The Sabbath Watchman

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Vol. 101, No. 3 – Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.



The Sabbath in Judaism Part 3

WORLD IN BRIEF

- Bulgaria
- Sweden
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Puerto Rico
- United States

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Introduction

The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. Exodus 20:10.

When God created the earth and placed human beings upon it, He divided time into seven periods. Six He gave to us for our own use, to employ in secular business; one He reserved for Himself. Having rested on the seventh day, He blessed and sanctified it. Henceforth, the seventh day was to be regarded as the Lord's rest day and to be sacredly observed as the memorial of His creative work. It was not the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth day that was sanctified, or set apart to a holy use; neither was it a seventh part of time and no day in particular; but it was the seventh day, the day upon which God had rested....

When the law was given at Sinai, the Sabbath was placed in the midst of moral precepts, in the very bosom of the Decalogue. But the Sabbath institution was not then made known for the first time. The fourth commandment places its origin at Creation. The Creator's rest day was hallowed by Adam in holy Eden and by the people of God throughout the patriarchal ages. During Israel's long bondage in Egypt, under taskmasters that knew not God, they could not keep the Sabbath; therefore the Lord brought them out where they could remember His holy day....

A threefold miracle was wrought in honor of the Sabbath, even before the law was given on Sinai. A double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none upon the Sabbath, and the portion needed for the Sabbath was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time, it became unfit for food. Here is conclusive evidence that the Sabbath was instituted at Creation, when the foundations of the earth were laid, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And its sacredness remains unchanged, and will so remain even to the close of time. From the Creation, every precept of the divine law has been obligatory on mankind and has been observed by those who fear the Lord. The doctrine that God's law has been abolished is one of Satan's devices to compass the ruin of the race....

The holy oracles were especially committed to the Jews; not to be an Israelite was not to belong to the favored people of God.... Now the prophet declares that the stranger who will love and obey God shall enjoy the privileges that have belonged exclusively to the chosen people.—*Signs of the Times*, February 28, 1884.

Ellen G. White.

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We believe:

- The all-wise, loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ; He is its Owner and Sustainer.
- He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.
- The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth, convicts of sin, guides into truth, and, when abiding in man, overcomes all unrighteousness.
- The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine; the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.
- His people, in harmony with God's Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.
- Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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The Sabbath in Judaism
Part 3

By Antonino Di Franca

IMAGINARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SABBATH

Jewish traditions about the Sabbath went very far, not only exalting the Sabbath in the way to observe it but also in adopting figures, symbols, and personifications to represent it. Some of the representations that were very emotional were its personification as a bride, as a princess, as a queen, or as guest. Of a different character were the renditions that depicted it as an angel or mediator. About the Sabbath as a bride and queen ("the Sabbath queen," šabbāt hammalkāh) is a poem going back to year 1540.

SONG "LEKA DODI"

"Beloved, come, the Bride to meet,
The Sabbath Princess let us greet.
Come, to the Sabbath greetings bring,
For it is blessings' constant spring:
Of old ordained, divinely taught,
Last in creation, first in thought.

"Beloved, come, the Bride to meet,
The Sabbath Princess let us greet.
Arouse thyself, awake and shine;
Thy light has come, the light divine;
Awake and sing, and over thee
The glory of the Lord shall be.

"Beloved, come, the Bride to meet,
The Sabbath Princess let us greet.
Crown of thy husband, come in peace;
Let joy and gladsome song increase.
Among His faith follow sorrow-tried,
His chosen people–come, O bride.

"Beloved, come, the Bride to meet,
The Sabbath Princess let us greet."

– Alkabetz, "Leka Dodi," c. 1540. UPB, 1940, i. 26, as quoted in, *The Union Prayer Book for Jewish Worship,* vol. 2, part 1, The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1978, pp. 26, 27.

Another author wrote about a tradition dating back to the sixteenth century; it is similar to the theme of the Sabbath being represented as a bride.

