Law by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit observes, not a new day of rest and worship, but God's Holy Sabbath day in accordance with the spirit of the commandment.

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

Paradoxically, Dispensational preachers and authors give the impression of being great supporters of the Jews and of the State of Israel. For example, Jerry Falwell is quoted as saying in the very same issue of **Washington Post** where this article appeared (Saturday, January 23, page B11): "If there is a person on Earth today outside the Jewish community who has stronger credentials of being pro-Jewish and pro-Israel outside Jerry Falwell, I haven't met him." What Falwell fails to state, however, are the reasons for his being "pro-Jewish and pro-Israel."

The reasons are evident in the Dispensational theology which he espouses. Dispensationalism teaches that restoration of the Jews to their homeland is the center piece of endtime prophecies that sets the stage for the Rapture, tribulation, appearance of the Antichrist, rebuilding of the Temple, Return of Christ, and millennial kingdom of Christ. To put it bluntly, Dispensational preachers and writers are eager to promote the advancement of the State of Israel, simply because they see this as the necessary prelude to rapture of the Church. The sooner the Jews are fully established in their homeland, the sooner the church will be raptured away, and the sooner God will lash out on the Jews as He has never done before.

Jewish leaders are intelligent enough to understand that the "pro-Jewish and pro-Israel" policy of people like Jerry Falwell ultimately derives from a theology of contempt for the Jews. This point is clearly made in the **Washington Post's** article dealing with Jerry Falwell's remarks about the Antichrist being a Jew Jewish male who is probably "alive somewhere today" (January 23, 1999, page B11). Phil Baum, the executive director of the American Jewish Congress is quoted in the article as saying about Jerry Falwell:

"Here's a man who professes to be sympathetic to Jewish causes of all kinds, and at the same time, he indulges in this kind of brutal statement. Most people who hear it will think that Jews . . . are responsible for evil in the world. What he's doing is causing an anti-Semitic response, and he is accountable for that."

On a similar vein Abraham H. Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, is quoted in the same article as saying that despite "years of Christian-Jewish dialogue, Rev. Falwell hasn't learned a thing. Reverting back to a distorted interpretation of the text of the New Testament, he revisits the worst in intolerance that resulted in persecution of the Jewish people and inquisitions."

The reason Rev. Falwell and evangelical colleagues like him have not "learned a thing," about God's glorious plan for the salvation of Jews and Gentiles, is simply because their minds have been blinded by centuries of theology of contempt for the Jews. A most evident sign of such theology, is the reduction of the Sabbath to an Old Covenant, Jewish institution, terminated at the Cross and the promotion of Sunday as the sign of the New Covenant.

The whole concept that the Sabbath is the sign of the Old Covenant given to the Jews and Sunday is the sign of the New Covenant given to the Christians, is appalling to any sane and sensible Bible student. Why would God offer salvation in two different ways to two different people? Did He discover that He made a mistake in the Old Covenant He gave to the Jews and that He needed to remedy the problem by giving a better and New Covenant the Christians? This hardly sounds as the God of Biblical revelation who does not learn by mistakes.

The time has come for Christians to reject the theology of contempt for the Jews, which has caused untold damage to Christian beliefs and practices, and to recover the Jewish heritage of the Christian faith. After all Jesus, twelve Apostles, as well as the thousands who responded to the Messianic proclamation were "believing Jews" who lived in accordance to the principles of the Law (Acts 21:20). Correspondents like Bill Broadway of various nationally respected papers can help in this process by helping people to see the need to overcome centuries of deeply ingrained anti-Judaism and rediscover the Hebraic foundation of the Christian faith.

If you have found this discussion enlightening, be sure to tell your friends that they also can receive these essays free of charge, simply by requesting to have their names added to the **Endtime Issues Forum**.

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