

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships.

## **Weekly Readings** **For the Sabbath of August 20, 2016**

*The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.*

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[Same head piece as last Sabbath] *YHWH* spoke to Moses, saying, "Avenge the people of Israel on the Midianites. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people." So Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the Lord's vengeance on Midian. You shall send a thousand from each of the tribes of Israel to the war." So there were provided, out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand from each tribe, together with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. ...

Then they brought the captives and the plunder and the spoil to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the people of Israel, at the camp on the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the chiefs of the congregation went to meet them outside the camp. And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. Moses said to them, "Have you let all the women live? Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord. Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him keep alive for yourselves. (Num 31:1–6, 12–18)

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*Moses: Have you let all the women live? Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord—*

To aid disciples who do not remember the incident, or who do not remember Balaam's role in the incident, the following citation should prove helpful:

While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of *YHWH* was kindled against Israel. And *YHWH* said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the Lord, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel." And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor." And behold, one of the people of Israel came and brought a Midianite woman to his family, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose and left the congregation and took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped. Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. (Num 25:1–9)

Balaam's role in getting the women of Peor to invite the people of Israel to their sacrifices is unstated, but apparently significant enough that Moses knew of it—and the Lord never forgot it:

And *YHWH* spoke to Moses, saying, "Harass the Midianites and strike them down, for they have harassed you with their wives, with which they beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the chief of Midian, their sister, who was killed on the day of the plague on account of Peor." (Num 25:16–18)

Again, if what the Apostle Paul wrote is true—

I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. (1 Cor 10:1–6)

and these things were written down for those disciples upon whom the end of the age has come (1 Cor 10:11), then what happened at the end of the forty years has relevance to what will happen during the Affliction and Endurance of Jesus, the two halves of the seven endtime years ... more than that: from the Passover liberation of Israel in Egypt through when Israel, behind Joshua [in Greek, *Íesous* — *Jesus*], crossed into the Promised Land and to when Israel asked for a king (so Israel would be like other nations), a period of four centuries, Israel formed the left hand enantiomer of the Christian Church from the Second Passover until the Apostasy of day 220.

Four centuries reduced to 220 days—this follows one day, the First Unleavened, being expanded to two millennia; so truly, with God time and its passage doesn't have the same relevance as it does with humanity.

The author of Hebrews wrote, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8). If He is the same today, thirty-five hundred years after the women of Peor seduced the people of Israel into offering sacrifices to Baal, as He was when He as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, commanded Moses to wipe out the Midianites, Israel’s circumcised brothers, then Christians need to be careful how they worship the Father and the Son. For as the Word of God [*ó Logos tou Theou*], His “sameness yesterday, today, and tomorrow” gives authority to what Moses wrote in the Second Covenant, the covenant that Paul identified as “the righteousness based on faith” (Rom 10:6), this covenant being the Book of Deuteronomy.

The following is a long citation — but then, this is a Sabbath Reading, and reading Scripture should occur,

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, “Let us go after other gods,” which you have not known, “and let us serve them,” you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For *the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul*. You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because He has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you.

If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to dwell there, that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which you have not known, then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with

fire, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as He swore to your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all His commandments that I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God. (Deut 13:1–18 emphasis added)

The Lord tests Israel? He tested Abraham (Gen 22:1); so why wouldn't He test Israel on the matter of whether you, as an Israelite, truly loves the Lord you're your heart and mind? Obviously, in the incident at Beor, there were Israelites who didn't; there were Israelites who loved the flesh of Midian women more than they loved the Lord.

Unfortunately for Sabbatarian Christians, the greater Christian Church will pluck passages from Moses to use as their justification for killing the Elect, the chosen ones: *If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, "Let us go after other gods," which you have not known, "and let us serve them," you [shall kill] ... that prophet or that dreamer of dreams ... because He has taught rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery.*

If greater Christendom were to determine who these other Gods would be, greater Christendom would find itself divided between Arian and Trinitarian, with both Arian and Trinitarian determined to kill Sabbatarians who will not worship a triune deity, nor deny that Christ Jesus is God. So to greater Christendom, "other Gods" would be the Father and the Son, the God of dead ones and the former God of living ones who had the glory He had before the world existed returned to Him. And because greater Christendom has never known these two, Christians within the greater Church will feel morally obligated to kill Sabbatarian disciples, all the while using Moses to justify doing so.

Yes, the preceding citation from Moses will be the basis for greater Christendom killing those who are faithfully serving God and keeping the Commandments; for they (greater Christendom) will not have served this God, nor do they know Him. For the god or gods that they have been serving are not "false" to those who commit fornication with them; they are not false to those who have familiar spirits; they are not false to those who preach the prosperity gospel; they are not false to those who have never known Christ Jesus, but only known Jesus as an infant in a manger.