"Jewish tradition compares the arrival of the Sabbath to the arrival of an important guest. In the sixteenth century, the Jewish mystics of Safed in the Land of Israel took this imagery so seriously that on Friday afternoon they would dress in white as if they were going to a wedding. As the sun set and the Sabbath began, they would go to the outskirts of their town to 'welcome the Sabbath bride.' To this day, Sabbath is referred to as a bride and a queen." –Mark Dov Shapiro, Scott-Martin Kosofsky, *Gates of Shabbat: Shaarei Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat,* newly revised and updated, The Philidor Company, Central Conference of American Rabbis 2016, w.n.p.

While the previous quotation told of a tradition dating back to the sixteenth century, the symbols of a "bride," "queen," "signet," and "pearl" are very old and appear even in the Talmud. The *Jewish Encyclopaedia* mentions them, as shown below.

"'Queen' and 'bride' are two typical appellations for the day (Shab. 119a; B.Ḳ. 32a, b; Gen. R. x.); it is the signet on the ring (Ibid.). A special soul (*neshamah yeterah*) is given to man on the eve of the Sabbath, and leaves him again at its close (Beẓah 16a; Ta'an. 27b).... The Sabbath is a precious pearl (Midr. Teh. to Psalm xcii., ed. Buber, p. 201a)...." –Emil G. Hirsch, Joseph Jacobs, Julius H. Greestone, *Sabbath*, in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906.

"The Gemara now returns to the issue of delight in and deference to Shabbat. Rabbi Ḥanina would wrap himself in his garment and stand at nightfall on Shabbat eve and say: Come, and we will go out to greet Shabbat the queen. Rabbi Yannai put on his garment on Shabbat eve and said: Enter, O bride. Enter, O bride. The Gemara relates: Rabba bar Rav Huna happened to come to the house of Rabba bar Rav Naḥman. They brought before him three se'a of oiled biscuits. He said to them: Did you know I was coming and prepared all of this in my honour? They said to him: Are you more important to us than Shabbat? The biscuits were prepared in deference to Shabbat." –*Babylonian Talmud. Tractate Shabbath* 119a.

In emphasizing the enormous importance that Judaism attributed to the Sabbath, a more recent author wrote the following.

"The Sabbath had become highly personified in pharisaic Judaism, and it had become an extreme point of observance. They personified the Sabbath as the bride of Israel, and ADONAI's queen. At a certain point in the Friday night synagogue service, they would welcome the Sabbath by singing a song called, 'Welcome, my beloved, Queen Sabbath.'" –Jay Mack, *The Power of Christ over the Sabbath,* 2006-2018.

Such imaginary representations of the Sabbath were found in some old Jewish traditions of Ethiopian origin. The Sabbath was personified as an angel sitting on a throne and every week descending from the heavens, coming down to earth to bring blessings and rest to men.

"When on Friday the Sabbath rises from his throne on the side of the East, then he descends on the same day from the seven heavens, and ... the archangels crown God's



Sabbath." –Pseudo epigraphical work of Abyssinian Jewish, *Te'ezaza Sanbat* ["Sabbath's Commandments"], p. 139.

Such respect and reverence were shown to the "Sabbath angel" that it was said that the angels "prostrate before him with respect."

"When the Sabbath departs from the right hand of God and the grace of God goes with him, the angels depart with him and crown him, singing hymns of praise, thanksgiving, and glorification, and they prostrate before him with respect." –Pseudo epigraphical work of Abyssinian Jewish rabbis, *Te'ezaza Sanbat* ["Sabbath's Commandments"], p. 141.

According to such tradition, the dignity of the "Sabbath angel" is so high that nothing is like it and nothing can rival it.

"There's nothing like the Sabbath…. Nothing can rival with the Sabbath and with the observance of the precepts; and among all these precepts there is not one like that of the Sabbath commandment, that preserves men from hell…. Sabbath is far superior to all the commandments." –Pseudo epigraphical work of Abyssinian Jewish rabbis, *Te'ezaza Sanbat* ["Sabbath's Commandments"], p. 148).

"No prayer is worth more than the Sabbath prayer." –Pseudo epigraphical work of Abyssinian Jewish rabbis, Louanges, in *Te'ezaza Sanbat* ["Sabbath's commandments"], p. 229).

In such concepts, the merits of the "Sabbath angel" are such that it is not possible to compare other observances with that of the Sabbath precepts; this is "superior" to others and incomparable. If, as stated, it "preserves men from hell," it actually is seen as a saviour, thus making the Redeemer unnecessary. Thus, they reached the top of legalism, so one can understand why the Pharisees opposed Jesus the way they did. What else would one expect? Even if it is not certain that such conceptions were present among the Pharisees in Jesus' time, there were certainly trends that later led to such results, inevitably arousing many conflicts with the gospel.



THE SABBATH AS MEDIATOR

Closely connected with the Sabbath's exaltation were speculations that were made about those who observed it acquiring human merits that were independent of God's grace.

Rabbi Levi said, "When the first man transgressed the commandment of the Kadosh Baruch Hu, He sat in judgment to punish him. What was the outcome? You find that on Erev Shabbat man was created: In the first hour he was conceived in thought, in the second hour He consulted with the angels, in the third hour He gathered his dust, in the fourth hour He kneaded the dust, in the fifth hour He made him into a form, in the sixth hour He put the flesh on him, in the seventh hour He breathed into him a soul, in the eighth hour He stood him on his legs, in the ninth hour He commanded him, in the tenth hour he sinned, in the eleventh hour he was judged, in the twelfth hour he was thrown out. God came to sentence him, but Shabbat arrived and God expelled Adam from there…. Yom Shabbat came and became his defence attorney, saying before the Kadosh Baruch Hu, 'Master of the universe, in the six days of creation, no one suffered punishment at all, and You begin with me? Is this my holiness? Is this my rest?' And for the sake of Shabbat, Adam was saved from Gehinnom.

When Adam saw the power of Shabbat, he was about to sing a hymn to Shabbat, but Shabbat said to him, 'To me you sing a hymn? Let's you and I sing a hymn to the Kadosh Baruch Hu, let it be "tov lehodot lashem…'" –Rabbi Gail Diamond, *Psalm 92–Psalms of Pesukei Dezimra of Shabbat.*

In this Judaic view, the Sabbath became the meditator and redeemer. Under such conditions, to wait for salvation from a being like the Messiah, the Son of God, would make no sense. This view of the law and the Sabbath usurps the Redeemer's place and mission.

REWARD FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Once the Sabbath was raised to such a level, it was inevitable that there would be people who stressed the human merits of those who observed it according to the rabbinical teachings. Since they tended toward righteousness, the Jews even developed an idea about the reward bestowed for Sabbath observance.

"Those that observe the Sabbath are ranked with those that give tithes and honor the Law; their rewards are identical (Shabbath 119a…). Two angels, one good, the other evil, accompany every Jew on Sabbath eve from the synagogue to the house. If the Sabbath lamp is found lighted and the table spread, the good angel prays that this may be the case also on the following Sabbath, and the evil angel is compelled to say 'Amen' to this; but if no preparations for the Sabbath are seen, the evil angel pronounces a curse, and the good angel is compelled to say 'Amen.' (Shabbath. 119b)." –Emil G. Hirsch, Joseph Jacobs, Julius H. Greenstone, *Sabbath, in Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1906.

Thus, the rabbinical traditions and regulations were not just matters of different interpretations, nor of diversity in the ways of observing the Sabbath, but of fundamental principles concerning its value, for the rabbis actually made the way the Sabbath was kept a saviour of the people. So one must ask, Could there be harmony between these concepts and practices of the rabbis and the practice and teaching of Jesus? In no case.

THE IDEA OF MERITS FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE

Not understanding that salvation and Heaven's gifts are granted solely by divine grace, the Jews went so far as to develop the teaching that those who observed the Sabbath received merits. Instead of seeing the Sabbath as God's gift and blessing, they understood it as a means of salvation.

"O My people, behold, you have annulled all Ten Commandments. Nevertheless, if you had kept one Commandment, … I would have forgiven you. And which commandment is this? It is the commandment concerning the Sabbath day." –Pesikta Rabbati 27:4, as quoted in The Sabbath in Scripture and History, p. 71; cf. Herold Weiss, *A Day of Gladness: The Sabbath Among Jews and Christians in Antiquity,* p. 11.