I'm sorry to have to tell you as a Sabbatarian Christian this, but the souls [*psuchas*] that sleep under the altar are of the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Elect, and "they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been" (Rev 6:11). The Elect in the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century will be killed as they were in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century. Widespread martyrdom will return. And how many are to be killed cannot be known, but the history of physical Israel was written in blood.

As there will be no way to convince Christians within the greater Church that their triune deity sprang from the foreheads of men as Athena sprang from the

forehead of Zeus, there was no way for Israel to convince Midianites that Baal was not *a real god*, but was a figment of human imagination. There was nothing Israel could say or do if the Lord didn't want to make Himself known to Midianites. What could Moses have done to change the dynamics on the ground? And this will be the dilemma of Sabbatarian Christendom following the Second Passover—there will be nothing the Sabbatarian can do to persuade Christians within the greater Church not to keep Christmas. No history lesson on the origin of Christmas will work. No logical argument will prevail. All the Sabbatarian can do is separate him or herself from family, friends, and neighbors, and quietly slip out of town before anyone realizes the Sabbatarian is gone. The Sabbatarian will have to let God do His work (God's work); for again, it is from the Elect, the chosen ones, that the souls [*psuchas*] will come that are “to be killed” as those that sleep under the altar were killed (Rev 6:9–11).

A digression: a question has arisen as to why *Philadelphia* almost always uses the naming phrase, “Christ Jesus,” rather than the more common, “Jesus Christ” of English speaking Christendom. *Christ* is a title, the translation from Hebrew into Greek of the Messiah. Hence, in a naming phrase, *Christ* functions in the same way as “King” functions in the naming phrase, King David. No one would think to call King David, *David King*. Nor would an English speaker identify Prince Charles as *Charles Prince*, nor call Prince Harry, *Harry Prince*. Therefore, unless writing the naming phrase “Jesus the Christ,” the respectful way to identify Jesus is as *Christ Jesus*, which doesn't close the door to younger siblings of Christ Jesus also being firstborn sons of God through being the Body of Christ—and if the Body, then also “Christ” as a title, not as a last name. Hence, there could be a *Christ Paul* or *Christ Peter*, which isn't sacrilegious but the reality of Jesus being the firstborn of many brothers (Rom 8:29). And in English, titles precede first names, not last names. Therefore when Paul McCartney was knighted, he became *Sir Paul*, not *Sir McCartney*.

Christians know Jesus as *Jesus the Nazarene*, or *Jesus of Nazareth*. The location of families hadn't yet developed into a last name. So while there were other men named *Jesus*, the Greek form of *Joshua* (because as Indo-European speakers, Greeks didn't hear or utter the Hebrew <ʿAyin> consonant or character, the consonant was left out of the name), there were not so many men named *Jesus* that the identifier of location [“of Nazareth”] wasn't sufficient to individualize the man. Therefore, when the title <*Christ*> is added to a first name <*Jesus*>, we get Christ Jesus, not *Jesus Christ*, the translators' shortened form of <ὁ Ἰησους ὁ Χριστος> [the Jesus the Christ], translators apparently believing that the definite article attached to Greek nouns didn't need to be included in their translations.

Back to Balaam: when “Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites,” Balak was king of Moab and “Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel” (Num 22:2–3); so Balak send for Balaam, saying,

Behold, a people has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are dwelling opposite me. Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed. (Num 22:5–6)

Apparently the words of Balaam, the son of Peor, were honored by the Lord ...

Many prayers made by Christians within the greater Church are honored by God, Father and Son. A person doesn't have to be born of spirit to have his or her prayers heard and honored; for every Christian within the greater Church is a potential son of God ... when a person is truly born of spirit, the person ceases to be a potential son of God and becomes an actual son through the indwelling of the spirit of Christ. However, this doesn't mean that more of the person's prayers are answered—if you as the parent of a human infant will permit your child to cry when the child has a dry diaper, has been fed and burped, and doesn't have anything apparently wrong, why would God not also permit His infant son to cry a little when this son has crawled into a corner and cannot get out without turning around and retracing the infant's crawl? Surely as a human parent, you have had an infant crawl into the corner of the room and begin bawling because the walls of the corner prevent the infant from continuing in the direction the infant was headed. If you immediately went over and turned the infant around, or picked the infant up, did the infant learn to solve the problem of crawling into corners? Rather, if you gave the infant some time to see if the infant could figure out how to get out of the corner on his or her own, would you ever have to rescue the infant from a corner again? And so it is with God, for human maturation forms a shadow and copy of spiritual maturation.