"If a man keeps the Sabbath properly, the Lord also keeps him." –Maaseh Book, (1602) 1934, No. 8, p. 13, as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations,* p. 428.

"Anyone who observes the Sabbath properly, even if he be an idolater, is forgiven his sin



[against God]." –Johanan T., Sabbath, 118b, as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations,* p. 428.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yohanan said: "With regard to anyone who observes Shabbat in accordance with its halakhot, even if he worships idolatry as in the generation of Enosh, God forgives him his sins." –*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbath* 118 b.

"He who keeps one Sabbath properly is accounted as if he had observed all the Sabbaths from Creation to the Resurrection." –Judah HaNasi. Mekiltah, to. *Exodus 31:13,* as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations,* p. 428.

"If we the Sabbath keep with a faithful heart, the Lord will Israel keep with love divine." –A Ibn Ezra, *Sabbath Table Himn*, c. 1158. DPB, ed. Nertz 569, as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations*, p. 428.

"Sabbath observance balances all the commandments of the Torah." –Eleazar b. Abina. TJ: Nedarim, 3.9, as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, A Treasury of Jewish Quotations, p. 428; cf. Sol Scharfstein, *Understanding Jewish Holidays and Customs: Historical and Contemporary, Hoboken,* p. 18.

"Had Judaism brought into the world only the Sabbath, it would thereby have proved itself to be a producer of joy and a promoter of peace for mankind. The Sabbath was the first step on the road which led to the abrogation of slavery." –H. Cohen, *Die Religion der Vernunft*, 1919, p. 184, as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations*, p. 427.



An Ethiopian Jewish proverb says, "The Saviour of the Jews Is the Sabbath" –J.H. Hertz, *Daily Prayer Book*, 1948, p. 341, as quoted in Joseph L. Baron, *A Treasury of Jewish Quotations,* p. 428.

"By observing the Shabbath, the Jew becomes, as our sages said, 'domè leyotserò,' similar to God Himself. Like God, he is master of his work, not a slave to it." –Isidor Grunfeld, *Lo Shabbat,* Milano, Roberto Bonfil, 5728-1968, p. 14; online edition, p. 4.

"Israeli sages call the Shabbat yesod haemunà (the true foundation of our faith), because the highest ideals, struggles, and sacrifices of which the Jews have been protagonists have had the observance of Shabbat as their foundation. Some said, in fact, that during the various persecutions suffered by the people of Israel it was not the Jews who saved Shabbat, but Shabbat that saved the Jews. This sacred day has the ability to give greater dignity to man and his work." –Ambra Marchese, *Conoscere le feste ebraiche,* pp. 19, 20.

"Our sages call the Shabbat yesod haEmunà, the basis of our faith. It is not an exaggeration. In fact, the highest ideas with which Judaism ennobled the human mind, the highest ideals for which our people fought for thousands of years, sacrificing countless lives of their children for them, all revolve around the Shabbat." –Isidor Grunfeld, *Lo Shabbat*, Milano, Roberto Bonfil, 5728-1968, p. 14; edition online p. 4.

"It is the Zionist philosopher Ahad Ha'Am who is credited with the comment, 'More than Israel kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept Israel.'" –Rabbi David Rosen, *The Family in Judaism Past, Present and Future, Fears and Hopes*, p. 9.

"Bialik was fond of quoting his mentor and teacher, Ahad Ha'am, when he said: 'More than Israel kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept Israel.'" –*Spending Shabbat with Bialik.*

"Eretz Yisrael will never be built without the Sabbath," he went on. "It will be destroyed, and all your work will be for naught. The Jewish people will never give up the Sabbath, which is not only the keystone of Israel's existence but of human existence. Without the Sabbath, there would be no godliness and no semblance of humanity in the world." –*Letters of Hayim Nachman Bialik, ed.* F. Lachower, 1939.

"Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: 'Had the Jewish people properly observed the first Shabbat that was commanded to them, no nation or tongue would have ever ruled them.'" –*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbath* 118 b.

"Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: 'If only the Jewish people would keep two Sabbatot in accordance with their halakhot, they would be immediately redeemed.'" –*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbath* 118 b.

"If all Israel were to observe two successive Sabbaths as they should be observed, redemption would ensue at once (*Shabbath* 118b; comp. Yer. Ta'an. 64a); if even one Sabbath were rightly kept, the Messiah would appear (*Shabbath* 118b).... Tradition plainly declares that the reward of him who observes the Sabbath in all its details will be greater in this world than in the world to come, as it is written....

"The observance of the Sabbath in all its details is highly extolled in the rabbinic haggadah. If all Israel observes two Sabbaths (or even one Sabbath; Lev. R. iii. 1) in all their details, it will imme-diately be redeemed from exile (Shab. 118b). The Sabbath is a costly present given by God to Is-rael (Ibid., 10b). The pleasures of the Sabbath are one-sixtieth of the delights of the world to come (Ber. 57b). He who honors the Sabbath with the preparation of delightful things will receive all that his heart desires: his portion will be limitless, and his sins will be forgiven. He who eats the three prescribed meals on the Sabbath will be saved from the troubles of the Messianic age, from the judgment of Gehenna, and from the wars of Gog and Magog (Shab. 118a, b). Had the Israelites observed the first Sabbath in all its details, no nation or tongue could have prevailed against them (Ibid., comp.; Ibid., 87b; Tos. to Shab, s.v. 'Kasher'). (Ibid.)." –Emil G. Hirsch, Joseph Jacobs, Julius H. Greenstone, *Sabbath, in Jewish Encyclopaedia,* 1906.

The following paragraph is a succinct summary of the concepts that have been presented in this chapter.

"By Hasmonean and Roman times, the Sabbath had acquired a central position in the self-consciousness of Jews everywhere in the Diaspora. It was also one of the few things about the Jews that the Gentiles knew. As such, it had become a clear marker in the boundary line that separated Jews and Gentiles. Among Jews it was understood that the process of assimilation into the stronger surrounding culture would begin with neglect of some aspect of Sabbath observance. They seem to have had their own domino theory. The collapse of the nation would begin with forgetfulness of the Sabbath. On the other hand, there was the notion that Israel needed to keep all the commandments as a condition for the Messiah to come. It became accepted however, that 'the observance of the Sabbath



outweighs all the commandments of the Torah.' Therefore, when all of Israel would 'remember' the Sabbath as they should, the Messiah would come and Israel would be redeemed immediately. Thus, Rabbi Levi said, 'If Israel kept the Sabbath properly even for one day, the son of David would come. Why? Because it is equivalent to all commandments.' This notion is also affirmed in the following dialogue between God and Israel, 'O My people, behold, you have annulled all Ten Commandments. Nevertheless, if you had kept one Commandment,... I would have forgiven you. And which commandment is this? It is the commandment concerning the Sabbath day." –*Pesikta Rabbati* 27:4. It would appear then that perfect observance of the Sabbath commandment on the part of Israel would result in all sins being forgiven and, therefore, in the coming of the Messiah. On the other hand, if an individual would just keep one Sabbath properly, 'it is counted to him as if he had observed all Sabbaths from the day that God created His world to the time of the resurrection of the dead.' These sayings demonstrate recognition both of the great importance of the Sabbath commandment and of the difficulty of observing it." –Herold Weiss, *A Day of Gladness: The Sabbath Among Jews and Christians in Antiquity,* pp. 11, 12.