God will permit His sons to work out their own difficulties in this world for as long as doing so doesn't spiritually harm His son. This means, more often than not, that prayers are not answered; for whether the infant son of God realizes it, he has *in his belief of God* the ability to *readjust* the physical world in which the son lives. Of course, most infant sons of God don't really believe they can walk on water—and most shouldn't attempt to walk on water for that would be tempting God—however the following lines from the poem “Perspective” applies, with the highlight line being germane to the issue at hand:

we didn't have much time  
to get around Priest Rock  
before seas would be too rough  
so I headed into the rip--  
the rolling rocked us as ripples  
became racks of water threefourfive  
feet high, rising, falling, jumping  
jumping, moving, stretching, jumping--

on our crossing from Homer to Kodiak  
even in the Barrens, we had flat seas  
although we did see a little rough water  
in Shuyak Pass  
but nothing like this--  
the rip became ridges  
six, eight feet high  
ridges that seemed too high  
too rough for any boat our size  
ridges that wrenched rudder

making steering impossible  
I was on the throttle, off  
on again, trying to keep up  
stay ahead, keep our bow  
into the next sea--  
the ridges steepened  
felt like cliffs  
that sloughed away under us  
letting us fall ten  
twelve feet--  
twelve became twenty  
as the ridges  
became spikes  
jumping, leaping, straining  
timbers & nails--  
pitched & dropped & dropped  
& dropped again till  
I looked at the near shore  
maybe a mile away  
& wondered if I could walk  
that far--

twenty feet become thirty  
foot walls, high  
as a house, then gone  
breaking beneath us  
& falling away  
only to form again  
before our bow could lift--  
the forward hatch cover was ripped away  
five feet of greenwater  
swept over the wheelhouse  
filling bilges  
backing up scuppers  
swamping the aft deck  
low in the water, heavy  
very heavy, the boat I knew  
couldn't take another thirty footer--  
**I also knew I could walk that mile**

but with us heavy  
nearly helpless  
the next wall was  
maybe, ten feet  
& the one after that six  
hardly rough at all

*from the collection, Upriver, Beyond the Bend (2001)*

Almost without exception, the sentiments expressed in this poem—a reality that occurred in August 1979—are what happens when sons of God find themselves in trouble in this physical world. Nothing really happens that is observable. As soon as I had no doubts, truly no doubts, about being able to walk to Lava Point, there was no need to even consider walking.

Two one-inch bilge pumps ran full lines all the way into Dutch. I bailed more than a hundred five gallon buckets of water from the bilge, and except for having to replace the forward hatch, we were in good shape by the time we off-loaded at Pacific Pearl's dock next to UniSea.

A forest fire threatens a son of God's home. The son of God prepares to evacuate, the prudent thing to do. But the son of God also prays for protection, and the fire, just before topping the ridge standing between it and the son of God's home, turns and races off in another direction ... was there intervention by God? There was none readily apparent for the fire continued to rage for days as firefighters fought to contain it. But the son of God's home was spared.

What happens if this scenario repeats itself, twice, three times, four times. Will the son of God become superstitious, or will the faith of the son of God become stronger? Hopefully, the belief of the son will become strong enough that when confronted with seemingly hopeless situations, the son proceeds on, knowing that death is a possibility but won't happen unless the son of God has grown spiritually enough to satisfy God—and this is not an excuse for not growing, but a valid reason for growing as fast as possible.

Now, back to Balaam, who told the messengers that Balak sent,

And he [Balaam] said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lork speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. And God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, 'Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Now come, curse them for me. Perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you." (Num 22:8–13)

The Lord spoke to Balaam—that should have been enough for Balaam. Balaam certainly knew enough not to go against what the Lord told him, but he was inwardly desirous of obtaining the honor and moneys that Balak offered.

At this point, Balaam's intellect warred with his empty purse, and his intellect would win, but his purse remained empty.

Balak was unwilling to accept Balaam's rejection of his divination offering; so he sent more honorable (men of higher rank) to Balaam to again request Balaam to come help him repel Israel from his lands.

But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the Lord my God to do less or more. So you, too, please stay here tonight, that I may know what more the Lord will say to me." And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you." So Balaam rose in



the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab.  
But God's anger was kindled because he went ... (Num 22:18–22)

Didn't God just tell Balaam to go with the men? That is what the text says. So why would God's anger be kindled against Balaam? And why should the angel of the Lord go through the charade of blocking Balaam path, when if He truly wanted to kill Balaam, He wouldn't have had to use a sword? He could have simply stopped his heart.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century, the study of narratives replaced the study of genres. Scholars realized that stories conveyed knowledge and were found in so many different forms that the "names" historically assigned to these forms became problematic. And the story of Balaam presents such problems in a narrative seemingly about the Israelite people:

And the angel of *YHWH* took His stand in the way as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. And the donkey saw the angel of *YHWH* standing in the road, with a drawn sword in His hand. And the donkey turned aside out of the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey, to turn her into the road. Then the angel of *YHWH* stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. And when the donkey saw the angel of *YHWH*, she pushed against the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall. So he struck her again. Then the angel of *YHWH* went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of *YHWH*, she lay down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. Then *YHWH* opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me. I wish I had a sword in my hand, for then I would kill you." And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey, on which you have ridden all your life long to this day? Is it my habit to treat you this way?" And he said, "No." (Num 22:22–30)

What is the relationship between Balaam and his donkey [ass] in comparison to the relationship between the Lord and Balaam? Has Balaam faithfully served the Lord up to the point when he went with the men sent by Balak? Should Balaam have even asked a second time about going to curse Israel? Wasn't being told, *Don't go*, enough?