CURRENT BELIEFS

The beliefs and practices that existed at the time of Jesus, and made His life as well as the lives of the believers in the early church difficult, continued into the following centuries as the rabbis continued to codify them in the Mishnah and the Talmud. They were held during the Middle Ages and reach even to the 21st century, as the following quotations show.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the Jew has survived two thousand years of persecution and humiliation largely because he had



the Sabbath. It was one factor that not only made him survive, but kept him alive, both spiritually and morally. Without the Sabbath, the Jew would have vanished. It has been said that as much as the Jew has kept Shabbat, so has Shabbat kept the Jew.... Take the poorest Jew, the most wretched person, and the Sabbath transforms him, as if by a miracle, into a man of dignity and pride.... There is a Sabbath prayer that reads. 'Rejoice in your kingdom, you who keep the Sabbath.' The miracle of Shabbat is the kingdom of every Jew.... All this highlights one point: The Sabbath is the most important institution of Judaism. It is the primary ritual, the very touchstone of our faith. Not only is the Sabbath the only ritual appearing in the Ten Commandments, but it is also repeated more often in the Torah than any other commandment. Throughout the Talmud, the Midrash, and the other great classical Jewish writings, we find that the Sabbath has a most central place in Jewish thought." –Orthodox Union Staff, *Why the Sabbath*, July 17, 2006.

"Shabbat is a weekly opportunity to practice living in redemption. It initiates us into a redemption that is not just utopian, but a blueprint for the here and now. It is gives us practice for the grand Shabbat of the Shmitah or sabbatical year, when the land gets to enjoy its own Sabbath, free from agricultural manipulation or control. In this way, Shabbat orients us toward a redemption that could transform the

face of the planet." –David Mevorach Seidenberg, *How to Experience Sabbath As Redemption.*

CONCLUSION

Studying the above concepts reveals something about the old and new Jewish Sabbath traditions and speculations. Therefore, it should not be difficult to understand why the Pharisees opposed Jesus so strongly and why He could not agree with them. Instead of understanding the Sabbath as the sign by which they would know that the Lord would sanctify them, they took the Sabbath as an end in itself through which man obtains merit.

This is also why the apostle Paul had to work so hard to carry out his mission of preaching the gospel, especially among the Galatians and the Colossians. He laboured with all his strength to correct the legalistic idea of the Christians who, under the wrong influence of Judaism, gave the Sabbath (and other feasts) saving value without Christ, thus denying directly or indirectly that salvation is the free gift of grace received by faith in Jesus, man's only Lord and Saviour. John 14:6; Acts 4:12.

It was because the apostle knew the Jewish teachings so well that he warned the Romans against making the same mistakes as the rabbis. The church in Rome was tempted not only to establish human merits and righteousness but also, in so doing, to annul the grace of God that was manifested through Jesus Christ. "Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works." "For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness." Romans 9:31, 32; 10:3.

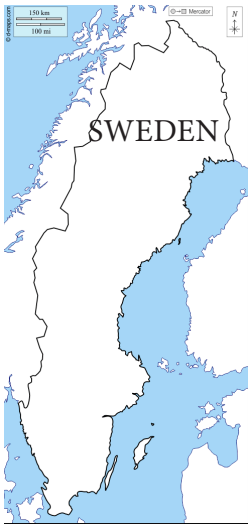
The quotations above showed how the Jews considered Sabbath observance one element of their own self-righteousness and ignored the true salvation that is possible through faith in Jesus Christ–because they tried to establish their righteousness by their works. Therefore, not the Jews' concept of the Sabbath, but the Biblical, Christian one, presented the true meaning and blessing of the Sabbath as it was originally given by the Lord at creation and lived and taught by Jesus when He was on earth.



EUROPE



SWEDEN



From August 14 to 15, 2026, a spiritual conference was held in Motala, Sweden, featuring Pastor Tzvetan Petkov, president of the General Conference, who delivered a sermon titled “Spiritual Friendship.” In his message, he emphasized the importance of character transformation through the Holy Spirit, citing the apostle John—whose life was transformed by the love of Christ—as an example. He also urged believers to seek daily spiritual renewal, brotherly unity, and the outpouring of the early and latter rain, thereby strengthening their commitment to God and the proclamation of the gospel.

BULGARIA



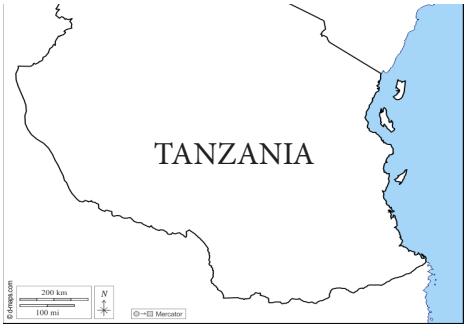
On September 30, 2026, the International Missionary Society (IMS) church in Sofia, Bulgaria, joyfully celebrated the baptism of Brother Georgi Tkachoff—a prominent visual artist—in a ceremony officiated by Pastor Margarit Zhekov, head of the Publishing Department for the Bulgarian Field. With this addition, the local congregation has reached 18 members, further strengthening missionary work in the country. This event is a cause for gratitude to God and renews the church’s commitment to continue proclaiming the Gospel and sharing the message of hope and salvation in Jesus Christ.



AFRICA



TANZANIA





The Tanzania Union continues to strengthen its communication and evangelism efforts through the use of digital platforms, with the goal of sharing the message of hope and salvation with an ever-widening audience.

As part of these initiatives, the participation of Brother Onesmus Kyalo—a representative from the African Division Committee—was particularly notable.

Through its official website, www.imstanzania.org, the Union shares news, biblical teachings, and information regarding various church activities, thereby facilitating access to spiritual content and fostering communication among believers.

Inspired by the promise found in Matthew 24:14, the work in Tanzania reaffirms its commitment to utilizing media to bring the gospel to more people and to continue proclaiming the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

ZAMBIA







From August 23 to 29, 2026, the Zambia Union held a spiritual camp meeting in the central region of the country, themed “The hour of His judgment has come”—a theme inspired by the biblical message of divine judgment.

One of the most significant moments of the gathering was the baptism of 13 individuals—ten women and three men—who publicly expressed their faith in Jesus Christ and their decision to follow His teachings.

The baptismal ceremony was officiated by Pastor Shepard Hampako, president of the Zambia Union, in an atmosphere of joy and gratitude to God for the new souls added to the family of faith.

This event represents a blessing for missionary work in Zambia and reaffirms the church’s commitment to continue proclaiming the gospel and preparing people for the soon return of Jesus Christ.

ASIA



JAPAN







From September 12 to 15, 2026, various spiritual, educational, and health-promotion activities took place in Okinawa, Japan, as part of the missionary efforts of the Asian Division, led by Pastor Roland de la Paz.

The activities included a Sabbath fellowship gathering, during which participants shared moments of worship, biblical reflection, and Christian communion, strengthening bonds of unity and brotherhood.

Additionally, healthy cooking workshops were held, where attendees participated in food preparation and learned practical nutrition principles. The program also featured a forum on health and the environment at the Kokaru-Shinso bookstore, with educational presentations focused on holistic well-being and stewardship of creation.

The events concluded with a food-preparation session and a social gathering, which provided an opportunity for participants to share experiences and strengthen their relationships.

These initiatives reflect the church's commitment to integrating the preaching of the Gospel with health education and community service, promoting a healthy lifestyle and Christian values in Japan.

AMERICA

PUERTO RICO





In Arecibo, Puerto Rico, a day of joy and gratitude to God took place with the baptism of two sisters, who publicly expressed their faith in Jesus Christ and their decision to follow His teachings.



The event, held in September 2026, was attended by Pastor Addin Ajucum.

This significant step of faith represents a blessing for the missionary work in Puerto Rico and a source of great joy for the congregation, which continues its efforts in proclaiming the Gospel and preparing new souls for the kingdom of God.

The addition of these two sisters reaffirms the church's commitment to continue sharing the message of hope and salvation found in Jesus Christ.







UNITED STATES



The baptism of a new sister in the faith was joyfully celebrated during a spiritual conference in New York, organized by the Northeastern United States Field—part of the American Union.

The baptismal ceremony was officiated by Pastor Pablo Hunger, director of the General Conference Evangelism Department, who shared the occasion through photographs published on September 11, 2026.

This significant spiritual step is a blessing to the church and a cause for gratitude to God, as individuals continue to respond to the call of the gospel.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen faith, foster Christian fellowship, and renew the believers' commitment to the mission of sharing the message of hope and salvation with more people.

The Sabbath
Wachman

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