Yes, the Lord told Balaam to go when Balaam went a second time to the Lord to inquire about the same matter ... how many times does the reader find Moses going to the Lord a second time about a matter? Even about saving the lives of unbelieving Israelites? And in the juxtaposition between Balaam, whom the Lord answers, and Moses, also whom the Lord answers, is the story being told.

Would Moses have gone with anyone to curse a people? Did Moses curse Egyptians? How close does Moses come to cursing Pharaoh?

Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, "Go, serve the Lord; your little ones also may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind."  
But Moses said, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our livestock also must go with

us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God, and we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there." But *YHWH* hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. *Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die."* *Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again."* (Num 10:24–29 emphasis added)

Moses was mad, but was it Pharaoh's fault that the Lord hardened his heart, intending to destroy both Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Moses could have said more, but this is all that is recorded—and this is enough to get the measure of the man. For Moses had at the time, the power to remove Pharaoh from the world of the living. All he had to do was speak the word. But Moses was willing to let God handle the situation; Moses was willing to wait for God to do His work. Moses didn't need to do God's work for Him.

Christian ministries need to be more like Moses and less like Balaam, who wanted to go as far as God would permit him in collecting his divination fees. Moses wasn't interested in his own, but in Israel's welfare.

After the Lord put words in the mouth of Balaam's ass, the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, which became a phrase Balaam repeated: *The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened* (Num 24:3).

Then *YHWH* opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of *YHWH* standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face. And the angel of *YHWH* said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, *I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me and turned aside before me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let her live.*" Then Balaam said to the angel of *YHWH*, "*I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back.*" And the angel of *YHWH* said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you." So Balaam went on with the princes of Balak. (Num 22:31–35 emphasis added)

Consider how Balaam answered the Lord: *I have sinned* [I have been caught by my unbelief of you, O Lord], *for I did not know that you stood in the road against me* [if I would've known, I would have stayed in Beor]. *Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back* [I'll give up the honor and the money if that's what you want, O Lord] ...

Where was Balaam's heart in all of this? If he knew that the Lord was with the people of Israel, would not it have seemed reasonable for Balaam to want to side with the people of Israel? Why would he want to support his own people over the people of God?

Now, take the preceding question and move it into the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years: why would a Christian within the greater Church want to stick with friends and family when the Christian inwardly knows he or she should keep the Commandments? Why would this Christian keep Christmas—and this will be one of the issues about which the Apostasy occurs; the main issue being Sunday observance—when the Christian knows Jesus wasn't

born on or near December 25<sup>th</sup>? ... For the past 3500 years [time, times, and half a time], December 25<sup>th</sup> has represented the birthday of the sun, the winter solstice.

The solstice backs up a day every 900 years, thereby giving a reasonably reliable date for when the observance of December 25<sup>th</sup> began, four days from the present solstice.

Balaam, like a kid with his hand in the cookie jar, was sorry he aggravated the Lord, not sorry his heart was impure. Therefore, when he realized that it really was the Lord's intention to bless Israel, he blessed Israel:

When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered: How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel! Like palm groves that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brings him out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows. He crouched, he lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you. (Num 24:1-9)

Balaam's end did not turn out well: the men of Moses "also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword" (Num 31:8).

Christians can, today, play games with God and seemingly get away with their lawlessness. He will even answer their prayers upon occasion, but He is interested in what's in their hearts, not what is in their mouths. And what was in Balaam's heart was his focus upon himself; for he knew that if he could get Israel to sin against the Lord, the Lord would Himself take Israel out. And he was somewhat successful, for the Lord had already sent the plague against Israel, the plague having killed 24,000 before "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest ... took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel into the chamber and pierced both of them, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly. Thus the plague on the people of Israel was stopped" (Num 25:7-8).

If a Sabbatarian Christian listens carefully to the words of his well-intentioned Christian neighbor, he or she will hear Balaam's words in the words of the neighbor—and again, Balaam had his eyes opened, and the Lord talked with Balaam. But Balaam's heart wasn't pure. And that alone was enough to condemn him.

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*The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.*

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